



OPTIMISING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Business need

In today's competitive environment, amidst skills shortages and financial pressures to "do more, with less" effective communication with employees is more important than ever.

Various studies have proven the relationship between effective internal communication and organisational performance. Effective internal communication results in:

- ▣ Strategic alignment
- ▣ High levels of trust, and
- ▣ Increased productivity



Managers as the key conduit in internal communication

Internal communication is layered: on one level it comprises a network of corporate communication channels, managed by communication professionals. On another it consists of the interpersonal communication process between leaders/ managers and their teams.

An overwhelming body of research indicates that effective manager-to-employee communication is the "secret sauce" in driving organisational performance. Line managers represent the most employee-preferred communication channel within an organisation. Management communication has a much more significant impact on employee behaviour than even the most sophisticated network of corporate communication channels

(electronic and printed newsletters, interactive chat rooms, glossy magazines).

The Corporate Leadership Council, for instance, has determined that effective internal communication by managers has the potential to increase employees' efforts at the workplace with as much as 29%.

Furthermore, research indicates that organisations with above-average levels of management communication are nearly twice as likely to exhibit above-average revenue growth, than their peers with below-average levels of management communication.

Emphasising the inherent value of internal communication—in that it motivates employee effort and thus, overall organisation performance—helps managers recognise the importance of their role. Increasingly leadership challenges demand superior communication skills to inspire, motivate, and lead people to perform optimally.

Communication professionals realise that without an intervention in the form of communication capacity building for managers, their organisations pay a significant price. For Communication professionals, such intervention provides an opportunity to embed effective communication in the organisational DNA. Equipping managers—the most authentic and effective communication channel—with core communication skills, fosters an open communication climate and a culture of effective employee engagement.

In short, upskilling managers in core communication skills, is truly one of the most critical Group-wide contributions that a Corporate Affairs team can make.

The employee communication solution described in this proposal is geared towards achieving this.



The training course is certified by the University of Pretoria, and managers who have completed the course receive a certificate of competence from the University.

The training solution unpacked

The training solution in short

The solution comprises of:

- ❶ An online training course to equip managers with best practice communication skills required, and
- ❷ A one-day training workshop in the form of a practical, experiential-based, non-classroom ‘learning-from-one-another’ experience

The solution focuses on the four contexts with the highest impact on organisational performance, where managers’ ability to communicate effectively is most critical. These contexts are offered in four modules, focusing on:

- 📌 Everyday operational communication with team members
- 📌 Communication during change
- 📌 Communication in cross-functional project teams
- 📌 Strategic dialogue

Training content

Content is structured based on research into instructional design, adult learning and information processing. All modules are designed so that new knowledge and skills are made practical, and will be remembered and retrieved for future use. Different learning styles are accommodated through audio, visual graphics, text, video, and printable notes and tools in PDF downloadable files (see Training format for more detail).

Core communication skills are integrated into the course content: e.g. effective listening, motivation, facilitation and conflict management.

The content can be contextualised for any organisation, by making use of examples that employees of the organisation can easily identify with, leadership quotes, statistics, and case studies.

The most important outcomes associated with each module, are:

Module	Managers will be able to...
Operational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Through their communication motivate people to perform better ➤ Through their communication inspire their teams (give meaning and a greater sense of purpose) ➤ Practically engage staff in line with global best practice ➤ Give feedback in a constructive manner ➤ Strike a balance between individual and team communication
Communication during change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Institute change ➤ Lead people through transition ➤ Pre-empt and deal with individual reactions to change
Project communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use excellent communication to project manage team work ➤ Become a productive team member by means of effective communication ➤ Become an effective listener ➤ Deal with group conflict ➤ Deal with conflict on an interpersonal level
Strategic dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Impart vision and share strategic intent with subordinates ➤ Encourage strategic alignment ➤ Create a the fit between strategy (what we want to achieve) and culture (the way we do things) necessary for implementation (strategy execution)

Training format

Online training

The online training programme is HTML based and users only need an internet browser and internet access. The programme can either be hosted on a G3 training server, or form part of the University of Pretoria's online training platform. Users can access the training at a time convenient to them, be that from home or work, regardless of different time zones.

The design and layout will have the company's look and feel. Content navigation is easy and flexible, allowing users to click through the content in their preferred sequence, and to bookmark the place where they left off, facilitating an easy return to where the module was exited.

Enhancements can be made to how the content is packaged in order to keep users interested, and involved. Interactive features such as exercises, quizzes, video clips, checklists, cartoons, simulations of real life situations, voice-overs, etc. can be considered.

A chat room facility can be built into the online solution, if desired, where experts address users' questions or real life engagement challenges in pre-arranged timeslots.

Interactivity is further enhanced by the content assessment at the end of each module. The user has three opportunities to illustrate that he/she has mastered a particular module. Based on the results of these assessments, the University award their competency rating and certificate.

Benefits of the online solution include the fact that it is –

- Self directed and convenient – employees can use it where and when convenient
- Easy to Use – easy navigation on any web browser
- Interactive – users are kept involved in the content by a number of interactive features
- Cost effective – no hardware or software to be acquired, online training do not involve travel by employees or presenters fees

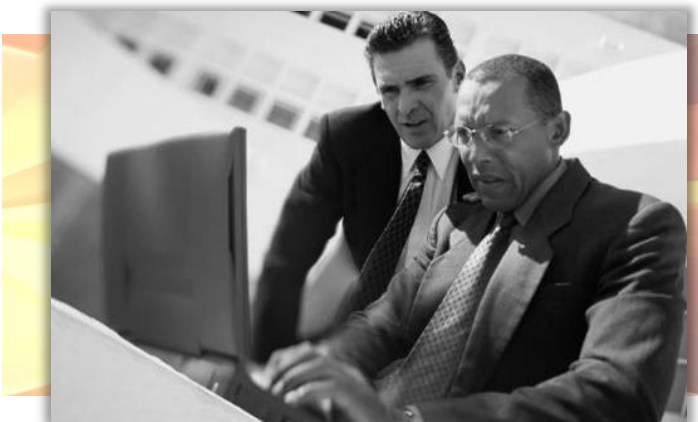


Experiential-based workshop

The one-day training workshop is optional. It is offered by the University of Pretoria and offers an opportunity to 'test drive' the newly acquired skills in an experiential based context. Only managers who mastered all three the online modules, obtains entry into the one-day training workshop. In this way, no time is wasted during the one-day workshop on instruction, explanation or presentation. All workshop participants work from the same foundation (knowledge gained through the online course).

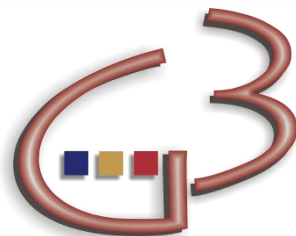
The workshop provides managers an opportunity to simulate situations, apply newly acquired skills, debrief on the experience and workshop how this links back to previous experiences. Participants learn from one another and have an opportunity to question and challenge what they perceive to be unrealistic or not effective.

The workshop programme will make provision for role play, video recordings and observation to provide feedback to participants on how to apply their engagement skills more effectively in real life.



In closing

A typical manager spends some 70% to 80% of a working day communicating to others. Consider the impact on the bottom line, culture and reputation of the organization, if this communication is effective. And to the converse: consider the opportunity costs if this expensive time spent on communication renders disgruntled, unmotivated or disengaged employees.



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS