

# How to Measure the Impact of Employee Communication and Engagement

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Capturing the ROI Of Modernized Communication Technology

A distinct trait top-performing organizations have in common is highly effective communication practices. These companies consistently communicate across departments and among employees, ensuring their goals are clear and all stakeholders are heard. According to Inc, the benefits of investing in communication policies are:

- 47% higher total returns to shareholders
- 19% higher market premium
- 4.5x times more likely to have highly engaged employees
- 20% more likely to have less employee turnover

Unfortunately, employee communication and engagement are often neglected across a company as they are assumed difficult to measure. Evolving communication expectations and outdated technologies, such as the intranet and email newsletters, make impact metrics difficult to produce.

Communicators can encourage its C-Suite to invest in employee communication and engagement by developing a measurement program to address these issues and analyze the effects of their strategic programs. The stronger your understanding of how employee communications contributes to the bottom line, the easier it is for an organization to prioritize the initiative.

An effective measurement framework consists of designing systems and adopting a robust platform to automate certain aspects of a company's communication approach.

Most importantly, establish goals for your program, pairing them with metrics based on industry standards, company data and existing corporate objectives.

In this eBook, you'll learn what goals an organization should use to evaluate the progress of employee communications.

**Key Takeaway: Brands don't grasp the importance of employee communication because it is difficult to quantify due to outdated technology.**

# CALCULATE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Participation is a key benefit of employee communication. As more employees genuinely partake in company events and programs, the better the working environment is for everyone. Employee participation can cover everything from attending a team happy hour, responding to a department-wide email chain, taking part in a seminar on corporate leadership and more.

An organization can require employees to partake in various programs, but to reap the full benefits of employee participation, a staffer must join in because they are genuinely interested. Disingenuous participation from employees leads to misleading and lackluster results, wasted resources and stalled company growth.

Unfortunately, encouraging participation in the workplace is taxing, as it is easy for employees to ignore messaging about corporate programming since they are already inundated with daily emails.

Employee communications helps increase staff attendance at meetings, awards programs, fundraisers, and so on, by keeping everyone informed of what's happening, communicating the goal, and why it's important to attend.

To encourage employees to participate on their own, companies must invest in modern, personalized solutions that modernize communication between company and employees, as well as streamline the entire communications infrastructure, making it easy for employees to participate.

These tools can be pure collaboration apps like Slack and Yammer for daily one-to-one discussions, social media channels like Facebook and LinkedIn to distribute company information to the public, or Dynamic Signal for employee communication and engagement.

**Using the right tools and systems allows communicators to:**

1. Send messaging where employees are active, which is primarily on mobile with social media and chat apps.
2. Personalize messaging to a specific department or employee group.
3. Automate the scheduling, publishing and metrics of internal messaging to save time for personalization.

A primary goal of employee communication is measuring overall engagement in company activities.

One of the major missteps in measuring employee participation is solely reviewing surface-level vanity metrics. For example, only noting the number of attendees, which is a vanity metric, at a corporate event is misleading and dilutes results.

An event or program can be widely attended, but that doesn't mean employees were connected with the programming or went on their own accord, which could lead to drawing an inaccurate conclusion about the performance of an event. Another issue with measuring staff participation is reviewing too many data points to determine the success of company activities, which can overcomplicate the analysis process.

Many organizations stop prioritizing measurement of participation as they've become overwhelmed with trying to pair metrics to every aspect of an event or program.

To resolve these challenges and measure workforce participation successfully, focus on monitoring the right balance of metrics. Track three to five metrics during corporate activities to guarantee you're accurately reporting on the overall performance of an event.

This balanced approach prevents a team from analyzing staff participation through one metric, which is misleading, as well as preventing any confusion caused by reviewing lots of extraneous metrics.

Opt-in metrics worth considering to track employee participation:

- Sign-ups for corporate programs
- Newsletter open rates
- Social sharing about corporate activities
- Event attendance
- Anecdotal feedback
- Staff performance at events

To further spur employee participation, recognize employee performance with company-wide and department specific incentives like awards, gifts and promotions (Blackhawk Engagement Solutions).

Whether offered in the form of peer recognition, contests, one-time rewards or a points based program, incentives can motivate employees to attend and engage with others at company events, as well as encourage the participation of others.

To build a more engaging corporate culture that cultivates communication and drives measurable results, you must focus on this major hurdle of activated employee engagement.

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# EVALUATE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

As employees become more familiar with the value and purpose of engagement initiatives, their contribution to its success will continue to grow. This is why consistent messaging of these elements are key.

An engaged employee is when a staff member is highly motivated by their work, fellow employees, and the company at-large because they have a sense of ownership over their professional lives.

Corporate programming is a prime opportunity to educate employees about an organization's purpose and their part in the overall process as it connects them more deeply with the company's progress.

