The Definitive Guide to

Employee Communication and Engagement

REPAIRING WHAT'S BROKEN

COMMUNICATORS

are facing unprecedented challenges as they struggle to engage a rapidly changing workforce. The expectations are greater than ever to connect with all employees, wherever they work. They're also dealing with flat resources and outdated systems. This guide explores the role of technology, such as Employee Communication and Engagement Platforms, in providing a strategic advantage for the communicator and marketer, proving their impact on the organization, and elevating communication as a critical business function.

CONTENTS

THE CHANGING ROLE FOR
COMMUNICATORS

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Amanda.

She's a communicator at a global organization. This is a day in her life.

Amanda needs to share news about an important change with their widely dispersed workforce. She knows it will make employees anxious, so it requires comprehensive messaging throughout the entire company.

She rolls up her sleeves and begins an execution strategy that includes:

Posting to the intranet, although most employees never use it

Printing posters for break rooms because most factory workers are never on computers

Sending emails, despite the fact not everyone has a corporate address

Creating a newsletter that won't reach employees until long after the announcement

Sharing on Slack because some employees only use the team collaboration tool

Her boss adds: "Make sure the message is consistent across every channel. Oh, and we need to show results, so prepare a report demonstrating the impact – with metrics."

Meanwhile, she learns that an employee posted something on social media about the change that may or may not be accurate. So, she has to drop everything to solve that crisis.

Amanda is a talented communicator. But she doesn't have super-human powers. And she's totally frustrated because even with all of this effort, Amanda knows she *still* won't reach every employee. She also has no idea how to demonstrate impact with metrics for the executive team.
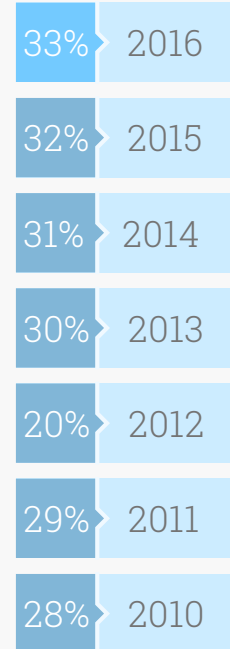
She feels overwhelmed. This is not a way to work.

For Amanda, employee communication is broken.

Real-Life communicators feel pain like Amanda's every single day.

So, let's be clear right at the start. When we make a provocative statement about communication being broken at enterprise companies, it's *not* the fault of communicators.

You work hard every day to connect the organization with your most valued asset — employees. You're creating great content that helps the company and people be their best. You're diligently trying to get it in front of the workforce to engage, inform and inspire.

But you're failing. And you're not alone.

Just 33 percent of U.S. employees said they are enthusiastic and committed to their work, according to Gallup's most recent State of the American Workplace report. Stop and think about that. Only one out of every three employees!

Wait, it gets worse. The majority of employees (51 percent) are not engaged and haven't been for quite some time. The impact is devastating. Gallup found that disengaged employees cost the U.S. between $483 and $605 billion each year in lost productivity. Gallup concluded: "The U.S. — and the world at large – is in the midst of an employee engagement crisis."

You know that employee performance is the most important outcome of strong communication that drives behavior. Successful companies communicate better than their competition. Yet something is getting lost in translation between what's communicated to the workforce and what's actually received by employees. They feel disconnected, alienated, not part of the team.

State of the U.S. Workplace

U.S. employees said they are enthusiastic and committed to their work, Gallup

%	Year
33%	2016
32%	2015
31%	2014
30%	2013
20%	2012
29%	2011
28%	2010

This is not just a *communication* problem. It's a *business* problem. And it will only grow more urgent as the hyper-connected, tech-savvy Millennial generation becomes the dominant force in the workplace.

"I would definitely say that employee communication is in a transition because of technology," said communication expert Lynn Loignon. "My big 'ah-ha' moment came when I realized that I shouldn't restrict the channels that people can receive communication. Everybody wants it differently. The only thing that matters is your personal preference on how you like to get information. Technology can ensure that employees get the information they want, in the way they want it, and coming right to them. They shouldn't have to do a lot of work to go find it."

Communicators like you are doing the best they can. But you're being let down by disjointed, outdated systems that are obstructing your

efforts and creating a more fragmented, less-informed workforce. They don't even provide tangible ways to prove the effectiveness of your efforts.

But there is an opportunity for organizations to adapt to the modern workplace. Employee Communication and Engagement (ECE) Platforms enable companies to reach every employee with relevant content, wherever they work, in any manner they want it – including on their mobile devices.

Make no mistake, the time is now to repair your broken communication.

"If you can effectively communicate to all of your employees, you can effectively solve a problem that companies have been trying to solve forever," said R. Joshua Whitton, a long-time communication and marketing executive who now is Regional Vice President of Sales at Aptaris.

Employees want the ability to:

Connect with the company immediately through mobile push notifications, alerts and video that gets high-priority content directly in front of them

Align with the rest of the organization around a shared mission and vision

Engage with the business through the ability to take action by commenting, liking and sharing approved content with their own social networks

CHANGING WORKFORCE

It's impossible to overstate the massive changes that are happening in the workplace. Increasingly, there isn't even any definable "workplace." Today, employees are doing their jobs almost anywhere – remotely, often at all hours. Coffee shops and kitchen tables can be just as acceptable places to work as office cubicles.

"Work is no longer where you go," said Kerri Warner, former Senior Vice President of Corporate/Employee Practice at MSL and now Vice President, Global Internal Communications at Mastercard. "It's what you do – a vocation, not a location. As a communicator, you can appear as a laggard if you're not thinking this way. It's also why communicating with the changing workforce is so critical."

It's not just about thinking how best to serve the digitally native Millennial workforce, Warner added. It's just as important for the Gen X mom or dad. It's become mainstream because this is an evolving landscape where:

The workforce can stretch around the world

Employees often don't sit at desks, but rather work on factory floors, hospital wards, retail showrooms, delivery trucks

Workers might not have a corporate email or intranet access, especially with the growth of the so-called Gig Economy and a greater reliance on contractors

Gallup, the go-to source for work trends, has found that 43 percent of employees now work in a remote fashion – an increase from 39 percent in 2012. The shift has been profound, and it's forcing companies to rethink how they connect with employees to ensure they're performing at their best.

"The No. 1 question that I'm asked at every conference is 'How do I communicate with a dispersed workforce,'" said Mark Ragan, CEO and Publisher of Ragan Communications, who hosts events that draw thousands of communicators each year. "Yet amazingly, some companies are still literally putting up paper flyers around their offices, like in the break rooms. I'll think, 'What, are we in the 1990s?'"

GREATER EXPECTATIONS

Communication teams are struggling.

"Communicators continue to be asked to do more and more," said Gini Dietrich, whose most recent book is "The Communicator's Playbook." "It's why I would say that they're pretty beaten down."

Even when the problem is not their fault, communicators are the ones who are held responsible. But more importantly, they hold themselves accountable because of the pride they take in their work.

Added Ragan: "The classic internal communicator is frustrated. They're laboring in obscurity, pounding out content, sending it out into the world and having no idea if anybody is even reading it."

Executives want to communicate *more* often and *more* directly with workers to ensure alignment around revenue goals

Communicators are squeezed in the middle, dealing with *more* demands of both executives and employees while having flat resources and outdated systems

Employees want *more* relevant, real-time and "snackable" content
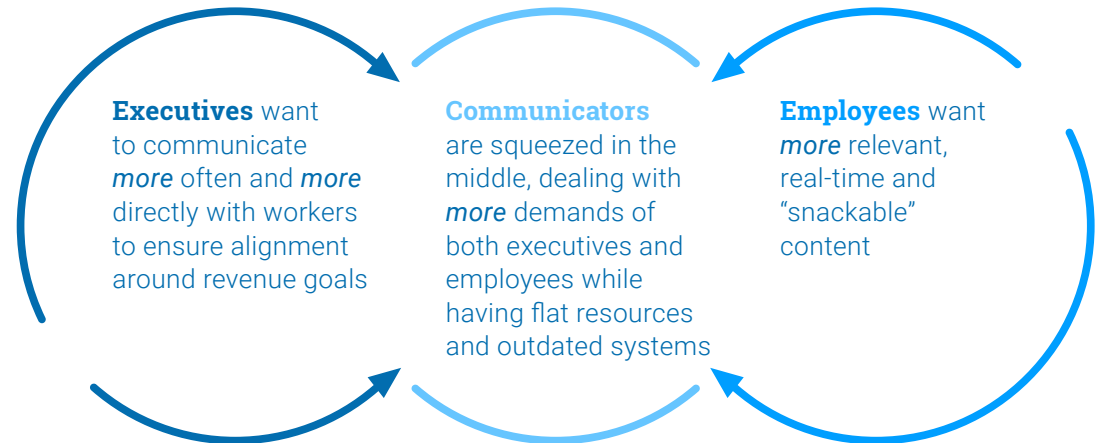
EMPLOYEE DISCONNECT

Workers feel overwhelmed *and* under-informed.

They are bombarded with information from their organizations on multiple systems. Email. Intranet. Slack, Yammer, and so on. Employees struggle to prioritize everything they're receiving.

It helps explain why a 2015 survey by Mindshare found that 74 percent of employees feel they're missing out on company information. And a more recent study, by Siegel+Gale, determined that lack of transparent communication from leadership is why 30 percent of employees find their workplace complex and difficult to navigate.

