Internal Communication – Is it giving your organisation the performance edge?
About Lane4

Lane4 is a leading performance development consultancy with a unique heritage in elite sport and business performance. Our people provide organisational development services to business and HR leaders across a range of sectors.

The company derives its names from the name in which our co-founder Adrian Moorhouse won Gold at the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988. The fourth lane is the one allocated to the fastest recorded time in the heats and therefore most likely to produce champions.

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Foreword

Internal Communications has evolved enormously over the last decade yet its reputation as the soft touch of the communications family is difficult to shake. In times of economic turbulence, functions neglecting the bottom line do so at their peril as leaders operate in environments of austerity and necessary cost-consciousness.

Once seen as an off-shoot of employee relations, with a remit to ‘package and push’ information, Internal Communications (IC) has taken strides into the strategic scaffolding of organisations, hand in hand with a more sophisticated understanding of employee engagement across industries. The discipline has seen its own shake-up with communicators recruited not just because they can craft and draft but because they have a deep understanding of the behaviour and people agenda during organisational change.

However, despite IC’s undoubted maturation as a function, questions of its value, role and home perpetuate. In our view, performance sits at the heart of this debate and, with functions under pressure to demonstrate true business impact, this performance must be tangible.

There are a number of critical success factors for IC that have moved beyond management of communication output towards a strategic function facilitating two-way conversation, creating real meaning for employees with organisational goals and supporting leaders to communicate with authenticity and impact. Yet, there’s even more to do before the function delivers on its promise.

For too many IC teams, measurement is not part of their day to day despite its ability to secure business credibility. Knowing that your communication activities have an impact on performance can’t be a ‘nice to have’. In the world of elite sport, measurement ensures that athletes focus on the things that are really going to make them perform to the highest standard. Communicators must ensure that they’re measuring the right things too. Satisfaction with team meetings merely happening is akin to satisfaction that an athlete turns up for training without giving due consideration to how well they trained or if their times and distances are improving as a result!

And so to the future. The communications landscape has changed and the entire concept of ‘internal’ communication is under scrutiny. Total message containment is a thing of the past. The way we all access, receive and participate in society’s conversations is progressing at pace. An email from a CEO can become external moments after it’s been sent. A proliferation of new channels has muddied the distinction between external and internal communication and, as communicators, we have to be at the forefront of this revolution with our stopwatches to hand.

Notwithstanding technological advances and the imperative on communicators to get under their skin, the leader’s role as communicator mustn’t be overlooked. Face to face communication affords the biggest opportunity to engage employees on an emotional level. No amount of technological sophistication can replace an honest and meaningful conversation with your manager. HR and IC must join forces to ensure that leaders are able to inspire and engage employees through their communication each and every day.

Regardless of reporting relationships, IC must be about people and performance, not politics.

Natalie Benjamin
Head of Communications, Lane4
November 2011
Executive Summary

Internal Communications (IC) is increasingly being recognised as a discipline which is central to the success of many organisations. Yet a number of key tensions are preventing it from maximising its impact. Perhaps the most contentious of these is ‘where should internal communications sit?’

This question opened an evening of lively debate among a selection of invited business leaders, HR Directors and leading communications professionals¹ at a recent Lane4 round table dinner. In this report we share some illuminating insights from the discussions ignited by this topic. We describe what we believe are the fundamental roles of IC in businesses today:

- Strategic Advisor,
- Tactical Advisor,
- Leadership Communications Coach, and
- Change Enabler.

To maximise their impact in each of these areas fully, IC professionals need to set themselves up for success. For instance, they must enhance their credibility and scope of influence by building close relationships across the organisation, and provide robust performance data to prove their worth. We identify seven critical success factors:

- Broad and deep connectivity
- Impartiality and challenge
- Strong commercial awareness
- Supporting authentic leadership communication
- Robust measurement
- Transparency and empowerment
- Expertise

Instead of focusing on where IC sits, what really counts is how it can enable people and performance. IC needs the commercial awareness to warrant its role in the strategic decision-making process, representing the employee voice at the top table. Harmonisation between internal and external communications is also a necessity, due to heightened levels of connectivity and empowerment provided by social media.

