

Research Brief Series

COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS

**THE CASE FOR
BUSINESS ACUMEN**

Global Research Report

The Next Level

The Business Value of Good Internal Communication

July 2019



The report, *The Next Level*, produced and published by IC Kollektiv, examines the value and practice of internal communication (IC) from many angles around one central theme: the business value of good internal communication. This publication is part of a series on topics and issues addressed in the 164 page global report. Following are the key findings from primary and secondary research on the importance of business acumen for internal communication professionals. The full report is available at ickollectif.com/report.

Why Business Acumen Matters

A critical capacity according to surveys

Business acumen as essential knowledge has been assessed by most communication surveys conducted over the last few years. Findings show that it is a critical capability for internal and external communication professionals.

- It is cited as the first of 10 best-in-class practices compiled from interviews with 10 global leaders in employee communication: “Be a business leader first, a communicator second.”¹
- It’s been recognized as the second most important core competency to drive corporate value.²
- Business acumen is included in the recent Global Capability Framework developed by the Global Alliance of Public Relations and Communication Management as a sub-capability to offer organizational leadership. “You demonstrate business and financial acumen through sound knowledge of the organisation’s business and core processes.”³

A requirement for practitioners ‘at all levels’

- Business knowledge is required not only for the most senior roles but also for entry-level communication professionals who “need to improve their business skills and apply business acumen, including financial literacy, to their everyday job responsibilities.”⁴
- Recruiters place business acumen among the top 10 most important skills/competencies for internal communication professionals.^{5,6}

Definition of Business Acumen

Business acumen is keenness and speed in understanding and deciding on a business situation, according to the Financial Times (FT).

The article says, “in practice, people with business acumen are thought of as having business ‘sense’ or business ‘smarts’. They are able to obtain essential information about a situation, focus on the key objectives, recognize the relevant options available for a solution, select an appropriate course of action and set in motion an implementation plan to get the job done. When they discover that changes are required to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, they make the adjustments as necessary and keep the activity moving forward. They are more often right than wrong in their assessments and choices and are admired by others both for their acumen and business success”.

Link to broader FT description:

<http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=business-acumen>

- For some 62 percent of recruiters, business acumen is the most valued specialist knowledge.⁶
- Yet, it is the number one skill/capacity that candidates are lacking.⁷
- Another research study⁸ indicates that 74 percent of IC professionals believe that to be successful, they should be seen as business people with expertise in communication. Among the respondents, only 14 percent reported having this competency in place while 42 percent were considering adding it versus 29 percent who didn’t have or were not considering applying these criteria.

IC Practitioners & Business Acumen

Expectations of Business Leaders

- Business acumen is a prerequisite for practitioners to gain credibility as trusted counsellors and advisors in the eyes of business leaders.
- The role of being both a counsellor and advisor rather than simply that of a skilled communication technician demands greater business acumen, not just for the chief communications officer (CCO) or senior agency professionals, but for mid-level and junior-level team members who help support these leaders.
- CEOs expect basic communication skills, but they want practitioners to have 'a firm understanding of the business, how it works, how it's put together, and what its issues are.' IC pros should know how the business works, its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. They should have an overall sense of everything that happens inside and envisage the future.
- CEOs expect any young communication professional to act as an internal news reporter to understand each function at the company in-depth.

"Understanding how our businesses make money and impact society is relevant to creating messages for all our audiences . . . At any corporation, a communications specialist must have a real understanding of and deep appreciation for the business in order to be an effective communicator, influencer, and strategic counselor. Our ability to work in strategic partnership with business leaders is based on a deep understanding of our respective businesses and what they mean for employees, customers, investors, and communities." Stacy Sharpe, SVP, Corporate Relations, Allstate



Views of Executives

“To every aspiring communications leader, I would remind you that trust is the ultimate human currency. To earn the trust of your leaders, prove to them that you understand the fundamentals of the business. Give them candid advice, based heavily on a true ‘outside-in’ perspective. If you deliver, they will welcome you into the inner circle and never want you to leave.” Bill McDermott, Chief Executive Officer, SAP.

