Internal Communications Health Check

A quick diagnostic for leadership alignment and communication systems.

Internal communication (IC) breakdowns rarely come from a lack of effort. They usually occur when organizations lack clear structures for decision communication, leadership cascades, channel governance, and employee feedback.

This health check helps identify where communication systems may be breaking down.

For each question, select the answer that most closely reflects how communication currently works in your organization. You can tally your responses at the end to see what they reveal.

When leaders make decisions that affect employees, how clearly are those decisions documented and communicated?

    a. Decisions include clear context, rationale, and next steps.
    b. Decisions are shared but context is limited.
    c. Decisions are communicated inconsistently.
    d. Employees often hear about decisions informally.

When a decision or change affects multiple teams or the entire organization, how does communication travel across the organization?

    a. It follows a cascade intentionally designed for the decision and the audiences affected.
    b. It follows a rigid cascade used for every decision regardless of context.
    c. An email or message goes out to everyone at the same time.
    d. Decisions and changes are not consistently communicated.

How clearly are organizational communications prioritized for employees?

    a. Communications are intentionally prioritized; employees understand what matters most.
    b. Some prioritization exists but messages occasionally compete for attention.
    c. Employees receive many messages, but priorities are unclear.
    d. Communication volume is overwhelming and priorities are not clear.

Before major decisions are communicated internally, how thoroughly are they vetted?

a. Decisions are carefully vetted before communication begins.
b. Decisions are usually vetted but occasionally shift after communication.
c. Decisions frequently change after communication begins.
d. Decisions aren't communicated.

How confident are managers in your organization when communicating decisions or changes to their teams?

a. Managers are confident and equipped to explain decisions and answer questions.
b. Managers generally communicate messages but may lack context.
c. Managers often feel uncertain explaining leadership decisions.
d. Managers frequently avoid communicating changes because they lack information.

How often do managers receive tools (talking points, FAQs, discussion guides) to help them communicate with their teams?

a. Managers receive tools consistently for major decisions and initiatives.
b. Managers receive tools occasionally when decisions occur.
c. Managers rarely receive communication resources.
d. Managers never receive tools and must interpret messages on their own.

How clearly defined are the purposes and owners of your organization's communication channels (email, intranet, Teams, town halls)?

a. Each channel has a clearly defined purpose and owner.
b. Most channels have defined purposes but some overlap.
c. Channel roles are unclear, and messages often duplicate across channels.
d. There is no clear structure for communication channels.

When is IC brought into decisions that affect multiple teams or the entire organization?

a. IC is engaged in discussion as a decision is forming.
b. IC is engaged in discussion after a decision has been finalized.
c. IC is kept out of the discussion and engaged just to send messages.
d. IC is never engaged.

What governance exists around all-employee communications?

a. All-employee messages are coordinated through a clear review process.
b. Most messages are coordinated but exceptions occur.
c. Messages are sometimes coordinated but often sent independently.
d. Anyone can send an all-employee email without coordination.

How effectively does your intranet support employees' understanding of organizational priorities and access to the information they need?

a. The intranet reinforces leadership priorities, highlights employee stories that reinforce strategy, and provides clear pathways to key resources.
b. The intranet contains some strategic content and resources, but the structure is inconsistent.
c. The intranet primarily functions as a document repository with limited connection to leadership messaging or strategy.
d. The intranet is outdated, difficult to navigate, or rarely used by employees.

When employees provide feedback through surveys and other mechanisms, what happens next?

a. The feedback is categorized, analyzed, and acted upon as patterns emerge.
b. The feedback is read and informally considered as part of future decision-making.
c. The feedback goes into a database that no one owns or looks at.
d. Employee feedback is not collected.

When employee feedback reveals patterns or concerns, how are those insights shared and addressed?

a. Feedback patterns are shared with employees along with concrete actions leaders plan to take to address the patterns.
b. Feedback patterns are shared with employees but steps to address the patterns are not shared with employees.
c. Leaders acknowledge feedback patterns among themselves but don't take meaningful steps to address them.
d. Patterns are never identified.

What Your Results Reveal

If your responses cluster around Bs, Cs, or Ds, your organization may benefit from clearer structures for how decisions move from leadership to managers to employees.

Mostly As

Your organization likely has a structured internal communication system that supports leadership alignment and employee clarity.

Mostly Bs

Your communication system functions but may lack flexibility or strategic alignment.

Mostly Cs

Communication may be inconsistent or reactive, which can lead to confusion and misalignment.

Mostly Ds

Your organization may lack a clear internal communication structure, making it difficult for employees to understand decisions and priorities.

Why This Matters

Organizations rarely struggle with internal communication because people aren't trying hard enough. More often, communication breaks down when there is no clear structure for how decisions move from leadership to managers and employees. When those structures are defined, communication becomes more consistent, managers feel more confident, and employees better understand what leaders are asking them to do.

Let's Talk

If this exercise surfaced questions about how communication flows through your organization, I'd be happy to talk about how internal communication systems can be structured to support leadership alignment and employee clarity.

If you'd like help interpreting your results or strengthening your internal communication systems, feel free to reach out. jenny.jones@sproutnarratives.com