

5 Tactics to engage employees through communication

Guide to Building a Successful Internal Communications Program

You have made the choice, a great choice ;) you have selected and deployed your internal communication platform, all employees have been added, activation rates are on the increase, What now?



How this guide works

This guide is designed to give you 5 steps to help you get off the ground in the first 90 days of using StaffCircle communications module.

Walking through each step and providing handy tips throughout.

We think if you follow this guide through the steps you will have an engaging strategy for 90 days and beyond.

We recognise that each business is different and this guide is designed to help not hinder. Use the steps where it makes sense for your business, but don't get stuck on them. Feel free to dip in and out of the tips.

What is Internal Communications?

Think of it as joining the dots. Most communication is verbal, informal and therefore uncontrollable.

Even if you are not communicating formally to your employees on a particular topic chances are someone else is picking it up for you, whether that be constructive or not.

Getting clear on your communication strategy helps link and share information and add context to all of those informal and uncontrollable communications. Helping your employees understand the business, see how they fit in and participate in a meaningful way.

1) Understand what you are currently communicating

Before creating an action plan, understand the current employee communication landscape in your organisation. Answer these questions for a full picture of why, what and how you communicate to your employees at the moment:

- Communication title
- What is the objective?
- What format is it currently sent in?
- Who is the audience?
- What advantages and disadvantages to the current format
- What opportunities would be created utilising Staff Circle ?

Answering these simple questions will build a full picture demonstrating the extent of your current communications. On top of that it will give you time to look at what is working and what needs to be tweaked and get you to start thinking about the benefits you can take advantage of moving the communications over to the platform.

As with all processes this can be as simple or as detailed as you have time for. Here is an example basic Employee Communication Audit Template.

Content Title	Current Format	Objective	Audience	Schedule	Advantages	Drawbacks	Opportunities in StaffCircle
Company Update	Email	Update employees on the current performance of the company	All Employees	Monthly	Easily reach all employees, Inexpensive,	No statistics on who and hasn't read, only available to employees with access to email	Statistics are available on reads, resend notifications to those who have not read. Available for employees on mobile devices. Can turn on likes and comments to encourage interaction
Birthday Cards	Post	Celebrate an employees Birthday	Individuals	Weekly	Card through the post is a nice touch	Card is not personalised with a message. Other team member can not sign (logistics). Costly and unsure of impact	Personalised message sent on the day. Ability to make public in the team to share in celebration.
Product Updates	Staff Notice Board & Department Email	Update employees on product changes (specifically sales)	Sales (Must) All Employees (Desired)	Bi-Weekly	Consistent place for information to be found. Inexpensive.	No statistics on who is interested in this information and reads proactively. Sales need the information immediately when on the road, only see it when access their email	Statistic are easily available to see if there is an interest wider than sales. Sales can have notifications sent to mobile to notify new information.

Tip 1

Once the audit is complete consider where the gaps are. What isn't sent that would be useful?

