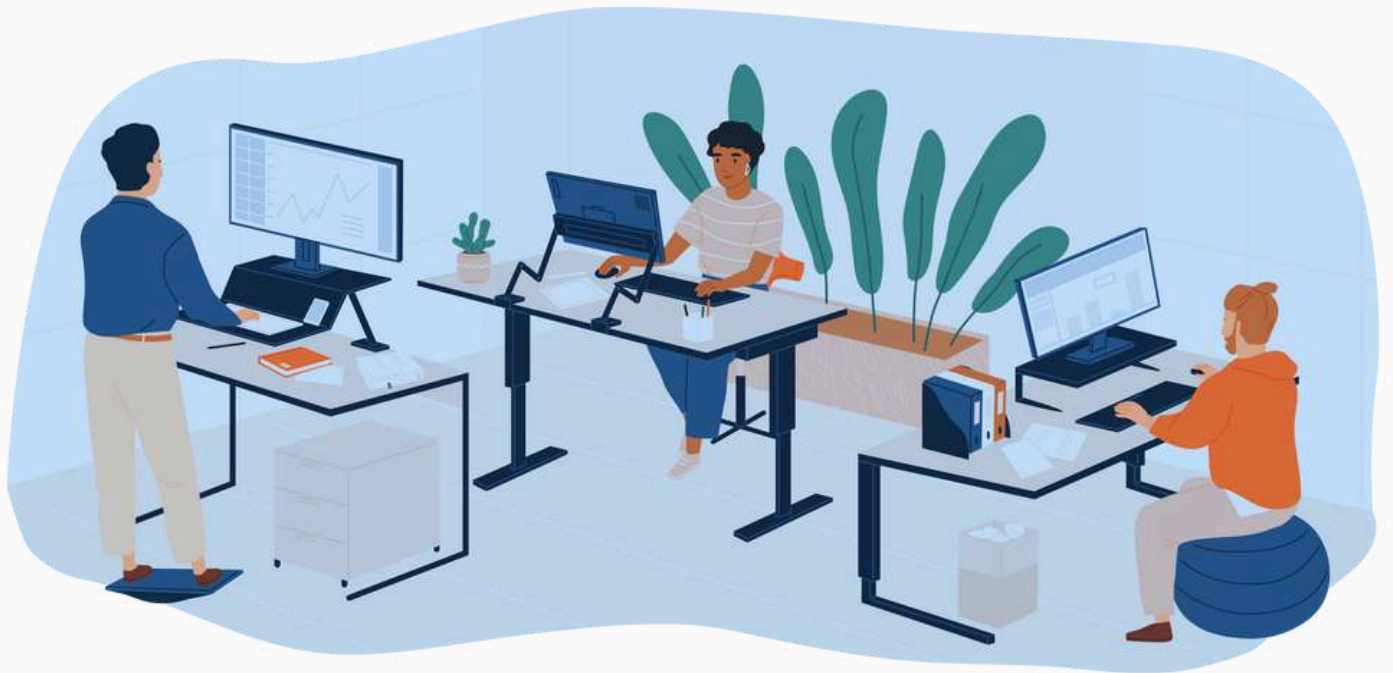




The Internal Comms Guide

Making Impact as an Internal Communicator



Content



Introduction

- About the Guide
- From the President of the IFICA
- Our Contributors

01.

Understanding Internal Comms

- Importance of Internal Communications
- Difference between Internal and External Communications

02.

Getting Started in Internal Comms

- What is Expected from an Internal Communicator?
- Challenges Internal Communicators Face
- Core Skills Internal Communicators Need

03.

Delivering Strategic Results Through Internal Comms

- Using Internal Communications to Support Organisational Goals
- Measuring the Impact of Internal Communications
- Staying Relevant Within Your Organisation

04.

Career Growth for Internal Communicators

- Career Tips From Contributors
- Tools and Resources for Professional Growth

Introduction

➤ About The Guide

The world of Communications is very dynamic. Not only does Communications apply within every sector and industry, it also covers a broad range of stakeholders - both internal and external.

Before the pandemic that disrupted our world, many organisations focused their efforts on communicating with their external stakeholders. The pandemic, however, made it clear that communication with internal stakeholders must be intentional and should equally be prioritised.