Meanwhile, organizations also are competing with the entire digital world for the attention of employees. Everyone has immediate access to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, their favorite bloggers, and on and on. It's another factor why employees tune out company "noise."

"For years, communication has been sharing what the executive team wanted the world to know and thinking that's enough," Dietrich added. "But now you have all of these other voices. The communication industry has not kept up at all."

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Zach.

He's on the corporate communication team of a major retail chain. He has no idea if his messaging actually reaches employees at stores across North America. His communication goes to district-level offices, but then he has no visibility after that. Is the information cascading all the way down to stores? Are managers presenting it to front-line employees who have the most contact with customers?

Zach doesn't know who gets the messages or if employees understand what they need to do or say as a result of the communication.

Zach feels like he's just playing a gigantic game of telephone.

HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

Engagement is not just about job satisfaction.

It impacts company performance by increasing retention of talented workers and boosting recruiting efforts. The ultimate goal is making employees feel valued and invested in the organization's success. Communication and engagement directly influences how well employees do their jobs. Gallup has found that:

Highly engaged business units have **41 percent** less absenteeism, **24 percent** lower turnover and **17 percent** greater productivity	Behaviors of highly engaged business units result in **21 percent** greater profitability	Companies with more engaged employees outperform peers by **147 percent** earnings per share

CEB (now Gartner) also determined that more informed employees perform at a rate 77 percent higher than their less-informed counterparts.

ALIGNED ORGANIZATIONS

When people don't understand why organizations are making decisions, they feel alienated. It saps morale and motivation. They become frustrated. They leave.

Effective employee communication can prevent that. It's the instrument for leadership to cultivate an environment where employees have the information to do their jobs and understand where the company is going.

RISK ELIMINATION

Communication ensures a healthy, inclusive and conflict-free workplace. Communicators deliver organizational values. They work closely with HR and the legal department to share safety information, government regulations and anything else that maintains a nurturing environment for everyone.

It's about managing compliance. The liability of not mitigating risk can be enormous. It can negatively impact brand reputation. It even leads to major financial costs in terms of a decrease in stock price.
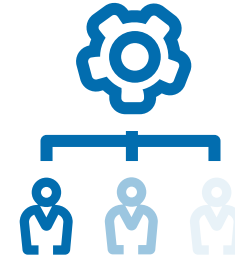
Communicating with large groups of people has never been easy. But it's harder at a time when research firm Gartner says work performed by geographically dispersed employees increased by **57 percent in just the past three years**. That requires is a *new way of thinking about communication*.
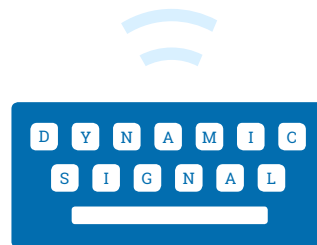
CONNECT WITH EMPLOYEES ON THEIR TERMS

Employees expect relevant information to be delivered to them – in the manner they prefer.

This is especially the case for Millennials, who will make up more than 75 percent of the workforce by 2030, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The one thing people have in common today is a mobile device in their pocket. Smartphones didn't start becoming widely available until the mid-2000s. Today, they are life's "remote control," according to social psychologist and trend watcher Rich Luker. He describes how mobile devices aren't just linking people to the online world, but connecting them to life. Pew Research Center found that more than 77 percent of Americans now own a smartphone and noted that the days of a "stationary" Internet are over. Today, people expect to be connected "on the go."

These devices have fundamentally changed how we communicate. We text. We get alerts. We play, record and share video. According to Deloitte, Americans check their mobile devices an average of 46 times a day – which qualifies as addictive behavior. So, when people show up at work, they expect the same kind of personalized, real-time interactions. When employers don't deliver, they're frustrated.

"Employee behavior really is evolving, and it's following the path we've seen with consumer behavior," said David Armano, Global Strategy Director at Edelman, the communications marketing firm. "That was really the canary in the coal mine. Consumers have become so dependent on mobile devices. They are basically the dashboard of our lives. That's now transferring over to the employee experience."

On the Go!

People in the U.S. who own a smartphone, Pew Research Center

77%	2016
69%	2015
59%	2014
58%	2013
46%	2012
35%	2011

COMMUNICATION METRICS

You can't improve what you can't measure.

You also can't prove that communication is having an impact without engagement metrics. Traditionally, communicators have not been able to link what they do with company success because they have no measurement tools. More than 59 percent of respondents in Dynamic Signal's "The State of Workplace Communications" report in 2017 said they lack an understanding about the financial impact of ineffective communication.

"Internal communication doesn't have analytics to prove results," Dietrich said. "Communicators have the intranet, but people may or may not go there. They send email, but people may or may not read them. They may be posting notices in lunch rooms, but people may or may not be reading them. There's really been no way to show the effectiveness of their work."
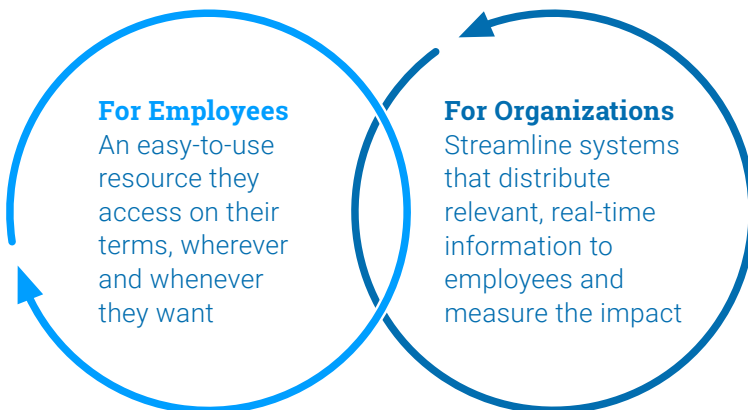
But when communicators have the ability to show their impact, they elevate their role as a critical business function.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Technology is changing every aspect of how work gets done.

One example is how the Employee Communication and Engagement Platform connects organizations with their workforces.

For Employees
An easy-to-use resource they access on their terms, wherever and whenever they want

For Organizations
Streamline systems that distribute relevant, real-time information to employees and measure the impact

"The biggest transition for communicators today revolves around technology," Lynn Loignon said. "Everybody wants and needs the technology to communicate. It's become part of who we are now. Technology is not an accessory. It's an appendage that's connected to us, 24-7."

Yet in February of 2018 when Dynamic Signal conducted "The State of Employee Communication and Engagement" report, 50 percent of the communicators indicated that their organizations have not increased – or have even reduced – their budget for communication technology in recent years.

"Communicators are frustrated because there are all of these tools out there that their employees are using, and yet they're not," said Ted Rubin, a leading social marketing strategist. "So, they can't achieve the results they know are possible because they don't have access to the technology."

Q&A
MARCY MASSURA

MARCY MASSURA
is an Executive Brand Advisor who believes in putting digital at the center of all holistic strategies.

Why is it more difficult to communicate with today's workforce? "The most obvious reason is that we are inundated with content. We're reading more on screens than ever before. So, messages from our place of business are diluted. Company information may fall through the cracks. It may look boring. If I'm choosing between dull content my brand is giving me versus looking at something more entertaining on BuzzFeed, I know what I'm doing on my lunch break. That's why you need quality content that's more compelling and makes employees want to be part of the conversation."

Are internal communicators taken seriously? "I would say they're seen as an important part of the organization for reasons like legal compliance issues. But where they're really dismissed is in how employee communication can play a role in brand reputation, brand awareness, and brand crisis. I'll be in a war room crafting a public message for a brand and then at the very end I'll be asked, 'Oh, yeah, and what should we tell our employees?' That's where you should start the conversation – with your most important people. So, I think comms is undervalued in really important areas."

Is the standard toolkit of intranet, email and team collaboration tools not reaching employees? "That's a given. Most organizations don't have things as simple as a mobile-friendly intranet. So, how do people view information on the subway or the train? I also believe in having some kind of portal that goes beyond the purpose of just communicating with the employee. You need functionality or resources that employees use every day as part of their job. That way it's no longer about driving people to these locations. Then while you're there, you get a pop-up notice about a company event or training. It removes the element of choice and we make sure our content will land in front of employees' eyeballs."

"The best strategy is just to be really, really awesome."

Is communication broken?
"If I'm an old-timey CEO or COO and somebody asks how comms is doing, I might say, 'It's doing well because every time we have a critical statement, they get it out in 24 hours. They're making employees aware of safety risks. So, sure, we're talking to our employees.' For them, it's fine. But if you're talking to a more evolved CMO, they'll say it's wildly broken. We're completely missing the mark on the power of internal comms."

COMMUNICATION PLAYBOOK

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Samantha.

She runs the communication team for a regional healthcare system. The workforce is skewing toward Millennial-aged employees, and she's concerned about feedback from younger workers that they don't feel valued. They're missing out on important information because the organization doesn't deliver it directly to them on their mobile devices.

She's worried that attrition could spike because she knows younger workers are more likely to change jobs if they feel unappreciated.

Samantha wonders what she will say if the CEO asks her about outreach efforts to engage their Millennial workforce.
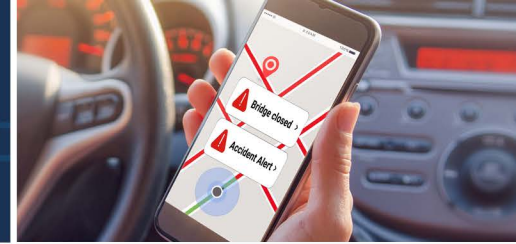
The way we communicate is evolving.

