

Research Brief Series

The Intersection of Internal & External Communication

Global Research Report

The Next Level

The Business Value of Good Internal Communication

April 2019



The report The Next Level produced by IC Kollektiv examines the value and practice of internal communication (IC) from many angles around one central theme: the business value of internal communication. This publication is part of a series on topics and issues addressed in the 164-page global report. Based on primary and secondary research, this edition of Research Brief presents key findings from our research on the intersection of internal and external communication. The first section features the results of our online survey while section two looks at how in-house practitioners/executives we interviewed manage the blurring of the lines between internal and external communication. The full report is available at ickollektiv.com/report.

RESULTS OF OUR SURVEY

DISTINCT AUDIENCE. INTEGRATED APPROACH.

IC Kollektiv conducted a global survey in July/August 2018 to find out how communication professionals are dealing with the blurring lines between internal communication (IC) and external communication (EC) and how this impacts IC in their organization. We asked in-house practitioners :

“How do you manage the blurring of the ‘lines’ between internal and external communication in your organization and how do you make sure the needs of your internal audiences and constituencies are not overlooked?”

The results indicated that :

- The majority have adopted an integrated approach to IC and EC or at least they are working together very closely.
- The alignment between both functions is a high priority and those who recognize its importance but are not there yet reported they wanted to have a closer alignment in the approach and management of IC and EC.
- While IC and EC draw closer, internal communication is seen as a distinct discipline.
- Internal stakeholders have specific needs and have also significant impact on the company brand, and, therefore, are seen as a distinct and a key audience.
- In line with this, the consistency of messages and timing between IC and EC is an important factor.
- The need to inform employees first is recognized but this is still a challenge for many.
- Employees are interested by external content but external content alone is not enough to keep employees well informed. The right message for the right audience at the right time is still needed.
- An integrated approach helps prevent a reputation gap externally and a lack of trust internally.
- Strategic internal communication is seen as critical to organizational success. IC and EC are both needed to optimize corporate success.



“Every time a PR campaign is produced, employees must be considered stakeholders and strategies must be created specifically for them rather than simply giving them access to what is produced for the general public. Their needs are different than those of clients or the general population. They need to make sense of how company news affects them personally in their daily work life. Sending employees a link to the organization's latest press release might inform them of the news, but explaining how the news will benefit them and giving them a space to discuss these changes will engage them.” (anonymous)

“It's a far more transparent - and fluid - communication environment now. So comms professionals are generally more conscious that messages on both internal and external channels should reinforce each other. But I still see both areas as separate constituencies to the extent that they have to be approached with customized plans for a 2-way engagement. Even if the core messages are becoming more aligned, I'm not sure we're at the point yet where it's effective to relate with all stakeholders as a single block.”
- Chidi Eke, Corporate communications, Nigeria.

Internal stakeholders as a distinct audience

Some 95 percent of respondents advocate the absolute need to consider internal stakeholders as a distinct audience. Here, the basics haven't changed: the right message, for the right audience at the right time. For some, there is even no such thing as blurred lines. Among the anonymous comments: *“The lines aren't blurred because distinct audiences need and want different information. But we must collaborate so we align our messages and timing. Someone is responsible for internal, someone else for external, working alongside each other constantly.”* *“The lines are definitely not blurred in the organization I work for. There is a clear and positive distinction between internal and external.”*

This distinction was made loud and clear by many respondents.

Towards an integrated approach

Some confirmed that IC and EC functions are fully integrated while the majority say they use an integrated approach to strategize, plan and/or manage internal and external communication in their organization. In line with this, they mainly raised the following key interrelated factors: close collaboration between teams and functions is needed to ensure the strategic alignment and approach of IC and EC, which in turn helps build employee trust, and supports employee advocacy and employees as brand ambassadors.

“Our internal team takes an integrated approach to planning and content management to ensure employees are considered in every plan, activity and content asset. In many cases content is repurposed - with consideration for relevance - across internal and external audiences.” (anonymous)



"My direct meeting is where the coordination and integration of internal and external take part. The teams also work on content jointly and meet regularly. It's critical to have both groups on the same page. A lot of external content actually comes from internal communications. Also, if you want to build employee trust, you want to ensure that your employees are learning much from the external communications but that the internal and external are aligned and timed to happen together as much as possible."

- David Chamberlin, former SVP & Chief Communications Officer at PNC, and currently SVP & Chief Marketing Officer at SonicWall, USA.

"We've established a robust operating model where there will always be an internal communications person in the room when things like media issues or big campaigns are happening, as well as a leader from the frontline. This ensures we match what is being said externally consistently with what we need our people to know and do."

-Rachelle Bryant, Internal Communications Advisor at Bupa, Australia.