While internal communications (IC) has gained more attention in the years following the pandemic, the function is yet to receive the organisational recognition and buy-in that it deserves.

In addition, within the African context, there are few resources available to help internal communicators to successfully perform this role and achieve the desired results.

To close this gap, we have put together this resource for internal communicators in collaboration with the Institute for Internal Communication Africa (IFICA).

Featuring contributions from experienced internal communicators, this Internal Comms Guide provides professional guidance, practical information and valuable tips that professionals can apply to succeed in an IC role.

We hope that you will use this Guide as a reference material to navigate your career journey as an internal communicator within your organisation.



From the IFICA President

The Institute for Internal Communication Africa (IFICA) was born from a moment that felt long overdue. When a social media post sparked an outpouring from IC professionals, it revealed a gap in the industry - too few conferences, workshops and spaces dedicated to IC practitioners to connect, share solutions and co-create the future of their discipline.

It became clear that the field lacked an official platform to not only raise its profile but also set quality standards. Months of planning and consultations followed, leading to the creation of IFICA - a direct response to the collective call for change.

But the key here is that IFICA isn't competing with existing organisations. Instead, it seeks to partner with them, expanding the network across Africa to spotlight the true value of IC. The goal is ambitious yet simple and focused; to ensure the discipline is recognised for its impact on employees, organisations and ultimately, customers and investors.

IFICA offers professional development opportunities, where the IC community can access online content, reports workshops and webinars designed to enhance their skills and knowledge of IC. The Institute also offers networking opportunities, where practitioners may connect with other professionals through our events, forums and online community.

It is time for African practitioners to bring the perspective of our continent to the globe and showcase their talent, skill, creativity and innovation, while co-creating and charting a course for the future. Visit our LinkedIn page or join us on www.IFICA.co.za.

Adesh Chetram
President, IFICA



Our Contributors



Bongzi Mbali
Executive Head of
Internal Communications,
Vodacom



Adesh Chetram
President, Institute for
Internal Communications
Africa (IFICA)



Elsie Ofulue
Vice President
EMEA Head of Internal
Communications



Mosima Phale
Co-Founder and
Vice President,
IFICA



Richard Etienne
Global Director
of Internal
Communications



Phindile Vilakazi
Administration &
Membership Manager,
IFICA



Nancy Bercaw
Senior Director
of Global Internal
Communications



**Kopano Setlhare-
Maruping**
Program Manager, IFICA



Ruth Mthembu
Content & Communication
Manager, IFICA



**Mathaka
Mkhumane**
Brand Manager, IFICA



Phumzile Matsheni
Internal
Communication
Officer



Thato Leokaoke
Events Manager,
IFICA



1

Understanding Internal Comms

Understanding Internal Comms

To succeed in the IC field, it is crucial to understand why IC is essential within any organisation and how it is different from external communications.

➤ Importance of Internal Communications

If there's one thing we'd like you to take away from this Guide, it is that internal communications is just as important as external communications and the function needs to be carried out with intentionality and purpose. Here's the reason why:

IC is the communication that takes place within an organisation, between employees and often led by management. It is designed to inform, engage, and motivate employees, and to create a sense of community and shared purpose. **Richard Etienne**

IC plays a key role in ensuring that the organisation's objectives and activities are communicated to everyone internally, including those responsible for managing external communications.

For external communications to be effective and aligned with the organisation's goals, it must first be informed by IC. **Mosima Phale**

IC is personal. Every message, every interaction, and every conversation is about the individual and team experience. Therefore, every word and action must be inclusive and engaging. Storytelling is critically important in IC.

Team members want to see and feel their impact too. Reflecting their efforts back at them through stories is a great way to do that and to foster a culture of curiosity and camaraderie. **Nancy Bercaw**

➤ Difference between Internal and External Communications

One clear difference between internal and external communications is that IC is focused on internal stakeholders while external communications is aimed at external stakeholders. However, the difference between internal and external communications goes beyond who the function speaks to.

These are some of the other key differences between internal and external communications:

Imagine a really sleek, red sports car. It has all of the engineering, the flashy air intakes and large aerodynamic pieces. External comms is the front right wheel, beautiful rims and all. Internal comms is the left wheel. Both vital, both engineered to perform with precision. Now, imagine one wheel turning left and the other to the right. What happens? Chaos. The car spins out, going nowhere fast.

