



# Reinventing Employee Communication and Engagement

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How To Create Conversations That Drive Business Objectives

A renewed focus on corporate branding is an investment in your company's future, as a valuable brand is essential for long-term growth and profitability. According to the Economist, brands account for more than 30% of the stock market value of companies in the S&P 500 index.

Yet, brand alignment amongst employees is ignored by company leadership as their contribution to business objectives is often an afterthought. To put it simply: Employees aren't aware of key business objectives and this is stunting your organization's growth.

Employees should be a company's first line of communication when shaping the corporate conversation as they have 10 times the reach their employer has on average (Fast Company). A brand is fueled by what employees say about the company, based on how they feel, what information they are given access to, news shared with them and more.

Facilitating conversations between the C-Suite and employees, amongst employees and across departments can empower an entire workforce to work together on the ongoing position of a brand to achieve its objectives.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 59%

of surveyed workers either disagreed with or were uncertain of their response to this statement:  
"I know what my company stands for and what makes our brand(s) different from our competitors."

(Gallup)

Ongoing discussions with employees about company objectives is the first step in understanding and executing against those goals. Investing in thriving employee communication drives the right impression of a brand internally and externally, enhancing the company's reputation as a majority of survey respondents trust employees over CEO's by 52% (Edelman).

Taking an active part in creating an employee-driven communication plan can build trust over time that the organization is genuinely interested in having employees be active partners in developing your brand.

Building trust is important as only 46% of employees surveyed have 'a great deal of trust' in their employers, while 15% have 'very little trust' or 'no trust at all' and the other 39% have some trust in their employers (Harvard Business Review).

There's no way to control the entire process of how a brand is viewed as it's a shared framework between the employer, employees, customers and other key stakeholders.

To begin influencing the corporate conversation, start by articulating the key values of the enterprise across employee groups.

With a stronger direction as to the purpose and values of an enterprise, help employees continue to shape what the corporate culture looks like by investing in employee focused programming and communication policies.

Lastly, equip employees with the proper tools to communicate across mobile, live chat, social media and more to improve productivity and foster dialogue amongst employees and between employees and leadership.

In this eBook, you'll learn the process for shaping the conversations employees are having to best achieve your organization leading objectives.

### Key Takeaway

Employees need to be equal partners in the dialogue that shapes a brand, otherwise there will not be alignment on leading business objectives.

## SHARE KEY VALUES IN A DIGESTIBLE FORMAT

A brand doesn't exist without first establishing cornerstones that describe its purpose. Known as company values, these are one to two sentence statements representing what an organization stands for and the reasons why it exists. All company objectives relate back to these values, which is what makes them essential for employees to grasp.

An enterprise like Home Depot is widely known for offering excellent customer service because this brand value has been effectively communicated by their employees in-stores and through their actions.

Another brand like Amazon is considered a leader due to their emphasis on invention and simplifying shopping experiences, which has been communicated through a variety of mediums, one of which being their employees.

For employees to communicate the brand your leadership envisions, these values must be shared, understood and adopted by the workforce.

Employees will happily advocate on behalf of a company and its products and services, but this requires a great deal of trust (Edelman). Building trust with employees requires an understanding of their role in achieving particular benchmarks that have meaning behind them.

Require that leadership, management and human resources acknowledge the major part employees play in developing a brand and executing against its objectives to start this process off right.

To begin building trust and communicating your values to employees, start by emphasizing the stories and beliefs behind these values as they are easier to connect with and feel more genuine than reading about your brand's values without context.

Although a brand's values should be concise, digestible concepts, it is the beliefs and stories behind them which make these values memorable and adoptable for employees in the long run.

### DID YOU KNOW?

# 76%

of executives tend to prioritize a clearly defined business strategy above clearly defined and communicated core values and beliefs.

(Chief Executive)

For example, one of IBM's core values is 'Innovation that matters—for our company and for the world.' (IBM) If reading that statement is the only experience an IBM employee had with that value, then it's likely they don't fully believe it to be true or feel motivated enough to share this facet of the brand with others.

However, the approach IBM takes is integrating and sharing specific stories with employees about various innovations that improve conditions at the organization and elsewhere that tie back to this value.

