

# Internal communication is the secret to sales success

By [Conan Green](#)

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It's not what you say, but how you say it. And often, those who are closest to us are the last to know. As communicators, our focus is often how best to reach external audiences: We devise campaigns for everything from advertising and public relations to social media posts and newsletters, to serve our clients best. Engaging with a brand's staff - who are elemental to its purpose and brand - is rarely given enough attention, even though they are a company's biggest ambassadors and can be its greatest weakness.



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

Being intentional about internal communications plays a vital role not just in extending a brand but also in helping staff feel more empowered, knowledgeable, connected, and appreciated: factors that all tie into marketing and company culture.

Why does internal communications warrant such attention? It's all about promoting effective communications among the people who make your organisation work. It involves producing and delivering messages and campaigns on behalf of management, as well as facilitating conversations with the people who make up the organisation.

## Strategic internal communication

Businesses that understand the power of strategic internal communication create a brand following from the inside out. As specialists in internal communication, DDB South Africa believes that staff are, in fact, a brand's most important audience.

Staff are often the first touchpoint for the public, which means when you're dealing with businesses that boast thousands of staff members, you have the opportunity to make each one of them an ambassador for your brand: Ambassadors that are invested in your business's success and will work as hard as your advertising will.



## Why internal communication or employee engagement is important

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To DDB SA, using current advertising trends to stay relevant to an external audience should apply to a brand's internal communications as well. While most brands see their staff body as a single entity or workforce, they should be seen as people first. People who, like their external audience, either buy into that brand or not, who share their brand loyalties on social media, and who influence the people around them through their buying behaviour and word of mouth.

Internal communication is a tool to turn staff members into proud salespeople for your product. The correct use of internal communication, at the right time, in the right tone, should double your potential for sales, before you've even started advertising. When a brand or agency receives an internal comms brief they should look at it with the ultimate goal of turning a business' staff members into influencers for the brand.

Internal comms practitioners or agencies should ask themselves:

- How does the new message differ from what's been communicated before? This helps build a consistent and progressing narrative for staff to be part of and evolve with.
- Who, exactly, will be receiving these comms? This means taking off your advertising hat and sitting down to listen to those people. Understanding the tone and temperature of their day-to-day work lives, knowing what slang and inside jokes they share.
- What is the staff's relationship with your communication platforms? This means understanding whether staff engage more on your intranet versus Facebook Workplace, for example, or if there are more effective spaces to communicate for maximum effect.
- How do staff engage on those platforms? And how can we use that knowledge to maximise engagement with your message? Knowing that people are more likely to remember something they've personally engaged with, the agency recommends using conversational platforms like Facebook Workplace, WhatsApp or an intranet platform to encourage ongoing conversation and engagement around the subject matter.

As with external campaign plans, a strategic channel approach is important to successfully communicate to staff.

At DDB South Africa, we've created an ecosystem of internal messaging, which is broken down into different themes and tones, and then communicated separately onto a platform that best suits it. For example, Facebook Workplace might include slang, memes and emojis for more conversational messaging, while a business' intranet is relied on for more formal information. This means successfully landing each message in a way that feels natural and native to its environment while landing the broader message across the ecosystem.

This unique approach to internal communication was most recently applied to MTN's latest rebrand. DDB was responsible for landing the historic rebrand to staff members, which it did in a personal and memorable way.

Knowing that the "What Are We Doing Today?" platform revolved around goals, drive and teamwork, DDB strategically aimed its sights on MTN staff members as individuals first. It performed on-the-ground conversations with staff as well as

giving them an opportunity to share their goals and ambitions. Using the similarities between each staff member, the agency was able to seamlessly introduce MTN's new platform by showing the entire staff body how alike their dreams and goals are, and how they've all been working towards a similar goal all along.



## MTN Group brand evolution underlines its role as a driver of Africa's progress

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There are several factors to take into account to successfully introduce staff to change, no matter the brand or organisation. Consider these:

- It's not communication, it's conversation. It needs to feel two-way, so staff feel like their point of view matters. Opening up that avenue of conversation opens up the possibility of staff embracing any change and ultimately taking ownership of it.
- Know the brand DNA intimately and know what was communicated before and how. Letting this knowledge affect your comms means that any change you're communicating is introduced as an evolution of who the brand is, rather than being an erratic departure from the brand staff members know and love.
- Allow staff members to find a personal connection to the new information first. For staff members to become ambassadors for your brand, the brand needs to prove itself worthy. Your job is to create a positive and personal impression on each of them.
- Know that communication fatigue is a real issue. This doesn't mean communicating less, it means communicating correctly – using an understanding of how staff members operate and engage on the platforms you have available and communicating accordingly.
- Everyone loves a good meme. Staff members are people before they're employees. Brands who understand that, and who allow themselves to break away from business-only speak and let their guard down a bit, will find that they'll connect with the people behind the job titles.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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