Essentially, we see communications as the lifeblood of an organisation. For an organisation to thrive, communications must flow. Leaders play a crucial role in the healthy stream of communication within their organisations. By empowering and enabling effective leadership communication, IC can move towards a position of helping managers to communicate rather than managing communication.

¹ Details of the participants can be found in the appendix.
What is the role of Internal Communications in organisations today?

Our discussions with business leaders, senior HR practitioners and communications professionals pointed to a number of distinct roles for Internal Communications (IC). These are introduced below, with illustrative quotes from the participants.

1. Strategic Advisor – sounding board, sense maker

To have a real impact on organisational performance, employee engagement must be transformational. This crucial message seems to have been buried in the recent explosion of engagement literature. Transformational employee engagement places employees at the centre of strategy development and delivery. By ensuring that strategy not only addresses the external environment, but also maximises the strengths of the internal environment, the foundations for true engagement are set.

A pivotal role for IC, therefore, is to facilitate employees’ participation in the strategic decision-making process and to represent the employee voice at the top table. This enables employees to understand the organisation’s direction, believe it is achievable and, most importantly, want to make it happen.

Rather than simply being asked to ‘package up’ and disseminate strategic messages, IC can add significant value by helping shape the strategy itself, using knowledge of what’s going on across the business to challenge decisions or to question priorities.

“You’ve got to have a communications team that (whoever they report to) is prepared to stand up and say ‘If you do that, this is the kind of thing that’s going to happen and I really don’t think it’s the way to do it.” (David Richardson, Group Chief Executive).

“My team jointly decided that our purpose in the business for both internal and external communications is to be the champion, challenger and conscience of the business.” (Fiona Lloyd, Global Head of Communications)

“I think one of the most valuable parts of my role as a communicator is to be extremely commercially aware, it’s the work that we do with the leadership of an organisation to help pull the messages out. What are we talking about? Why are we talking about that? Why will that work? Why, why, why? How can you do that when this group over there wants to do this?” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand).


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David Richardson, Group Chief Executive

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2. Tactical Advisor (who, what, how, when, why)

In addition to helping shape the game plan, IC professionals should have the expertise to provide tactical advice on the construction and implementation of strategic and day-to-day messaging.

“Those basic questions that communicators were put in there to answer, that’s what needs to be said, who does it need to be said to, when and how? Where we’re going now is that you have to be able to coach and influence in order to get in there and ensure that all of those points are covered.”
(Rodney Jordan, Director, Employee Communications)

Whether IC sits within or outside HR, our participants provided a number of examples of the two functions working together to ensure that messages are effective:

“We have comms at every meeting. They challenge, we discuss, give feedback on what we think we need, they try and provide it and we build a better message as a result.”
(Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)

Supporting the business to execute planned work and to provide ad-hoc support requires tactical advice on the key factors reflected by MAD:

- **Message**: How to craft a compelling message: the salient points, content and structure
- **Audience**: Who needs to know what, their frame of reference and what you need them to do with the message
- **Delivery**: The full spectrum of delivery mechanisms available, including multi-channel and media methods

While IC should collaborate with other business functions to promote consistently high standards across all types of organisational communication, the ubiquity of social media means that internal communicators are not necessarily expected to control these communication channels. Instead, they must embrace the role of enabler instead of gatekeeper:

“Communications needs to multi-channel, it needs to be progressive. I don’t think you can manage it anymore. I think the whole philosophy that you can manage it is one that is rapidly going out of the window.”
(Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)

Web 2.0 puts the audience in complete control. Anyone with access to the internet can transmit messages to millions of people in an instant. As a result, we can’t assume that internal communications will stay internal. Take Nokia CEO Stephen Elop’s brutally honest internal memo describing Nokia as a “burning platform” falling desperately short of its competitors. The 1,300-word memo to the company’s employees went public, appearing in full on various news and technology websites.

