

Internal Communication in NGOs

Communications



toolbox INDIA Foundation

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Before starting this module, if you believe your organization has an open culture where the staff feels comfortable discussing these topics, you could consider going through these questions with them.



Internal communications go beyond official channels of communication, such as meetings, memos, etc., it also includes more informal touchpoints like WhatsApp messages, pleasantries, and even body language. The way your staff communicates and interacts with each other directly affects the organizational culture. Therefore, promoting good practices of internal communication can ensure a healthy working environment where teams collaborate and support each other, making your organization a pleasant place to work. The contrary significantly deteriorates the organizational culture and, eventually, your effectiveness. Given the importance of internal communication, in this section of the module, you will learn the benefits of having effective internal communication, and how to create a robust internal communication strategy step by step.

What are the benefits of having a robust internal communication strategy?

Ensures that all the staff's effort is directed to achieve the same goal, saving time and increasing productivity.

Provides a guideline for consistently communicating with the team so that they can keep abreast of the goals of the organization, specific initiatives, changes, challenges, and so on.

Encourages the staff's proactivity allowing them to take action, respond quickly and efficiently to change or emergencies, and adapt practices to achieve the organization's goals.

Creates a sense of belonging and identification among the staff, where the mission of the organization becomes the personal mission of everyone—subsequently having an impact on employee engagement and efficiency.

What are the steps to create an internal communications strategy?

1. Establish your goal and objectives

To understand the difference between goals and objectives, please refer to the "Establish your goal and objectives" part in the strategic communications section.

If struggling to determine the goal of your internal communication strategy, ask yourself the following question, "How would I like my organizational communication to be?"

The objectives, on the other hand, should be specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and time-bound, and they will depend on your organizational culture.

2. Determine your key messages

What are the values you want to promote within your organization? Strive to develop key messages containing these values and mainstream them in your communications. They need not be complicated or overly sophisticated. It could be, for instance, to promote an open-door policy in your organization. Your messages do not have to state this expressly, but rather the context, medium, or frequency of your communication should imply it through your content.

3. Define your target audience

With a clearly defined target audience, your messages' content and delivery mechanism will also become precise. In this vein, it is crucial to understand if you are addressing one of your consultants, an intern, a board member? Are they situated in your main office, in the field? Do they have access to the internet?

Understanding the particular characteristics of your audience will allow you to craft better messages and deliver them more effectively.

4. Choose appropriate tools and tactics

After you have defined your target audience, organically you will identify the most appropriate tools and tactics to deliver your message.

Nowadays, several tools make internal communication a lot easier; To mention a few, Slack, Asana, Google Hangouts, Trello, Basecamp, Zoom, GoToMeeting, and UberConference. There are also traditional ones like the telephone, regular posts, dashboards, staff meetings, and many more.

A tactic is a planned way of doing something. In this sense, when designing your tactic, be detailed and creative while remaining realistic. Plan it in such a way that the person in charge of communicating has a roadmap of feasible steps that will allow them to achieve a particular aim. Remember, your tactic must always be aligned with your goal and objectives.

5. Develop an implementation plan

Now that you have established your goals and objectives, determined your key messages, defined your target audience, and chosen appropriate tools and tactics, it is time to determine who is going to do what and when. Each of your tactics will need an implementation plan, and ideally, it will be created in consultation with the staff and management of the organization.

6. Monitor and evaluate

Identify the tools that you will use to assess your communications and the extent to which they have advanced your goal and objectives. It could be through survey scores, feedback forms from specific events, increased employee sign-ups, etc. During your monitoring and evaluation process, do not forget to use SMART indicators to measure your success. By doing so, the strategy can be reviewed and enhanced as it becomes easier to determine what is working, what should be improved, and what should be avoided.

Tips to promote better internal communications

- Encourage open dialogue.
- Promote information sharing and collaborations.
- Understand your audiences and find out how best to communicate with them.
- Communicate regularly and be consistent.
- Be transparent.