Tip 2

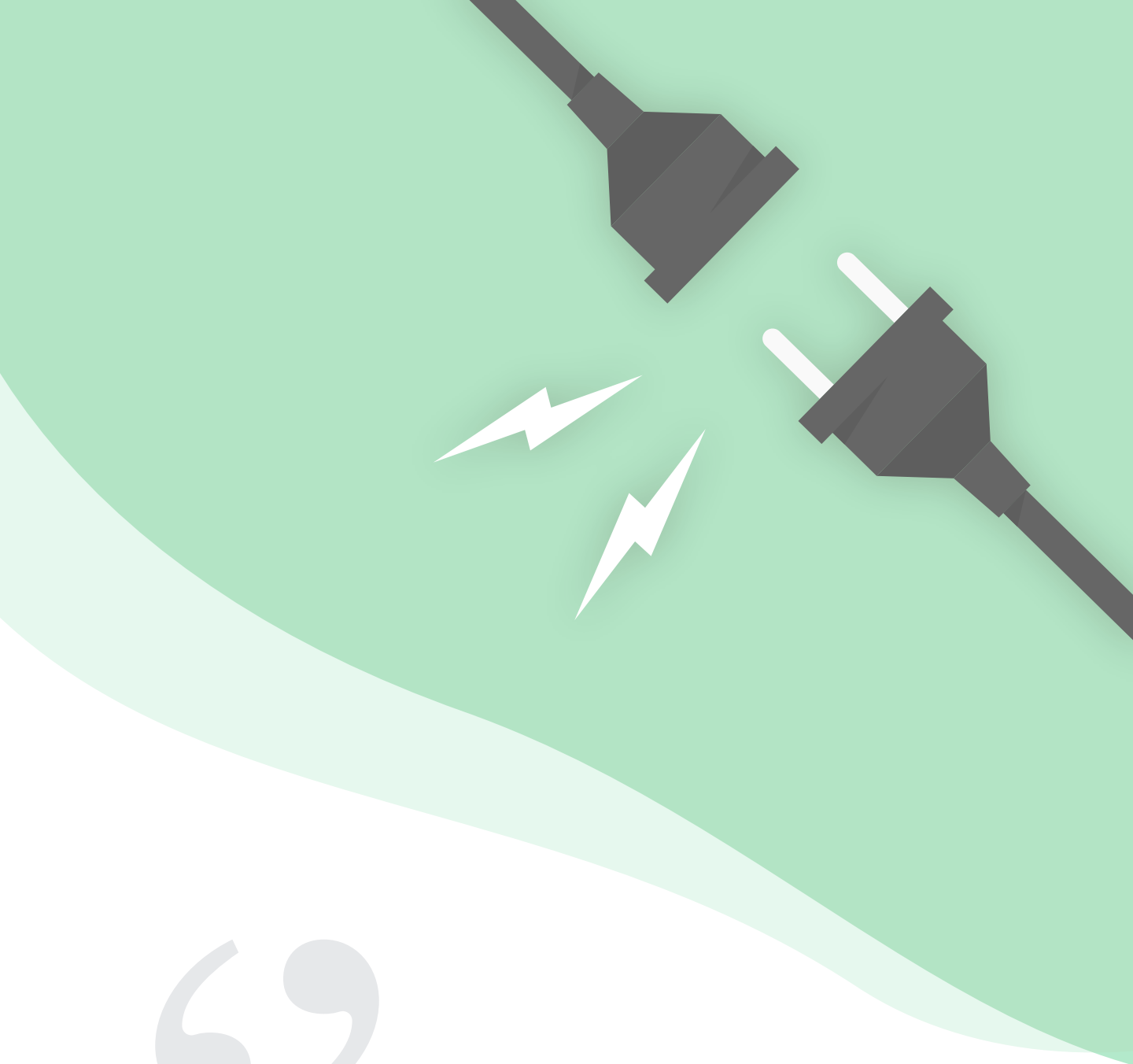
Ask for feedback – What do employees like? What don't they like and why? What would they like to:

- Continue seeing
- Stop seeing
- Start seeing

Tip 3

What are the goals and the call to action? Are the messages clear? If not, note that the format needs to be tweaked ready for the next step

– **The strategy**



Gallup says 'A staggering 87% of employees worldwide are not engaged. Many companies are experiencing a crisis of engagement and aren't aware of it.' It is no secret that communication can make or break employee engagement and therefore productivity

2) Be clear on the future

Just before getting stuck in to a content strategy it is good practice to take a few minutes to look at the 'Why' of your strategy

- What are the goals and ambitions for the future in terms of employee communication?
- What do your employees need to think, feel and do in order to make those goals and ambitions real?
- Where are they now? What needs to change? Attitudes, perceptions, access to basic information?

Being clear on what you want to achieve moving employee communications to StaffCircle will make planning much easier. You should now have:

- What you want to achieve
- What is currently circulated and how
- What currently works and what doesn't
- Opportunities of utilising StaffCircle
- Gaps that you have identified from the Audit and employee feedback.

Taking all of this background information in to consideration you can now document what, how and when you want to circulate future content. (See Communication Review and Strategy Excel for template.)