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This reality blurs the boundary between Internal and External Communications (EC). It requires IC to work even more closely with EC to ensure absolute consistency. Furthermore, the tactical advice provided by IC must also prepare stakeholders for the possibility, or inevitability, of their messages going external. Many organisations are still getting to grips with this. The emergence of social media channels such as Twitter have completely changed the communications landscape, allowing people to receive information in real time. This allows little or no time for communicators to contrive any response.

3. Leadership Communications Coach

Between the strategic and the day-to-day activity lies a valuable opportunity for leaders to engage employees through effective communication. Creating a clear line of sight between the organisational vision or strategy and employees’ day-to-day roles helps employees to care about their work. Indeed, researchers recognise meaningfulness as an important condition for engagement at work 4, having been associated with many positive individual and organisational outcomes (e.g., motivation, commitment to their work, enhanced psychological and physical health, increased job satisfaction and effort).

Leaders are constantly communicating, intentionally or not, through their formal and informal actions and interactions. Consequently, opportunities for enhancing the quality of communication are everywhere. In the words of Fiona MacAllan (Head of Internal & Change Communication):

“The world would be a better place if organisations realised that there are actions they shouldn’t undertake without communications input”.

Given that any action that can be observed has communicative power, internal communicators must “coach, counsel, enable” managers to own their communications, ensuring they are as impactful as possible. Communicators must help managers to communicate rather than manage communication. A key role for internal communicators, therefore, is to help leaders have meaningful conversations with employees. Regardless of the uptake of multi-media methods:

“There’s always going to be the need for conversations within organisations and so you need to be able to get in there and connect with those people that are going to have those conversations and understand what they need in order to have those conversations.” (Rodney Jordan, Director, Employee Communications).

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What is the role of Internal Communications in organisations today?

4. Change Enabler

We identified the fourth significant role for IC as the mobilisation of employees to bring about change. With an overarching awareness of the many messages, programmes and initiatives going on in an organisation at any one time, IC professionals are responsible for ensuring that a common thread runs throughout.

This is particularly important during times of uncertainty and change. Effective communication reduces uncertainty. Employees may resist that change if communication is inadequate. Consequently, IC has to help employees make sense of and support the newly-agreed direction:

“…that’s what communication can do, it aligns people for success in the direction that the CEO, the shareholders and the stakeholders in the business know is where we want to go.” (Mary Edmunds, Head of Group HR & Global Engagement)

Momentum generated when all energy is aligned to achieve the ultimate goal can give a team the winning edge. This philosophy is reminiscent of the late Sir Peter Blake, winner of the Whitbread Round the World Race, the Jules Verne Trophy and successive victories in the America’s Cup in 1995 and 2000. While the American teams may have had greater financial resources, Blake’s New Zealand crew had a simple yet effective strategy. This strategy centered on returning again and again to one pivotal question: “Will it make the boat go faster?” This question helped the team focus on what really mattered, and ensured that all energies were converging on the same ultimate end goal – getting from A to B in the quickest time.

In sailing, like business, many factors can distract us from the ultimate goal: wind, currents, and other boats can all challenge alignment. Yet, since many races are won by very small margins, misalignment can put the boat at a distinct disadvantage. David Richardson articulated the enhanced importance of alignment during inevitable periods of flux:

“From my perspective, comms is absolutely critical because it’s the glue that sticks our organisation together. We have an interesting history that goes back a long way, we’ve expanded a lot in the last few years. Many of the organisations that we have acquired have been quite small owner-managed businesses, used to very personal communication from the owner, knowing everybody and knowing everything that’s going on. To suddenly find yourself transitioned into an organisation, which, although it’s not large – we’re about 1500 people – is still in 17 countries; that’s tough, so communication is absolutely critical.” (David Richardson, Group Chief Executive).

What are the critical success factors for Internal Communications?

Critical success factor #1: Broad and deep connectivity

It has been said that the lifeblood of an organisation is the relationships that exist between the organisation and its internal audience. Furthermore, others argue that these relationships are essentially communications processes, and the quality of these relationships determines how well the content is understood. It is fundamental, therefore, that internal communicators are well-connected with their internal audience. Both the breadth and depth of relationships are likely to affect communication quality and the subsequent level of engagement across the organisation.

