

RECLAIMING INFLUENCE:

# Proving internal comms' value to leadership: 3 essential tips



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# Proving the strategic value of internal communication functions

Internal communication teams play a pivotal role in organizations, offering strategic value that often goes unnoticed. While these teams consistently prove their worth through innovative problem-solving, proactive decision-making, collaborative partnerships, and seamless execution—they aren't always able to quantify their impact using traditional metrics. Leaving their seat at the table in flux.





Internal communicators have a crucial mission. Aligning and inspiring employees around an organization's mission, getting essential information in the hands of employees wherever they work, and fostering feedback and engagement. These teams are often the ambassadors and the voice for their employees. This becomes especially critical during times of change, when a cohesive understanding is paramount.

There is no doubt these teams contribute to the cultivation of a positive work environment, resulting in heightened employee morale, increased talent retention, and amplified productivity. Moreover, they are invaluable assets during crises, armed with the right tools and expertise to navigate such challenging circumstances.

Even with an established system in place, internal communication can be complex. While it primarily serves to share company-related information, it also plays a crucial role in keeping individuals informed and safe during times of crisis and in retaining top talent.

As hindsight has taught us, society often finds itself ill-prepared for the inevitable, and crises often strike without warning. They can range from internal misconduct to external conflicts like terrorism, environmental disasters, and various other potential scenarios. And they are as unpredictable in scope as they are in timing.

Establishing a robust system in advance just makes sense, because getting the correct information to everyone quickly impacts how your company ultimately weathers the storm. And a modern intranet acts as a communication hub that safeguards employees and minimizes negative repercussions.

Working in tandem with a well-designed internal communication strategy, it plays a crucial role in aligning your workforce during tough times. This is particularly useful with a distributed workforce that's unlikely to get information quickly otherwise.



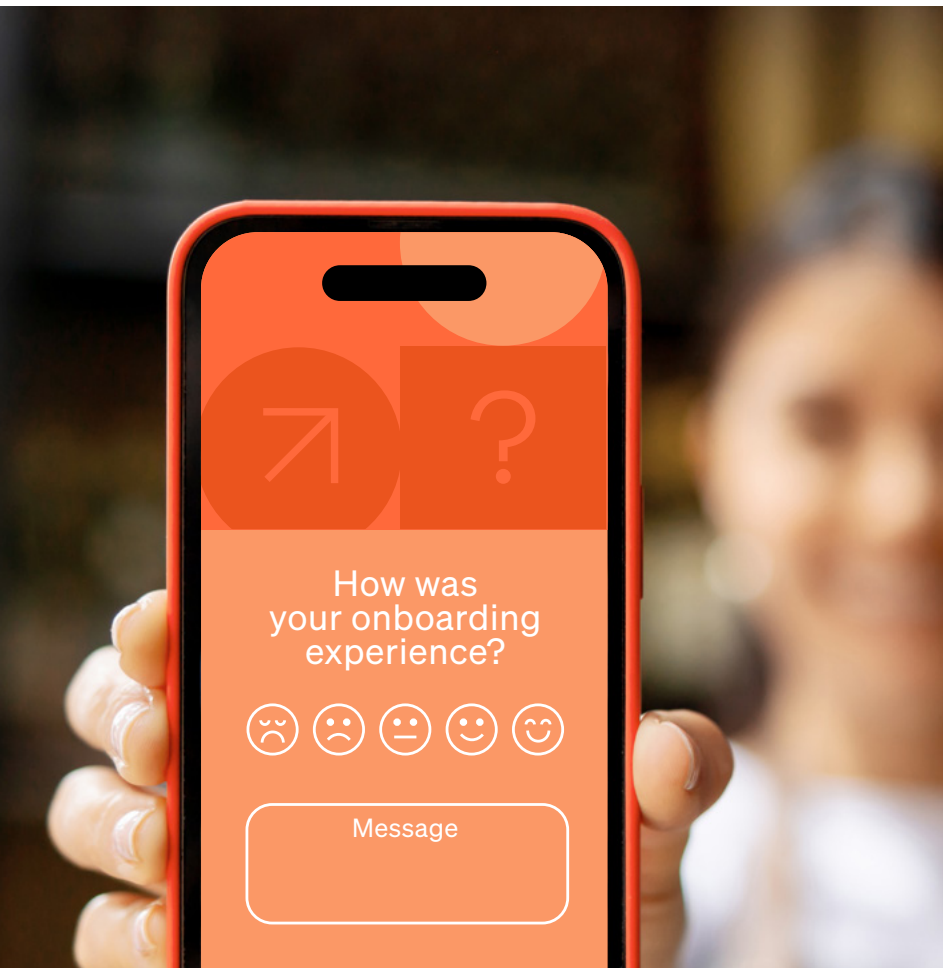
And when it's 'business as usual,' good communication practices put employees at the center. You're making efforts to keep them informed because their contribution and existence in the organization is meaningful. And this feeling of belonging translates to dollars.