"We do work closely with our colleagues that have an external focus, as our roles are interconnected. We collaborate with senior leaders and business managers to understand the internal needs. Our partnership with HR is particularly important." (anonymous)

Corporate success needs both disciplines

"It is about embracing the blurring between external and internal . . . especially since corporate / organizational objectives can only be realized (mostly) by the 'intersection' of both internal and external audiences - closer alignment in the management and approach of both internal and external communications can only be positive," indicated Henk Geertsema, the PR & Communications Manager at Country Land and Business Association (CLA) in UK. Thaís Trevisan, the Global Internal Communication Business Partner at Schneider Electric in Brazil commented: "The strategic alignment among the teams is essential . . . make sure that internal and external teams have a clear vision of the key themes and business priorities."

Employee first, when possible

Many emphasize their effort to ensure that employees hear company news first from the organization. This remains a challenge and some still need to lobby to convince management to inform employees before telling the world.

"We are reminding management all the time about the necessity to communicate internally first avoiding situations when employees find out crucial information from the media and not from the management." (anonymous)



"The way we are managing the lines between internal and external comms is to work closely with our external marketing team so that all their work has an internal comms part of it to ensure internally we support the external comms activity. We're not yet there in terms of early promotion of external work. Recently, our CEO announced she was stepping down, and externally in the media the comms was ahead of what we were able to control. Instead, we created specific internal material to help take back ownership of this comms for our employees. We created an internal interview video with our CEO which was well received. These are some examples of the activity we're doing. It's tricky in terms of making sure they're not overlooked. It needs leadership who is willing to give permission and understands that their internal audience is as important as their customers. We try and cover this by being at the table when external activity is planned so we have a duty to be the voice of the internal audience. That's how we prevent that our people are not overlooked. Sometimes this works well and sometimes it doesn't."

- Frank Dias, IC Business Partner, Lloyd's, UK.

Well informed staff are great brand ambassadors

"I make sure we arm our people with the right messages and guidance to talk about our organization confidentially, even in difficult conversations. Employees are the most powerful advocates any organization can have - they are trusted, respected and have informal networks. If you empower them and give them the tools to talk about your organization, they can help you enable and develop deep, meaningful relationships"

- Caroline Chivers, Head of IC, Marie Curie, UK

"We highly value our internal audiences, they drive our (health care) business and need to stay well informed and, especially, engaged. They're at the heart of all we do. They're service providers, the face of our health care system and our best brand ambassadors."

- Kim Rose, Director, Strategic Communications, University of Florida Health, USA

Prevent a reputation gap and lack of trust

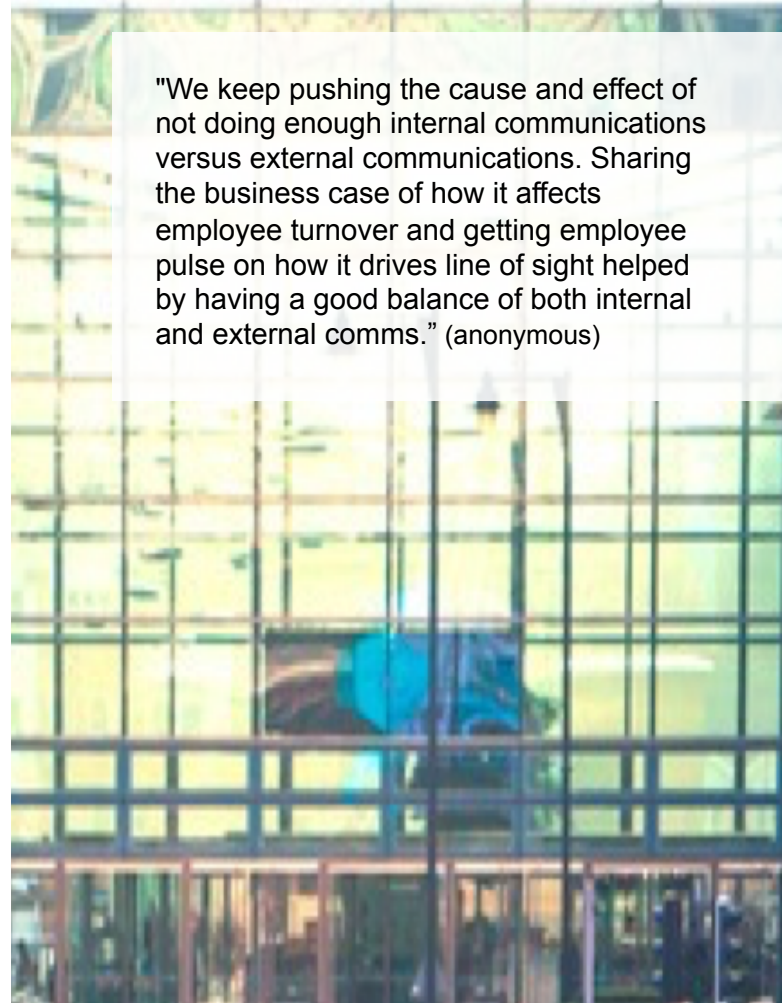
"I take every opportunity to remind my executive that internal and external communications are part of the same continuum. Internally, public relations and communications serve as the social conscience of the organization. Externally, our efforts serve to build and protect organizational reputation. Both social conscience and reputation are intangible assets that live in, or are shaped by, the hearts and minds of others. They are both relational constructs that are supported by our communication and relationship building efforts and that are co-dependent. One can't succeed without the other. For external audiences to believe what we say about our organization, our internal audiences must experience, believe and identify with the same. Failure to do so creates a reputation gap and undermines our authenticity and credibility as an organization. It breaks the trust of our people who are our most valuable asset. That is the reason why we must communicate equally, passionately and professionally with our internal and external audiences."

