



MULTICHANNEL INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Creating and executing effective
communications in the new normal



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1. INTRODUCTION

As businesses adapt to meet the demands of the “new normal”, a dynamic and holistic approach to communications strategies is starting to emerge. Business leaders and managers looking beyond 2020 towards a post-pandemic world are transforming their attitude towards communications, adopting a multichannel approach to the dissemination of information, feedback and training material.

Digital tools lie at the heart of this transformation in communication strategies, aligning goal setting, performance management, continuous feedback and talent stack growth into a unified system which drives collaboration and productivity.

2. MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS – THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The way in which individuals and teams communicate in the workplace has undergone radical change in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses have gone to great lengths to put in place protocols to protect the workforce and continue their work in a safe and secure manner. The provision of PPE, deep-cleaning and social distancing measures, combined with on-site health screening and isolation rules have created unprecedented barriers to communication in the workplace.

But the biggest seismic shift has occurred in the realm of digital communications and the rapid rise of remote working. In 2012, Gallup reported that *39% of the workforce was working off-site at least some of the time. By 2016 the figure reached 43%. With the arrival of the global pandemic, the number of remote workers in April 2020 reached 62%*, with the “new normal” indicating this trend towards a greater number of employees working remotely is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

This transformation in the way businesses operate poses a number of communications challenges:



Establishing and tracking objectives

Managers and team leaders need to communicate objectives and key results to employees in a transparent manner, ensuring that the company's top priorities are clearly understood. When goals change, employees require instant updates in order to keep them on track for success.



Aligning teams and individuals

With teams and individuals dispersed geographically, making sure the right people are involved in the right conversations is essential. New communication methods are necessary to ensure employees are aligned so they remain focused on the tasks which matter the most.



Making feedback an ongoing process

With managers unable to walk around the office to understand how teams and individuals are working together, new strategies focused on continuous feedback need to be implemented to ensure that challenges are identified and addressed in a timely manner.



Keeping employees motivated & engaged

New styles of communication are required of managers and HR leaders to track employee motivation and encourage greater engagement. With employees reacting differently to working from home, consideration for their emotional and physical well-being must be made and any support communicated clearly.

“Remember that employee communications is a way to bring people together. Many of the most important communications systems now engage people in conversations, let people give feedback, and include voting (“thumbs up”) on various options to help employees feel involved.”

JOSH BERSIN



3. 2020 AND BEYOND – EMERGING TRENDS

To meet these unique challenges, businesses around the globe are adopting a new communications strategy, driven not just by the HR department, but by everyone from shop floor management to the company CEO.

This holistic approach to frequent and transparent communication strives to bring unity and cohesion to a strategy which was otherwise scattered and in disarray. Communications are no longer simply about conveying information to employees; they are about aligning and driving both individual and business growth and disseminating new ways of thinking throughout the workforce.

Multichannel communications platforms are an essential tool for businesses seeking to accomplish these goals. This approach allows leaders to create a diverse set of channels to meet the

demands of the various sections of the workforce, creating and sharing a range of media to the people and teams who need them. These include:

- 1 Social messages**
Get up to speed on daily tasks and share new information directly to teams and individuals. These conversations allow managers to keep track of priorities while making sure everyone is aligned and getting the feedback they need.
- 2 Blogs**
Update employees on new trends and business practices with informative blog posts and video articles. An effective multichannel communications strategy should have ongoing training as a core feature.

3

Crisis Comms

Share critical information on urgent changes directly to team and individuals, with digital sign-off for peace of mind. Updates to Health and Safety policies and pandemic response protocols can be swiftly documented and distributed.

4

Reviews and Appraisals

Schedule regular one-2-ones, check-ins and other meetings with employees. Regular meetings to catch up on any progress while identifying areas for concern gives managers the necessary oversight to offer assistance and training.

Benefits of a unified multichannel communications strategy:



A real-life example: How Hunter Warfield can now use Microsoft Teams for HR and Multi-Channel Communication:



The US based company provides revenue recovery and risk mitigating services. Their mission is creating a positive change in the financial lives of all of their clients, whilst ensuring a results-driven, but empathetic approach to business.