But companies haven't adapted how employees receive and share information in their everyday lives.

"The pace of change is so great that we have better stuff at home than we do at the office," said Jim Cockin, the Head of Group & Employee Communications at United Kingdom telecommunications company Sky. "It's a race for businesses to keep up."

Actually, they're falling behind. Communicators must rely on technology designed to reach employees who sit at a cubicle in front of a computer screen. Legacy systems fail to meet the challenge of reaching every employee, everywhere, in a way that is personalized, convenient, and measurable.

Instead, content is disappearing into the black hole of the company intranet, languishing unopened on the email system, or getting lost in the flurry of messages that overflow team collaboration tools and enterprise social networks. They aren't solving the engagement problem. They're adding to it because these systems are company-centric, not employee-centric.

CHECKLIST
Challenges Facing Communicators

- Employees say they feel disconnected
- Traditional systems do not meet organizational needs or employee expectations
- Employees can't find and share critical content to do their jobs better
- Difficulty aligning organizations around mission, vision, values
- Duplicated effort posting same content on multiple systems
- Inability to accurately track or measure impact of communication
- Struggling to reach employees in ways that inspire, engage, inform

DOWNLOAD

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Kaitlin.

She's the Senior Vice President of Global Communication at a major technology company. She's frustrated because her team cannot personalize its messaging. Everything they send feels impersonal – not tailored or relevant to individual employees.

Kaitlin knows from experience that if an email looks generic, employees will treat it like spam and simply delete it.

Every day, Kaitlin wonders if it's too much to ask for a technology that enables her team to target communication based on roles, teams and locations.
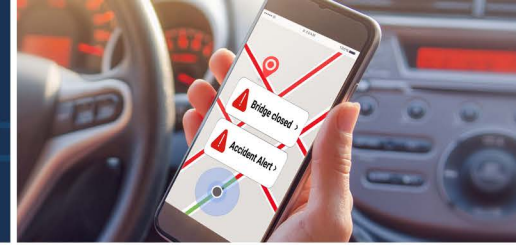
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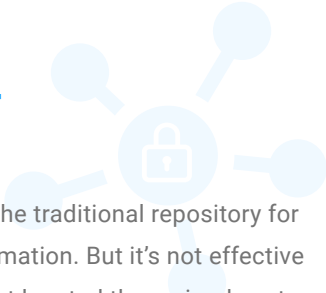
This has been the traditional repository for employee information. But it's not effective because content located there simply gets ignored. Only 13 percent of employees say they visit their intranet daily and 31 percent say they never do, according to Prescient Digital Media.

The intranet can be difficult to access behind a firewall. It's not interactive or designed to be easily viewed on mobile devices. It's also not an intuitive system where information is at your fingertips.

"Intranets are the most hated thing by employees," Mark Ragan said. "Show me an intranet that employees love and I'll give that communicator a Nobel Peace Prize."

Intranets also are often tightly controlled by IT departments. The intranet was never designed for communicators. In fact, the attitude of IT administrators sometimes can be downright territorial. They just want those pesky communicators to go away and stop with their annoying requests.

EMAIL
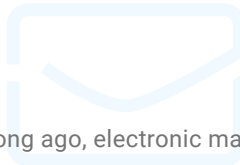
Not all that long ago, electronic mail was the hot new technology, replacing the hard-copy version of memos distributed to employees. (Those of a certain age will remember the old-fashioned inter-office envelopes, complete with button and string.) Well, the days of getting excited about hearing "You've Got Mail!" are long gone. But email remains a go-to channel for internal communication. But is anything being communicated?

A 2015 study found that 122 business emails are sent and received daily by the typical business professional. (Another 2017 study found that half of the more than 269 billion emails sent every day are spam.) It's no wonder that employees aren't paying attention to email. It's information overload, especially if they must constantly shift back and forth between email and other platforms for company information.

Many employees ignore email just to avoid being distracted from doing their jobs – and maintain their sanity. Making the communication problem worse is the fact that many workers don't even have a corporate email address.
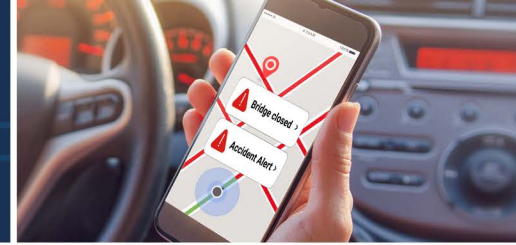
TEAM COLLABORATION AND ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS

Team-based software facilitates collaboration and quick communication across an organization.

These virtual break rooms enable employees to hang out and chat. Yes, there's a fun element to these tools where everyone can post and join in the conversation. But there are significant limitations. They create a cacophony of noise. The more people participate, the more confusion.

Someone posts a photo of their kids. Followed by insights about a strategic competitor. Then a message from an executive. Oh, and here's a request to go to lunch! They're all given the same level of importance. There's no hierarchy. Employees are left to prioritize for themselves what's critical because these tools aren't designed for delivering top-down messaging. You can't discern the relevance of the information.

TEAM COLLABORATION

Tools such as Slack connect people with real-time messaging when they need answers in a hurry

ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKING

Tools such as Yammer act like Facebook for organizations where posts are recorded in a feed
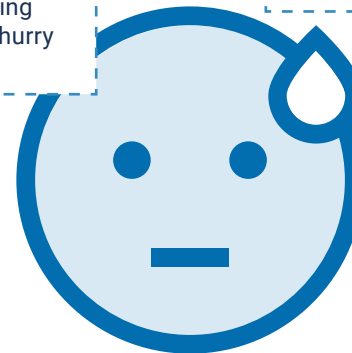
It's a helpless feeling when you know you're not reaching all of your employees.

So, hard-working communicators often compensate by doing more. But it's like the famous axiom: Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

With traditional systems, the whole is less than the sum of its parts.

The result? Distraction. Confusion. Noise.

The root problem is legacy systems are not focused on how employees naturally engage with content today. They are walled gardens – siloes, if you will – that dictate where employees must go to get information. But those days are over. Employees now choose how they get their content. It's the role of the modern communicator to deliver it to them.

What if this patchwork of ineffective solutions were no longer at the center of your employee communication and engagement strategy? What if there were a platform that can curate information so you're delivering relevant content to the right people, wherever they are?

Traditional Systems

Too many channels → Too hard to segment → **DISTRACTION. CONFUSION. NOISE.**

Too hard to access and navigate → Too manual and slow →
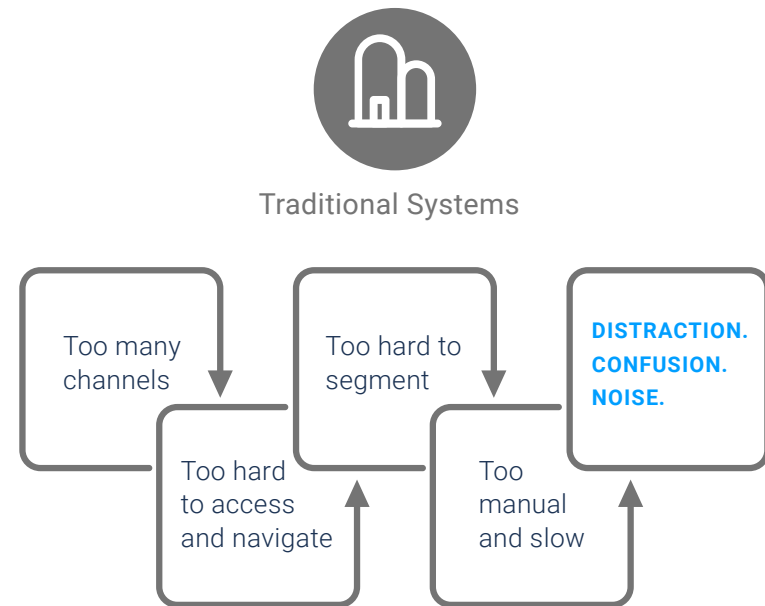
Pro Tip No.1

PLATFORM VERSATILITY Communicators need a system that allows for efficiently personalizing connections between the organization and employees through broadcasts and posts, video, document collaboration, sharing, SMS and push notifications, newsletters and surveys. It should be an open platform that delivers information wherever employees want to receive content, while capturing user and content metrics. This is unlike walled gardens such as LinkedIn, Workplace and Yammer that assume everyone creates and receives information the same way – and only within their ecosystem.

Q&A
LYNN LOIGNON

LYNN LOIGNON
is an communication expert with a wide range of experience, including at Kohl's Department Stores, where she rose to Vice President of Internal Communications.

What is the state of employee communication? "Technology is completely transforming how we communicate in our personal lives, and that's so connected with how we want to communicate with people in our professional lives. But internal communicators are inexperienced with technology and don't necessarily have the budget to get what we need. We're all trying to figure it out so we can develop communication strategies that work for our organizations."

Is there a feeling of not being able to keep up? "There's a lot of that. Even at companies where you do have the technology, you might not really know what to do with it and how to manage it. I've been to a lot of Mark Ragan's conferences and heard a very similar message from other communicators. They just feel lost. Communicators put up this front that we're super-confident about what we do and our role. But there's always a little voice in our heads that questions everything we do. We're not as confident a group as marketers or technology teams where they feel like they have expertise that nobody else has."