- Christine Szustaczek, AVP, Communications, Public Affairs & Marketing, Sheridan College, Canada

"From my end it's to work in sync under one main key message, channels change between internal and external audiences but we want to showcase what we are from the inside. The image with our external stakeholders is important but it's a priority that our internal public feels engaged with what they see outside of the company they work for."

-Carolina Cantillano Valverde, Internal Communications Executive, Experian, Costa Rica

"I know a lot of people believe that communication practitioners should have both external and internal in their remit, however I believe that there's a strong case for employee communications to be its own function that works closely with external communications. As companies are consistently faced with adaptive and technical challenges, it's important that there's a strong focus on those people who are representing the brand to customers, talking about their company on LinkedIn and other social platforms. We've also seen a massive shift in what employees expect from the companies they work for, and that is a strong



"We keep pushing the cause and effect of not doing enough internal communications versus external communications. Sharing the business case of how it affects employee turnover and getting employee pulse on how it drives line of sight helped by having a good balance of both internal and external comms." (anonymous)

purpose, a good corporate citizen, values that resonate with them.

These things need a dedicated internal focus to optimize engagement and connection to everything companies say externally."

- Rachele Bryant, Internal Communications Advisor, Bupa, Australia



Where IC sits

Responses from those who addressed this aspect showed diverse models but mostly IC and EC report to the same department, either Corporate Communications, Communication, Public Affairs & Marketing, or Communication & Marketing. In the same organization, while some practitioners are responsible for IC only, others are responsible for both IC and EC. In some instance, the functions of IC and EC are completely integrated. One respondent indicated that they've "recently made the bold move of structurally separating internal and external comms" in their organization.

Internal and External Communication Managed as an Integrated Approach

As part of our research, we asked a specific group of communication professionals/executives to answer this question which differed slightly from the one used for our online survey:

"Blurred lines between internal and external communication are here to stay. How does your organization deal with this reality in its approach to internal communication? Can you share how your organization ensures internal and external communication are aligned together and also specify if both functions are integrated or not?"

This section features key perspectives from respondents and provides examples of how IC and EC are structured in some companies and their approach including some practices and benefits.

A positive impact

Beyond where IC sits in the organization, this intersection has engendered increasing respect for the distinct nature of internal and external communication. There is a recognition that internal and external communication are part of the same continuum. They are co-dependent and as such, one can't succeed without the other as they are both needed for corporate success.

The results indicated :

- In terms of structure, IC and EC functions are part of the same department in most companies. When both functions are separated, they work closely together.
- The majority of participants indicated that they use an integrated approach to manage internal and external communication. They argued that this alignment is essential on many levels: driving business results, ensuring consistency between the image projected by a company and how it is perceived by its own employees, and ensuring consistency between what employees say about the company and its impact on the perception and reputation of the company by external audiences.
- IC is recognized as a key component of the overall communication strategy and to help drive the company strategy. IC and EC are both needed to optimize corporate success.
- Internal stakeholders are recognized as a distinct audience with specific needs.
- Employees are or should be informed first.
- In some companies, the integrated model expands IC and EC by including other functions such as HR, Market Management, etc.