Content Title	Purpose	Intended Result	Audience	Notifications	Interaction	Priority	Pinned	Format	Content Curator	Content Approver	Frequency
Company Update	Update employees on the current performance of the company	Employees are clear on objectives of the business and our progress against the objectives. CTA: How they can impact on this	All Employees	In App - Push - Email - SMS	Likes - Comments	Important	Yes - 24 Hours	Text/Graphs /Images	Charlie Smith- Executive Assistant	Elaine Ward - CEO	1st Friday of Each Month
Birthday E - Cards	Celebrate an employees Birthday	Put a smile on a face	Team - Individual Tagged	In App - SMS	Likes - Comments - Photos	Highlight	No	Image/ Text	Employee Manager	N/A	Ad - Hoc
Product Updates	Update employees on product changes (specifically sales)	Sales are quickly updated with alterations to product. CTA: Sales update their customers	Sales (Must All Employees (Desired)	In App - Push - Email - SMS	Likes - Comments	Critical	Yes - 12 Hours	Text/Document	Jack Newland - Marketing Assistant	Kieran Blunt - Marketing Manager	Bi Weekly - Wednesday

2) Be clear on the future

To enhance your communication and engagement ensure that you note the features on StaffCircle that you intend on taking advantage of:

- Personalisation - Select Audiences by Individual, Team, Department and or location.
- Notifications - Select from In App, Push, SMS and/or Email.
- Priority– Critical, Highlight, Important or Information.
- Pined Article – Select the time to the article to the top of the feed.
- Varied content format – Select to include, text, Images, Video, Graphs and even attach relevant documents if required.
- Set Interaction level – Activate likes, comments, add photos to comments or choose not to turn any interaction on.
- Set the Schedule – Apply a date and time in the future that you want the article to be published

The screenshot shows the 'UPDATE ARTICLE' interface. At the top, there is a dropdown menu for 'Pin article for (hours)'. Below this are several toggle switches: 'Published' (checked), 'Allow people to like' (checked), 'Allow people to comment' (checked), 'Allow images in comments?' (checked), and 'Specify schedule' (unchecked). A section titled 'WHO WILL GET THE ARTICLE?' has two buttons: 'EVERYONE' and 'FILL CHOOSE'. Below this is a text input field with the placeholder 'Start by typing '@'...' and a search result for 'leicester (Leicester Office)'. At the bottom, there are four more toggle switches: 'Show in app notification' (checked), 'Send email notifications' (checked), 'Send push notifications' (checked), and 'Send SMS notifications' (checked).

Tip 1

Whilst it is easy to over communicate in terms of quantity and timing of articles. Its really hard to over communicate a message that you want to convey. There is so much noise in our daily lives messages will need to be communicated more than once and in different formats to really get through to the audience.

Tip 2

Add the Content Title and Dates in to a calendar view – this way you can easily see if there are any major gaps where no communication is being sent or where too much information is being distributed.

Tip 3

Communication can sometimes get in to the nitty gritty of operations. Which is important. It is also super important to make sure communications share the bigger picture. Keeping employees in the loop, aligned and understanding of where they fit in to the business goals can only positively impact performance.

Tip 4

Personalise you message. The great thing about utilising StaffCircle is that you have the ability to select the audience in a multitude of ways, Individuals., Team, Departments and or Site which means content can be very specifically directed to that group.

3) Create great content

Now that you have decided how, who, and when content is going to be created and distributed to, its time for the exciting bit!

You know your business better than we do. Therefore this is not a prescriptive guide. But we do know how to engage employees so have left some considerations here for you to think about and apply where necessary. StaffCircle has a multitude of formatting options to chose from.



Diversify your content. Don't just stick to Text. Add videos, infographics, Images , quotes etc. Think about how you would like to receive the information and what would catch your eye amongst the noise of day to day communication that we all receive.



Make it readable. Use subheadings to break up the text. The Format Editor give lots of option in terms of Text size etc use it.



Encourage interaction. You are in control of what articles you would like to have interaction of and to what extent. Likes, comments and attachments or all of the above. Utilise this and encourage the use of it, you will find this information invaluable in terms of feedback as to what content is valuable to the reader.



Make it friendly but stick to the voice of the business. Every time you interact with your employees it is another time that the culture and values are demonstrated. Make sure that your tone in the writing is consistent



Utilise Visuals. Did you know our brains process visual 60,000x faster than text, 905 of the information sent to the brain is visual and 405 of people respond better to visuals?



What's in it for me? Lets face it this is the main question an employee has when seeing a new article. What is it about? How does it impact me? What do I have to do? Makes sure these questions are answered and any action you require as a result of the comms are sure to be



Keep it short and sweet. The benefit of this platform is that is accessible on mobile devices. No one wants to read an essay on a mobile. If you find that article is getting too long break it down in to different article and send out parts at a time.

