



Compassionate Internal Communications

As the national conversation around civil unrest, systemic racial injustice, political disruption, and the pandemic dominates our existence, leaders are called to fiercely rise to the challenge of uncertainty and put their people at the heart of every communication. At the same time, internal teams may be struggling with heightened uncertainty as they prepare to either return to the office or embrace more permanent remote operations. Whatever your organization decides for the future, it is critical to put compassion, humanity, vulnerability, clarity and empathy at the forefront of an internal communications strategy. To help you charge ahead with your heart and your head, we've put together a checklist to set you up for success in communicating organizational change – both now and in the future.

Set the stage

Clearly articulate the new vision, the steps you're taking to achieve stated objectives, potential outcomes and scenarios so teams can visualize and understand how their contributions align with the organization's greater purpose, and ultimately how the news could materialize over the long-term. Then, purpose-driven mission, values, brand promise and ethical standards of the organization remain stronger than ever (while outlining the reasons why).

Put empathy into action

Anticipate questions that may arise, and schedule office hours, breakout sessions, town halls and 1:1s to foster an open, honest dialogue. It's important to give your team an opportunity to express themselves freely and share ideas openly. Be cognizant that some team members may be more than willing to air their grievances in a large group setting, whereas other personalities may prefer a more intimate forum to express their raw feelings and emotional experiences. Compassionate leaders understand this distinction, and make a concerted effort to personalize their style and style to the unique needs of each employee.

Cultivate a safe space for ideation and empower your team to be part of the solution

This can be achieved through pulse surveys, integration barometers, focus groups, etc. The objective is to leave your vulnerabilities and judgements at the door, and ensure everyone's ideas, fears, anxieties, motivations and frustrations are considered and prioritized. Now might be a good time to create a new way of working within your company. Including your team in conversations and encouraging ideas and perspectives can make them more likely to champion the broader vision.

Be transparent about missteps

Honesty is key! Owning mistakes will promote authenticity among your team. Just remember to talk about what steps you're going to take to fix the problem.

Put your personal agenda aside

Your employees are always watching, so it's imperative to set the tone for the culture live by the organization's core values. That means putting your own biases aside and encouraging a diverse flow of ideas (instead of forcing them to emulate your own perspective).

Be People First and Service-Led in charting the path forward

Put a strategic stake in the ground about the future vision, direction brand promise, values, ethical standards and growth trajectory of your organization. Reassure your team that the future is bright, and together, we can (and will) do hard things and become even stronger in the process.

Above all, the right choice is always to put people first.