“Just as business leaders need to be excellent communicators, communicators need to have exceptional business acumen. If we’re going to work together to make the right strategic decisions for our stakeholders, we all need a deep understanding of what we’re trying to do.” Steve Shebik, former CFO of Allstate and since promoted to be its Vice Chairman.

“Business acumen, co-existing with communications expertise, is the foundation of good internal communication. IC pros should know how the business works, its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. They should have an overall sense of everything that happens inside and envisage the future. I feel that good internal communications will bind people to the ideas, concepts, and values endorsed by the business.” Amit Bajaj, CEO of Tata Consultancy Services Europe

“The greater the business acumen, general to business or specific to the company, the better able communication professionals would intuitively know when and what to communicate. Specific company experience certainly trumps general knowledge.” Jes Pedersen, President/CEO of Webcor, USA

“...it is important that the intended audience not only understand the news but see themselves in it. So, it’s about more than just putting a comma in the right place, it’s about understanding the business and how it makes money to turn around and communicate something to a group of employees that will help them be educated, inspired, and engaged. Understanding leads to engagement.” Linda Rutherford, SVP, and CCO, Southwest Airlines.

Key Perspectives From In-House Practitioners

- Business acumen is considered a baseline element for being a successful communication professional. Communication techniques and tactics alone bring limited value to the business. If practitioners fail to understand their entire business and how the pieces work together, leadership will call upon them only when they need something crafted, usually reactively.
- Business knowledge is the quickest way to show your credibility. Expertise gets you to the table, but credibility keeps you there. But the hard reality is that we may not be able to stay at the table without business acumen skills.
- Communication, just like finance or law, is a business function. The role of practitioners is to help the business do what it needs to do, which is typically to achieve reliable and sustainable net income. Practitioners who don't have a deep understanding of how their business does this are out of the game. If they work in oil and gas, they need to understand the hydrocarbon value chain. If they work in investment banking, they need to understand the fundamentals of finance.
- For IC to be viewed as a vital leadership process and IC professionals as business partners who are called upon to help address business issues, practitioners need to have a thorough understanding not only of their business but of the industry in general and, even higher-level, the principles of business.
- Understanding the challenges that the company is facing is imperative as the pressure on leaders is intense, society's expectations are rising and employees want honesty and transparency.
- By speaking the language of leaders, practitioners can add real value, even to the point of helping to shape some of the policy and decisions.
- The maturity of the IC function now requires moving beyond the transaction state towards much more transformative work. IC professionals have to invest their time and energy into achieving a deeper understanding of the business and what the people inside the business know and understand about the strategy and direction of the business. Helping the business understand how employees will react to change and transformation is one of the most important roles that communication professionals can play.
- Business acumen is up there with strategic and critical thinking skills and insight into emerging trends and issues and how they affect the organization on a strategic level. Without business acumen and this insight, our counsel can never strategically be linked to advancing organization goals and objectives. It will always be seen as a 'nice to have' or an afterthought.
- The current market is so dynamic that leaders are looking not only for experts in their field, but also for business partners and problem solvers, proactive activists who will spot upcoming trends and opportunities, and help to develop the whole business, whether it's increasing profits or excelling in customer service.
- Tactically, business acumen sets the organizational tone and helps you create a compelling and consistent narrative to weave through the many messages and stories you tell every day. Practically, it translates as elegant simplicity – how we transform complexity into clear communication that employees can easily understand.
- It prevents practitioners from constantly focusing on the challenge immediately before them and be able to connect what they are doing and saying with the larger context of their organization.
- By having a clear understanding of how business works, practitioners can get a better comprehension of the challenges and opportunities the business faces, why the company might make certain decisions, anticipate the impact and how specific news will affect future corporate goals. They can foresee the communication priorities and the impact of their work on employees and company results. They can have informed conversations with stakeholders, ask better questions, and make better decisions.