Why is it so difficult, and yet so important, to reach hourly workers? "Many are working less than 20 hours a week, and they're focused more on punching the clock than the purpose of the organization. You're potentially talking with HR and legal about whether you can communicate with them during off-hours. Sometimes it's just assumed that managers will give their people important information. But they're also your front line – the people who make or break your relationship with your customer. If they feel uninformed or disconnected from the organization, your customers are going to know it. If you get them engaged and inspired, they can make a huge impact on your sales and just a positive image about your company. They can be your biggest assets and your ambassadors."

"We're at a crossroads."

What is your biggest challenge today? "It's so hard to come up with a good measure of success. It affects your confidence as a communicator because you don't know if your messages are getting to the audience and impacting people the way you want."

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION AND
ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Evan.

He leads executive communication at a Fortune 500 company. The CEO wants to connect with the workforce after a recent employee engagement survey indicated senior management is "out-of-touch." She's also fuming about her low rating on Glassdoor.

Evan is told to set up a road show so she can speak directly to the troops. But he knows it could take two years to get her to every company site.

Evan asks himself: Why don't they have the video capability to put the CEO in front of employees on a regular basis?

Communicating with the workforce is crucial to the success of every organization.

But communicators also are painfully aware that traditional systems and channels are getting in the way of creating strong connections with employees.

Employees don't visit their **intranet**

Not everyone has **email access**

Team collaboration tools are too noisy for top-down communication

Gartner has categorized all the ways organizations are using in the struggle to engage their workforces. (The slide on this page was presented at the Gartner Digital Workplace Summit 2017.)

The Fragmented State Of Employee Communications
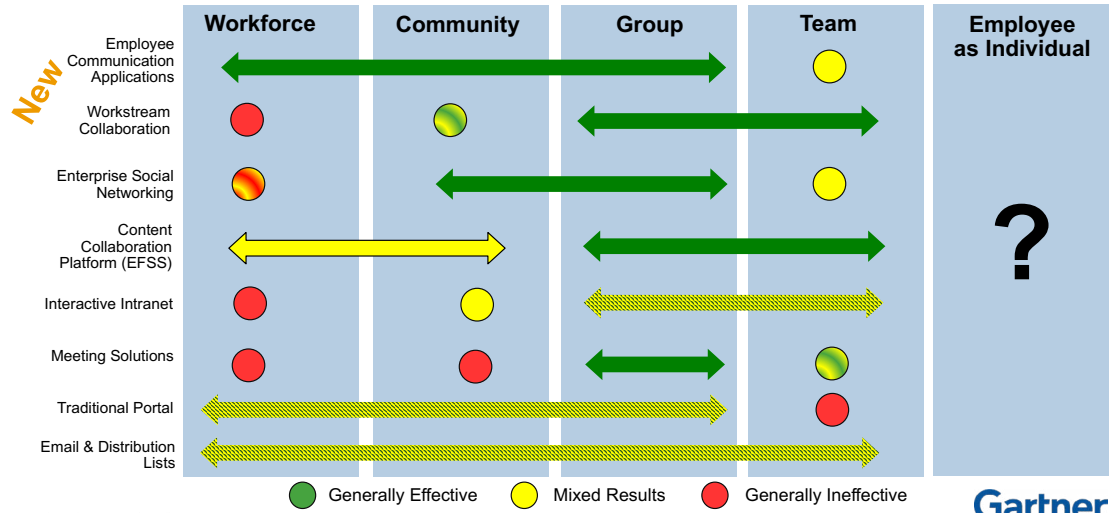
It found that new applications like Employee Communication and Engagement (ECE) Platforms are the most effective for connecting with the entire workforce, communities and groups.

Like most things in life, bad things happen when you don't communicate. So, organizations

are re-thinking their approach to employee communication. Companies recognize the value that comes with aligning the workforce across functions, roles, and locations.

This explains the movement toward ECE Platforms.

WHAT IS AN ECE PLATFORM?

An ECE Platform allows you to communicate with your employees better.

Content can be created or curated from all other channels, and then distributed to targeted employee segments across multiple distribution endpoints, including an optimized, personalized mobile experience – while accurately measuring the comprehensive impact of your strategy.

An ECE Platform is a control and distribution center that does what your existing systems cannot. It enables the micro-targeting of your message to exactly the people you want to reach, at the right time, so you can influence their behavior. And it's accomplished at scale.

ECE PLATFORM

CONNECT
with employees immediately through mobile push notifications and alerts to deliver high-priority content

ENGAGE
employees by giving them the ability to take action, such as sharing approved content in their own social networks

ALIGN
a dispersed workforce with your shared mission and vision through measurable communication with every employee

An ECE Platform ends frustration for both communicators and employees by *removing* the obstacles inherent to legacy systems.

Information is delivered directly to employees in the manner they prefer. For most people today, that's on mobile devices.

"Because people are constantly moving like never before, everything today is on the phone," said Gary F. Grates, Principal at W2O Group. "They're not even going to laptops anymore or iPads. If it's not on the phone, it doesn't exist. That's the only way you can reach people today – including employees."

Added Gini Dietrich: "You don't want to have people go to someplace different. You just want to have it all in one convenient place that's easily accessible."

BENEFITS

Enable employees to easily access information with a mobile device app so they can quickly get back to their jobs

Capabilities such as native video, news feeds, email digests, request confirmations, surveys, gamification

Immediately alert every employee to important announcements

Increase productivity by giving employees information to help them understand company goals and perform their jobs better

Interactive communication that gives employees a voice by allowing them to comment, tag and "like" content

Empower sharing of approved content so the company message can be amplified through distribution on the personal social channels

Segment content through synchronization with the organization's System of Record so employees receive information that's targeted specifically for them

An ECE Platform is not just another system for employees to ignore.

It consolidates existing systems – breaking down silos to cut through the clutter for overwhelmed employees.

Too often an organization's answer to a communication problem is post more content on the intranet or send more emails. The real solution is using a platform that delivers high-priority content directly to employees.

"The burden of getting communication shouldn't be on the target," Marcy Massura said. "It should be on the person shooting the arrow. You need to get content right to people."

AN ECE PLATFORM DELIVERS:

- **Consolidation.** Integrates with company intranets, human resource systems and centralized directories. This makes the platform the "control room" for your communication strategy with the ability to segment the workforce for more targeted messaging.

- **Drive More Value from Other Systems.** Enables organizations to leverage existing systems to boost their effectiveness. The platform improves intranet traffic by directing employees to content relevant to them without having to waste time searching.

- **Eliminate Ineffective Channels.** Allows organizations to phase out costly, inefficient communication channels, such as printed materials/newsletters.

- **Unified Communication Strategy.** Helps communicators align the organization around a shared message of mission, vision and values.

- **Adoption.** Delivers information in whatever manner employees prefer. Mobile apps are the primary way for people to receive and share news. But the platform also exists on the web and can be sent as a daily email digest.

- **Communicator Productivity.** Reduces duplication of effort by communicators. The same content isn't posted on multiple systems, eliminating wasted time and effort.

Communicators are doing more than ever.

But can you show that you're reaching employees? It's disheartening to lack a way to demonstrate your impact on behavior.

Without metrics, it's difficult to understand:

> If employees are visiting the intranet or engaging with specific content

> If emails actually are being read

> If people see important messages in the flow of collaboration tool feeds

"Communicators have been using tools from the Dark Ages like click-through rates and open rates," Mark Ragan said. "You can go to billion-dollar company and ask the head of communication: 'What was the impact of the last email you sent from the C-suite?' And they'll look at you like a deer caught in the headlights. They'll have no idea."

Using multiple systems to distribute content makes it impossible to measure communication. The metrics don't integrate and often tell conflicting stories. But an ECE Platform integrates all systems into a single platform so communicators can track comprehensive results.

> See if employees engaged with content

> Use metrics to improve strategy

> Demonstrate impact to leadership

Optimization doesn't happen through wishful thinking. Charting progress, analyzing quantifiable results and then recalibrating strategies enables the communicator to become foundational within an organization.

COMMUNICATORS WANT MEASUREMENT

A CEB report titled "Key Trends in Communication Priorities and Budgets," which was released in November of 2017, found that the top challenges for communicators to meet 2018 organizational goals are "navigating digital transformation" and an "inability to measure and monitor communications activity."

CEB also discovered that communicators are so focused on tracking the effectiveness of their efforts that nearly 44 percent of staff budget in 2017 was devoted to building measurement capability – a steep increase from 30 percent in 2012.

"The measurement component is just a huge part of communications success today," said Joni Renick, a Senior Executive Advisor at CEB. "It just makes a lot of sense to know how you're doing."