The company has a section of their website dedicated to highlighting business innovation success stories, industry specific content on innovations achieved and insights on innovation for CEO's, CFO's and other senior roles in the form of videos, transcripts, studies and more. IBM incorporates and promotes this value-related content to encourage adoption of these company cornerstones both internally and externally. If employees trust, act and communicate on these values, then it can empower them to fully commit to existing company objectives.

### **Here are six tips for sharing an organization's core values with employees to drive adoption:**

- ① Interview employees and audit where they stand. Understand where you're starting from in terms of an employee's grasp of the company's key values. Interview employees to see what they say and how they feel about the brand. This process will help audit the organization and provide direction on what areas of your brand identity are widely understood and which values need to be further communicated.
- ② Highlight key stories with content based on company values. To reinforce the concepts not currently adopted by employees, share content with them that ties in relevant stories that reflect these values. Experiment with different types of content like video, articles, audio books, interactive stories, interviews and more to identify what formats employees engage with the most.
- ③ Integrate brand identity into daily company activities. Draw further attention to relevant stories related to your values at staff gatherings, monthly meetings and in-person company events to showcase to employees what drives the organization forward and what values they should look to measure their own success.
- ④ Use relevant tools to message employees on the right mediums. Create messaging around these examples of corporate values in action and send it to employees on the mediums they are most active on: mobile, social and chat.
- ⑤ Reassess your employee's grasp of brand values. This can't be a forced assessment of success as coercing employees to memorize the company's brand identity won't create a strong connection with the workforce or a worthwhile brand. Audit employees again three to six months after communicating company values to see what progress has been made and what needs to be revisited..
- ⑥ Recognize employees who illustrate brand values. The most straightforward way to communicate and illustrate brand values at an organization is highlighting an example of a current employee, manager or C-Suite executive exhibiting these characteristics. Share these stories online and of fine with your workforce as employees will look to mirror these examples in their day-to-day roles.

Invest in integrating your brand's key values in the messaging and daily tasks of employees, while also showcasing these values in action with examples to back up your claims and strengthen the employee dialogue.

### **Key Takeaway**

Listing a company's values in a mission statement isn't enough, employees need to observe these values in action to consider adopting and sharing them.

# BUILDING A THRIVING CULTURE THROUGH EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Corporate values act as the foundation that form a company's employee culture. The established culture of an organization will drive an impression of its brand amongst employees.

To develop your culture in a positive direction, strategize and act critically to foster an environment that represents the brand's ideals and objectives.

A company's culture is synonymous with its brand as it's an always evolving mix of the behaviors of its employees and the meaning behind their behaviors (Forbes).

The culture of any organization is defined by both the company, its employees and other stakeholders. To empower employees to contribute to a culture that defines a brand over others, develop programming that facilitates communication as a key attribute of the corporate culture.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 70%

of employees who agreed that their companies performed well financially said their executive team speaks to them often about the core values associated with the culture of the company.

*(Chief Executive)*

### Creating a successful communication focused program at an enterprise involves:

- Connecting the program to existing initiatives and goals for one consistent narrative, regardless of its focus
- Creating a positive attitude towards company values to encourage employee buy-in
- Educating employees about productive communication practices applicable to their role
- Empowering employees with the infrastructure to share feedback with leadership
- Prioritizing communication practices with management to assess problems and resolution opportunities identified by employee

An example of a corporate initiative that fosters communication by integrating these principles is Google's unconscious bias program. Addressing Silicon Valley's diversity issues, the program trains employees to identify their own prejudices and ways to counter them at work.

90% of Google employees who took the program learned what their own bias looked like and felt an obligation to step in and identify moments of unconscious bias in the workplace (The Atlantic).

Teaching employees how to communicate to tackle this problem, empowered them to act on the program and develop a safer working environment for the entire workforce. Since employees felt comfortable to share their learnings from the training, it helped educate other employees that it is appropriate to communicate constructive criticism.

This program directly ties back to one of Google's brand values of maintaining an open culture where everyone feels comfortable to share their own ideas and opinions. As participants communicate the outcome of the program to others, it acts as an example of corporate values in action.

Programs like Google's build a company's culture by connecting employees to its values and encouraging action through communication.

To encourage conversations that drive business objectives in the long-term, link all of your programs internally and externally back to company values to maintain a uniform dialogue with employees around a few key talking points (Harvard Business Review).