There is also heightened retention when employees feel a sense of belonging. These same employees are also more engaged and invested in the company's culture. And this is something to pay attention to, as recent research conducted by Gallup reveals a concerning decline in employee engagement over the past decade.

Do your employees feel recognized and valued? If not, the time to act is now.

And then we have the challenge of leadership communication, which happens irregularly and from a distance at most organizations. How often are your leaders communicating the organization's mission, values, ethics, and goals to employees in a way that inspires a sense of ownership? And how do you know? Inclusion is powerful. It fosters increased engagement and unleashes creativity and innovation—all from empowering employees to *simply flourish™*.

So, how do you prove any of this? How do you know how employees feel? Top-notch internal communications platforms offer AI-powered employee listening capabilities, with a variety of ways to monitor and assess what's happening beneath the surface.



Employee listening that goes beyond regular employee engagement and annual surveys will capture what they want to tell you and what their actions tell you too! It's crucial to combine prompted and passive listening, continuously captured by gathering millions of data points across your employee experience platform. How else can you detect and analyze emotions, sentiments, and language patterns—to reveal how employees truly feel? You'd be guessing—you can't.

But if your company's internal communications efforts are handicapped and not receiving the recognition (nor the budget) it deserves, everything shared above isn't happening. And this puts your company at risk and unarmed as it runs at full speed into the Talent Wars of 2023.

So, if your company doesn't already recognize the need to bolster its communications capabilities based on the fall-out from our collectively experienced pandemic or current geopolitical flux, we have three elements to drive the point home and prove your value once and for all.

# Three essential elements to demonstrate your value

When internal communication budgets fall short, the consequences can be costly. Unfortunately, during times of financial constraint, marketing, and communication departments are often targeted for cost-cutting.

While we understand the need to do more with less in today's climate of high inflation and potential recessions, reducing investment in the communication budget has severe repercussions. It negatively impacts corporate responsibility, accountability, and transparency within the organization—all things that impact potential investors' decision-making process and top job seekers' checklists when reading Glassdoor reviews.

And let's forget about preparing for future opportunities, as companies lacking adequate internal comms capabilities

are treading water, scrambling to keep everyone on board as wave after wave strikes. That new campaign or product idea can wait as there's always a new person to onboard and train, taking up an inordinate amount of time.

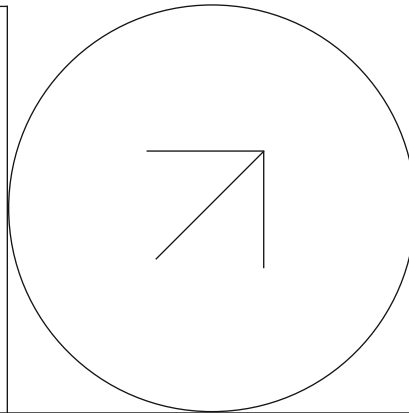
During these periods, a brand's image may suffer, customers may seek alternatives, and competitors who sufficiently plan and appropriately budget for effective communications will gain a competitive edge.

In our age of digital transformation, technologically sophisticated companies see the value in expanding, rather than reducing, comms functions all around. And those that aren't, are failing at remote work, among other things. There's just too much to get done, and this isn't the area to scrimp on.