EXAMPLE OF HOW AN ECE PLATFORM TRANSFORMS COMMUNICATION

▷ **Your CEO wants to record a short video that will be distributed throughout the company. Compare how communicators accomplish this using traditional tools and with an Employee Communication and Engagement Platform.**

	PRODUCTION	DISTRIBUTION	ENGAGEMENT	MEASUREMENT	RESULTS
TRADITIONAL	• Prepare script • Hire production agency, book studio • Multiple tapings, lengthy editing process	• Post video on intranet • Send company-wide email with a link . . . and a second email . . . and a third • Share on general feed in team collaboration tool	• Employees can watch video	• Inability to accurately track who watched video	• Complex • Inefficient use of time and resources • Repeated, interruptive messages to workforce • Packaged video presentation • Unknown impact
ECE	• CEO records video using personal mobile device in her office • Communication team can review and edit video prior to targeted distribution	• Communicator posts video • Video is sent as a broadcast to the employee segments who need to see it • SMS and push notifications alert every targeted employee on their mobile devices, tablets and computers	• Employees can watch video • Employees can "like" video • Employees can take part in an online chat with the CEO through comments and replies	• Track who opened video • Track who watched video • Track how much of the video an employee watched • Use engagement metrics to improve next video project	• Simple • Efficient use of time and resources • One message to workforce • Authentic video presentation • Measureable impact

Pro Tip No.2

ABILITY TO SCALE Look for a technology partner that has enterprise deployment experience and a full-service customer success team with expertise in engagement programs, robust authentication, security, delegated administration, post approvals, customized branding, connectors and API integrations with existing systems. As your organization grows and evolves, you will need a platform that will scale with your business. Check out online review sites, such as Glassdoor, to make sure vendors are focused on their customers.

Q&A
GINI DIETRICH

GINI DIETRICH
is the founder of the popular Spin Sucks website. Her most recent book is The Communicator's Playbook.

"Communicators are being held more accountable, and that's a good thing."

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing communicators today? "I think it's access to the data they need to do their jobs. It's also access to the communication stack and software that they need. There also has to be a better understanding of how a business makes its money. That way, they can make a good argument about how they're contributing."

Is that how communicators earn more respect within an organization? "Absolutely. In my mind, they don't understand the profitability piece because they don't have the experience. But until they get that, they're not going to have the respect."

Are companies still trying to catch up to how their employees communicate in their personal lives? "Yes. I mean, some companies still won't let people use Facebook during work hours. That doesn't even make sense. I talked to someone at a major automobile manufacturer who said their company didn't allow access to Slack or Google Analytics or anything like that. I was thinking, "What! Do they really think that people aren't already using them on their phones?'"

So, it's important to reach employees where they prefer? "You don't want to have people go to someplace different. That takes time or they just won't do it. You want to have it all in one convenient place."

If you could wave a magic wand to fix employee communication, what would you do? "I would make it so easy to measure your impact with just press of a button. Boom. It would be done."

Traditional channels of email, the intranet and even team collaboration tools give us more ways to communicate, but are organizations reaching employees less? "That's exactly right. But it's more than business. It's a societal issue. Communication has been made so easy that we forget that there are human beings on the other side of the phone, computer or tablet."

ECE PLATFORM

CASE STUDIES

How three companies changed the way they connect with their workforces.

Sutter Health faced a daunting challenge...

trying to engage 53,000 employees spread throughout more than 100 facilities across Northern California – working at all hours on three shifts daily. It needed to communicate critical information to employees and give them a way to share content on their social networks about Sutter's great work.

"It's just especially difficult to reach people who aren't sitting in front of a computer," said Carey Peterson, the Director of Internal Communications. ". . . So, we really needed to reach employees where they're at – and that's their smartphones."

Within four months of implementation, 36 percent of the workforce was using the Team Sutter-branded Platform – far exceeding the pre-launch adoption estimate. Sutter knew the ECE Platform was having a significant impact because it now could measure employee engagement. There had been more than five million social media impressions from content shared by the workforce.

"Communications is always a challenge, no matter what the industry, because the tools available to us don't give us a lot of insight," added Michelle Grant, Internal Communications Coordinator. "They're difficult to measure. You can use email, but you can't track the results. There are only a few tools where we can track success, and one of them for us is this platform."

Luxury automaker BMW has a global workforce of 125,000 employees...

and manages hundreds of dealerships within the United States alone. The company struggled to provide relevant information to employees, including salespeople on showroom floors. Implementing the BMW Insiders Platform transformed how the company engaged the workforce and increased employee knowledge about the business.

"We needed to make sure that we were able to connect with our associates in a personal way and deliver information to them in a timely manner," said Andrew Cutler, Executive and Internal Communications Manager at BMW of North America. "The reality is that with legacy systems like email and our intranet sites, it's a challenge to do that."

BMW was able to target specific departments and dealerships as well as solicit feedback on content.

After launching the ECE Platform, the automaker saw a 300 percent increase in the amount of company-produced content employees shared on their personal channels. This has a huge impact when you consider that each additional BMW sold per dealership, per month, translates to $1.2 billion in revenue.

It's why Cutler compared the platform to giving employees the keys to the car and letting them take the wheel as company ambassadors.

"When our employees are engaged and clearly understand our business, it gives them the feeling that they're part of something valuable," he added.

One of the world's largest...

research-based biopharmaceutical companies, with products sold in about 170 countries, was confronting a problem on a global scale. How could it reach a far-flung workforce that included scientists and manufacturing specialists in laboratories as well as workers in warehouses? Many had no corporate email or rarely worked at a desk.

The biotech company solved that vexing challenge with an ECE Platform. Today, the company only uses the smartphone app to connect with the dispersed workforce. This mobile-centric solution allows the company to deliver information to the right employee at the right time.

The company can:

- ⊘ Reach every employee immediately
- ⊘ Segment employees and send them targeted content
- ⊘ Deliver messages with internal documents
- ⊘ Easily record and send engaging videos
- ⊘ Onboard new employees using mobile devices

The ECE Platform made it easy for the communication team to send a variety of messages and content to employees, including PDF documents, native videos and other relevant news. For instance, the company had connected with its employees 283 times through push notifications in less than two years after implementation.

The program has been wildly popular with employees. Of the nearly 4,700 employees invited to use the ECE Platform, a remarkable 98 percent have registered – a testament to how workers want company information on their mobile devices.

Q&A
DAVID ARMANO

DAVID ARMANO
is the Global Strategy Director at Edelman, the communications marketing firm. A prolific writer, Armano is an influential voice on the topics of communication and social media for business.

"Companies have under-estimated the cultural shift. It's not just technology."

Why is good communication important? "People are seeing and being exposed to more. And those people are your employees. You have to be transparent with them. When you're sharing more information with them, you're actually going to be sharing more information to people in the outside world. There's less risk and greater reward when you're making sure accurate information gets to your employees."

Does good communication help a company perform better financially? "A front-line employee who feels good about the company and feels connected is going to affect the customer experience in a positive way. That directly tracks to improved productivity for the company. Employees who feel strong connections to a company also are the ones who tend to vocalize great things about the organization. The goal should always be getting employees more engaged, more connected and just making them feel better about the company."

And poor communication? "If you look at companies that have problems and aren't being very transparent, they're not in as good as shape as they could be. They take a hit and in some cases their growth is slowed. The new reality is your reputation affects your valuation of the company. There is an impact."

Is it hard for communicators to cut through the noise? "Yes, and that's why it requires a lot of forethought when adding a new technology. You need to make employees understand that they will be empowered when previously they were disconnected. Employees are inundated with information. When you're evaluating new technologies, put a lot of care into ensuring there is more value than what you currently use."

BUYING
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Once upon a time, communicators were largely concerned with, well, communicating.

Today, the job requires an understanding of how technology systems connect organizations and employees. This means communicators need another skill – purchasing communication software.

They must:

Stay current with technology trends

Evaluate software

Build business cases for new software
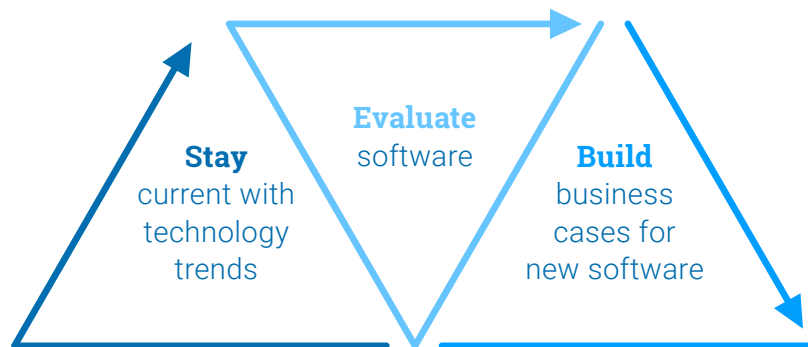
This is unfamiliar territory for most communicators. There's no instruction manual. It can be intimidating to evaluate solutions, deal with tech vendors, and then put your reputation on the line by recommending the company purchase something new. But now it's part of the job.

Yet CEB research has found that while people might see the value of a new technology for an organization, only half (49 percent) are willing to advocate for buying a solution in the face of internal opposition.

Communicators must become comfortable with the idea of becoming the catalysts who mobilize others in their organizations to take action. You have the ability to persuade others by doing what comes naturally.

Communicators must communicate.

There's a difference between *want* and *need* when it comes to technology.

Understand what problems you're trying to solve, what value you want to bring and how an ECE Platform is a "must have." Determine what success looks like for your company.

More effective communication with the workforce?

Improving employee job performance?

Greater alignment around strategic vision?

Driving more engagement?

Measuring the impact of your communication?

Fit with existing infrastructure?

Reaching employees on multiple platforms?

R. Joshua Whitton has led marketing and communication efforts at Orchard Supply Hardware, Sears Holdings Corporation, and Save Mart Supermarkets. He never focuses on all the bells and whistles – just the functionality he requires.

"My approach to technology is that I don't necessarily need something that does everything," said Whitton, who now is at Aptaris, the Regional Vice President of Sales at Aptaris. "I just need a solution that meets my needs and solves my problems. It's important to understand your problem and look for something that provides that exact solution."