The innovative and forward-thinking team has been proactively utilising technology throughout various aspects of their business. However, they faced a number of challenges with their previous approach to multi-channel communications:



Reviews, Check-ins & Appraisals:

The Hunter Warfield HR team spent up to 2 weeks every quarter manually collecting individual employee objectives data for a strategic performance report for their President. There was no analytics infrastructure for tracking or easily communicating individual progress against company and departmental goals.



Critical health and safety related communication:

Based in Florida and Guatemala the company often has to send out Health & Safety related critical alerts to its distributed team, such as hurricane alerts.



Costs:

Considering the time spent on pulling information together and the lack of reporting and communications infrastructure the costs of the pervious HR software at \$25,000 were significant.

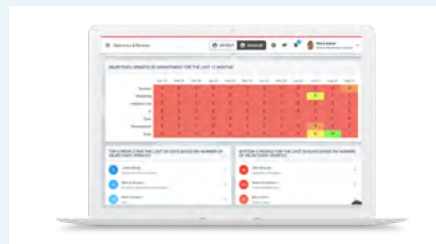
However, they had to rely on an sms service, which meant no tracking ability or reporting capability on who read the messages or any critical internal communications.



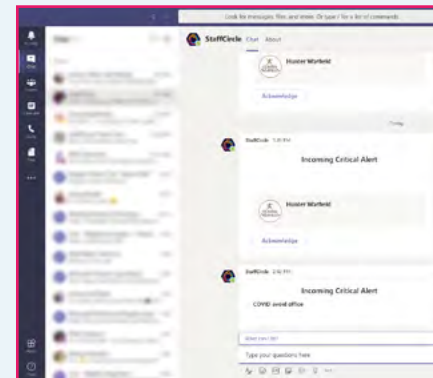


With the implementation of a software that is not only a multi-channel communication tool but a performance management system Hunter Warfield sees the following results:

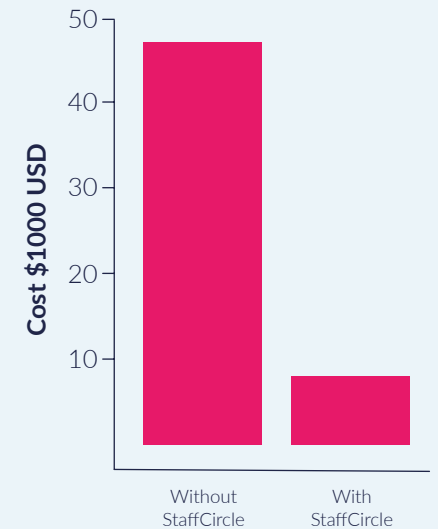
1 Birds-eye view analytics with a heat map which can save the company's HR team up to 8 weeks of administrative time each year. The President can now log in at any time and check individual, departmental and company level progression. Communication between managers and employees is regular.



2 The Communications module will allow managers to reach employees on their preferred channel, regardless of location and create visibility of messages read. Whether it is via text message, Microsoft Teams or push notifications, the distributed workforce will always get critical alerts.



3 StaffCircle is considerably more cost effective than most other multi-channel communication or HR tools, in this instance the forecasted **savings adding up to \$39,000 over just 2 years.**



4. MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

“We have to remember that employee communications are not just focused on information: they are designed to support change. Rather than just “inform” people through email or online events, we want them to know there is a new policy, new organization change, or major new initiative that changes their life at work.”

Analysis from [Josh Bersin](#) predicts a rapid rise in the global digital jobs capacity by 2025, with an estimated 149 million jobs spread across sectors including privacy and trust (1 million), cyber security (6 million), data analysis, machine learning and AI (20 million), cloud and data roles (23 million), and software development (98 million). This acceleration is bringing with it a need for new models of education and training, and a communication strategy which places skills training at its foundation.

Multichannel communications can be used to amplify a culture of collaborative learning, with individuals and teams sharing resources, delivering constructive feedback and creating thought-provoking discussions within a unified framework. Encouraging employees to build their talent stacks has been demonstrated in multiple studies to [positively impact](#)

[engagement](#) while a study from [Harvard Business Review](#) revealed that focusing on learning is an optimal method for dealing with anxiety, acting as a buffer for stress, and significantly reducing burnout.