Key Perspectives

- Leaders generally don't express interest in just one solution. They want to make sure that internal and external communications are tightly aligned on any given issue.
- Any internal communication can have external implications, and vice-versa. Alignment using that outside in/inside out principle ensures thinking and acting holistically with all stakeholders on behalf of the business, driving clear and consistent messaging adapted to specific audiences for whatever business initiative or result it's designed to drive.
- Critically, this extends to shared reporting lines, shared business partnering, and shared communications strategy and planning. Without lockstep working and working relationships, we lose our focus and the true understanding of our communications strategy. When this works well, the approach is completely seamless and provides outcomes. It involves seamless and intense working relationships where skills are pooled and ideas shared.
- There's a need to communicate to publics not only in the tone and language that will be most appreciated by them but also through the means that will have the most impact on influencing the kind of behaviour that is wanted to impact. Thus the argument for different approaches to internal and external communications.
- It is utterly imperative that the company's internal communication content complements and perfectly aligns with what the company is publishing externally.
- Be fast and efficient in preparing and sharing the same consistent messages in all channels simultaneously to be credible, reliable and transparent to internal and external stakeholders.
- The consistency between the image projected by a company and how it is perceived by employees is fundamental.
- All external communication is evaluated by the employees and compared with the internal communication of the organization, immediately impacting the perception of transparency and credibility of the communication strategy. Your employees can read about what is happening to the company in real time and can reinterpret the message faster than and far beyond the official communications channels, depending on the issue. This makes rapidity of response from the external team, who need to alert and keep the internal team in the loop, more important than ever. This requires a constant alignment between both areas.
- It takes minutes for a small internal glitch to make it to the headlines in the newspapers. Even much smaller companies empower their employees to create the desired external perception of the organization as advertising is not enough. Trust is a key challenge for today's organizations. Employees can enhance the trust in organizations.
- Each can become an ambassador or anti-ambassador of the company they work for and make a significant impact through their networks when it comes to the perception and reputation of the company.
- Provide relevant and timely information that allows them to act as true ambassadors of the company.
- All of our stakeholders are using social media, including employees. We want to empower them to share the content relevant to them and their networks.
- The culture of an organization is out there, totally visible, a crucial part of the brand. A company's brand is primarily the story of its cultural journey from birth through evolution, transformation, beliefs, and most importantly stakeholder perception. The most critical stakeholders are employees, more so in the digital era, where everyone is a reporter or a storyteller. How we empower and leverage our employees will decide the outcome.



INSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

DuPont

Mark Dollins, Former Head of Executive & Global Employee Communications, at DuPont, and currently President, North Star Communications Consulting, LLC, USA

Approach - My global IC work with PepsiCo and DuPont has been rooted in a concept I've come to call 'outside in/inside out.' Essentially it's assumed that any internal communication can have external implications, and vice-versa. We don't look at this dynamic as something to deal with. We look at it as an opportunity to drive clear and consistent messaging for whatever business initiative or result it's designed to drive.

Structure & Practices - Internal and external sub-functions were aligned under one communications structure, which is the right way to do it. It affords regular interaction between communications professionals who manage internal and external stakeholders. We partner on messaging, align on strategy and metrics, and remain in lockstep for execution.

Benefits - Clearly, everything from messaging to sequencing can have an impact on the overall success of any communication plan. Alignment using that outside in/inside out principle is the only way to ensure we're thinking and acting holistically with all stakeholders on behalf of the business.

Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA)

Susan Blundell, Director of Internal Communications and Communication Services, Canada

Structure - While blurred lines exist between internal and external communications, there are also very clear stakeholder needs that can be identified. Our internal communications are either categorized as business unit communications that are distributed to all GTAA employees, or corporate-wide communications that are also sent out to airport employees. Our external communications team manages all media relations, and all outgoing communications from the CEO's office, the executive suite, and all external-facing social and digital media.

Our internal and external teams reside in the same office space.

Approach & Practices - Our director of external communications and director of internal communications and communication services meet regularly, as do the managers from both teams. Daily communication is critical.

Our intake process is centralized and involves a request form to initiate the process. Our communications request form process is currently manual and has resulted in ongoing issues for our internal and external communications teams. As part of our plan to improve the client experience, we are implementing a customized project management solution that allows clients to see their project status through a clearly-defined process. It is also a mobile solution that will allow users to make their request from any device. It will house all communications plans, materials, proofs, creative briefs, and allow for electronic sign-offs. We are currently in the testing phase with IT and anticipate a roll out this year.

Both teams are a part of an integrated emergency response plan and actively participate in full-scale emergency exercises to plan for potential emergencies. When it comes to operational efficiency, the two teams collaborate to ensure that communication is effective and timely, especially in a crisis scenario.





SAP

Antonia Ashton, Vice-president Communications at SAP EMEA South, based in South Africa

Views - People often talk about internal and external communication as if they are completely different things. Therein lies a fundamental error. They are inextricably intertwined and barriers between internal and external communication have become less defined.

Structure - These areas of expertise are separate within the organisation.