Don't get caught up in shiny objects. Feel confident with your choice. You will lose credibility if you fall in love with the sizzle and don't deliver the steak.

When a well-known entertainment conglomerate was evaluating an ECE Platform, 15 people were involved in the decision.

An East Coast convenience store chain had 16 stakeholders in its evaluation. And a major shipping company needed 20 people to sign off before purchasing a platform.

These examples demonstrate how the tentacles of an ECE Platform can touch virtually the entire organization. Purchasing technology is a team sport. CEB has found that the typical buying decision requires approval of 6.8 stakeholders. So, any purchase requires buy-in from people representing a wide-range of business functions.

Getting large groups of people to agree on anything is a hard. They have different priorities, concerns and goals. It's why a common decision simply is to do nothing and accept the status quo.

Communicators play the role of shepherd as they demonstrate how an ECE Platform will benefit each member of the committee in addition to meeting shared objectives.

In other words, explain what's in it for them.

BENEFITS FOR THE BUYING COMMITTEE

- **Leadership.** Align employees to execute on strategy and drive superior financial performance.

- **HR.** Manage compliance and risk through auditable communication logs.

- **Legal.** Maintain a consistent message, accurate documentation, address compensation liability risk, ensure a safe workplace.

- **IT.** Streamline existing systems and/or get more value from existing tools.

- **InfoSec.** Meet all security-compliance standards.

- **Marketing.** Generate additional earned media visibility, driving higher ROI on campaigns.

- **Sales.** Personalized nurturing of leads and contacts for higher win rates and faster sales cycles.

Mark Ragan describes communication leaders as "Employee Engagement Culture Experts" at their organizations. But if you're tempted to use "culture" as the reason for adding an ECE Platform, Ragan offers this advice: resist the urge. It will fall on deaf ears. The correlation between culture and revenue will be lost on others.

"You need an argument that says, 'Look, this is going to make us money,'" Ragan explained. "Show that an Employee Communication and Engagement Platform boosts productivity, offers efficient mobile engagement so people go back to work quickly and informed, saves customer service time, improves customer retention. All of that translates to dollars. If you start making 'soft' arguments that don't contribute to revenue, then it becomes a nice-to-have instead of a need-to-have."

Joni Renick, of research firm CEB, tells communicators that they must learn how to sell. Educate internal stakeholders about the strategic and financial benefits of a technology. That's how you unlock budget.

"I talk with people all the time about how to elevate the message," Renick added. "Communications talks about speaking the language of their audience externally. But so often they forget to speak the language of their internal audience. It's about teaching communicators to be better salespeople."

"The CFO isn't concerned about corporate culture or if employees are happy," said Joelle Kaufman, Chief Marketing Officer at Dynamic Signal. "The CFO cares about standing up in front of the board or Wall Street analysts and saying, 'We beat our numbers and our strategy is working.' So, you talk their language and tell them how you're going to help them achieve their goals. You must explain that the end result of poor internal communication is your price per share is lower than it could be. That's an argument that makes sense to the CFO."
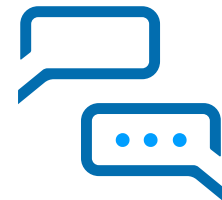
SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SUITE

Increase Performance. Employees achieve more when they understand the company vision and have immediate access to information that helps them do their jobs better. **Example:** A global shipping company uses its ECE Platform where employees can easily access information like their pay stubs – so they don't waste time and get back to work quickly.

Engagement Metrics. End the guessing game about who is seeing and engaging with messages. **Example:** One of the world's largest digital industrial companies knew that within the first three months of adopting an ECE Platform, 55,000 employees had been on-boarded and recorded 125,000 content views.

Employee Retention and Recruitment.
Disengaged employees are not likely to stay employees. There's a high cost associated with attrition. Transparent communication helps organizations nurture their best-performing people and attract new talent. **Example:** When a healthcare

organization had a sudden change in leadership, the interim CEO used the ECE Platform to deliver short, weekly videos to reassure employees about the direction of the company.

Better Use of Resources. One platform enables the elimination of existing channels while driving greater utilization of resources such as the intranet by alerting employees to new content and improving their access to it. **Example:** When a supply-chain company with more than 30,000 employees added an ECE Platform, it dropped a monthly printed newsletter.

Cost of Poor Communication. What is the price, in dollars and impact on the brand, when you can't immediately connect with your workforce? Do you want employees getting news from their social media feeds or accurate information directly from the company? If there is a crisis, are you able to reach out to every employee? **Example:** When major wildfires spread across Northern California, Sutter Health used

its ECE Platform to keep employees informed of fast-moving developments and even how to donate time off to affected colleagues.

Mobilize Brand Ambassadors. Transform the workforce into a powerful voice that promotes the company by sharing "snackable" content with their personal networks. **Example:** Data company DOMO took advantage of employee engagement in a marketing campaign that resulted in a 9.6 percent conversion rate, "which is scary good," said Julie Kehoe, Vice President of Communications.

Keep Pace with Industry Trends.
Organizations risk falling behind in the marketplace when competitors are using innovative technology to connect with employees– and they are not. **Example:** Before utilizing an ECE Platform, a prominent health club chain relied on posters to communicate information to on-the-go trainers and associates who didn't have company email.

TIPS TO BE AN INFORMED BUYER

If you have never worked with software deployments and technology system customization, it's easy to become overwhelmed. It doesn't have to be that way. Here are points to keep in mind as you're going through the evaluation process.

Understand Your Problem. Make sure you have clearly articulated the challenges your organization faces and how an ECE Platform will overcome them.

Identify Your Buying Committee. Understand all the internal players who must be involved in the decision-making process, and bring them into the conversation early – especially IT, Legal and HR.

Do Your Homework. Talk to peers about what they're using and get their guidance about what to look for, questions to ask, and potential roadblocks.

Search for a Partner. Seek out a vendor who is truly interested in helping solve your problems, and not someone just interested in making a sale.

Talk Is Cheap. Make sure your choice has proven the ability to do what you need, when you need it, and the vendor has the resources to support you.

Leverage Your IT Team. They can ensure your choice will deeply integrate with existing systems and security frameworks, has the flexibility to address the many business units and functions of your organization, *and* reduces complexity by consolidating (or eliminating) other point solutions.

Demonstrate the Value Being Created. It's rarely about buying the cheapest alternative, but it is important to show you negotiated a deal that generates the most value.

Establish Adoption Metrics. Determine KPIs that are achievable and make sense with the help of your partner (employee adoption, active users, engagement), and then hold them accountable for meeting those measurements.

Know Your Timetable. Set expectations by communicating to your stakeholders how long the implementation process will take and their involvement.

DOWNLOAD

DEFINITIONS

Employee Communication and Engagement Platform
Modern way for companies to connect with their most valued asset – employees.

Technology Stack
Set of software solutions that help you achieve communication goals.

Product Roadmap
The vendor's plan for future functionality and innovation in a solution.

API
Application Programming Interface is how software systems communicate with one another.

Seat License
An individual user who has access to a software product.

SaaS
Software as a Service is how vendors sell and deliver cloud-based software, often on annual subscriptions.

Integrations
Bringing together software products into one, cohesive system.

Plug and Play
A way to describe software that easily integrates with your existing systems without significant IT support or maintenance.

Pro Tip No.3

USE A PERSONAL TOUCH A platform should synchronize
with the HRIS and other systems for automatic segments with
added capability to create new segments and target content for
workgroups and teams – while accurately measuring engagement.
This way, the right message is always getting to the right employees.

Q&A
ROBYN HANNAH

ROBYN HANNAH
is Senior Director of Global Communication, Dynamic Signal. In 2017, she moderated the DySi ThinkTank Road Show in New York, London, Chicago and San Francisco. The series brought together more than 150 internal communicators for thoughtful conversations about the common challenges they face and the opportunities ahead.

Was there a take-home message from the Road Show? "Anytime the word 'intranet' was mentioned, a pained expression crossed the faces of everyone. There's so much frustration. Communicators know they're putting so much time, effort and care into creating great content. But it all falls short because their intranet is failing them. The outcome is not representative of their output. They don't think they're reaching the intended audience. They're stuck in this cycle where they produce content and have no way to measure the impact on the business."

Were there specific complaints about legacy systems? "One issue with the intranet is that it just doesn't meet employees where they are. Today, everyone is on their phones all the time. But the intranet actually is disruptive. You have to stop what you're doing and go to the intranet. It takes you away from work. Communicators weren't saying that there isn't a place for the intranet or email. But they're looking for something to make them more useful. They want a better way to push the right employees to the right content. They can't do that with the systems they have now."

Why is having metrics so important to communicators? "Communication is a critical business function. But without metrics or data, that's difficult to showcase. And they're seen as soft. They want the recognition that their work adds value and that communication is important to a successful organization. They know good communication aligns the company around a common mission, makes employees feel connected to a larger purpose and gives them the information to do their jobs well. They want executives to understand that authentic communication is important to building great company culture and has real financial value. They need metrics to prove that."

> "Communicators want their role to be seen as a critical business function."

What was the most insightful point you took away from the Road Show? "Often these events could be like support group sessions. It's easy for communicators to feel disheartened because they know they're doing good work, but their systems are failing them. But in London, Jim Cockin, the Head of Group & Employee Communications at Sky, said something that just changed the whole mood in the room. He described how we're living in "a golden age of storytelling." He talked about how we've never had so many tools and channels on which to share our stories. It's true. We do have innovative technologies to connect with our audiences."