The following elements drive engagement from employees, integrate them into your events and programming to influence results (Institute for Employment Studies):

1. An employee's ability to voice their opinions and have them listened to and valued by managers.
2. The opportunity for an employee to advance in their career and develop relevant skill sets.
3. A company's genuine concern for the well-being of its workforce.
4. How involved workers are in the decision-making process.

When present in the workplace, these drivers increase employees' desire to come to work, empower their connection to the company's objectives, and helps them better understand the purpose of their role.

Measuring worker engagement is another important goal to signal the value added by employee communications.

Traditional reporting methods are an obstacle to evaluating employee engagement because formats like surveys are not always precise or are ignored by staff.

When done right, surveys completed by employees are a useful resource in a measurement toolkit, but too often do employees feel obligated to answer questions a certain way and they don't trust that action will be taken.

An employee's personal satisfaction with their level of engagement at work isn't enough on its own to quantify success either. For example, a person could respond to a survey that they love their boss, but at the same time not give their full effort in their role.

Furthermore, the average response rate on an employee survey is 30%, which also leads to an inaccurate view of the level of engagement employees are experiencing in the workplace overall (Digitalist).

Another issue with calculating engagement is many organizations focus solely on revenue generated as the metric for success, which does not provide a complete understanding of engagement.

Dealing with these measurement issues starts with understanding how to properly use both traditional and modern tools to reflect the true state of engagement in the workplace.

To make an engagement measurement survey useful:

- Share them with employees regularly on mobile with an easy-to-use interface.
- Discuss the implications and how they'll be put into action with employees ahead of time.
- Ensure managers lead the survey effort with their team to encourage participation.
- Keep survey input anonymous for more accurate responses.
- Create short and simple surveys to increase response rates.

Secondly, increased revenue is merely one metric denoting success with employee engagement, as increased productivity across departments and business units, lower turnover rate, higher job satisfaction and other metrics need to be taken into consideration.

Other than surveys, use the following direct metrics to understand actual engagement as opposed to self-perceived engagement (Harvard Business Review):

Engagement Metrics	How to Measure
The amount of work occurring outside of normal working hours like nights and weekends.	Require employees to use time tracking software and segment their extra time spent on after hours tasks
Time employees spend with team members outside of their team, department or region.	Setup employee mentoring and shadowing to encourage cross-departmental collaboration, track employee opt-ins to the program.
Participation in unscheduled meetings and initiatives vs. recurring and required work engagements.	Suggest managers review meeting minutes and attendees and log their team's participation in meetings and company initiatives outside of their role as compared to required tasks.
Time spent interacting with customers outside of typical job responsibilities.	Track online interactions with customers using customer support software like Zendesk or Help Scout.

Another way to spur engagement and measure its impact is by hiring and promoting people that are practicing the right behaviors aligned with an organization's culture.

According to Fast Company, employees typically follow the example of leadership, which makes it necessary for managers, directors and executives to be champions of transparency, employee engagement and the sharing of company news.

The positive influence leadership has on employees can draw attention to the skills an organization values, encouraging workers to mirror these traits in their roles for an opportunity to advance, improve and engage.

In addition to hiring and promoting the right talent, create feedback systems for employees and leadership to regularly communicate with one another and build stronger bonds across the firm.

A report from McKinsey concluded that investing in communication and collaboration through social technologies could raise the productivity of workers by 20% to 25%. When employees at every level are able to communicate freely, it is easier to provide workers with necessary company information and provide feedback on their performance.

Workers can offer feedback to their managers and top executives too, which gives all stakeholders valuable insight into the corporation's ongoing engagement levels.

**Key Takeaway: Move beyond measuring revenue generated and the results of surveys to determine the full extent of employee engagement.**

# CALCULATE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

The influence of employee communications extends beyond the dialogue between the workforce and leadership, impacting how a company brand is shaped and solidified both internally and externally.

Brand equity is the value associated with a consumer's perception of a company resulting in either positive or negative consequences. A company can proactively influence this perception through an investment in employee communication and engagement.

Establishing brand equity is another key indicator of success with employee communication as the strength of a company's brand impacts how employees, investors, customers and future hires view an organization.

A company with strong brand equity can command an increase in customer loyalty, drive higher margins for its products and services, achieve long-term growth, expand its negotiating power with vendors and partners and establish a competitive advantage (The Hartford).

An added benefit of an organization investing in its employees' growth and well-being is that they are more likely to become advocates and owners of their work leading to additional exposure for the enterprise in a variety of mediums, slowly building the authority of a brand.

For example, Chobani offered employees an ownership stake in the company once it goes public or is sold, which led to a delighted workforce, widespread media coverage about the owner's promise to employees and more brand awareness, especially for the organization from a hiring perspective (New York Times).

The way the news of this arrangement at Chobani was shared internally, heavily impacted how employees and other stakeholders specifically discussed this development within the company and externally.

