



The Digital Bulletin Board: How Companies Can Communicate Effectively Through Constant Disruption

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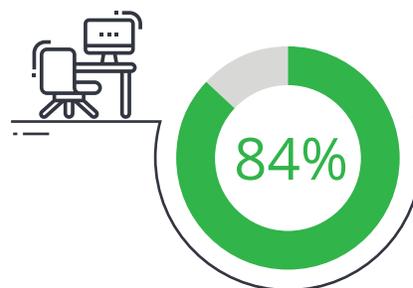
Back when people gathered around the water cooler instead of chatting on a collaborative software tool, the company bulletin board was a central repository of need-to-know information. From reminders about open enrollment to new policy changes, employees could see the latest company updates and stay informed about what was coming down the pike.

Nowadays, with the technology-enabled rise of the gig economy and remote work, there may not be that central gathering place, making it harder for company leadership to communicate directly with employees. And never has direct communication with employees been more important. From business model upheavals to external market changes, organizations these days are in a constant state of disruption. In the face of these changes, employees are expected to adapt and adjust, all while doing their “day-jobs.” What’s needed is stability, driven by holistic, overarching strategic communications that leverages digital, on-demand platforms to unite employees under a common purpose.

So how does HR and company leadership communicate effectively to a workforce that is increasingly disparate and disrupted? The answer is a new one-stop-shop, outfitted for a digital workforce.

Meet the Workforce Where They Are

The Deloitte 2019 Global Human Capital Trends report found that:



84 percent of respondents believe it is important or very important for their organization moving into 2019 to reimagine the workforce experience to improve productivity.

As a result, leaders should apply this shift in workforce experience to workplace communication, sharing details on everything from small changes to major events. Organizations need a way to connect to the workforce where they are—untethered, deskless, and remote. Employees need access to critical information on their timetable, beyond an email that can get buried or an in-person meeting that might be missed.

Companies also must ensure their messages rise above the noise. From the endless ping of emails, alerts, and texts, employees consume overwhelming amounts of information every day. Organizations need a way to connect to the workforce with personalized, short, and to-the-point messages, targeting the right audiences at the right time with the right information.

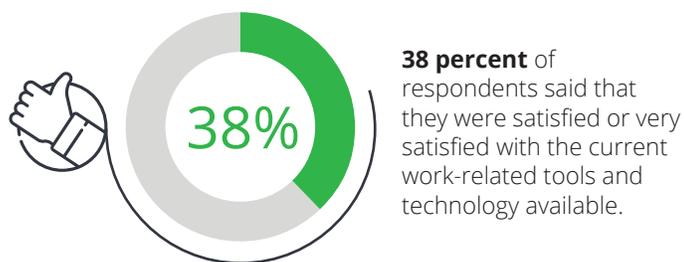
Leveraging Digital Tools

To that end, companies are increasingly leveraging digital tools to disseminate critical updates, providing a single platform that can push out on-demand updates, particularly during times of extended disruption.

Take, for instance, a company going through a merger or acquisition. Employees will wonder how a complex M&A process will affect their day-to-day responsibilities. How will their benefits policy change? How will their department be re-shaped? What new training must they undertake? Will the hierarchy and reporting structure change? And what is the timetable for all these changes? Beyond one-size-fits-all alerts, employees want to know how each change will impact them specifically.

Enter ConnectMe. Digital HR tools like Deloitte's ConnectMe have become an integral communications toolbox, helping deliver a constant stream of communication through workplace disruptions, including links, banner company alerts, and a tab or wall dedicated to the management of the change—similar to yesterday's bulletin board. Company leadership is able to create a personalized user experience to share necessary information with targeted employees.

These tools are crucial, as Deloitte's 2019 Global Human Capital Trends report found that:



Even further, despite investing billions in HR technology, 65 percent of respondents report that this technology is inadequate or only fair at achieving its overall objectives.

It's a Two-Way Street

Working in a constant state of disruption can be distracting, overwhelming, and can breed uncertainty, which in turn yields mistrust and frustration. Companies leveraging strategic communications can empower a more engaged and productive workforce, particularly during times of significant disruption. And in an age of increased transparency, not only do employees want to be in the loop—they also want to be heard.

The strongest organizations place a high premium on their workforce's viewpoints and want to hear directly from their employees about how changes are impacting them. Organizations are increasingly mining for internal trends and patterns to help shape their communications strategies. Digital pulse surveys and employee polls provide the quantitative data to reveal emerging patterns, challenges, and issues that need to be further addressed.

In this regard, an employee in, say, the accounting department who logs onto the internal platform for the latest news about the merger or acquisition can not only receive critical updates about the integration or separation and a reminder of their personalized to-dos, but he or she can then take a quick poll about their recent employee experience. That information, coupled with qualitative findings from virtual town halls and leadership Q&As, provides a comprehensive and interactive picture of how employees are faring, allowing leadership to adjust their strategic communications accordingly.



Companies also need to be mindful of external forces impacting employees. Digital HR tools and platforms also use engagement analytics to mine external data. From combing through news alerts, monitoring industry trends, and getting a grasp on relevant, emerging technologies, companies need to incorporate external events into their strategic communications to provide a holistic roadmap to their workforce. Being able to leverage both internal and external trends is a rare and powerful ability, one that puts companies ahead of the game when it comes to communicating *with*—not just *to*—employees.

A Case Study in Navigating Disruption

A current ConnectMe client navigating M&A provides employees with a monthly one-stop-shop email that aggregates business updates, integration updates, transformation updates, links to pages on their shared intranet site with more info, etc. This communication contains the “must-read” info each month, compiling all relevant information into one accessible touchpoint for employees. To complement these monthly emails, the client implemented a virtual town hall where employees from both legacy organizations could submit questions to leadership ahead of time, vote on the questions they most wanted answered, and then heard live from their leadership team during the Town Hall. During the call, employees continued to interact with the platform and voted on questions, left comments, and asked additional questions. This created a personal connection, reinforced leadership's commitment to the managers, delivered information in another vehicle, and promoted a unified approach to leading/moving forward during the period of disruption they are experiencing.

Disruption isn't showing any signs of slowing down, and in today's tight labor market, companies need to be on the offense to keep employees engaged amidst sweeping external and internal changes. Whether it's M&A or the implementation of workforce-shifting technologies, employees need on-demand insights and a feedback loop to stay the course, and digital HR bulletin boards are just the ticket.

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