THE WAY
FORWARD

Tale from the Front Lines

Meet Claire.

She's a member of the corporate communication team. Part of her role is creating the company's monthly magazine. Because a majority of the workforce doesn't work in front of computers and has no digital access, the magazine is considered a primary information source for employees.

Still, Claire wonders why so much time and money is put into a print product when the news is outdated by the time employees receive it. She also doubts that many employees actually read it.

When Claire shares these concerns with her boss, she's told: "It's just the way we've always done it."

Fortune magazine releases the <u>100 Best Companies to Work For</u> list each year.

It's produced by San Francisco-based <u>Great Place to Work</u>, which determines who makes the cut by measuring employee engagement. An executive with the organization once explained to Mark Ragan the secret to getting recognized – communication that builds trust.

"If you're not communicating with your employees honestly, candidly and transparently and not making your communication entertaining and engaging, you won't get on the list," Ragan said. "I don't care how many child-care centers you have, how many M&Ms you're giving away or how many ping-pong tables you have."

Great companies to work for also outshine their peers. Organizations on Fortune's 2016 list experienced 50 percent less voluntary turnover. It's also why McKinsey research has found that productivity increases by 20 to 25 percent in organizations with connected employees.

"A front-line employee who feels really connected to the company and about the work it does is going to affect the customer experience," said David Armano, of Edelman. "All of that comes down to added productivity for the organization. It seems like common sense, but it's not as universal as you might think. Yet the ones who invest in that strongly definitely see a difference."

RISK OF STATUS QUO

Lack of communication is a foundational problem with ripple effects throughout the entire organization.

Company misalignment. Disengaged employees, reduced productivity. And ultimately, lower company value.

Determine what role communication plays in amplifying the key business drivers for your business. Recall how CEB research found that more-informed employees perform at a rate of 77 percent higher than their less-informed counterparts? What could that mean to your organization's financial performance?

Percentage of improvement in key business drivers x .77 = Increased Revenue

THE OLD WAY	VS	THE NEW WAY
• Accept that content won't reach entire workforce		• Reach every employee, wherever they are
• Concede employees might not have information to reach full potential		• Deliver information to help each worker reach full potential
• Conclude that it's impossible to collect rational metrics		• Use metrics to optimize your communication

JOB PERFORMANCE

When communication breaks down, employees feel abandoned. They're not part of the team. They lose interest. Yes, they can leave. Or, it could be worse.

When Ted Rubin speaks at conferences, he sometimes includes the story of a conversation between a CFO and a CEO. "What," asks the CFO, "if we spend all of these resources training our employees, and then they leave?" The CEO answered: "What if we don't and they stay?"

It's the same principle with communication, Rubin added. It aligns everyone around strategic goals. That results in better job performance and higher employee satisfaction – which leads to superior customer experiences.

DISCONNECTED WORKFORCE

Humans are social creatures. We want to feel connected. Psychologically, we want to feel that we're part of something worthwhile and doing valuable work. That's difficult to achieve in an era of dispersed workforces where people can instead feel like they're on their own little islands, barely tethered to their organizations.

But communicating with every employee, wherever they are, strengthens bonds.

FALLING BEHIND

Employees want the most up-to-date tools to perform their jobs. A modern communication platform ensures they have the information they need – quickly and conveniently. Communicators want the ability to reach all employees, measure impact, and be smarter about resource allocation.

Neither can be accomplished with legacy systems.

"The world is really being served up on your mobile device, and now enterprise employees expect the same thing," added Edelman's Armano. "It's mainstream behavior that has been going on for years. Most organizations are still grappling with this. But the shift to mobile is changing everything."
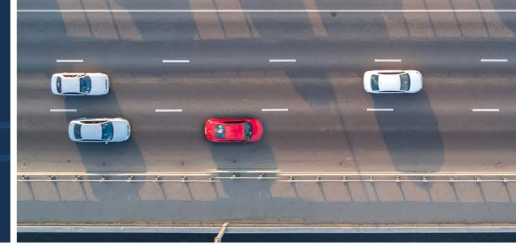
ECE Platforms connect...

organizations with employees in more personalized ways through broadcasts, posts, video, document collaboration, sharing, alerts and push notifications, newsletters, and surveys. It integrates your existing systems to create a streamlined, measureable platform that integrates with any distribution channel the employee prefers.

That kind of capability is why Gary F. Grates, Principal at W2O Group, sees this as a renaissance period for communication.

"It's an incredible opportunity to rethink our profession and our value proposition," he said. "We can facilitate discussion and debate rather than a one-way broadcast model. It's a great time to look at data and draw insights where we can counsel our leadership. You can't help but sit back and say: 'What an age we live!'"

ECE
PLATFORM
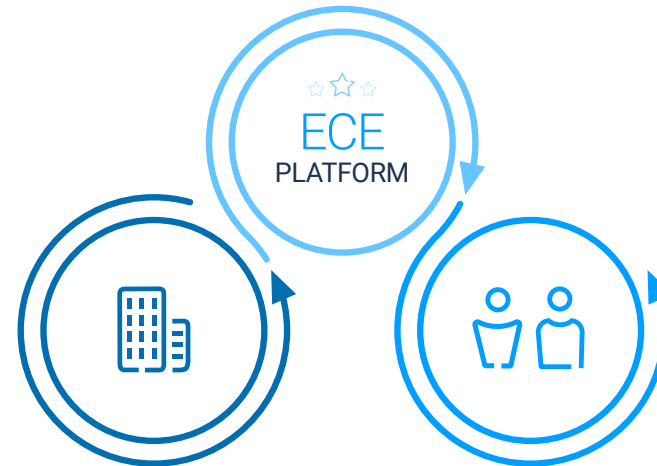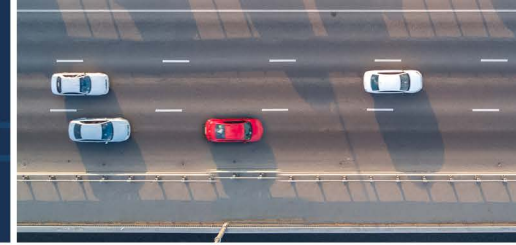
DRIVE BUSINESS FORWARD

Proving the ROI of what they do is a constant struggle for communicators.

The link between company "culture" and business outcomes is not always obvious to the C-suite.

But name one business function of any organization that isn't impacted? Communication is foundational for everything in an organization. It's why the most successful companies communicate better.

"A more informed and connected employee is more passionate about your business," Ted Rubin said. "It's that simple. In today's day and age, even if you're not thinking that way, your competitors are. You want to stay ahead of the curve or start figuring out ways to keep up or people are going to be finding other places to work."
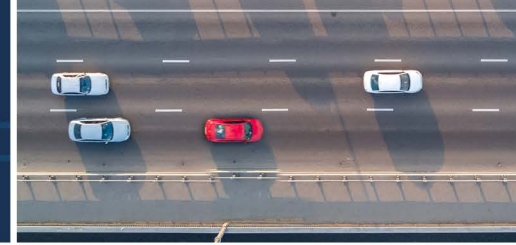
MOBILIZE BRAND AMBASSADORS

Employees are an untapped resource when it comes to brand recognition.

Or at least they are an undervalued one.

Communication drives engagement. Engagement drives advocacy. If marketers make easy for content to be shared, employees will naturally become powerful advocates.

The 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer found a collapse of trust in all institutions in the United States. But people trust the recommendations of friends and family. It's why employees can have a remarkable amplifying impact on paid media efforts.

SAP quickly turned 1,200 employees into passionate advocates for the brand using an ECE Platform. It generated between 500,000 and 1.3 Euros in earned media – the equivalent of 260,000 clicks in paid media.

In fact, Marcy Massura, the executive brand advisor, said that when messages are sent by employees, they reach 24 times further than if the brand had shared it. But too often, she added, companies will pour resources into consumer marketing, influencer marketing, paid media and so on, but then complain they're not getting ahead of the competition.

"They're not asking their 5,000 employees to help spread the world about the company," Massura explained. "They're leaving a free marketing channel on the table. Companies should not miss out on a huge marketing opportunity that exists with their employees."

An ECE Platform will facilitate this kind of employee advocacy at scale and will keep organizations aligned with the current guidelines for acceptable social media sharing.
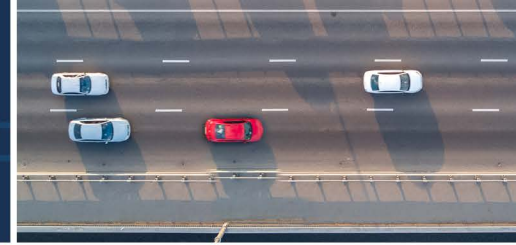
ELEVATE THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Respect is earned, not given.

An ECE Platform enables communicators to earn that respect by showing tangible proof of the impact they're having on their organizations. They finally can be considered a critical business function.

"If you have the tools to show that what you're doing is working, you're going to shoot up in the organization," Mark Ragan added.

