



Communication Plan Guide

for engaging employees and boosting performance

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Research suggests that almost 70% of plans fail. That same research suggests that plans fail not because the plan was bad, but because the necessary connections between the plan and the actions taken by individual employees never occurred. In other words, the success of your business plan, including the vision, mission, objectives, goals and bottom line results, rests with your ability to get the buy-in and commitment of your employees so that they focus their efforts on the key goals.

How can I get my employees focused on our key goals?

As a leader, this is likely one of the most important questions you ask yourself. Having employees understand the goals you have set and getting them to take the appropriate actions in support of those goals is vitally important to your business - because if they don't commit to doing what needs to be done your plan will fail. And failure of your plan may well mean failure of your business.

And so we turn to communication.

We try and try and try - through memos, speeches, newsletters, meetings and a host of other methods...yet every time we do an employee survey, the results seem to be the same: communication scores low and far too many employees don't recognize a direct link between their job and overall company performance. The good news is that the process of engaging employees in your critical plans, and thereby improving performance, is not nearly as difficult as you may think. The core of communicating effectively inside an organization is simple: it's about making plans relevant to each and every employee. Worded differently, it's about making communication strategic, linking messages to behaviours and employee the right tactics.

How do you turn communication into a strategic tool?

The key to understanding communication, like many other processes becomes much easier when you have a few fundamental principles and a planning model to work from. Once you understand the principles and model, you can truly begin to effect performance. Since 1997, Strategic Connections Inc. has been helping companies develop and implement communication plans that work. Prior to 1997, I had the good fortune to work inside a large, successful organization doing the same thing - helping the company as a whole, and the key business units within connect their employees to the plans.

The model I use is about ensuring a commitment to take the appropriate action by enhancing understanding, linking that understanding to an employee's job and identifying behaviours and actions that support the plan. In other words, it is a model that will help you be one of the 30% of those who succeed. This guide offers an outline of my communication-planning model.

As you work through the model you may find the articles, ideas and tools available at www.strategicconnections.com, quite helpful. You may also find that the full workbook behind this guide, which is available for purchase through the Strategic Connections Inc. website to be of greater assistance in preparing your plan.

I wish you well in your quest to bring life to your business plans and objectives by engaging your employees. And as always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,



Ken Milloy
President, Strategic Connections Inc.



STEP 1: KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION AND WHAT'S GOING ON - INSIDE AND OUT

Section 1 - Situational Assessment

What is going on outside of your (company, division, and/or department)?

What is going on inside of your (company, division and/or department)?

What are the vision and strategic goals / objectives of your company?

Describe your company culture in as much depth as possible.

Describe the most critical issues and challenges that exist within your company from your employees' point of view?

Section 2 - Business Goals

The communication plan you are developing is intended to assist with the achievement of some specific management goals - what are they?

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

- 4)



Describe the target audience in terms of demographics, lenght of service, work location / situation / constraints, geographical issues, access to computers, preferred communication channels and so forth.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

STEP 3 - DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What is your overall goal for this communication plan?

What are the objectives you will pursue in support of this goal?

1)

2)

3)



STEP 4 - DEVELOP KEY MESSAGES

The messages I need to communicate include:

Key Message 1:

Sub-message(s):

Key Message 2:

Sub-message(s):

Key Message 3:

Sub-message(s):

Key Message 4:

Sub-message(s):

Remember: Test the effectiveness and clarity of your messages with the audiences they are targeted at.



STEP 5 - IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

What strategies will you use to support your communication goals and objectives?

1)

2)

3)

4)



STEP 6 - PLAN YOUR TACTICS

Action	Description	Vehicle	When
Feature Story On Strategic Plan	Conduct an interview with the CEO focused on the strategic plan for the year ahead; present in interview format	Employee Newsletter	April 2004



STEP 7 - GET ON WITH IT!

Implementation

How many plans have you seen written and not implemented?

The fact of the matter is that no matter how great your plan is, if you don't get around to getting on with it as its written - you have wasted your time planning the darn thing.

Make sure that the right people are assigned the right tasks, that your budget is clear and available, and that you have budgeted the right amount of time to do the work you need to do.

And most importantly of all - have fun, keep going and remember - your plan will not be perfect and adjustments will have to be made as you go.

Oh yeah - remember that every question that comes up and every roadblock you encounter offers one very important thing - an opportunity to improve your plan.



WORKSHEET 8: EVALUATION PLANNING FORM

What I want to measure	How		When	Questions I can ask to measure success
	Qualitative	Quantitative		
Actions taken by the audience in response to the communication				
Attitude changes of audience				
Behaviour changes of audience				
Increase in understanding and/or comprehension				
Relevancy of communication				
Believability of communication				
Timeliness of delivery				
Clarity of messages delivered				
Effectiveness of vehicles and processes used				
Other				
Other				



“ When UMA embarked on a new strategy and a major reorganization we knew the success of the change was highly dependent on communicating effectively and achieving a cultural change.

Ken Milloy should be given considerable credit for helping us achieve our goal.

I have no hesitation in recommending Ken as an expert and highly responsive practitioner.”

Jeremy O. Kon, Chair & CEO, The UMA Group

Research suggests that almost 70% of initiatives similar to UMA's fail - not because the plan was bad, but because people didn't buy in and take responsibility. Using approaches we have developed and proven to be effective time and again, we work with clients like UMA to ensure they are among the 30% who succeed.

Taking a whole-systems view, we are able to establish clarity about what needs to be achieved and the plan to make it happen. We then provide the expertise and hands-on guidance to make it happen. Our aim is simple; thought leadership, practical solutions and peace of mind for you.

Through results like those achieved at UMA, we have established a reputation as leaders in strategic internal communication. To find out how we can help you succeed, call Ken Milloy at 604.461.8222, or visit www.strategicconnections.com.



engaging people . . . boosting performance