To optimise communication effectiveness, IC needs to have a close link to the Executive Team, ideally with direct IC representation. If IC is not invited to contribute towards the game plan, its impact may be compromised before the game has even started. At the same time, however, IC must have a finger on the pulse. They must be in touch with word on the street, or more likely, the word on Twitter. Without a tight grasp of what employees really think and feel, how can IC represent employees’ thoughts, feelings and opinions accurately or tailor messages to meet their needs?

In practice this includes the right blend of centralised and localised tailoring. Examples of this in practice include:

“You have to be able to strike a balance. I sit in the corporate centre, which means I’m far too far away from the frontline of any part of my business to do effective execution. Although I understand the plc and the overarching aims of the organisation, what I can bring is the thread that links everything together. I also know that I need people sitting out in a call centre in Syracuse, or in an operational centre in Hinckley, who relate to our energy shippers or who relate to our domestic customers in upstate New York. They’re the ones who know how to talk to those people, what the best media are to use to get to them, what is of concern to them, and how we need to pitch to them. What I bring to that is the overarching story. So it’s the story of National Grid, but how you need to make that right for your local people in Syracuse.” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand)

The importance of broad connectivity can be a challenge for IC given the typically small size of IC teams. While opinion was split on the best place for IC to sit (as we will discuss later in this paper), the HR Business Partner network was used by some as a valuable extension of the IC communications network:

“It’s a small function, and one of the benefits of us sitting in HR is that we get to extend our communications network with people on the ground. We have a global HR function so we also have a structure for communicating with HR fairly regularly and that way can get messages out...because you don’t have an infinite number of communicators on the ground, but you do need people on the ground so that you can get the message and share it, or coach around it and everything else.” (Rodney Jordan, Director, Employee Communications)

Regardless of where it sits in an organisation, it’s clear that IC needs to be well connected: both out into the far reaches of the organisation, across to colleagues in teams such as HR and EC, and upwards through representation at the most senior level.

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What are the critical success factors for Internal Communications?

Critical success factor #2: Impartiality and challenge

Impartial challenge sits at the core of effective IC. This helps leaders to develop a strategy to inspire transformational engagement, to help determine priorities, to help gain clarity on why and what we are communicating. The need for impartiality generates lively debate regarding where IC is housed. For some people, this drives a preference for IC to be an independent function:

“I have a very decided preference for communications being an independent organisation within its own function. I think if it sits in any function other than its own function, depending on the culture of the organisation and the quality of the leadership team, and what phase of growth the company is in, and who’s got an axe to grind or who’s following a personal agenda, there is a risk that the group could be seen as overly aligned with one function rather than another, representing interests of Marketing or HR or wherever because people naturally align to the line manager who assesses your performance or calculates your bonus, so if it really came down to it the communicator would be obliged to follow a leadership direction. So that’s why I think it needs to be in charge of its own destiny.” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand).

Others, however, felt that

“…you can do all of those things irrespective of where you sit. I’ve worked in businesses where it’s reported into HR and where it hasn’t… both I’ve seen work well and both I’ve seen work badly. From me it has always come down to the relationships between the function they report to and the expertise they have in the team. They have to be skilled, robust, they have to challenge, otherwise it doesn’t work.” (Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer).

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Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer
Critical success factor #3: Strong commercial awareness

To contribute to the debate at the strategic level, internal communicators must be commercially aware:

“As a communicator, if I’m doing my job properly, I network really well across the organisation, I’m commercially aware and I understand how the company operates.” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand)

“Those working in Internal Communications must have a deep understanding of their organisation. Where this isn’t present, great questioning and advice on channels alone will not always lead to the best answer.” (Judith Lyons, Director of Change & Organisation Development)

Indeed, despite the potential strategic value of IC, research suggests that almost half of internal communicators are not directly involved with strategy development. The pull towards more traditional, functional support means that increasingly, internal communicators are required to manage the tension between being a strategic advisor and a solution provider:

“I try to stay as strategic as much as I can because that’s where I really think we can drive a difference in an organisation.” (Mary Edmunds, Head of Group HR & Global Engagement)

Fiona MacAllan (Head of Internal & Change Communication) is well aware of the friction encountered by IC professionals operating at a strategic level, as trusted advisors, while being expected to deliver the tactical solution. Yet she firmly believes that IC should be “70% strategic, 30% tactical”, believing that it is in the strategic space that the real value can be added.

