

besPEAK



Internal Communications: integral to your business' success

We believe internal communications (IC) is one of the cornerstones of effective employee engagement in successful and high functioning organizations.

Yet it is often the most under resourced, misrepresented and poorly utilized function in businesses today.

According to a landmark study, companies that invest in employee communications and implement or improve communications practices typically see higher subsequent [financial] returns.

Recently, beSPEAK Communications interviewed communication professionals who not only “get” internal communications, they excel at it – and they’ve got the awards, expertise and experience to show for it. Best of all, they were willing to share their knowledge and insights so that we can all work a little harder – and much smarter – to help raise the bar for our internal communications efforts,

benefiting both our employees and our organizations.

Your company can't – or shouldn't – do without a strong representation of strategic, professional internal communications capability. This report will show you that the success of your company is dependent on the success of a solid internal communications strategy.

bespeak (v.) – to speak for something; to be a sign or indication of something

beSPEAK is a public relations and corporate communications consultancy. beSPEAK handles key areas of communication where the ‘voice’ of your organization needs to be heard – in corporate affairs, product/brand communication, issues/crisis management, corporate reputation, corporate communications strategy, stakeholder and community engagement, communications analysis and research. Visit bespeakcommunications.com or connect with an email to listening@bespeakcommunications.com.

The professionals:

Our conversations took place over the fourth quarter of 2010 with internal communications leaders in a variety of industry sectors in Canada, including:

- * banking
- * natural resources
- * pharmaceutical
- * professional services
- * retail

Employee base:

The experts we spoke with work for organizations with an employee base ranging in size from 180 to 140,000 people – a diverse audience size with typically Canadian communications challenges. The IC experts tell us that their employees are decentralized across multiple locations, often spread from coast to Canadian coast and some even scattered locations in countries located around the world.

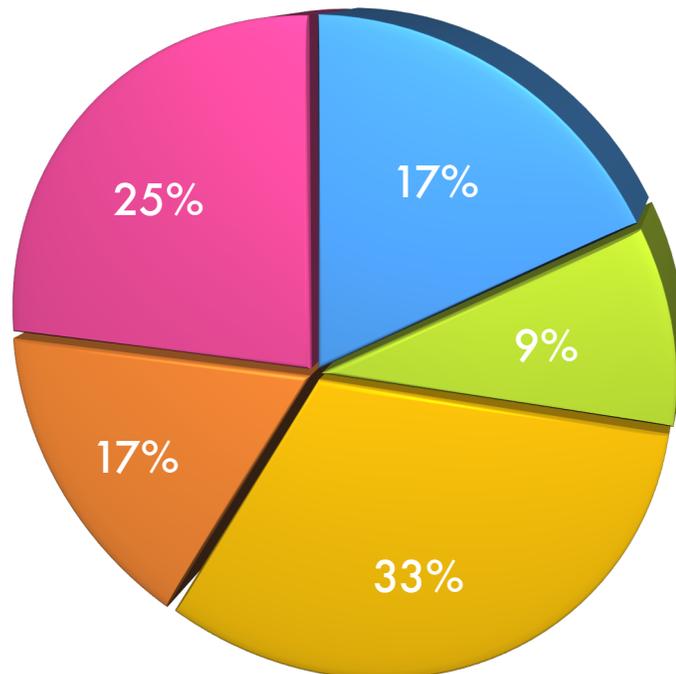
Resources

Internal communications teams consist of anywhere from less than one full time employee to 45+ team members focused on delivering business information to employees. This means that there are some organizations relying on a head count of only a few people to meet the information and engagement needs of thousands of employees. Communications professionals need to be focused and clever

Internal communications professionals report into a variety of functions, including:

- Marketing
- Corporate Communications
- Public Affairs
- President/CEO

It's worth mentioning that none of the experts we spoke with report into Human Resources. What's more important to note is that in spite of reporting relationships, partnering with HR is an essential ingredient to the success of the IC function.



What has helped these communications professionals achieve their success? How do they add value to their organization regardless of the resources available to them; how do they create their own ROI? We can summarize what's working for them – their success factors – under four main headings:

Strategic

- The internal communications team spends a great deal of time consulting regularly with leaders in the organization. They continually work to ensure that the management and leadership teams “get it”. They not only have access to all members of the senior executive, but they categorize their working relationship as one of collaborating “hip to hip”.
- They work to sustain the business’ day-to-day needs by providing communications that support business outcomes and plans that are top of mind, and in sync, with the CEO.
- This function realizes the value of measurement and the old adage: what counts is what you count.

- Most importantly, the internal communications function never loses sight of sharing their employees’ viewpoints and faces wherever and whenever they can be incorporated.

Specific

- All efforts are designed to engage and motivate employees.
- The communicators position themselves as a resource – but not as “writers for hire”.
- They define what they do, but even more essential, they define what they don't do.

Supportive

- Working with key individuals around the organization, the IC team ensures communications are effective by playing the role of counsel and coach.
- The team act as leaders rather than doers, strategically positioning themselves as strategists rather than just tacticians.
- They position themselves in the role of gatekeeper for employee communications, helping ensure the flow, timing and format of information to the staff.

So how do you measure up?

If you are charged with the role and opportunity to inform, educate and motivate your employees to make them your best brand ambassadors – do you know where you stand on the apparent divide?

Are you supported, employed and utilized to maximize the IC potential in your organization? If you can't score yourself a 10, it's time to rethink how you can make the most of what you have to increase your reach, your impact and your results.

Talk to [beSPEAK Communications](#) to find solutions to help move your internal communications from a “nice to have” to a necessary function that is integral to your business’ success.

Streamlined

- Successful IC teams have created trusted tools that are strategic, aligned and planned.
- They ensure they reduce the noise, rather than create or add to it.