

Align communication with your work culture

It's vital that your communication helps achieve your company's goals, so use these six guidelines to ensure that communications reflects and sustains the "core culture" – the purpose, philosophy and priorities – of your organization.

by Dr. Sheila Margolis, President, Workplace Culture Institute

Consider the following aspects of your organization before using the *Internal Practices Alignment Audit* toolkit article on the *Hub* to assess your current communication practices.

1. Purpose: The purpose of your organization is not the answer to the question "What do you do?" (which typically focuses on products, services and customers), but rather the answer to the question "Why is the work you do important?". Employees need to know how their work makes a contribution to the company and to society as a whole. No matter what your organization's purpose is – to nourish life, to make people happy, to support health and healing, or whatever it may be – incorporate the purpose into your communications.

2. Philosophy: The philosophy of a company is typically derived from the organization's founder. Understanding the founder and the founding principles will help you uncover the philosophy – the personality, the character, the spirit of your organization. Ask yourself what's the single element that's fundamental and enduring to your company that guides how you distinctively do your work.

In your communications activities, ensure the philosophy is discussed and examples of it "in practice" are shared. Regularly communicate this value that guides how employees must behave each day. Share stories of the founding not just with employees but also with job applicants to help reinforce your internal brand.

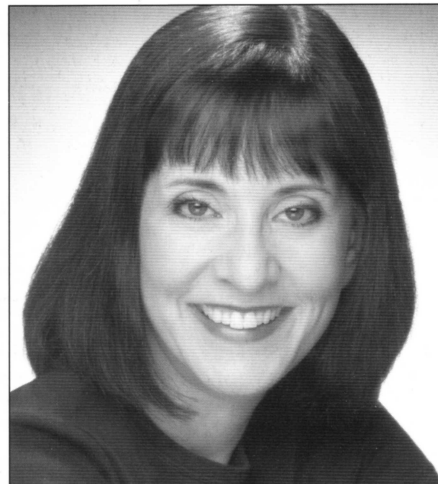
3. Priorities: Priorities are strategic values that guide how your organization's purpose and philosophy are put into practice. These

values are derived from your strategic goals. If a goal is, for example, to increase employee training, then one of your priorities is for your communications to focus on training and development. In some organizations, teams meet daily for a brief review of their priorities to ensure that all are united in a shared focus.

4. Strategy: Without a clear understanding of strategy, employees may not direct their energies in ways that support organizational success. Help the organization monitor its progress in achieving goals by regularly distributing updates on the metrics used to evaluate success. Whether your metrics are an increased number of customers, or quicker turnaround time of projects, or improved retention, status in achieving goals must be communicated with everyone in the company.

By meeting with one's supervisor to discuss personal actions toward achieving company goals, each employee should then fully understand their contribution to organizational success. If their work each day doesn't support the company's goals, then they must be helped to redirect their efforts to be strategic.

5. Culture: Guide leadership at all levels of the company to ensure that the messages they deliver consistently incorporate the organization's core culture, principles, vision



CONTACT

DR. SHEILA MARGOLIS

Dr. Sheila Margolis is president of the Workplace Culture Institute. She specializes in workplace culture and organizational change. Margolis recently published the book *Building a Culture of Distinction: Activities and Tools to Lead Organizational Change*.

► email: smargolis@cultureofdistinction.com

► web: www.cultureofdistinction.com

and strategic goals. For example, in a technology company I've worked with, the CEO meets monthly for a breakfast with employees who are celebrating their birthday that month. The CEO discusses with employees the culture and the future direction for the company.

6. Align external comms with your culture:

The image you project to the public through your marketing, PR and advertising must be aligned with your company principles. Think about your website: does it reflect and reinforce those core principles? If not, you're projecting an image that may conflict with the customer experience. Be serious about presenting your organization in a way that reflects what the organization is genuinely about. Otherwise, the image projected may introduce a confused picture that can alienate both employees and customers.

DOWNLOAD THIS ARTICLE

Find the full version of this article online at:

► www.internalcommshub.com/trial/strategy/howto/margolis.shtml

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT:

Make the most of your online membership with these additional articles on the Hub. Simply join at:

► www.internalcommshub.com

TOOL: INTERNAL PRACTICES ALIGNMENT AUDIT

► www.internalcommshub.com/trial/measuring/toolkit/practicesaudit.shtml