Internal PR

adapted from
Effective Public Relations
&
Exploring Public Relations
Internal PR

- The coordination and mediation necessary for dealing with employees put PR staff with communication knowledge and skills in a central role in managing internal relations.

- As a part of the larger public relations function, the goal of internal relations and employee communication is to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the employees on whom its success or failure depends.
Employee communication

Employee communication function must address:

• 1) the value of understanding, teamwork, and commitment by employees in achieving bottom-line results,

• 2) the need to build a strong manager communications network that makes every supervisor at every level accountable for communicating effectively with employees.
Organizational culture

The culture of an organization is what defines it as different from other organizations, as it defines the values, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that guide both managers and employees in their effort to achieve the organization’s mission.
Worldview

• “Worldview” comprises the basic value and belief system prevalent in an organization’s dominant coalition.

• An asymmetrical worldview holds that an organization’s goal is to get what it wants without having to change the way it does business.

• A symmetrical worldview incorporates negotiation, conflict resolution, and compromise in an organization’s in how it deals with its publics.
Organizational culture

- **Authoritarian organizational culture** --> asymmetrical worldview - communication is structured & formal, decision-making is centralized, individuals are held accountable in a system of specialized division of labor. Input from employees is not sought or valued.

- **Participative organizational culture** --> symmetrical worldview, encourages two-way communication & dialogue, values teamwork, & rewards collective effort because the organization & employees share goals. Innovation can come from any level of the organization.
Vision & Mission

• A vision statement spells out a target for strategy and the goal of an organization. It also spells out priorities, as well as what the organization hopes to accomplish.

• The mission statement spells out how what the organization does is different from other organizations do. It helps employees set priorities so that all are committed to achieving what the organization claims to do.
Examples

- "Organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

- "To enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential."

- "GM’s vision is to be the world leader in transportation products and related services. We will earn our customers’ enthusiasm through continuous improvement driven by the integrity, teamwork, and innovation of GM people."
University of Mauritius

• Mission statement: The mission of the University of Mauritius is to provide an efficient and effective service to the community through quality teaching, research, consultancy and extension services, consistent with national goals and policies, supportive of regional thrusts and orientations, and in conformance with international norms and standards. In achieving its mission, the University is committed to prepare students for an increasingly complex social and technological world and to improve the well-being of the people of the Republic of Mauritius.

• Vision statement: The University of Mauritius, based in a small-island-state, seeks to be a university of international standing and a leading institution in the region.
Employee publications

• Keep employees informed;

• Provide employees the information they need to perform their assignments;

• Encourage employee commitment to quality improvement, increased efficiency, improved service, and greater social responsibility;

• Recognize employees’ achievements and successes,

• Create the opportunity for two-way communication.
Controlled media vs. grapevine

- **Controlled media** = primary methods for internal publics. Composition & concentration of employees & other internal publics makes them relatively easy to reach with publications, meetings, intranets, & other controlled media.

- The **grapevine** = neither a formal nor a controlled medium, but word of mouth can be quickest way to communicate with internal publics -->will fill the information gaps left by inadequate internal communication programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Strategic’ internal communication roles</th>
<th>‘Technical’ internal communication activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting major change programmes</td>
<td>House journal or magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating messages from top management</td>
<td>Intranet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating the business mission/vision/values</td>
<td>E-zines/e-newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising awareness of business issues and priorities</td>
<td>Management conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising/maintaining the internal credibility of the top team</td>
<td>Briefing groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee motivation</td>
<td>Noticeboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating feedback</td>
<td>Employee annual report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing managers’ communication skills</td>
<td>Management journal/magazine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17.1 Strategic and technical internal communication activities

Source: Based on Kernaghan et al. 2001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Direction of communication flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| House journal or magazine | Mass medium  
Regular, full-colour, glossy employee publication – often published monthly                                                             | Communicate management messages and business news; with human interest and social elements    | Usually downwards  
Best ones engage employees using techniques from consumer media, with focus on ‘human interest’ stories |
| Intranet                 | Web based information and communication medium restricted for internal use                                                                     | Variable. Can simply be a depository for corporate documents through to an interactive communication medium. Incorporates email function for external communication | ‘Pull medium’ – employees have to select what they want to find out about                          |
| E-zines/ e-newsletter    | Mass media, distributed via intranet and email:  
1 Electronic version of the house journal  
2 E-newsletter is shorter and more frequently distributed.  
More likely to be weekly publication but format can adapt more easily to current issues | As for house journal but with the emphasis on the reader being able to gain more accessible and regular access to business news | downwards, but there is provision for feedback via hyperlinks to contacts                          |

Table 17.3  Top six internal communication channels

Source: Adapted from Kernaghan et al. 2001, Reproduced with kind permission of John Smythe and McKinsey & Company
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Direction of communication flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management conferences</td>
<td>Face-to-face medium – can range from ‘CEO addressing all staff’ type conferences to those that are run along the lines of workshops involving staff</td>
<td>Transmission of key business messages, through to role playing and participation</td>
<td>Usually downwards, although could involve participative, interactive workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing groups</td>
<td>Face-to-face medium, generally no more than an hour in length Can take the form of team briefings for local teams, led by the line manager, on a weekly basis. Usually two way Alternatively, ‘special’ briefings can be breakfast, lunch, after-hours meetings, often led by top or senior management. Sometimes involve questions and answers (Q&amp;A) sessions</td>
<td>Provides management updates from different levels of the organisation. Can be used to gain responses and inputs from staff</td>
<td>Variable. Can be downwards or two way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noticeboards</td>
<td>Traditional ‘local’ medium found in corridors, staff restaurants and meeting areas Flexible medium – can be updated as regularly as is necessary</td>
<td>Channel for announcing events, value statements, policy statements, etc</td>
<td>Downwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17.3 Top six internal communication channels (Continued)

Source: Adapted from Kernaghan et al. 2001, Reproduced with kind permission of John Smythe and McKinsey & Company