If you're looking to cultivate a distinctive and compelling brand in the marketplace, an organization must nurture a distinctive and compelling brand within the workplace.

### **Key Takeaway**

Develop programs that encourage communication amongst employees by tying these initiatives to company values and providing ways to take action on these objectives.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 86%

of corporate executives, employees and educators surveyed cite ineffective communications as a leading cause of workplace failures

(Salesforce)

## CRAFT PURPOSE-DRIVEN COMMUNICATION POLICIES

To further drive adoption of company values and programs focused on communication, revisit and adapt existing corporate policies and develop new ones that further integrate communication as a leading directive.

The goal of a purpose-driven policy is to reinforce an organization's key values, spur dialogue across departments and as a result achieve the company's goals.

These policies should make employee communication initiatives easier to adopt and scale across an organization, reinforcing a brand's value based objectives with the workforce.

An effective communication policy can direct any company function from requiring employees take monthly one-on-one lunches with coworkers from different departments or requiring that a communication schedule is established with every project worked on remotely from multiple locations.

The only difference between each corporate policy is what values it's emphasizing amongst employees. When creating new policies centered on employee communication, include the following elements:

What to Include in Communication-Centric Policies	Examples of Communication Policies in Action
Building brand alignment with employees is a long-term process. Establish a time-frame associated with your policies to encourage ongoing communication or educate employees on how to facilitate communication between stakeholders on their own in the future.	<b>Quicken Loans</b> The founder and chairman of Quicken Loans annually updates the company's key values to ensure they reflect the current state of the organization. This policy of yearly updates helps keep their values fresh in the mind of employees and regularly open for discussion on how they can be improved. (Fast Company)
Create policies that provide employees with respect and autonomy as opposed to rigid rules and regulations.	<b>Sprint</b> One of Sprint's policies is to provide recommendations on how employees should communicate using social media but also to let employees share what they want, where they want as management trusts them to carry on the conversation about the brand. (Forbes)
Include what tools and systems should be used to facilitate online employee conversations.	<b>AIR CANADA</b> Air Canada provides a library of content for employees to access using Dynamic Signal, keeping them updated about what's happening at the company and for information to share both internally and externally.
Integrate the support of management to ensure employees feel comfortable to communicate without fear of retribution or consequences for constructive criticism.	<b>Nationwide</b> Nationwide implemented a policy of reverse mentoring with senior executives to train them on the business benefits of using social media, Yammer and other internal tools to allow employees to better communicate with each other. (Simply Communicate)

To identify existing policies in need of an update, review management practices as a starting point especially when it comes to hiring, promotions, employee transfers, performance reviews and terminations.

Fostering communication amongst employees during these essential management tasks can bring them into the conversation about ongoing objectives at the organization and involve them in the process of creating these goals.

Integrating an additional layer of trust and transparency through communication into existing policies can help prevent rumors, explain the company's decision-making process, capture valuable employee feedback and reinforce corporate values that shape an authoritative brand.

### **Key Takeaway**

Communication policies help employees and management understand how to communicate for a seamless integration of company values and goals into daily tasks.



DID YOU KNOW?

# 522 HOURS

of a manager's time at work per year are spent searching for information

(Accenture)

## EQUIP EMPLOYEES WITH THE PROPER TOOLKIT

Along with crafting the right policies, selecting the right tools can help an organization better craft the corporate conversation. Tools that reduce the barriers to communication amongst employees can simplify the process and guarantee a workforce remains informed of what the company is trying to achieve.

45% of survey respondents said gathering information about what other parts of their organization are doing is a big challenge, which is unfortunately reducing the adoption of company values and goals and weakens an employee's connection to their employer's brand (Accenture).

Yet, traditional tools like email newsletters and a clunky intranet are too easy to ignore, offer irrelevant content and don't align with the way employees access information today. Instead, make the medium part of the message with modern tools on mobile devices like Facebook Messenger and Slack that are easy to operate and the types of platforms employees already use to communicate on a daily basis.

Investing in the proper tools to spur communication allows for more time to develop and share the values that reflect a company's culture with employees, instead of struggling to distribute messaging and measure its impact. The right employee communication tools surface personalized company content in real-time to ensure what's reaching each team member is relevant to them based on their department or role.