Approach - However, there is more and more cross-pollination as all communication planning is driven from an integrated perspective. Nothing in the communication portfolio is seen as stand-alone and this represents a significant shift over the last few years. This integrated approach is like a virtual circle with one area of expertise feeding into another.

Benefits - It promotes alignment of messaging that can be adapted to a specific audience and then localised and shared in an osmotic manner. This approach is not only driving better alignment but increasing consolidation of the global communication portfolio, which translates into increased productivity and the streamlining of many processes. In turn, this approach brings marketing and communication functions together across paid, owned, shared and earned platforms.

BRP

Leslie Quinton, Vice-President, Global Corporate Communications, and Events, Canada

Views & Practices - I have heard some people state that internal and external communications are now essentially the same thing. While often true, this is not entirely the case and there are almost always reasons to target your communications differently according to the audience. The old belief is still valid. You need to communicate to your publics not only in the tone and language that will be most appreciated by them but also through the means that will have the most impact on influencing the kind of behaviour you want to impact. Thus the argument for different approaches to internal and external communications.

The single biggest game changer in narrowing the divide between external and internal communications is obviously social media. Your employees can read about what is happening to the company in real time and can reinterpret the message faster than and far beyond the official communications channels, depending on the issue. This makes rapidity of response from the external team, who need to alert and keep the internal team in the loop, more important than ever.

Structure - The two teams work in tandem with one another. While they are separate, they are tightly connected and frequently work on projects that integrate members of both teams seamlessly.

Microsoft

Tom Murphy, Director of Communications at Microsoft Digital, Services, and Success (DSS), USA

Views - Since the advent of the internet, the reality is that information is fluid and there's little or no friction between information moving inside or outside the organization. I'm sure most, if not all internal communicators start with that in mind, although in reality the vast majority of content never makes it beyond the firewall.

Structure & Approach - Today, the alignment between internal and external communications is critical. At Microsoft, all our external communications are managed centrally by our Corporate Communications team. Part of their remit is also driving top-level internal communications initiatives across the company. Most major divisions across Microsoft have their own internal communications function. In our case, we have someone on our team who works in lockstep with the corporate communications team and ensures that they're aware of any important or critical issues and the correct steps are taken ahead of any communication. We also partner closely to address ad hoc issues as they arise.



Teva Pharmaceutical

Tali Dulin, Head of Corporate Internal Communications, Israel

Structure - Internal and external communications are both part of the Corporate Communications and Brand unit at Teva. As such, we have always worked closely alongside each other but were focused on different audiences. We are now writing a new chapter in Teva's story together. This is an opportunity to talk about what we stand for, what we do and the value we bring for internal and external stakeholders.

Approach & Practices - It is critical that we all tell the same clear, strong narrative and use our professional teams and resources as effectively as possible. We hold regular alignment meetings, have a global editorial calendar and plan how content can be leveraged for multiple audiences together. Providing our local communication teams with the content pre-packaged for different audiences and channels enables them to distribute global content faster, simply adding their own local flavor to ensure relevance.

A great example of this cross-pollination of content is our external website '[lifeeffects.teva](https://lifeeffects.teva.com)', which contains blog posts, articles, podcasts and videos by patients about how they experience day-to-day life, living with asthma, migraines, ADHD, and depression. Our patients are the primary audience for this website, but the real-life examples also provide a bridge of understanding and empathy between our employees and the people they serve.

Nationwide

Rick Phillips, recently retired as Chief Communications Officer, USA

Views - I've never had a leader express interest in just one solution. They want to make sure that internal and external communications are tightly aligned on any given issue.

Structure & Approach - We are aligned as one corporate communications group at Nationwide and embrace internal/external communications as integrated entities. I structure my team like an agency. Our internal and external teams have "beats" and serve specific business and staff areas. That way, in an issues management scenario, I have internal and external communicators that can deliver aligned results in both areas in minimal time.

We also recognize that there is no such thing as an "internal only" message, and on occasion, we've had internal messaging in hands of reporters in minutes. That doesn't mean that we don't prioritize audiences. We always share messaging with internal audiences first, unless there is simply no alternative, in which case we will aim for simultaneous timing. But, by and large, our employees remain the top priority for messaging.

Royal DSM

Terhi Kivinen, Senior Director, Internal Communications, Netherlands

Approach & Practices - Most of the communications issues on our table have both sides, internal and external, and we're all involved in reaching our common objectives via an integrated approach. We build messaging, channel, and stakeholder plans together and align with the top management and our regional communications network to ensure everything is consistent.

A concrete example is the use of social media. All of our stakeholders are using social media including employees. That is why we want to reach them via traditionally external channels as well and also empower them to share the content relevant to them and their networks.