Unfortunately, brands often weigh focusing on media and consumer relations over an investment in employee communication, which is a necessary component to include when building brand awareness.

Many organizations don't understand that fostering communication with employees internally can lead to a stronger reputation among the media and consumers. Engaged employees can multiply the reach of a company's message, improving the equity of a brand overtime.

Measuring brand equity allows an enterprise to analyze the strength of a leading brand to inform more strategic decision-making, as well as quantify the impact of employee communication.

There are many ways to access brand equity as it is more intangible than the other benefits of employee communication and engagement. Start by measuring customer loyalty and brand awareness as these elements are the most practical ways of reviewing progress (Brand Amplitude).

**1. Customer Loyalty:** Consistent communication practices among employees can retain customers because a brand's offerings are kept top of mind through authentic employee advocacy and the values behind a firm's products and services being succinctly reinforced with consumers.

According to Edelman's Trust Barometer, consumers are more reliant and trusting of a "person like yourself" such as an employee, as compared to leadership at an organization.

For example, Chipotle's recent E. Coli scare has negatively affected customer loyalty for the brand.

Chipotle's employees can help articulate to customers what policies have changed to prevent such a foodborne illness from occurring again, which would likely resonate more effectively than if the same information came from a press release or an executive.

Empowering employees to communicate effectively could assist a brand like Chipotle keep its customers.

**2. Brand Awareness:** The choices a consumer makes every day are directly related to their awareness of a particular brand and the value they believe to be associated.

The emotional connection a customer has with an organization is impacted by many factors, one of which is what people hear from others about a company.

**31%** of surveyed CEOs said employer branding is important for building a global reputation (Harvard Business Review).

Employees can add to the positive impression of a business or detract from it, giving consumers and other external stakeholders more information to make their own conclusions about a brand.

Use social listening to understand the common associations made about a brand on social media, as well as monitoring what employees are adding to the conversation.

It is difficult to segment the impact of employee communications on raising brand awareness when compared to the input of other mediums. One way to account for this issue is to monitor the timing of communication initiatives with employees alongside increases in awareness as it may signal their influence on the beliefs of consumers.

In addition, conduct focus groups, customer interviews and send surveys to your customer base to analyze metrics like perceived cost and brand preference to continue to detect changes in brand equity.

Continue to strengthen your brand through communications by regularly auditing your employee and customer base to understand how they view the organization.

Employees should be your most vocal advocates and source of feedback to validate the progress of programming. Establish what gaps still exist and identify leading priorities.

Compare your organization's progress with brand building to key competitors to learn how different companies empower employees to communicate and bolster brand growth.

**Key Takeaway:** Audit your communication practices with employees as they influence how customers, investors and partners form an opinion of your brand.

The benefits of employee communications are far-reaching. Fostering dialogue in the workplace improves the participation and engagement of employees - and as a result, strengthens a corporate brand in the marketplace.

Measuring the success of communication among employees helps C-Suite leadership, communications and external stakeholders understand at a glance that communication programs are critical initiatives.

Empowered employees know what's happening at their company, give feedback to supervisors, take ownership of corporate growth and share their experiences at work with others online and offline.

Forward-thinking brands invest in employee communications to scale operations and build a workforce that drives meaningful results in the long-term. Start identifying your company's goals with communication to decide what engaged and purpose-driven employees looks like for you.

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### Employee Communication and Engagement Platform



#### Modernize

Mobile-optimized, personalized way to connect with your employees on their terms:

- Push notifications and alerts
- Native video
- Documents, newsletters, surveys



#### Streamline

Single platform delivers trusted information that employees need to do their jobs:

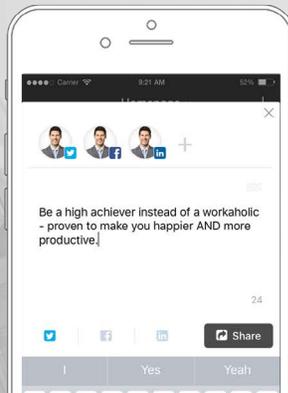
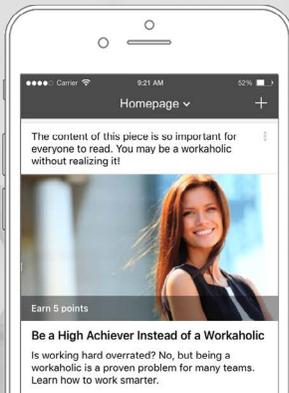
- Consolidates existing systems
- Easily accessible
- Targets relevant content



#### Measure

Accurate metrics show effectiveness of communication and where to improve:

- Track engagement
- Optimize strategy
- Demonstrate strategic impact



20% of the Fortune 100 use Dynamic Signal to keep global employees informed and engaged

All 8 of the top PR Agencies in the world use Dynamic Signal internally and suggest it for their customers

Over 4 million pieces of content have been published on the Dynamic Signal platform