That's what happens when internal and external comms aren't aligned. Sure, one speaks to employees and the other to the outside world. But it's not just about the "who" they speak to, it's about how they work together to drive the organisation forward.

IC is the steady force steering employees in the right direction, making sure they're aligned, motivated and proud to be part of the journey. External comms takes those same values and projects them to the world, shaping how customers, investors and the public perceive the brand.

These two wheels need to move in harmony, delivering the same message in tone, timing and intent. The moment one veers off track - when internal says one thing and external something else - the entire organisation starts to wobble, with the risk of the brand's reputation spinning out of control.

The real magic happens when they are aligned - when the internal pride fuels external admiration. Together, they propel the organisation forward in ways that turns heads and leaves a lasting impression. **Adesh Chetram**

Both forms are similar in that they deal with the presentation of information and messages on behalf of an institution to a defined audience.

Each stream has a uniquely defined audience, where for example, external communications deals with audiences or stakeholders outside of the organisation such as investors, media, and the public; and internal communications deals with audiences inside the organisation such as employees, managers, executives, and the board.

However, it is not as simplistic a line as it appears. As communication evolves, we are seeing an overlap between the two workstreams, where increasingly, there is an interest by external parties on what happens inside organisations.

Therefore, it is important to understand this overlap and be mindful of the possibility of internal communication externalising.

Bongi Mbuli



Internal communications is like talking to your teammates at work. It's about sharing information, coordinating tasks, and making sure everyone is on the same page. Think of emails, team meetings, and office announcements.

External communications is how the company talks to people outside, like customers, suppliers, and the public. In short, internal communications keeps the team informed and united, while external communications shapes how the outside world sees the company. **Ruth Mthembu**



2

Getting Started in Internal Comms

Getting Started in Internal Comms

➤ What is Expected from an Internal Communicator?

Your role as an internal communicator is to act as a bridge between your organisation and its people. While the specific expectations will differ within organisations and sectors, your role is essentially to be a strategic adviser that adds value by delivering outcomes that shape the success of the organisation.

Here are the key things expected from professionals working in the IC function:

The IC professional is responsible for creating and implementing employee communications content, and programmes that actively engage internal audiences.

IC professionals also play a crucial role in keeping employees informed about the organisation's vision, mission, values and strategic goals.

They play a pivotal role in creating an environment that fosters engagement and motivation. **Elsie Ofulue**

An IC professional plays a critical role in shaping the culture and engagement within an organisation. They must be able to promote engagement, ensuring that employees are not only informed but also motivated and aligned with the organisation's mission.

They need to excel at working with diverse teams and functions, understanding the organisation holistically in order to support various departments in achieving their objectives.

Ultimately, an IC professional is a strategic partner within the business, ensuring that communication flows seamlessly to create a united and engaged workforce. **Mathaka Mkhumane**

The role of an IC professional is to foster a connected, engaged, and aligned workforce. We act as a bridge between leadership and employees, ensuring that the company's strategy is communicated effectively through curated messages, fostering a positive work culture. **Phindile Vilakazi**

IC must go beyond simply relaying information. It requires crafting a comprehensive strategy that fosters transparency and drives continuous employee engagement.

The same level of energy and excitement seen in external campaigns must be mirrored internally, ensuring employees feel just as informed and inspired.

Moreover, collaboration with HR is crucial to strengthening employee retention and positioning the organisation as an employer of choice. This partnership enhances not only attraction and retention but also overall employee experience.

A key role of IC is to remain attuned to employee sentiment, listening on the ground, and collaborating with internal stakeholders to creatively address feedback. By doing so, IC ensures that employees' voices are heard, promoting a culture of responsiveness and engagement. **Mosima Phale**

IC professionals should focus on adding value. Ultimately, that is what each professional must do to help drive business performance.

Value in the perspective of IC is about providing the context for leaders to communicate the business strategy, engaging employees around the business purpose and strategic priorities, and equipping line managers to unlock the best employee experience for their team members.

Depending on the requirements of the business, these can take various forms including embedding the employee value proposition, bringing the organisational culture to life, enabling change management and supporting functional communication. **Bongi Mbuli**

➤ Challenges Internal Communicators Face

Of course, working in IC is not always as easy as the expert professionals make it look. There are unique challenges that IC professionals face and they must learn to overcome these challenges.