We align by planning together on weekly basis, and our overall strategic planning is done by this integrated approach in mind.



thyssenkrupp Elevator

Luis Ramos, Head of Communications, Germany

Views - There is no longer a clear separation between internal and external communications in terms of content. Think about it. Most of us share what happens in our personal and professional lives on social media. Messages circulate through the social channels and mix with traditional and digital mass media. Employees consume that mixture, which contributes significantly to how they feel about their work.

Practice - No company can ignore this! It is utterly imperative that the company's internal communication content complements and perfectly aligns with what the company is publishing externally.

Structure & Benefits - In our organization, internal and external communications belong to the same department. That makes content sharing much easier, alignment more precise, and communications a lot more effective.



Allianz – Slovenská poisťovňa

Lucia Muthová, Ph.D. is the Director of Corporate Communication Dpt., Slovak Republic

Structure - IC and EC in our company have always worked hand-in-hand and they are handled by the same department, ensuring full integration of both functions.

Approach & Practices - Everything that is presented externally whether media releases, advertising campaigns, or new products and services are presented within the company first. The best ambassadors of your company are employees, themselves.

Of course, a lot of other internal information is presented via internal communication channels. Integrated communication means not only integrated internal and external communication but also integration with other company functions such as human resources or market management. We regularly circulate information between our departments by meeting regularly and circulating minutes. Internal communication in our company coordinates the release of information so we are informed about all the news in advance.

Yıldız Holding

Zeynep Arayıcı Korzay, Senior Manager, Global Internal Communications, Turkey

Structure - In our organization, the IC team works within human resources and report to the Chief Human Relations Officer. The corporate communication team reports to the Vice-chairman.

Approach - Regardless of reporting relationships, we work side-by-side in managing projects and any crisis situations that arise. We see our colleagues as brand ambassadors or managers of the media channels, and we ensure that our employees hear company news before it becomes public. Procurements, agreements, investments, and sponsorships are first announced in the company. Press releases and social media posts are shared simultaneously. Our teams are aligned. In addition to supporting the Chairman as the key external spokesperson and for IC, I support external communication and create efficiency advantages related to preliminary preparation and timing.

HSBC

Patrick Humphris, Head of Communications, Asia Pacific, Hong Kong

Structure - We have a fully integrated communications function. Within the function, we have employee communications specialists and media relations specialists, but fundamentally we are integrated across all our major teams and within country communications teams. There are good reasons for this.

Approach - Our message needs to be consistent. Significant internal communications cannot be kept out of the public domain and major media issues impact our employees' sense of pride in working for HSBC. Taking an integrated approach to communications makes complete sense because the message to our people and the outside world has to be consistent.

Views - Employee communications these days must be timely. With the advent of social media, the flow of information has become rapid and boundaries between internal and external communication are largely irrelevant.

To be heard, we need to be relevant to the lives of our employees. They're using social media and they're increasing access to their information via their smartphones. It's important that employee communications recognizes this trend and uses it effectively because it's consistent with how we are living our lives.

We believe the old-fashioned distinction that you could draw between internal and external communications is from an analogue era and not suitable for today's digital world.

Henkel

Maggie Tan, Head of Corporate Communications, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Henkel Singapore

Views - We can be a strategic partner in identifying and capturing opportunities that strengthen our company's reputation internally and externally. Through integrated internal and external communications programs, we are positioning Henkel as an innovation leader in Indonesia and establishing it as a leader in sustainability in Singapore.



Novo Nordisk A/S

Torben Bo Bundgaard, Vice-president of Organisational Communication, Denmark

Structure & Approach - The central communication functions in Novo Nordisk are organised around stakeholders. They focus on employees at large, external media, and policy-makers to name a few. Our organisational communication function is mainly focused on employees with a mission to ensure engagement around key priorities of the company. Our ambition is to enable our colleagues to communicate and act as champions on behalf of the company, internally and externally.

Practices - To ensure a close alignment between the teams who work with different stakeholders, we have established an editorial board consisting of employees from the relevant communication functions who are charged with overseeing, planning and producing messages and stories across different channels and stakeholder groups. Internal and external messaging and story development is highly integrated in Novo Nordisk.

Benefits - This facilitates consistency and efficiency.

Telia Lithuania

Vija Valentukonyte-Urbanaviciene, Acting Head of Communications and CEO

Views - By having a workforce equal to 1/1000th of the country's population and just completing a major change, employees are a communications force you cannot ignore. Each can become an ambassador or anti-ambassador of the company he or she works for and make a significant impact through his or her social networks when it comes to the perception and reputation of the company. In our annual reputation survey is an indicator of trends for the future and one of our target groups is employees. We know that it takes minutes for a small internal glitch to make it to the headlines in the newspapers. Even much smaller companies empower their employees to create the desired external perception of the organisation as advertising is not enough. The 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer shows that trust is a key challenge for today's organisations. I believe employees have an opportunity to enhance the trust in organisations.

