

Employee Communication

Effective employee communication is a vital aspect of the employer-employee relationship. It shows employees that they are valued by the company; conversely, lack of communication can make them feel underappreciated, fostering discontentment and low morale. With all the possible channels for communication today, there are plenty of opportunities to supply employees with timely and accurate company news and information.

Mediums for Employee Communication

In today's technology age, the communication options are seemingly endless. However, it's important to balance technological channels with face-to-face contact, so that executives and managers stay visible and accessible to employees.

Examples of technological communication channels:

- E-mail
- Videos (online or broadcast on televisions around the building)
- Blogs (written by CEOs or other executives)
- Podcasts
- Intranet
- Hotline telephone number for emergencies or important announcements
- Newsletters
- Bulletin boards (online or physical)

Examples of face-to-face interactions:

- Town hall meetings

- Company or department-wide meetings
- CEOs or executives walking around chatting with employees
- One-on-one meetings between employees and their direct supervisor

When to Communicate with Employees

Communication is important on several levels, ranging from groundbreaking company information to day-to-day

- o *Quarterly and yearly goals, initiatives and achievements:* Give employees access to company sales data, upcoming and ongoing goals or initiatives, and details on the future direction of the company. They want to know that they are working for a healthy, financially solvent company, and they likely will be interested to hear what direction decision makers are taking the company.
- o *One-on-one meetings:* All employees

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interaction.

- o *Significant news:* This includes layoffs, mergers/acquisitions, management changes, new product announcements, bankruptcy, organizational crises and company re-organization. It is essential to inform employees of such news promptly, truthfully and transparently. Nothing hurts employee morale and loyalty more than hearing about something on the morning news rather than from their employer.

should have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with their immediate supervisor periodically to discuss expectations, current projects and concerns or questions on either end.

- o *Praise and recognition:* Employees want their hard work to be recognized, so make sure your management team finds ways to praise large accomplishments of teams or individuals. Whether it's a personal e-mail, an in-person handshake or an announcement on the company intranet, don't let employee achievement go unnoticed.



HR insights

- *New hires and promotion:* Keep employees in the loop by announcing new hires and promotions to the company or branch. This will help new employees feel welcome and will further the recognition for promoted individuals.
- *Ongoing company news or information:* This could be anything from how current projects are progressing to dates for the upcoming company picnic to updates in a company policy. Through your chosen communication channels, make sure employees are always informed on any information relevant to them. The more involved they feel with the company, the more loyalty they will likely have.
- Conduct periodic employee opinion surveys and keep them anonymous to encourage candid responses. Analyze the results collectively and work to improve items of concern among employees.
- Have an open-door policy for all management levels. Employees should feel comfortable expressing their ideas, concerns or suggestions with a supervisor.

Fostering Two-Way Communication

Getting information out to employees is essential, but hearing their thoughts, concerns and ideas is important too. Not only will they feel like the company values their opinion, but they could provide some excellent feedback for future changes or improvements. Here are just a few ideas for encouraging open communication:

- During company or department-wide meetings, allow time at the end for a question and answer portion. Here, executives need to be sure to answer employees honestly and directly, even if the answer is, "I'm not sure" or "I can't discuss that now and here's why..."
- When possible, deliver news in smaller group settings to allow for discussion and conversation among employees and management.