Be prepared to provide supporting research and compelling stats to help leadership understand the significance of an exceptional employee experience and your role in facilitating it. It affects every aspect of your organization, after all:

47%

Highly effective internal communication practices resulted in a 47% higher total return to shareholders over a five-year period compared to companies with poor practices. ([Watson Wyatt](#))



3.5X

Companies exhibiting exceptional internal communication are 3.5 times more likely to outperform their peers regarding revenue growth. ([Towers Watson study](#))

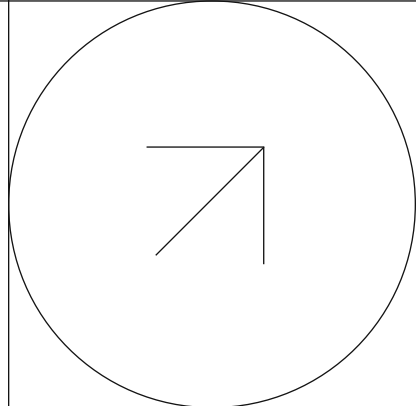
20-25%

Effective communications can boost team productivity by 20-25%.



147%

Highly engaged employees help companies outperform their competitors by 147% in earnings per share. ([Gallup](#))

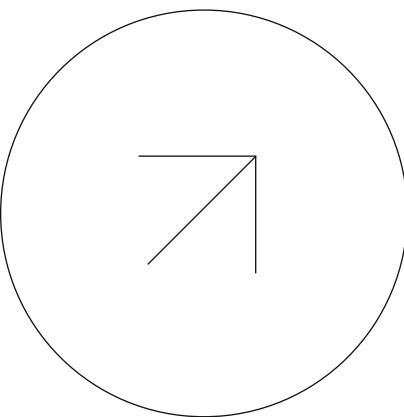


4.6X

When employees feel heard, they are 4.6 times more likely to feel empowered to perform at their best.







# 85%

Regular updates from leaders on progress and company news motivate 85% of employees.



# 4.5X

Good communication strategies increase employee retention by 4.5 times compared to weak ones.



# 47%

Effective communication builds a strong company culture, influencing 47% of job seekers.

This latter handful of statistics and many more useful insights [can be found here](#). They'll help you build a compelling case for a robust communication budget.

As Kate Miserany, the VP of Communications at Momentive, says, “Internal comms teams are tasked with a pretty intense burden—trying to make our cultures go digital, while at the same time facing resistance to increasing their digital transformation budget.” Listen to Kate’s [podcast](#), and hear what she has to say about significant internal communication challenges of the future so that you can fold those into your planning!

Now for those tips, dealing elements that will solidify your standing!

TIP 1:

# Align communications plans with business goals



It's surprising, but many communications strategies are far from strategic. They're haphazard and reactive, focusing on activities rather than results.

Because of this, company leaders have a blurred view of the communications function. They see it as a series of checkboxes to run through on a list rather than a foundational pillar that's critical to the company's long-term success. So, unfortunately, your efforts must begin with correcting their vision.

But this is also an opportunity. Misalignment as a negative is readily apparent, with ample proof points at your disposal. It leads to misunderstandings, weak teamwork, hindered project management, and decreased productivity. Inadequate communication is a contributing cause of the silo mentality that emerges in many companies as departments struggle to keep things together on an unstable foundation.

It also fosters the spread of misinformation, resulting in insecurity and poor morale. And these employees tend to be less motivated than their

better-informed peers at competitor companies sporting effective and strategic plans.

So, that's what can go wrong, but we want to focus on what can change for the better with your amplified efforts in place.

Aligning your communication efforts with business goals just makes sense. You want to come prepared with numbers and measurements on adoption, engagement, and sentiment. More specifically, highlight how collected data can be used for monitoring and evaluating engagement. Also:

- Emphasize the importance of analyzing sentiment within the company.
- Stress the value derived from proactively identifying and addressing issues before they escalate.

Be sure to highlight the benefits of having everything easily accessible for everyone in the workplace when there's an organized approach to communications—one that employees actually use. This is another key selling point for stakeholders. And if it isn't, it should be. Many communications programs are bottlenecked by inefficient intranets or employee experience platforms that just deliver. This can be disastrous.