Structure & Approach - What it means for us is that the functions marketing, external and internal communications are set to work much more closely together, they are now in one division, making sure the coordination is happening altogether. The campaigns are first run internally and then launched externally. All the new things reach our frontline first, who are sometimes harder to reach. We expect both, internal and external communicators to understand both sides of the fence and make sure everything is aligned with our strategy, toolsets, and tone of voice.



GSK

Joss Mathieson, Former Vice President, Global & Corporate Internal Engagement at GSK, UK

Structure & Approach - Both IC and EC were part of our Communications & Government Affairs (CGA) function for many years, but alongside the new business strategy, we moved to an even more integrated approach. Internal and external communications are part of the same teams, and often both are part of people's roles, particularly at a regional and local level. Teams report into CGA but are aligned and embedded with our three global businesses. My team (Global & Corporate Internal Engagement) sits within our Corporate Affairs department in CGA, which works company-wide and guides and supports colleagues embedded in all three businesses.

We also created a Global Digital Communication team responsible for both internal and external digital communications, aligning content and editorial, channel management and delivery, and analysis and insight.

Benefits - This had benefits in terms of planning stories and content that works for both internal and external audiences, and transferring best practices, monitoring and measuring impact.

IKEA Group

Guy Britt, Global Head of Internal Communication, Sweden

Structure - At a global level, communication functions are 100 percent integrated.

Views - I personally believe that the days of internal and external communications silos are over. By embracing the concept of co-worker communications rather than internal communications and assuming everything will go external, we are able to maintain strict standards in terms of communications quality control and relevancy.

The rise of social media also means that internal communications don't always remain internal. Almost every employee has a personal network of thousands at their fingertips and they're sharing news, stories and opinions about their personal life and workplace.

General Motors

Selva Carbajal, Internal Communication Manager, Argentina

Structure - Both internal communications and external communications belong to the Communications and Public Affairs department. Each area has a manager in charge.

Approach - The efforts are constantly coordinated through an integrated action plan, producing synergy and strengthening each other. Social networks erased any divisions between internal and external disciplines. Any fact, internal communication has the potential to become second in external information through the same employees that today act as informal correspondents of the organization. In the same way, all external communication is evaluated by the employees and compared with the internal communication of the organization, immediately impacting the perception of transparency and credibility of the communication strategy. This is a challenge because it requires a constant alignment between both areas, but it is also an opportunity to strengthen communication with our collaborators by providing relevant and timely information that allows them to act as true ambassadors of the company.

Approach & Practices - Just as we would with journalists, we want to tell our story and we can equip employees with unique and exciting content for them to share externally (as external ambassadors of the brand).

At IKEA we also accept that more often than not, our co-workers will read about IKEA in the news and wonder what is really happening. Whether it's positive or negative, we have a dedicated space on our intranet with links to articles and statements about the article and its content and present the facts and full story for co-workers.

Benefits - Through this method of transparency and openness, we can not only arm our co-workers with facts, we can also motivate them to go out there and do some myth busting for us within their own networks.



Clifford Chance LLP

Paul Osgood, Global Head of Internal Communications, UK

Approach & Practices - At Clifford Chance, this starts with our Monday morning meeting where all the internal communications, external communications, digital and brand teams members share their agendas. Critically, this extends to shared reporting lines, shared business partnering and shared communications strategy and planning. Without lockstep working and working relationships, we lose our focus and the true understanding of our communications strategy. When this works well, the approach is completely seamless. Our recent management of gender pay gap reporting was innovative and is impacting recruitment, retention and our external positioning. This has only been achieved through seamless and intense working relationships where skills have been pooled and ideas shared.

Views - In many respects, the integration and alignment of internal and external communications is a natural result of universal access to news. All stakeholders access and evaluate news in real time. This means that the marketer who is promoting their product or service is utilising the very same channels that are being used by many stakeholders to collaborate, socialise and transact on their own or their organisation's behalf. It's a heady mix which truly blurs the lines between employment, procurement, recruitment and even shopping.

Our digital infrastructure is extensive. We live, work and socialise online and our digital roses grow around us. Sustaining a singular internal communications approach which ignores the very environment in which all our employees thrive is naïve and leads to communications irrelevance.