As Tim Sarchet explains in his article for Training Zone, Why collaboration is key to learning in the [new normal](#):

“Traditional leadership is built around hierarchy, set performance goals, structured communication and well-established decision-making protocols, but in the ‘new normal’ world, all of that has been jettisoned. Goals alter weekly and employees need to have more autonomy in decision making when face-to-face contact is no longer the norm. Collaborative learning can help managers work

together to establish new ways of communicating and managing dispersed workforces, while also supporting greater team agility and employee empowerment.”

5. FIVE STEPS FOR EXECUTING MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATION

1

Utilize performance management tools

A multichannel communications strategy is most effective when it is tied to performance and communicating objectives and KPIs across the workforce. Managers can provide ongoing performance feedback, take proactive action to address issues and recognise high-performing A-players who may feel undervalued.

2

Integrate with MS Teams

With the increasing popularity of the Microsoft Teams platform, integration with a multichannel communications platform streamlines administration tasks even further. Integrating performance management tools allows for staff across the workforce to understand their role and gain greater insight within the familiar framework of Teams.

3

Align the workforce across multiple devices

An effective multichannel communications strategy maximizes the potential of the contemporary digital landscape. Emails, direct messages, documentation and videos can all be sent to a variety of device types, including desktop/laptops and mobile phones, making sure staff can be reached wherever they are.

4

Understand priorities and use alerts

Newsfeeds and dashboards cut through the noise and allow employees to see what matters most in real-time. By using a customizable Today Screen, managers can personalize objectives and offer feedback, while also sending out media, training and other notifications to individuals, teams and departments.

5

Marshal data analytics

With multiple unique channels of communication available, data analytics helps leaders break down the various metrics of performance in line with the desired outcomes. By using data analytics and reporting, businesses can better understand how effectively their communications strategy is working in alignment with their company's core values.



9. CONCLUSION

An effective multichannel communications strategy synchronizes employees throughout the organization, delivering key information across an array of digital platforms while engaging and motivating the workforce. By assigning individuals, teams and departments their own unique channels, HR leaders and managers can create custom digital templates and review progress via built-in analytics.

StaffCircle is leading the way in how companies achieve a better performing culture with higher employee engagement and more transparency across the organisation. We believe that performance management is intrinsically

linked to employee engagement, so we designed our cloud-based platform to do both. Our flexible performance management gives a 360 view of each and every employee and fully automates every stage of the process. Combining this with multi-channel engagement and communication features that are designed to reach distributed workforces, delivers a better employee experience and measurably improves workplace culture.

Conclusion



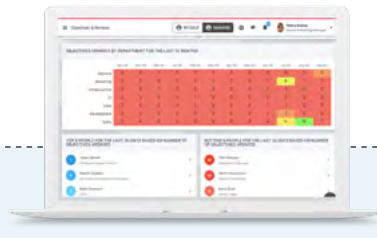
Holidays and Absence



Microsoft Teams Integration



Objectives Dashboard



Objectives Heat Map

This approach encompassing continuous feedback and the ongoing development of skills ensures that companies are best positioned to deal with the evolving landscape of the “new normal” in 2020 and beyond. StaffCircle offers a comprehensive solution to the communication challenges businesses face, recognising the need for flexible tools which integrate performance management and HR processes within an internal communications platform. With a birds' eye view of individuals and teams, StaffCircle's digital suite allows leaders to drive engagement and motivation where it is needed and visibly reward the top performers, encouraging the behaviours which drive the company towards success.



Document Resources

This document draws upon a wide range of research from a variety of reputable sources. To find out more click the links below:

Gallup: Remote Work Trends to Guide High Performance During COVID-19

Josh Bersin: The Urgent Need for Change Communications

Josh Bersin: Microsoft Get Serious About Skills: Major New Announcements

Semantic Scholar: Mapping Talent Development: Definition, Scope and Architecture

Harvard Business Review: To Cope With Stress, Try Learning Something New



staffcircle
your people unified