If an enterprise neglects to personalize the information being sent to employees, then it's not likely they'll open, read or engage with it further. Send different content to each employee group and/or department at your organization to align with the challenges they are facing, the projects they are working on etc.

### Key Takeaway

The proper tools for employee communication integrate with other popular enterprise and social platforms to streamline the process of serving employees content where they are most active.

Select a platform that provide the ability for employees to submit their own content for internal or external sharing as it more intimately involves them in the process of developing a brand and culture.

Throughout this process, let employees define their level of participation in terms of timing, frequency and where they share information as the important part is involving them in what's happening in the company and starting a dialogue.

Regrettably, only 43% of employees believe they have an organizational culture of trust and empowerment that supports employee engagement (Altimeter Group). To counter this, the right system of tools can encourage employees to participate as communication feels safer since the content they are reviewing for sharing is pre-approved and therefore, open for discussion and distribution.

Invest in tools that both personalize the information served to employees and illustrate whether the workforce is actually consuming the content they are receiving.

For leadership, a modern workplace communication tool guarantees employees are not only served content in a more reliable way, but that they actually receive it. Knowing with certainty that employees opened, clicked and shared the content served to them gives a company a more comprehensive understanding of the success of their program.

Using the right tools makes it easier for an organization to get employees connected and aware of its messaging, not to mention, the right tools provide more time to strategize on company objectives since repetitive, mundane tasks are streamlined.

It is a virtuous cycle as established company values will inform the organization's culture and from that culture will naturally come the need for particular policies and tools to frame the corporate dialogue in the right direction.

Business objectives can't be reached without a contribution from employees, who live and breathe the brand every day and often interact with customers face-to-face.

Facilitating communication amongst employees and between management and employees is the only way to build a thriving corporation that can endure the challenges of a competitive marketplace.

Bring employees into the corporate conversation by sharing the company's values with them in a digestible manner, creating programs and policies to put these values into action and by investing in modern tools to streamline the entire process for optimal employee buy-in.



## Connect with Your Most Valued Asset, Your Employees

Modernize, streamline, and measure all your employee communication with one platform.

Trusted by Hundreds of the World's Leading Brands



BMW GROUP

P&G

IBM



Capital One

Deloitte.

Humana.

### Employee Communication and Engagement Platform



#### Modernize

Mobile-optimized, personalized way to connect with your employees on their terms:

- Push notifications and alerts
- Native video
- Documents, newsletters, surveys



#### Streamline

Single platform delivers trusted information that employees need to do their jobs:

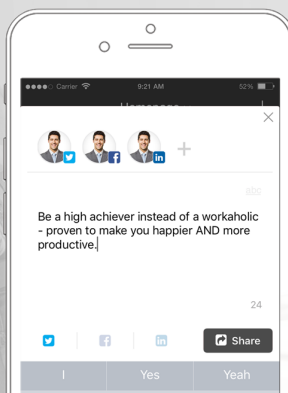
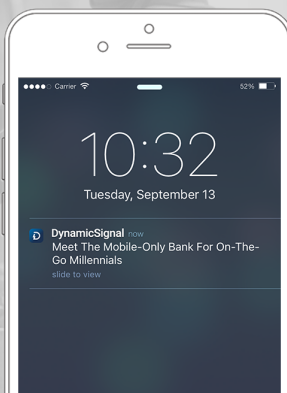
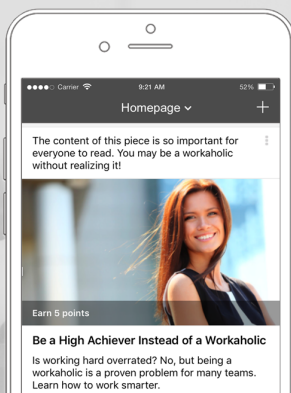
- Consolidates existing systems
- Easily accessible
- Targets relevant content



#### Measure

Accurate metrics show effectiveness of communication and where to improve:

- Track engagement
- Optimize strategy
- Demonstrate strategic impact



20% of the Fortune 100 use Dynamic Signal to keep global employees informed and engaged

All 8 of the top PR Agencies in the world use Dynamic Signal internally and suggest it for their customers

Over 4 million pieces of content have been published on the Dynamic Signal platform