

Conducting an internal communications audit: Your communications « snapshot »

Effective internal communications are critical to advancing your company's goals. Do your policies and practices support your objectives?

Determining the effectiveness of your internal communications

The scope of an audit all depends on your needs. It may be a broad all-encompassing review or it may be focused on a specific area. The communications audit provides valuable information to help you develop or restructure your communications strategies.

Your communications audit should review:

- Your **objectives and goals**: What are both the long-term and short-term goals?...
- Existing **communications initiatives** and **vehicles**: What formal and informal methods and tools are currently in place for communicating upward, downward and laterally?...
- **Attitudes** towards existing communications: How do staff and management perceive the communications efforts and what, if any, are the resistors?...
- Your **needs** and **expectations**: What are the specific organizational and departmental needs?...

CASE STUDY - TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Background

The client was implementing a new technical tool that would significantly change the way in which its 500 employees did their jobs. In order to ensure that employees were informed and that employees ultimately accepted and took ownership of the new program, the client asked CommuniKo to assess its communications initiatives and tools and implement strategies to respond to the current need.

CommuniKo Audit

- Interviews and meetings with all involved stakeholders to understand the audiences and the existing communications strategies.
- Evaluation of communications tools in place.
- Assessment of attitudes toward existing communications efforts.

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Audit recommendations

Based on the audit, it was determined that the client's employees would be most receptive to:

- brief and concise communications sent via e-mail on a monthly basis.
- monthly face-to-face communications (i.e. team meetings) to facilitate bi-directional communication so that employees could submit feedback and questions to management.
- hands-on demonstrations of the new tool.

It was determined that other possible communications initiatives, while more sophisticated (i.e. content managed intranet system), would not be regularly consulted by this particular personnel group and as such, a waste of human and financial resources.

Results

The client effectively shared their "thinking" with their employees. By following the recommendation in the CommuniKo Audit, employees understood the rationale behind the changes and had opportunities and forums to express their concerns. The CommuniKo Audit helped the client ensure that employees did not resist the impending changes and in fact was responsible for helping ensure active employee participation in the implementation of the new technical tool.