As Laura Klieves, VP Head of People at Malwarebytes, emphasizes, "If it's not a dynamic, interactive place, nobody will want to go there, as they can't find what they need anyway." Listen to Laura's [podcast](#) for more insights on creating an optimal setup and understanding what and when to communicate.

Coordinate with other business functions to develop short and long-term strategies to improve each area, with clear communication activities attached. And create specific, interconnected communication hubs for each. To further bolster your case,

it's essential to understand how similar businesses in your industry benefit from targeted internal communication strategies. Reach out to us, and we can help you find industry-specific stats and provide [a variety of relevant case studies](#).

Develop multiple reliable and measurable [communication channels](#) to connect everyone and ensure the ability to execute your plan quickly and effectively in times of crisis or when change is afoot. And rely on [AI-powered employee listening](#), which provides several reliable measurement options.



TIP 2:

# Build change management into your plan



Change is a constant in today's business landscape, and successful organizations excel at managing it effectively. Quality communication empowers leaders to monitor perceptions and prepare for significant shifts. Therefore, having a well-prepared change management plan should be a central focus of ongoing leadership discussions. The challenge lies in knowing how to engage stakeholders and obtain their buy-in effectively.

When conveying the importance of change management protocols, Carolyn Clark, VP of Employee Experience Strategy at Simplr, emphasizes the need to tailor the message to resonate with stakeholders.

**“It comes down to figuring out how to talk their game and using what they care about to prove your case—whether it's data, sentiment, content, or whatever it is. If you want somebody to believe your actions matter, you must learn to speak their language.”**



Carolyn Clark,  
VP of Employee  
Experience  
Strategy at  
Simplr

To gain further insights on how to gain executive support, listen to Carolyn's Cohesion podcast.

During significant changes like mergers, new product launches, or rebrandings, it is crucial to communicate to employees why these

changes are necessary, how they will be implemented, and how the workplace will be impacted. Instead of overwhelming employees with an information overload, it is more effective to plan targeted communications that revolve around a shared vision of the change, its process, and any revised goals.

Encourage employees to provide feedback from the beginning of the change process and keep leadership aware of nuanced observations that could shift your trajectory. Each individual is likely to have a unique perspective, and it is essential to actively listen and understand that some individuals may feel unsettled or threatened by change. Communicate progress, updates, and adjustments early on through various channels to ensure everyone is well-informed.

Maintain an ongoing dialogue and remain attentive to concerns. Create a shared space where incentives can be offered to encourage employees to accept and adapt more swiftly to change. Leverage available analytics tools to gauge positive and negative sentiment as you progress and report in regularly with this advanced intel. This is your time to prove why involving communication teams from the start of any change management process is so critical.



The comms team is an effective intermediary, managing communication from leadership to the entire company and messaging out to customers. It is essential for information shared on the company intranet to be authentic and transparent, regardless of whether it relates to minor issues or major events. Trust is easily lost without this foundation.

And employees who receive consistent and reliable messages daily are more likely to respond positively to requests, changes, and other matters, even during times of crisis. This is key to mention (and support with stats supporting your efforts) during check-ins as well!

Leslie Quinton, VP of Communications at Ubisoft, reminds us that "most communication is really about change management because in everything we do, whether we're talking to our employees or an external stakeholder, we're trying to influence somebody to think something or do something." Listen to her [podcast](#) to gain valuable advice for communication teams facing challenges in winning buy-in from leadership and other stakeholders.

And any successful efforts require working with the other two company pillars: HR and IT.

TIP 3:

# Partner with HR and IT leadership





In today's digitally transformed workplace, collaboration between people and technology is paramount, especially in a distributed workforce. And a well-designed internal communications strategy fosters collaboration, cooperation, and creative input from HR, IT, and communication teams.

Internal Communications seek to effectively communicate and understand what's working and what's not working. This way, they can course correct in real-time and optimize the value they bring to the organization's performance.

HR practitioners must bring the company's employment proposition to life so employees feel connected, enabled, and included. This way, your company can better attract, retain, and engage your talent. Elevating the employee experience is the optimal goal here; the right communications plan and platform will help accomplish this goal.