With that comes:

Influence
in the organization

Great
work fulfillment

Career
advancement
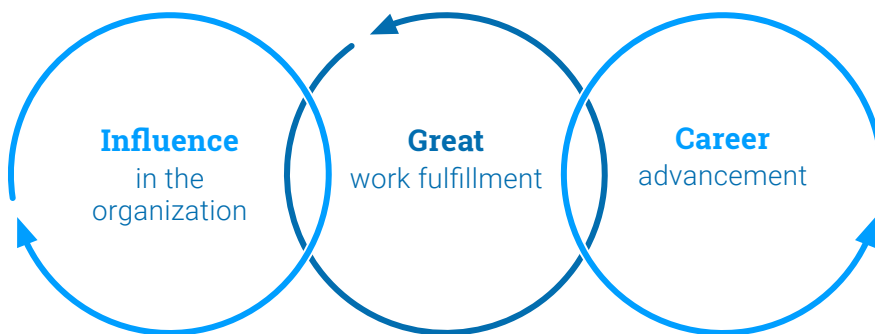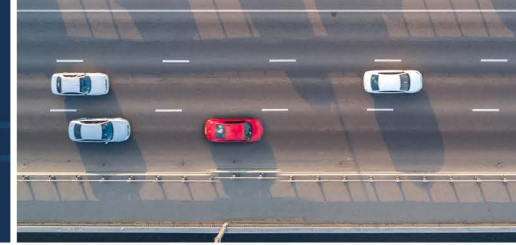
GETTING STARTED

This is not the future. It's already happening.

Organizations are transforming employee communication to *modernize*, *streamline* and *measure* their efforts. Kerri Warner, of Mastercard, said she encourages clients to consider those three words as just a starting point of what's possible today.

"Those are capabilities," she added. "Think about these as benefits that make our lives easier more than thinking in terms of streamlining and modernizing. That's even more so when it comes to measuring. Typically, people don't get into communications because they're focused on data and metrics. We're driven by creating words that influence and stories that matter. But the unintended consequence is that way of thinking doesn't give communicators muscle inside the organization. Metrics are what get you taken more seriously."

One conclusion of Gallup's State of American Workplace report in 2017 was blunt: The rulebook is being rewritten for business success. "The one thing leaders cannot do is nothing. They cannot wait for trends to pass them by," the report concluded.

But if you solve the communication problem, you solve the employee engagement problem. What that would do for your organization?

Remember Amanda, the frustrated communicator at the start of our story? Think about how her day would be much different if she had an Employee Communication and Engagement Platform to put out that important message to her entire organization.
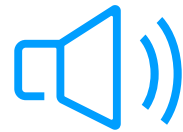
She would save time streamlining all of her channels with one platform. She would maintain a consistent message. She would demonstrate the impact to her executive team.

Amanda wouldn't need super-human powers to do her job.

Imagine a world where employee communication isn't broken.

COMMUNICATION

TALKING POINTS

Data is great to support an argument.

But it shouldn't be the argument itself.

We have collected some great data points that can be used to help make the business case for an Employee Communication and Engagement Platform even stronger. But they key to make the numbers applicable to your individual business.

Here are three examples of the financial impact of not improving employee communication and engagement.

Note: *These formulas are averaged across industries. It's important to use numbers that are both accurate and make sense for your business. If you don't know the multiples, it's a great way to start the conversation with your CFO.*

EXAMPLES – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1 Customers retention rates are 18 percent higher when employees are highly engaged, according to Cvent. How much could you save in reducing customer churn?

Formula: *Your Churn x .18 = Increased Profit*

2 For every 1 percent increase in employee engagement, you can expect an additional 0.6 percent growth in sales, according to Aon Hewitt. What are your annual sales?

Formula: *Sales x 0.6 = Increased Revenue per 1 percent increase in engagement*

3 Increasing employee engagement investments by 10 percent can increase profits by $2,400 per employee annually, according to the Workplace Research Foundation. How many employees do you have?

Formula: *Number of employees x $2,400 = Increased Profit*

COMMUNICATION TALKING POINTS

Can these other data points support the need for an ECE Platform at your organization?

EMPLOYEE DISCONNECT

- Just **33%** of U.S. employees say they are enthusiastic and committed at their workplace, _Gallup_

- Only **13%** of employees say they visit their intranet daily and **31%** say they never do, _Prescient Digital Media_

- **74%** of employees feel they're missing out on important company information, _Mindshare_

EARNINGS

- Companies that have more engaged employees outperform peers by **147%**, earnings per share, _Gallup_

- Increasing employee engagement investments by **10%** can increase profits by **$2,400** per employee annually, _Workplace Research Foundation_

- For every **1%** increase in employee engagement, you can expect to see an additional **.6%** growth in sales for an organization, _Aon Hewitt_

PRODUCTIVITY

- More informed employees perform at a rate **77%** higher than less informed employees, _CEB_

- Productivity improves by **20** to **25%** in organizations with connected employees, _McKinsey_

- Customer retention rates are **18%** higher when employees are highly engaged, _Cvent_

MOBILE DEVICE TRENDS

- More than **77%** of Americans own a mobile device, _Pew Research Center_

- **85%** of U.S. adults get news on a mobile device, _Pew Research Center_

- The average adult spends **3 hours** and **17 minutes** per day (not including voice) on a mobile device, _eMarketer_

- Americans check their mobile devices an average of **46** times a day, _Deloitte_

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

- Only **14%** of communicators have confidence in their ability to measure and monitor communication activity in 2018, _Gartner_

- **73%** of communicators say disseminating company news is a serious challenge, _Dynamic Signal's "The State of Workplace Communications" 2017 report_

- More than **75%** of the workforce will consist of digitally savvy Millennials by 2030, _U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics_

LOST PRODUCIVITY

- Disengaged employees cost U.S. companies between **$483** and **$605** billion annually in lost productivity, _Gallup_

- Employees spend nearly **10 hours** per week searching for information, _McKinsey_

- Time spent by employees searching for company information has increased **76%** in past three years, _Gartner_

COMMUNICATION

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHEET

1 What evidence do you rely upon to know if your communication strategy is effective?

○ Metrics
○ Employee feedback
○ Other
○ None

2 What communication channels do you currently use?

○ Intranet
○ Email
○ Team Collaboration Tools
○ Enterprise Social Networks
○ Newsletters
○ Signage
○ Other

3 Do your employees tell you they're suffering from information overload?

○ Yes
○ No

4 How do you measure the impact of your communication?

○ Output metrics
○ Surveys
○ Email open rates

5 Do you use metrics to optimize your communication strategy?

○ Yes
○ No

6 Does your company regularly invest in communication technology?

○ Yes
○ No

7 Is your budget increasing for communication technology?

○ Yes
○ No

8 Do you feel comfortable asking for more budget for technology tools?

○ Yes
○ No

9 Do you know how to build a business case for acquiring new technology?

○ Yes
○ No

10 Do you know how to set KPIs to show ROI for a technology investment?

○ Yes
○ No

Bonus question:

11 Do you feel valued in your role as a communicator?

○ Yes
○ No

DOWNLOAD

JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE MODERN

COMMUNICATOR

The role of communication leader comes with so many more responsibilities and expectations today. Here's a sample job description based on what we're seeing throughout the industry. This is what we recommend you should aspire to be as you advance in your career.

VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

Do you love telling stories shaped by data and connecting those to broader company goals? Are you passionate about aligning employees in meaningful ways that increase productivity and engagement? Are you using insightful metrics to shape strategic communication priorities for your organization?

The Vice President, Global Communication – reporting to the CCO – leads an agile communication and employee engagement team that is obsessive about metrics and continuously improving your contribution toward organizational goals.

We are looking for a thoughtful, innovative, and quantitative communicator to drive alignment around business goals and objectives by integrating internal and external communication.

If you are a storyteller and strategist who leverages data to advance a goal-oriented communication strategy that ensures consistent messaging and engagement, we're looking for you.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE MODERN COMMUNICATOR

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

new job functions

Drive strategy for all company communication and thought-leadership, determining where, when, and how we consistently tell our story to both internal and external audiences.

Execute strong communication programs and a regular communication cadence with all levels of the organization that align audiences, deepen awareness and engagement, and support company goals.

Create, protect, and proliferate the company's mission, vision and values as well as ensure corporate messaging that enhances alignment, engagement and employee advocacy.

Aggregate and analyze metrics that illustrate both the impact of your initiatives to better engage and align employees.

Cultivate an environment where every employee has the information needed to do their job so that the workforce is connected and adheres to company standards of integrity and ethics.

Advise the executive team regarding internal and external communication issues and opportunities.

Provide leadership and oversight of the Public Relations, Internal Communication, Customer Marketing, and Community Management teams – developing the strategic and operational framework to ensure ongoing success.

Train and support Employee Communication and Engagement Platform administrators across the enterprise.

Create and maintain comprehensive longitudinal reports of customer and employee communication campaigns.

Establish standards, objectives, and KPIs with respect to the hiring, onboarding, development, motivation, coaching and performance of all company communicators.

Leverage internal eNPS and 360 feedback surveys to identify points of message misalignment and opportunities for communication and engagement improvement.

Identify key metrics to foster improvement that ensure all communication activities are efficient, effective, and scalable.

Create data visualizations and dashboards that will help guide strategic decision-making.

JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE MODERN COMMUNICATOR

WHAT YOU'LL BRING:

new job functions

15-plus years of experience with demonstrated success modernizing, streamlining, and measuring internal and external communication.

Bachelor's degree or above in communication, organizational psychology, journalism – or relevant work experience.

Ability to leverage multi-media campaigns to achieve operational efficiency at scale.

Deep experience with communication technology and data analytics tools as well as the ability to manage technology vendors.

Strong writing and public speaking skills.

Great listener.

Ability to work across organizational lines, command respect, and influence leadership.

Dynamic Signal Certified

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