Tip 1

Catch an eye – utilise the ability to add a photo to the news feed. This is what the employee will see first on their feed. Make them want to open the article.

Tip 2

Ask yourself would you read it and be inspired? If you get bored by your own content chances are it is not going to be very engaging. You want to publish a piece of work feeling proud of it.

Tip 3

Creating great content means nothing if no one knows it is there. Makes sure you add Notifications so that employees are sent reminders when something new is available to read.

Tip 4

Utilise the summary section. Personalisation is Key to get engagement. Notifications are personalised. Use the Summary Box as an intro to the article, this summary will be included on the personalised email push notification

Tip 5

Before a piece is sent out it is a good idea to check it achieves what you need it to. Here is an example of questions of the types of things to ask yourself about a piece of content before publishing. Ask as many or as few questions as you want.

Content Title	Communicative	Clear	Useful	Valuable	Delightful	Killer Question	Notes	Action	
	Does the content clearly communicate the message you want the audience to understand?	Is straightforward and free form Jargon?	Does it provided the necessary information for a user to complete a task or process?	Does it provide information that the target user wants and needs?	Does the content Improve the employee experience?	Does it exceed users Expectations?			Would you read it?
Company Updates - Sept	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Publish	
Birthday Card Template - Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Publish	
Product Updates -	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	Need to remove abbreviations or add a jargon buster. Also add more visuals looks a little dull.	Revise

Wondering what to send through StaffCircle?

Common types of employee communication



Company Update



Benefits



Customer Success Stories



Seasonal Advice



Birthdays/Weddings/Births



Policy/Process Updates



Product/Service Updates



Employee Success Stories



Department/Site Information



Specialisation Blogs



Charity Activities

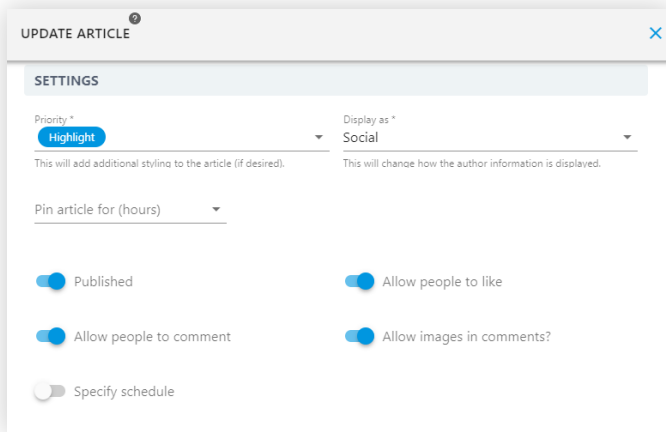


IT Hints & Tips

This is not an exhaustive list, if it is sent to employees either to individuals, Teams, Departments, Sites or the whole business StaffCircle can accommodate it.

4) Observe and Interact

It's good to be heard. Encourage employees to interact with your posts by turning on likes, comments and photos to be shared. Why? Asking for feedback helps for employees to feel like their voice matters. It will also show you how effective the content is.



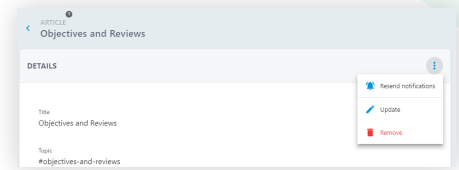
The screenshot shows the 'UPDATE ARTICLE' settings panel. It includes a 'SETTINGS' section with the following options:

- Priority: Highlight (selected)
- Display as: Social (selected)
- Pin article for (hours): (dropdown menu)
- Published:
- Allow people to like:
- Allow people to comment:
- Allow images in comments?:
- Specify schedule:



Tip 1

Not gaining the interaction that you desire? Try resending notifications. To encourage employees to read that have not yet done so.