Here are some of the challenges our contributors have faced on the job and steps they have taken to overcome them:

The most challenging aspect of IC for the team I work with has been managing leadership changes. As internal communicators, we act as the voice of senior leadership, so when a new CEO or leadership team comes in, we have to quickly adapt to their vision, strategy, and ways of working.

Adapting to these shifts can be difficult, especially when you've invested time and effort into creating processes that align with a former strategy. The vision, culture, and approaches we had promoted may no longer be relevant, and even proven methods can be challenged by new leadership. It feels like starting over each time, which can be frustrating.

However, we've overcome this challenge by embracing change as part of the role. Change offers opportunities for growth and innovation, and we've learned to remain flexible and open-minded. By continually adapting our approach, learning new ways of working, and aligning our communications with the evolving company vision, we've been able to support leadership transitions successfully. **Mathaka Mkhumane**

I've seen that other departments within the organisation don't understand the value of IC and they just think internal communications is just about sending out an email.

I have had to demonstrate the value of IC and ensure department heads understand the importance of a communications strategy and plan which has been working so far. **Phumzile Matsheni**

I think the biggest challenge I faced earlier on in my career is actually driving the importance of the role, being brought into conversations later rather than from inception of a project or implementation of a strategy.

Over time, I have overcome this by the constant education of stakeholders on how our partnership/ collaboration is crucial to organisational success.

Also staying curious, constantly asking the right questions, seeking to understand and inevitably influencing situations has yielded results. **Elsie Ofulue**

Message Alignment Across Departments: Different departments often have varying priorities, which can create fragmented communication.

Solution: I regularly collaborate with the Human Capital Department, the Technology Change Management teams and leadership to ensure internal messaging aligns with company-wide goals.

I've also standardised key messaging through editorial calendars and coordinated campaigns to create a unified voice across the organisation. This always has a silver thread to project the company values and the objectives in a smart way.

Engaging Leadership in Communication: Getting leadership to consistently participate in and drive internal communications can be difficult.

Solution: I've built relationships with leaders by showing them how their involvement strengthens trust and engagement within teams, and also developed a leader-led framework to empower them.

I also host leadership podcasts where I encourage leaders to share their personal and professional journeys, and their vision. This has brought leaders closer to employees in an authentic way. **Kopano Setlhare-Maruping**

Gaining the attention of employees: Employees are often bombarded with information from a variety of sources, so it can be difficult to gain their attention.

I have overcome this challenge by creating engaging and informative content that is relevant to employees' interests. I also use a variety of communication channels to reach employees, such as email, intranet, social media, and employee newsletters.

Communicating complex information in a clear and concise way: IC professionals often need to communicate complex information to employees in a clear and concise way.

I have overcome this challenge by using plain language and avoiding jargon. I also use visuals and storytelling to make my communication more engaging. **Richard Etienne**

Often, we're the last to be brought into a plan or project. Then there's the lack of information sharing.

But I've found ways to overcome these challenges. For starters, it's about proving our value upfront. Showing that if you involve internal comms from the beginning, the whole project runs smoother and the results are better.

I've made it a point to push for a seat at the table early, to argue for the budget and time we need, and to demonstrate that we're strategists who can elevate a project when we're involved from the ground up.

Building strong relationships with other departments has also been key. If you're seen as a partner rather than a last-minute add-on, people start to bring you in earlier. For post-campaign reviews, I've been advocating for real, actionable insights, turning feedback into forward motion, so that the next time around, we're not repeating the same missteps.

It's not always easy, but by consistently showing up, proving our worth, and pushing for the respect and resources we deserve, IC is moving from the backseat to the driver's seat - where we belong. **Adesh Chetram**

► Core Skills Internal Communicators Need

Without any doubt, effective internal communication is critical to the success of any organisation.

To deliver the expected results and have the level of impact that the role demands, these are some of the essential skills that IC professionals need to have:

The key skills for me are interpersonal and relationship-building skills as you work with the diverse personalities that you need to manage. You must also be solution-oriented as these colleagues will come to you with challenges that need to be resolved and look to you for direction. **Thato Leokaoko**

Deep listening skills, along with clear, concise writing skills. You must be able to get to the heart of the matter in any communication. And, always advocate for the reader/receiver.