Business Acumen as an Essential Capability

Nationwide

Rick Phillips retired in 2018 as Chief Communications Officer for Nationwide, a Fortune 100 company, USA

“In talking to many of my counterparts at other organizations, most communicators are no longer talking about “getting to the table” as they were several years ago. But the hard reality is that we may not be able to stay at the table without business acumen skills. Said another way, expertise gets you to the table, but credibility keeps you there. Business knowledge is the quickest way to show that credibility. That’s something that’s a must for my team, and having business acumen allows us to provide real and wanted counsel to leaders.”

Bombardier Recreational Products

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

“Everyone in communications needs three things. In no particular order they are:

- comprehension of the function of communications within a company and their role within the team
- good understanding of the business their company is in
- how business works

This last point means knowing why the company might make certain decisions and anticipating how specific news will affect future corporate goals. Communicators who don’t have a rudimentary understanding of how business works will constantly focus on the challenge immediately before them and be unable to connect what they are doing and saying with the larger context of their organization. The good news is that this skillset can be learned and by being alert and engaged. IC professionals can ramp up their knowledge and understanding of their business and the sector it operates in.”

Clifford Chance LLP

Paul Osgood, Global Head of Internal Communications, UK

“Without an appropriate understanding of business, business strategy and the wider impact of business on economies and society, an internal communications team is only able to transact. Business acumen isn’t a substitute for knowledge. No sales director will welcome your constructive criticism of their latest campaign. However, an authentic understanding of the business strategy and dynamics that underpin that sales campaign can bring employee communication insights to the table.”

Novo Nordisk A/S

Torben Bo Bundgaard, Vice President, Organisational Communication, Denmark

“A solid understanding of our business is a prerequisite for acting as a strategic advisor to our leaders, and we consider everyone to be in an advisory role, ensuring that communication links clearly to strategy.”

GSK

Joss Mathieson, former Vice President, Global & Corporate Internal Engagement, UK

“Business acumen is critical. Why would a business leader think we are credible if we can’t understand the challenges they’re facing and provide smart advice on how we can help them achieve good outcomes? The business environment today is very dynamic and challenging, which means that companies need to be one step ahead and agile to be successful.

Internal communicators must have strong business acumen and the ability to understand what’s helping or hindering business performance, together with great external awareness, strong strategic thinking and an ability to connect the dots. If we’re not impacting the business results and able to prove it, we don’t really deserve a seat at the table and risk becoming a ‘nice to have’ rather than a true strategic partner.”



Webcor

Shel Holtz, Director, Internal Communications, USA

“We need to understand and speak the language that leadership speaks.

Since I am new to the industry, I am taking steps to get up to speed as quickly as I can, reading industry trade publications and taking courses, mainly on LinkedIn Learning at this point, that includes many courses on construction management. It has long been my belief that communicators who speak with executives about the ROI of internal communication as “more engaged employees” or “better morale” are laughed at when they leave the room. ROI is an accounting formula with only one meaning: the benefit of an investment divided by the cost of the investment presented as a percentage. If we cannot grasp a basic accounting formula and position other benefits of communication as something other than ROI, leadership simply will not take us seriously.

Similarly, we need to understand our entire business and how the pieces work together. If we do not, leadership will call upon us only when they need something crafted, usually reactively. Understanding the business, we can serve the needs of leadership, proactively identify and recommend communication solutions, and serve as a trusted counsel to the members of a company’s executive team.”



GE

*Rachana Panda, Chief Communications Officer
GE South Asia, India*

“Business acumen is an absolute must for any communicator. The depth and need might differ depending on the role but an overall understanding of the sector and audience is a must. How else does one design the communications plan? Rarely do we realize that the impact of our work is huge. Be it a merger and acquisition, integration or change, culture is paramount. Ultimately the culture growth of the company results in creating shareholder value and corporate accountability. All of this is only possible if the communications teams understand their role and impact.”

