

Strategic Internal Communication Audit Template

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This worksheet is based on a model provided by Ronald D. Smith in 'Strategic Planning for Public Relations', 3rd Edition.

Effective communication among membership is critical to an organisation's success. An 'engaged' member is one who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about his or her interaction with the organisation, and thus will act in a way that furthers the organisation's interests.

To encourage this engagement, a strategic approach to internal communications is recommended. A strategic plan will consider the role of internal communications within the organisation; develop a structure for internal communications and methods of delivery.

Before developing a strategic internal communications plan, an audit of existing communications is necessary. This worksheet will help the communication practitioner collect relevant information and develop a report.

1. Existing Information

Answer the following questions based on what you know directly or what you can learn from your clients or colleagues within the organisation.

Performance

a. What services/products does the organisation provide?

b. What are the criteria for determining quality?

c. What is the quality of services/products provided?

d. Within the last three years, has the quality improved, remained unchanged or deteriorated?

e. How satisfied is organisational leadership with this quality?

f. What benefit/advantage does the services/products offer?

g. What problems or disadvantages are associated with this product/service?

Niche

a. What is the niche or specialty that sets you apart from competitors?

b. How has the service/product changed within the last three years?

c. How is the service/product likely to change over the next two years?

d. Should changes be introduced to improve the service/product?

Structure

a. What is the purpose/mission of your organisation?

b. Does your organisation have a set of vision/mission/value statements? If so, what are they?

c. Are organisational members familiar with the vision and mission statements?

d. What communication resources are available for potential public relations/marketing communication
activity: personnel, equipment, time, money and/or something else?

e. Within the next three years, are these resources likely to increase, remain unchanged or decrease?

f. How strong is the public relations/communication staff's role in the organisation's decision-making process?

Internal Communication Tools

Using the chart below, identify the communication tools used to disseminate messaging and collect information in the internal environment.

Publication - Paper		
Publication-Electronic		
Intranet - Email Bulletin Board		
Inserts/Enclosures		
Meetings, Video, Webinars		
Displays/Exhibits Social		
Media Face-to-Face		
Grapevine		
Other		

a. Does a strategic approach exist for the use of internal communication vehicles?

b. Do you have clear objectives?

c. Do/Can you measure the effectiveness of your efforts?

Internal Impediments

a. How supportive is the internal environment for public relations/communications activities?

b. Are there any impediments or obstacles to success that come from within your organisation?

Among Top Management

a. Are these impediments caused by policy/procedure?

b. Are these impediments deliberate?

Among Public Relations/Marketing Staff

a. Are these impediments caused by policy/procedure?

b. Are these impediments deliberate?

Among Stakeholders

a. Are these impediments caused by policy/procedure?

b. Are these impediments deliberate?

2. Research Program

If there are any significant gaps in the existing information, you may have to conduct research to learn more about the internal environment. This section will guide you through consideration of that option.

1. What is the basis for the existing information noted above: previous formal research, informal or anecdotal feedback, organisational experience, personal observation, presumptions/supposition and/or something else?

2. How accurate is the existing information?

3. How appropriate would it be to conduct additional research?

4. What information remains to be obtained?

5. If the existing information is not highly reliable, consider additional research, such as the following:

Interviews with key people within the organisation

Review of organisational literature/information

Additional personal observation

Interviews with external experts or opinion leaders

Surveys with representative publics.

6. What research methods will you use to obtain the needed information?

3. Research Findings

After you have conducted formal research, indicate your findings as they shed light on the internal environment of your organisation and write a brief summary of the internal environment.