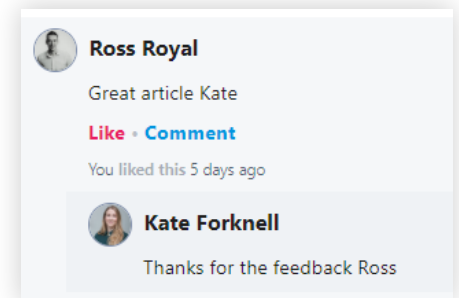


Tip 2

Ask for engagement, don't be afraid to ask for people to leave their comments or perhaps photos, if applicable. Sometimes when introducing a new way of communicating you may need to be prescriptive around permissions.

Tip 3

Reply to comments left, showing that the comment has been read. This will encourage interaction in the future.

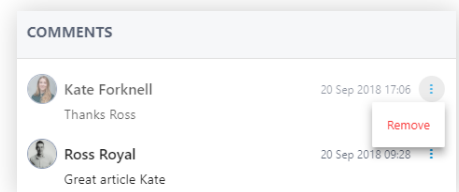


Tip 4

Take action, seeing a trend in comments? Reply to show this is noted and explain the next steps that are going to be taken

Tip 5

We appreciate opening up comments opens up the small risk that someone will leave something undesired. This is no problem its is easy to delete a comment from a thread



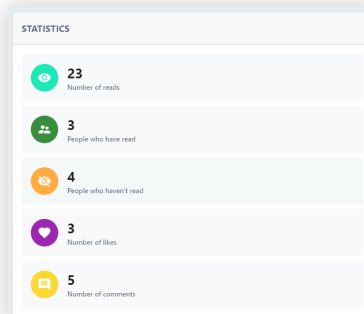
5) Measure

Measurement is the key to success. When you are just starting out keep your eye on Reach (reads) and Engagement (Likes & Comments) you can see this easily on the Stats of the article.

These statistics will demonstrate what is being opened and creating interest and activity

Note any trends that you start to see about the most and least successful articles.

Once you are happy that your articles are gaining the engagement that you are after you can move on to measuring.



Two vital areas to measure are:

- 1 Behaviour – has employees behaviour changed in any way as a result of content circulated
- 2 Impact – has the behaviour change created any business impact in in terms of productivity, employee engagement, staff turnover etc.

Measuring these areas will show the ROI of the system and the content that you are creating, justifying that time spent in this is worth it.

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Company Update	Update employees on the current performance of the company	Employees are clear on objectives of the business and our progress against the objectives. CTA: How they can impact on this	All Employees	In App - Push-Email - SMS	Likes - Comments	Important	Yes - 24 Hours	Text/Graphs /Images	Charlie Smith- Executive Assistant	Elaine Ward- CEO	1st Friday of Each Month		
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Product Updates	Update employees on product changes (specifically sales)	Sales are quickly updated with alterations to product. CTA: Sales update their customers	Sales (Must) All Employees (Desired)	In App - Push-Email - SMS	Likes - Comments	Critical	Yes - 12 Hours	Text/Document	Jack Newland - Marketing Assistant	Kieran Blunt- Marketing Manager	Bi Weekly - Wednesday		

Tip 1

We all know that business is not static. Neither is your communication strategy. It's important to review what is working and what isn't and alter appropriately.

- Employees commenting on what they would like to hear? Add it to your strategy
- Employees need a little bit more or less on a current article? Tweak it.
- Something not adding value? Delete it from your strategy

Tip 2

Behaviours and Impact do not need to be measured against every article. Just start with your most important pieces of information.

Pssst...Don't forget Alerts

Alerts are designed to send important info quickly. The message needs to be under 500 characters, being clear and concise is key.



Get proactive around your alerts and decide:



What triggers an alert?



Who sends the alert?



Who gets the alert?



What's the priority level?



What is important to say?

There are no rule on what alerst can and cannot be used for but common topics alerts are utilised for are:

- Fire Alarm Tests
- Site Information
- Temporary Closures
- Facility Issues
- Traffic Warnings
- Deadlines Pending

We hope you find this useful

We find taking the time to follow this process in detail or just the principles will help you create and run an engaging employee communication. That evolves as your business does
This 5 Step process is a cycle that can be repeated from time to time to refresh your communication plan. Just remember...

- 1 Review**
- 2 Plan**
- 3 Create**
- 4 Interact and Observe**
- 5 Measure**

You can find more How-To information in our knowledge base at:

<https://www.staffcircle.com/help>

UK: 0203 900 3443 US: +1 347 486 6266