Microsoft

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

“Business acumen is a critical capability for internal communications professionals. The difference between a good communicator and a great one is the ability to understand the business environment and apply the right strategies to drive the right outcomes. In a world where things change so rapidly, understanding the implications and being able to build communications to support change is critical. It’s something our leaders value and it’s something they expect. Communications is often a horizontal function in a vertical world giving us the opportunity to connect the business, share insights and drive clarity. Business acumen is essential for that.”

SAP

*Antonia Ashton, Vice-President Communications, SAP
EMEA South, South Africa*

“Having a solid business acumen means that you understand how the business operates. Until such time as internal communication professionals confidently demonstrate that they have a strong grasp on at least the big picture of the organisation’s objectives and can speak the language of the business, they will never truly be seen as strategic advisors.

If you can demonstrate that you understand not only the objectives of the organisation but how XYZ executive’s objectives are aligned to master organisational goals and how the various facets of the internal communications portfolio can support those objectives, you’re on a winning ticket. That’s assuming that you meet your internal communication objectives and your outcomes are exemplary!

This topic is top-of-mind for internal and external communication professionals at SAP. The learning and HR teams have come a long way in recent years to provide training that helps communication professionals confidently take their seat at the boardroom table.”

Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi

*Jean-François Berthet, Alliance Internal
Communications Manager, Japan*

“Alliance communications deals with very high-level corporate concepts that require a good deal of understanding of our companies and of the context in which they operate. It’s necessary to understand the basic principles of vehicle manufacturing, engineering, and marketing, as well as the basic business indicators and the key concepts of technologies.

We operate in a shifting environment within very complex companies. Communications staff need to create a compelling synthesis of complex situations. Consequently, key qualities in our environment include not only business acumen, but also the capacity to formulate complex ideas and deliver content in a creative way.”

Lafarge Poland

Iwona Burzyńska, Director of Communications and External Relations

“Business acumen is very important and that is a true virtue of a good communicator to be able to learn the business quickly. It does not mean that the communication professional has to know everything or have extensive knowledge on business operations, but they need to understand the business well enough to be able to ask the right questions and be a partner to business functions. We need to speak the same language as the business and we need to be able to know what is and what is not important. Therefore business acumen is a must and communications professional should never underestimate it. It helps you achieve the goals of communications which for me are: building community and engagement around the brand internally and externally, advocacy and reputation.”

Allianz

Lucia Muthová, PhD., Director of Corporate Communication Dpt., Allianz – Slovenská poisťovňa, Slovak Republic

“Everyone needs to take responsibility for his or her job and work on our common goals while projecting a good image to customers. In support functions, we must bear in mind that every commercial company works on the basis of generating profit through providing products and services that customers need and want. As a customer-oriented company, communication professionals look at things from the customers’ point of view. It is extremely important that we see our job strategically as a part of company business. The right perception of internal communication is far more than sending PAs or magazines. We support management in meeting their business goals and help employees to understand their involvement in company success.”

Nestlé

Kerrie McVicker, Internal Communications and Employee Insights Manager, Nestlé Oceania, Australia

“Internal communications is one of those great roles that gives you a view across the business. It also acts as an intersection for employees with the company so naturally, business acumen is an important capability for internal communications professionals.

By cultivating a deep understanding of the business goals, context, and purpose, you develop a framework to connect employees meaningfully to the organisation, each other, and the stories and beliefs that shape the culture of your organisation.

The more you understand, the better you can strategically advise and collaborate with the business. Tactically, it sets the organisational tone and helps you create a compelling and consistent narrative to weave through the many messages and stories you tell every day. Practically, it translates as elegant simplicity – how we transform complexity into clear communications that employees can easily understand.”

Alshaya Retail

Nicholas Wardle, Former Global Internal Communications Lead, at Alshaya Retail, based in Kuwait, (now Head of Employee Engagement & Communications at One Housing, UK)

“It’s obviously important to have an understanding of how the business works and this should be covered during the induction process for new joiners. Clearly, the more an IC pro knows the better, but you can’t be expected to know everything and there are shortcuts. Much is to be able to talk their language. Few real people like using phrases like ‘agile, robust or hackathon’, but if this turns your stakeholders on, use it in their presence to engage with them.