Critical success factor #4: Supporting authentic leadership communication

Leaders10 and academics11 recognise the need for leaders to be authentic. The high levels of challenge and turbulence that characterise our current economic and business environments are, no doubt, key drivers for this. This means that leaders need to talk, and they need to walk the talk. Their actions and words must be consistent in both formal and informal situations:

“For me, it’s about the connection between what you say and what you do. Some organisations are creating messaging that leaders don’t know how to use. This means there’s no connection between what we’re talking to leaders about and how they behave. Helping an organisation create a line of sight between the employee and the organisation’s dream is critical. The leader’s role in that is critical. For me, leadership and comms are symbiotic.” (Adrian Moorhouse, Managing Director & Co-founder)

IC must be an enabler, not a mouthpiece. They must support leaders to have the conversations that build trust and engagement because they are authentic and consistent. The leader’s role is central to high performance communication, yet many leaders lack the skills to draw out a conversation or elicit sought-after feedback.12 One of our participants highlighted the potential benefit of HR involvement in this important pursuit:

“I think there are two advantages of Internal Communications being part of the HR function. The first is this can strengthen the relationships with the HR Business Partners ensuring that the key messages are reinforced in the business through this key role. The second is that it enables Internal Communications to work closely with those responsible for leadership capability as one of the key leadership skills is the ability to engage people in what is going on in the organisation to get the best out of them.” (Judith Lyons, Director of Change & Organisation Development)

What are the critical success factors for Internal Communications?

Critical success factor #5: Robust measurement

Facilitated by good connectivity, communicators need to monitor the mood and mindset of the workforce closely to determine the likely, and then actual, impact of messages on the audience:

“It is also about following things through, checking to see whether things have had the intended impact. Often what happens is that messages are one after the other without knowing how they have been received. One of the key skills required of the Internal Communications team is to have great relationships across their businesses to enable them to temperature check how things have landed.” (Judith Lyons, Director of Change & Organisation Development)

“I think it’s very hard to get that close two-way loop going, because it’s very easy to disseminate messages and think you’ve communicated but you haven’t. You’ve chucked stuff out there and you’ve not got anything back.” (Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)

Data is the foundation for credibility. In the words of Fiona MacAllan (Head of Internal & Change Communication), you’ve got to have “hard metrics as a mandate to operate. Without hard metrics all you are dealing with is opinions.”

A critical role for IC, therefore, is to ensure that a range of robust measurement processes are in place that will enable you to assess progress towards key goals, and inevitably, demonstrate the value of the function. Whether you incorporate communication metrics into existing performance metrics, conduct pulse surveys, or hold focus groups will depend on what you are trying to measure. Likewise, key outcome measures depend, of course, on your specific values and strategic ambitions, but for David Richardson, our CEO participant:

“…for me engagement is a critical measure. The other key measure is their contribution to building trust. Trust in the leadership, confidence that the leadership will take the organisation through some fairly massive change, and trust that they will do the right thing.” (David Richardson, Group Chief Executive).

Critical success factor #6: Transparency and empowerment

Undeniably, the meteoric rise of social media has changed the very nature of communication. The audience is in control, meaning that IC must look to inspire conversations, rather than kill them. This means less broadcasting and more enabling of two-way conversations and empowering the audience to communicate well:

“We have to accept that we’re never going to control social media. It’s important to say to people that we understand that you use this and it’s part of your life. The adult thing is not to issue a ‘don’t do this’ list but rather share knowledge and best practice on how to get the most from it, protect yourself and keep your job” (Fiona Lloyd, Global Head of Communications).

