

Why 2015 should be the year of internal communication

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Internal communication is a fundamental part of any organisation's operations, for without optimising this it will not operate efficiently. Having been afforded the opportunity to work at a government institution during my experiential training, I can confidently state that 80% of the projects we embarked on dealt with internal communication.

We dealt with managing events within the hospital which included planning and implementing an events calendar that included birthday celebrations, memorial services and events that coincided with special days in the medical calendar amongst other things.

Preparing the hospital newsletter was chief amongst the tasks I admired as it afforded me the opportunity to practice my journalistic skills.

Engagement

While we tried our utmost best to make the internal communication function as smooth as possible, I feel our efforts were not on par with how the discipline should be handled in this day and age. Our communication model was more geared towards informing employees rather than two-way engagement evident through the fact that messages were finalised without the employees' input, then handed down to them for implementation.

Internal communication has shifted from the days of human capital discovering new information regarding developments in the company on notice boards and having foremen or supervisors relay messages derived from senior management as witnessed within communication in autocratic leadership. Internal communication is now more about engagement in an effort to clear all the noise that may distort the message from sender to receiver.

Organisations put a lot of effort on external communication while neglecting their most prized asset, which can literally make or break the entity in a matter of minutes. Neglecting internal communication can have dire consequences as witnessed in the platinum belt, where mining companies' production was gravely affected. We tend to associate internal communication with the human resource function, thus getting things completely messed up.

Think outside the box

The primary objective for optimising internal communication within an organisation should be to connect employees with the brand, which will ultimately drive better business results. Employees need to be in sync with the company's vision and should be part and parcel of the machinery that drives the company towards that vision. Despite senior management

earning big bucks for being in the driver's seat, every employee should get involved and not feel that their value lies in the cubicle they occupy or simply with the machinery they are paid to operate.

Through internal engagement, organisations may identify individuals with the right characteristics for a more advanced role. Organisations may save valuable time and resources training a new person for a senior position while capable leaders work their potential away in cubicles. It is time for brands to think outside the box by encouraging their communication teams to look into internal communication and leverage the many opportunities that can be harnessed through this discipline.

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