IC pros should be encouraged to ask probing questions to understand what is trying to be achieved on a project. There is no shame in saying ‘help me understand’. If anything, it can get people onside as you’re showing an interest in their work, which is usually flattering. A great crime is to pretend to understand when you don’t. You will get found out and not only will this affect your personal credibility, it could have disastrous consequences for the project.”

Telia Lithuania

*Vija Valentukonyte-Urbanaviciene,
Acting Head of Comms, CEO, Telia Lithuania*

“These days it is a critical competence! The current market is so dynamic that leaders are looking not only for experts in their field, but also for business partners and problem solvers, pro-active activists who will spot upcoming trends and opportunities, and help to develop the whole business, whether it’s increasing profits or excelling in customer service.

Every communicator must be able to have meaningful conversations with their leaders, linking communications outputs, outtakes and outcomes to a business result. A good tool for this is provided by AMEC. By not doing so, communications professionals run two risks. First, they may end up working in their own “echo chambers”, doing a good job in their function but failing to prove their value and justify the cost, especially when the going gets tough. Second, even if the conversations do happen, it is critical that they reach the strategic level, and steer away from “vanity measures” such as “influencer X is good or bad since his post got Y likes and Z comments”. Again, we have to talk strategic, outcomes not outputs.”

Greater Toronto Airports Authority

*Susan Blundell, Director, IC and Communication Services,
Canada*

“It is impossible for internal communicators to effectively support the organization’s strategy if they don’t have a full fiscal understanding, and in our case, an operational understanding of the business. Our internal communicators have an in-depth understanding of our organization’s master plan and update our internal scorecard that identifies how well we are doing with our corporate goals each month. To advise business units on the best approach for a communications campaign, they need a thorough understanding of how all business units function, how it will impact all of our stakeholders, and what the outcome will be.

We use design-based thinking to ensure that our projects, campaigns, and initiatives hit the mark with our stakeholders. We need to be able to quickly assess the current landscape and identify risks. Because our environment is so operational, our internal communicators must also have an in-depth understanding of everything from crisis communications to day-to-day operations. To know their stakeholders and understand how key messages will land effectively, they must understand how each segment is unique.”

DuPont

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

“If we can’t talk about the business in ways that leaders do, we’re automatically pushing a boulder uphill. Every internal communicator should be fluent in conversing about his/her business with a CFO, CHRO or any other corporate officer. It demands that we understand the metrics used to define financial success or the failure of business performance. I often tell team members that if they can’t explain any text or table in a quarterly earnings release, they need to get educated – and fast. It’s ironic that the same communicators who complain they can’t influence leaders often are the same professionals who don’t understand what foreign exchange rates are or what margin expansion/contraction is. If we want to be more influential, we have to invest in business acumen as a core communications competency.

Financial literacy isn’t optional, and financial communications isn’t an external communication thing, contrary to what some internal communication professionals often say. To communicate quarterly and yearly performance internally, employee communication practitioners have to understand the business. Townhall content on business performance and quarterly emails shouldn’t be written by external communications folks. As internal communication pros, we should help take that story and frame it appropriately for internal stakeholders. To do that, we’ve got to understand the business. We need to have strong connections in the Finance function and find safe havens to ask questions as we build our financial acumen.”

General Motors

Selva Carbajal, Internal Communication Manager, Argentina

“Whether organizations are large, medium, or small, across all sectors there is no place for those who do not understand the business in which they work and can not demonstrate how they add value based on their expertise. This applies to internal communication as much as any other area of the company, although in our case the challenge is greater for two reasons. First, in most organizations, we are still on the path to being recognized and accepted as a business partner. The speed with which we pass from simple transmitters of messages to protagonists at the main table does not depend only on us but also on the importance that leaders of the company give to our role. Secondly, as part of our role, we have the responsibility to transmit to the rest of the organization the results and challenges facing the organization, and motivate them, so that each one is able to make the best possible contribution to the achievement of the company objectives. That is why it is even more important for our teams to understand the business and be able to speak the language, design strategic communication plans aligned to the business objectives, and demonstrate that good communication gets results. This requires a business mentality and training that should start in the universities and continue within the same organizations. Access to relevant and updated information and close contact with the first line of the company's leadership are essential elements for the internal communication area to be effective in its role.”