A fundamental change brought about by Web 2.0 is the complete removal of any metaphorical ‘walls’ that used to contain communication. As a result, what’s internal can immediately become external. What’s more, our audiences are increasingly suspicious of spin, and yearn for authenticity. This combination of factors emphasises the importance of harmonisation between IC and EC:

“It’s going to get more vociferous, it’s going to be more open, it’s going to be more transparent. The importance of a message being aligned – you used to be able to have one message for your shareholders, one message for your employees, you could segment it, you could position it. Now you can’t. It’s got to be consistent. Therefore, you’ve got to really nail it.” (Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)

“This idea of silo-ing your communications is becoming less and less viable because the people are no longer in segments, they’re no longer in silos. Your employees are your customers, are your investors, are your community pressure groups, are the people who vote for your elected officials. It’s all the same human being; the same group of people…It’s about making sure that the company has always got a coherent and consistent face, irrespective of what it’s saying and who it’s saying it to, so that you’re authentic all the way through. Traditionally you might say that’s all about a brand experience, that’s not really employee communications, but it is what it is. It is your organisation.” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand)
Critical success factor #7: Expertise

Last but not least, for organisations to reap the full benefits of high performing IC, communications experience and expertise is a must. As the internal communications discipline evolves, so too does its own employee base, with seasoned communications professionals drawing on broad and varied communications and change backgrounds to deliver truly strategic services to organisations. As a profession, IC must look to attract top talent into its realms. Ideally the leader of IC should be a technical subject matter expert, something Fiona MacAllan feels strongly about:

“Organisations need to understand that IC can move a business in support of its strategic direction and stop putting non-professionals in IC roles – it’s a wasted opportunity.” (Fiona MacAllan, Head of Internal & Change Communication)

The expertise of an IC practitioner will determine the effectiveness with which they bring each of the success factors to bear in their day to day work. In the words of Linda Kennedy:

“They have to be skilled, robust, they have to challenge, otherwise it doesn’t work.” (Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)
Social media has changed the nature of communications forever. Its impact on IC, as a result of the increasingly blurred lines between internal and external communications, leads some to question even the future of its existence:

“I think that the future of internal communications is that there isn’t one. The development of the wired world and the networked environment, the increasing ability that individuals and groups right across the globe have to talk to each other, share views, share interests and lobby means the traditional boundaries that traditional corporate communications teams have created between the employees, the journalists, the investors, the politicians and the regulators, they don’t exist anymore, because those groups are completely porous. I think instead organisations need to be thinking about their strategic messages and their content, and they need to be thinking about managing their relationships.” (Sarah Larvor, Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand)

A debate that began with the question “Where should Internal Communications sit?” spawned many evocative insights into the role of IC, both now and in the future, if it’s to contribute towards high performance in an organisation. One thing on which all of our participants seemed to agree was that “internal communications is vital to the organisation” (Mary Edmunds, Head of Group HR & Global Engagement). These statements from Linda and Adrian sum it up well:

“I don’t think it matters where its sits actually, I think the key thing is how you make it work.” (Linda Kennedy, Chief Change Officer)

“For me it’s about engagement with the employees and about performance, so I don’t mind really where it sits, but it’s got to engage all employees and build trust in the leadership message and where we’re trying to get to.” (Adrian Moorhouse, Managing Director & Co-founder)

The best IC set up for one organisation will not necessarily work for another. It depends on the maturity of the organisation, its geographical spread and its key priorities:

“I think it depends where the organisation’s at, where you are in the change journey, where you are in the organisational journey, what you’re trying to achieve, but I think where it sits is less important than how you use it. I think that’s absolutely key.” (Stuart Branch, Europe HR Director)
Conclusion

In considering where and how IC should be placed for future success, we conclude that what really counts is that IC is positioned where it can enable people and performance most effectively. If we allow the position of IC to be determined by politics or history, we will miss opportunities. However, so long as IC is impartial and well-connected, more important than where it sits, is how it is used.