Tata Consultancy Services

Sobha Varghese is, Head, Internal Communications, Continental Europe, Belgium

Views - In this age of speed and social, news travels fast. This has led to an almost complete breakdown in the barrier between internal and external communications. What a company shares on its external communication channels is quickly internalized in its employees' coffee corner and WhatsApp communications, and communications made internally often immediately make it to social media. The golden rule is that you should not share anything internally that you wouldn't be comfortable revealing outside. The reverse is true as well. Beyond the mechanics of where the IC teams are placed, which can boil down to budgets and resources rather than skills and strategy, there is an inherent need for both internal and external teams to connect, collaborate and work together towards common objectives.

Approach - We are at an age when a press release or a newspaper article just doesn't cut it. Organizations need to create customized and compelling pieces of content for different media and audiences to get the right messages across at the right time. Both internal and external communications teams need to work together in tandem towards this. There are tremendous synergies to be had from working together in this manner and understanding that both disciplines are equally important.

Practices - While treating new developments in our organization, we prefer to take the content and tailor it to different audiences. For example, in IC, we like to use a friendly, focused and more engaging tone and personalize the message for our IC media and platforms. It can be a shorter, sharable format for our internal social platform, a visual, longer story for our magazines or to-the-point messages for our email alerts. On our social platform, we especially like to have our employees make comments, share their views and start a conversation. Wherever possible, we also link to external sources which we have enabled so that our employees get a complete perspective about a development. While both internal and external communications tell the company's story, IC pros say it to the people who know the organization best and feel the reality of the workplace every single day.



Enel

Alicia Martínez Venero, Head of Communications Peru, at Enel Peru

Views - The lines of internal and external communication are blurred. Today more than ever, the consistency between the image projected by a company and how it is perceived by employees is fundamental. However, we must bear in mind that the important stuff is not just to talk about communication.

Approach - What we communicate must be a reflection of what really happens. It is a fact that both inside and outside any company its behaviors are perceived by people, whether or not they are perceived by their workers. These behaviors and actions are what we communicate through internal/external communication. The work of the Communications team must reflect the true spirit and way of being and acting when the company is in contact with all people. It is also key that those who manage internal communication maintain permanent communication with those who manage external communication.

We must maintain a multi-directional approach that ensures that communication has a 360-degree view. In other words, our stories are told at the same time on various communication fronts to all our publics. The idea is that we must communicate with each audience, taking into consideration the specific approaches that each public requires.

Benefits - This not only ensures coherence but also helps us multiply the impact and reach of communication, strengthening our reputation.

Lafarge Poland

Iwona Burzyńska, Director of Communications and External Relations, Poland

Structure - At Lafarge Poland, all communication channels (internal, external, digital and marketing communications) are under one roof. I see this as a big advantage for this organization.

Views - The lines between the two are blurred. Especially now in the information, digital age any message about our brand spreads instantly. We have to be fast and efficient in preparing and sharing the same consistent messages in all channels simultaneously if we want to be credible, reliable and transparent to our internal and external stakeholders.

Approach & Practices - How do we ensure alignment between channels? We are lucky to have all communication channels in one team's hands, but we still needed to define the structure and the process. It consists of three elements: map of content, regular team status meetings and collaboration within the communication team, status meetings and interfaces in co-operation with other functions. (Note of Editor: details on each elements on page 60 in the [report](#).)

Numbers speak

According to a survey conducted in 10 European countries, some 39,3 percent of respondents declared that their IC strategy was effective or extremely effective at helping achieve key business goals. However, 70% of people who perceived that internal and external communication are integrated believed that their IC strategy was effective or extremely effective at helping achieve current business goals.

Internal Communication in Europe 2018

About the report - *The Next Level* is the first publication of its kind bringing together C-suite leaders, in-house communication professionals/executives, and academics across all continents. Based on primary and secondary research, the report takes the conversation about internal communication to the strategic management level. Via solid insights, advice, frameworks and resources, *The Next Level* covers critical topics and issues dealing with today's challenges and future needs to truly help practitioners better position themselves as trusted counsellors and advisors and communicate on the same strategic level with senior management. Find out more and download the full global report at: ickollectif.com/report.

About the Research Brief series - 'Research Brief' is a publication series based on the findings of the global research report *The Next Level*. The series takes a step further as each edition puts a specific topic at the forefront, by consolidating critical information found on this subject in the 164-page report, in a clear and concise document. Each edition of the series is available at ickollectif.com/next-level-research-brief.

About IC Kollektiv - IC Kollektiv is an award-winning global organization dedicated to the strategic management of internal communication as a business function. The independent non-profit is based in Montreal and shares knowledge, insights and research from around the world on the practice of IC with people in more than 163 countries. For more information on IC Kollektiv, please see our website ickollectif.com.

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The local version of spelling is used out of respect for the contributors and in recognition of the global community.

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