The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation

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

“As employees and communicators, we're all working for the same organisation. It's important for the Communications team to understand what we do as a bank and how trends in the external world will impact the way we do business today and in the future. If we don't truly understand the organisation and what it is trying to achieve, we won't be able to create effective communications. You'll find our team members spending a lot of time with the business, sitting on executive committees, embedded in strategic project forums and advising on strategy delivery.”



Megapolis

Nataliya Ratushinskaya is Head of Corporate Communications at Megapolis Group of Companies (FMCG logistics and distribution), Russia

“Business acumen is an extremely important capability for my team, both IC and external communications professionals. IC professionals must be able to see the big picture of the organization, analyze risks and opportunities for communication, and find the best approach to handling information as any mistakes can come at great cost.”

Yıldız Holding

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

“An IC professional must develop a market perspective, financial acumen, and business systems thinking. Without a clear understanding of how business works, we cannot foresee the communication priorities and the impact of our work on employees and company results.

Culture, engagement, employee experience, and customer experience projects that aren't grounded in the business strategy, goals and objectives and financial metrics, will have a short life.

IC teams must know the organization and their position, understand how their work impacts the overall business system, and use metrics to monitor their performance.”

Enel

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

“Business acumen is fundamental for internal communication professionals. Internal communication was designed to contribute to better management. It cannot be separated from the business objectives. Those who design and execute the strategies must have a clear vision of the business objectives so that those objectives are always present and reflected in the communication activities.”

Company in the Middle East

*Gary G. Hernandez, Head of HR Communications,
at a company in the Middle East*

“To make a significant positive impact in business communications, project management and business acumen are critical skills. If you don’t know the ins and outs of your industry, you are sunk. Let me be clear, communication is a discipline, not an industry. Just like finance or law, we are a business function. We exist to help the business do what it needs to do, which is typically to achieve reliable and sustainable net income. If you don’t have a deep understanding of how your business does this, then you are out of the game. If you work in oil and gas, you need to understand the hydrocarbon value chain. If you work in investment banking, you need to understand the fundamentals of finance.

So how do you get there? A bachelor’s degree in Communications and an MBA is a great start, or a bachelor’s in business and a master’s in communications. Get some experience in your business outside of communications. Learn to read and manage a P&L or get a job in operations. Get close to the revenue generators. If all you bring to the table is newsletters, social media, and a cool website, then you won’t be at the table for long. Businesses need us to find solutions to problems that are holding the company back. Sometimes the solutions are communications related and sometimes they aren’t. When they are, fantastic, we are there and ready. When they aren’t, our critical thinking skills, business acumen, and ability to get things done are still needed.”

Some suggestions to build business acumen

- Get to know and understand the business of your business.
- Have strong connections in the finance function and don’t be afraid to ask questions.
- Get some experience in your business outside of communication.
- Get a bachelor’s degree in Communication and an MBA, or a bachelor’s in business and a master’s in communication.
- Take the [IABC Business Acumen Certificate](#)
- Take management courses related to your industry, for instance, via LinkedIn Learning and others.
- Learn to read and manage a P&L (profit and loss) statement.
- Get close to the revenue generators.
- Read industry trade publications.
- Read [Mastering Business for Strategic Communicators: Insights and Advice from the C-suite of Leading Brands](#) (Emerald Publishing, 2017), by Ron Culp and Matt Ragas. This book is a gold mine and also offers a glossary, a comprehensive list of resources on business acumen including journal articles, books, trade and professional articles, white papers, reports, etc.