Viewing communications as the lifeblood of an organisation highlights the necessity for it to flow plentifully to and from each extremity of an organisation and its heart. While an organisation still thrives, communications cannot (and should not) be stopped. The reality is that the availability of IC resources drives the current status of IC in many organisations:

“I think the challenge too is that within any organisation you have ground that you have to cover: vision, values strategy, HR process, you have to cover all those, and unless your internal comms function is set up to cover all those, you’ve got to split it up. You’ve got to make sure all that happens. So let’s say you put it on its own, but you don’t cover the HR parts, then HR will find its own people. Or you put it in HR, and you don’t cover vision or strategy, some other function will cover that, so you’ve got to cover all the ground, and so long as you’re covering all the ground it can sit where it needs to.” (Rodney Jordan, Director, Employee Communications).

Leaders are crucial in aiding the healthy flow of communication within and outside of their organisation. Each and every employee should be encouraged to contribute to that stream of communication. Not only does this foster engagement, but it also places IC in a position to help managers to communicate rather than relying on IC to manage communication.

By empowering and enabling effective leadership communication, high performing IC functions can contribute more towards helping the organisation achieve its strategic aims. Whether the IC function has sufficient credibility and influence to achieve this is, therefore, an important question.

Engaging with each of the success factors described above will itself build credibility – through good quality relationships, impartiality and challenge, commercial awareness, enabling leaders to communicate effectively, demonstration of robust measurement data, transparency and expertise.

“I think the challenge too is that within any organisation you have ground that you have to cover: vision, values strategy, HR process, you have to cover all those, and unless your internal comms function is set up to cover all those, you’ve got to split it up.” (Rodney Jordan, Director, Employee Communications).
Appendices

Participant biographies:

LIZ BOWES, Lego – Interim HR Consultant
Liz concentrates on the delivery of Lego global & local HR People & Culture projects. She has 12 years HR professional experience operating at Board level within ‘blue chip’ global organisations with experience in both private & public sectors. Liz has had direct experience of and accountability for Employee Communications within change projects (BUPA Hospitals transition to Spire Healthcare, NHS London). She feels it is critical to focus on employee engagement and communications in successfully embedding change initiatives—an area often not given the required focus within organisation change projects.

STUART BRANCH, Masco – Europe HR Director
Stuart has 22 years’ experience in the HR world, with a track record in HR business partnering, organisation development, change management and M&A. Stuart believes that internal communications is a key tool to use within any Human Resource strategy. He has operated in roles with and without direct line management of internal comms, but says he always includes them in his team and draws on their services whether they report in directly or not.

MARY EDMUNDS, Tui Travel – Head of Group HR & Global Engagement
Mary leads on people engagement across this global business of 55,000 people, supporting issues internally and externally for group headquarters and emerging markets. Mary has a track record in banking and telecommunications of delivering business improvement and creating innovative and aligned people solutions.

RODNEY JORDAN, Coca-Cola Enterprises – Director, Employee Communications
With over 10 years of communications experience and a broad knowledge of employee and change communications practices, Rodney is responsible for developing and embedding employee communications capabilities across a multi-national organisation. This has included launching, embedding, and sustaining employee value proposition and associated internal brand to drive employee engagement across all territories. Rodney is passionate about measuring communications effectiveness and is also a firm believer that relationships with key stakeholders, a keen understanding of organisational readiness, and alignment within strong change management framework are underutilised tools in the communicator’s grasp—no matter where they sit within an organisation.
LINDA KENNEDY, Everything Everywhere – Chief Change Officer
Linda has over 20 years of HR experience across a range of industries and has worked for large global organisations including support services company Serco as Group HR Director, Williams Lea and Cleanaway as Global HR Director and oil and mining company BHP Billiton as VP Human Resources, amongst others. Most recently Linda has been successful in delivering Orange UK into the Sunday Times Best Companies list and in leading the organisational change and integration of Orange and T-Mobile to form Everything Everywhere. Linda is an Associate of the Institute of Linguists and a Fellow of the CIPD.