And IT professionals are charged with delivering frictionless access to every bit of information relevant to employees. IT must ensure that everyone finds the support they need to succeed and at every step of the way, from onboarding through to knowledge capture as workers retire.

HR understands employee demographics, preferences, requirements, and unique situations, and they can guide tone, timing, and communication channels.

With this input, IT is better equipped to understand the tech requirements to empower teams and individuals to work effectively. This way, the communication team can target messaging more precisely. And this entire process is leveled up when supported by a robust platform that informs the efforts of each team.

The entire company benefits when these three departments collaborate harmoniously, and each succeeds together. Each leg of this operational trifecta plays a crucial role in fostering feelings of belonging and relevance, resulting in employee perception that supports or hinders the realization of company goals.



For example, effective recruitment and onboarding efforts are the responsibility of all, as assimilation and ongoing engagement require synchronized efforts. And this extends to strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion capabilities within the company.

High-performing teams have aggressive goals to meet for each of these indicators, and employees both notice and appreciate this work. And in turn, they feel valued and are invested in the company and its success.

How can your triple-threat team prove its impact to leadership? You need analytics that captures feedback around sentiment and behaviors and allows HR and others to read between the lines of what employees say. They should ultimately be able to extract actionable insights to inform strategic decisions on various matters.

There are a wide range of technologies and tools available to facilitate communications ranging from simple

messaging apps to exhaustive employee experience platforms. The choice depends on your long-term vision and how serious you are about transforming and safeguarding your company.

From many, the choice is clear, and it comes down to a basic build vs buy decision. You can either burden IT with the creation and ongoing upkeep of super-specific capabilities that may or may not be used or opt for a ready-made option created and consistently updated by internal comms experts. The latter option frees your IT team to work with robust analytics and develop ever more sophisticated solutions to serve internal and external needs, so it's a popular choice for a good reason.

Your decision will determine how effective your communication efforts will be and whether or not you'll have meaningful metrics to back it up. And whether or not you have access to leadership to share them!

CONCLUSION:

## Access is the key to success

To achieve success, having the right systems in place is crucial. However, access to leadership is equally vital.

Transparent and authentic communication is scary without a leadership seal of approval. It just cannot comfortably exist otherwise. Internal communication teams require direct access to leadership to craft messages that are grounded in shared values and will resonate across an increasingly distributed workforce. The right tone and message can build trust and loyalty and motivate teams and employees.

Once you have the right message, you need a way to share it. This is where your tech choices matter. That comprehensive employee experience platform option mentioned above should include a robust intranet, a newsletter, and employee listening capabilities, all easily distributed via multiple channels.

Without these tools, your meticulous planning and efforts to create targeted messaging will go to waste as it will likely fail to reach everyone. Employees must receive the information they need, when they need it, through channels that suit their preferences. So, be sure to have those options in place.

Lastly, having the best tools, technology, and content is meaningless without the right people to operate and distribute them. Your communication team, HR and IT leaders, and any other departmental liaisons should connect often to compare notes and share understanding. Masterful communicators are a must, as cross-functional alignment plays a pivotal role in achieving overall company success and in your ability to demonstrate why you deserve to keep your seat at the strategic planning table.

Reach out for a demo, and we'll show you how the different elements of an employee experience platform connect to create optimal communications that move the business forward.

# About Simpplr

## Who we are

Simpplr is the modern intranet that transforms the work experience for all employees — wherever and however they work. Simpplr is the only platform that unifies employee engagement, enablement and services, leveraging state-of-the-art AI models to deliver a seamless, cohesive and personalized employee experience.

Trusted by over 700 global brands, including Moderna, Snowflake, Splunk, Penske, Eurostar and AAA, Simpplr customers achieve significant improvement in their employees' productivity, retention and overall satisfaction. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, CA, Simpplr is backed by Norwest Venture Partners, Sapphire Ventures, Salesforce Ventures, Tola Capital and Still Venture Capital. Learn more at [simpplr.com](https://simpplr.com)

## Benefits

- ↘ Designed for the way you work
- ↘ Ready to use in weeks, not months
- ↘ Built for business users
- ↘ Unified, engaging experience across mobile and the web
- ↘ Powerful integration
- ↘ Secure and scalable platform

## Trusted By