DSM

Terhi Kivinen, Senior Director Internal Communications, Netherlands

“All communications people working with business leaders should understand the business strategy, target setting, and objectives to add value in reaching those targets. A common language is important in creating better understanding both ways. Continuous dialogue helps both sides to understand each other’s objectives and align them together. It is an increasingly important capability for business leaders to be effective communicators so there is the shared interest here and not only the other way around.”

Tesco

Aniisu K Verghese, Senior Manager - Corporate Communications, Tesco Bengaluru, India

“Business acumen is fundamental to succeeding as an IC practitioner and one among other key skills that the team is expected to demonstrate. In our organization, business acumen is a key skill that’s needed in the job for all colleagues. It allows one to have informed conversations with stakeholders. It gives the individual a closer understanding of the challenges and opportunities the business faces. More importantly, with business acumen, the practitioner can make better decisions and be viewed credibly in the eyes of stakeholders.”

Tata Consultancy Services

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

“Internal communication is a function which closely mirrors the business, charting the direction taken by the organization, noting its achievements and mapping the challenges ahead. An ideal IC pro will need to know the intricacies of business, the nuances of work culture, core values, and its vision for the future. It’s a hard task to know all the details and then break down the information blocks into bits while categorizing them for relevance and disseminating them in suitable formats and media to varying audiences.

For example, in the case of our primary published channel ‘Connexions’, a quarterly magazine distributed to around 50,000 employees, we ensure that the stories featured highlight our business messages and priorities. At the same time, we are careful to include information that is relevant or useful to employees. It’s a hard balancing act to be business-centric and people-oriented at the same time, thus demonstrating the complexity of internal communications.”

Teva

Tali Dulin, Head of Corporate Internal Communications, Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Israel

“I believe it’s essential. You need to be able to bring value and be involved in the business from the start, not just called in when it’s time to communicate. When we consider a change, we first look at it from the business perspective, then the organizational perspective and finally, fine-tune the best way to communicate given all the parameters including the business need, sense of urgency, employee state-of-mind and ability to make the mindset change needed to truly activate the change.

I think we provide a critical link between the business needs and the people, so as professionals we need to understand both. Once a business decision is made, it impacts habits and ways of working and it is essential that people are given the opportunity to be part of that process. When you do this well, you help create the focused energy and momentum needed to drive the business forward successfully.”



References

- ¹ *Best-in-Class Practices in Employee Communication: Through the Lens of 10 Global Leaders*, Institute for Public Relations, 2013.
- ² *CCI Corporate Communication Practices & Trends Study 2017 Final Report*.
- ³ Fawkes, J., Gregory, A., Falkheimer, J., Gutiérrez-García, E., Halff, G., Rensburg, R., Sadi, G., Sevigny, A., Sison, M.D., Thurlow, A., Tsetsura, K., & Wolf, K. (2018). *A Global Capability Framework for the public relations and communication management profession*. Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Research.
- ⁴ *The 2017 IPR and PRSA Report: KSAs and Characteristics of Entry-Level PR Professionals*. IPR, PRSA.
- ⁵ *Inside Insight 2018*, VMA Group, 2018.
- ⁶ *The State of the Profession 2018*, CIPR.
- ⁷ *The View*, VMAGroup, 2018.
- ⁸ *What Does Good Look Like? A Quantitative Perspective on Best-In-Class Practices in Employee Communication*, Institute for Public Relations, 2014.

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.

Contact: Email info@ickollectif.com | Twitter [@IC_Kollektiv](https://twitter.com/IC_Kollektiv) | LinkedIn | Facebook | Website ickollectif.com

© IC Kollektiv, July 2019. Quotes from other published reports, respective publishers. See full copyright notice inside the [global report](http://ickollectif.com/report). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from IC Kollektiv.

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

The global report is supported by **IABC**, our strategic partner, as well as by the **Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management** and by **The Conference Board**.

Industry Partner | Gold Level