SARAH LARVOR, National Grid – Global Head of Employee Communication & Brand
Sarah is an employee engagement, strategic communication and change management specialist with over 18 years’ experience of leading and delivering successful employee, brand & leadership engagement and cultural change programmes in complex organisations. Prior to her current role, she consulted to the financial services industry, working with clients on various organisational communication and engagement projects. Sarah’s communication philosophy is to treat people as adults. It’s all too easy, when working in large organisations, to forget that “audiences” and “segments” are actually groups of talented, resourceful and resilient individuals.

FIONA LLOYD, Allen & Overy – Global Head of Communications
Fiona has been in her current role at Allen & Overy LLP, an international law firm, for three and a half years and is responsible for all internal and external communications, including PR, website, branding and advertising. In the legal field, Fiona has also worked for Freshfields and Eversheds. Prior to law, Fiona enjoyed a ten year career in marketing and communications in the banking sector.

JUDITH LYONS, Boots – Director of Change & Organisation Development
Judith joined Boots over 20 years ago and has pursued a career in HR. As well as the operational HR Business Partner roles she has held, she has also worked on and led numerous projects across the Boots business, including the set-up of wellbeing services, the sale of Boots Healthcare International and the closure of the Boots final salary pension scheme. Judith is currently Director of Change and Organisation Development responsible for leading the thinking on the future shape and health of Boots UK. As part of this role she also has responsibility for internal communications.
Appendices (cont.)

ADRIAN MOORHOUSE, Lane4 – Managing Director and Co-founder
Adrian is the Managing Director of Lane4 and an Olympic Gold Medallist. Drawing on extensive commercial expertise and an elite sporting background, Adrian balances his leadership role with performance consultancy projects for Lane4 clients. He specialises in the fields of leadership development, organisational change and senior team facilitation. Adrian has won ‘Best Leader’ at the ‘Sunday Times Best 100 Small Companies to Work For’ Awards on two occasions.

DAVID RICHARDSON, LGC – CEO
David Richardson was appointed Group Chief Executive of LGC in 2007. David joined LGC from British Mediterranean Airways where he was Chief Executive. He has extensive commercial management experience across a wide range of technical and regulated services businesses. He is closely interested in the role of internal communications in building employee trust, particularly across borders and cultures.

JULIA WARREN, Thomson Reuters – Global HRD
Julia has worked at Thomson Reuters for 10 years and has over two decades’ experience in the HR sector. She has a strongly commercial approach with considerable experience of strategy development and implementation within a range of blue chip organisations. As the leader of major global transformation of frontline work forces she works closely with internal communications professionals, valuing the vital contribution of communication in any change work.

Additional contributor:

FIONA MACALLAN, Nationwide Building Society – Head of Internal and Change Communication
Fiona is a Communications professional with 25 years’ experience. Her role at Nationwide sees her responsible for the creation and implementation of IC strategy and framework, change and other corporate communication together with strategic guidance and support to divisions. She is experienced in driving global communication strategies within complex multi-national matrix organisations for a diverse range of audiences, cultures and languages.

By empowering and enabling effective leadership communication, high performing IC functions can contribute more towards helping the organisation achieve its strategic aims. Whether the IC function has sufficient credibility and influence to achieve this is, therefore, an important question.
DR. ZARA WHYSALL is Head of Research & Product at Lane4. Zara is dedicated to developing Lane4’s position at the forefront of thought leadership in performance psychology. She is a Chartered Psychologist, with an MSc in Occupational Psychology from Nottingham University, and a PhD in behaviour change from Loughborough University. Her previous roles span academia, the Civil Service, and research and training in the private sector. She has recently been appointed a Visiting Fellow of Loughborough University.

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NATALIE BENJAMIN leads Lane4’s Communications business, working with clients to devise impactful internal communication strategies. She trained as a journalist at Cardiff School of Journalism, moving into PR and corporate communications in two agencies before specialising in employee communication. She has a particular interest in the leader’s role as a communicator. She has competed for Great Britain over 1500m and also competed for Wales at the 2002 and 2006 Commonwealth Games.

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