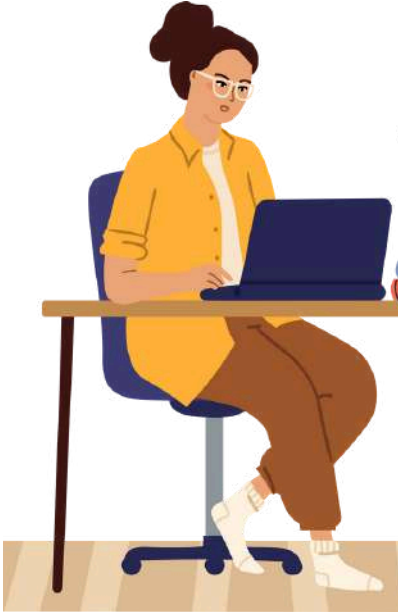
Diplomacy is another useful trait. Be a problem solver, a unifier, and an ambassador for the organisation's core values. **Nancy Bercaw**

To truly succeed, you need business acumen. You can't just spin stories; you have to understand how the business fits together and what makes the gears turn.

And of course, strong writing is non-negotiable. If you can't turn a dull corporate update into something people actually want to read, you're sunk. An eye for design? Absolutely. You've got to know what looks good and what doesn't because people judge emails by their cover (and their fonts).

Ultimately, we make the impossible seem easy. One minute we're strategizing on how to build brand pride, the next we're calming a comms crisis that's brewing at the canteen.

But when you've got the right mix of creativity, strategy and that all-important Swiss Army knife mentality, no challenge is too big to tackle. **Adesh Chetram**



The ability to think strategically, the agility to learn and adapt as things evolve, and most importantly, staying curious.

We have the privilege of being exposed to many functions and disciplines which makes us more knowledgeable on many subjects. The ability to embrace new knowledge and invest the required time to understand the unknown is key to developing messages and shaping narratives that move people forward.

Bongi Mbuli

Writing and editing skills: IC professionals need to be able to write and edit a variety of content formats.

Content creation skills: IC professionals need to be able to create engaging, informative and relevant content.

Data analysis skills: IC professionals need to be able to collect and analyse data to measure the effectiveness of their communication campaigns.

Communication technology skills: IC professionals need to be able to use a variety of communication tools and technologies, such as email, intranet, social media, and video conferencing.

Communication skills: IC professionals need to be able to communicate effectively with people at all levels of the organisation. This includes being able to write and speak clearly, and being able to listen actively.

Teamwork skills: IC professionals often work on cross-functional teams. They need to be able to collaborate effectively with others and share ideas.

Problem-solving skills: IC professionals need to be able to identify and solve communication problems.

Adaptability: IC professionals need to be able to adapt to change and be willing to learn new things. **Richard Etienne**



3

Delivering Strategic Results Through Internal Comms

Delivering Strategic Results Through Internal Comms

Internal communications is not about making things pretty or being an errand staff within the organisation. As an IC professional, you are uniquely positioned to deliver strategic results within the organisation and support the achievement of organisational goals.

► Using IC to Support Organisational Goals

To strategically support your organisation's goals as an internal communicator, you need to understand the organisation or business and the challenges it faces. This, in turn, will help you to identify the critical areas where communication can make a difference to the operations and success of the organisation.

These are some of the things our contributors have done to leverage IC to support the goals of the organisation:

The effective and optimal use of regular communication channels such as newsletters, intranet, town hall meetings, open door sessions have provided leadership opportunities to share updates, recognise achievements and celebrate milestones.

Leveraging these channels have also created an open and honest culture of transparency which also fosters psychological safety in the workplace. **Elsie Ofulue**

When we have internal campaigns, we use our team members (more often than executives) as spokespeople for the message.

For example, during the height of COVID, we created a one-minute video of team members around the world advocating for hand washing, mask wearing, and social distancing in their own languages: Swahili, Arabic, Russian, and Urdu.

We continually showcase the efforts of our team as they enact our 10-year strategic plan. In this way, team members learn from and celebrate with each other along the way. **Nancy Bercaw**

I have leveraged IC to support organisational goals by ensuring the right content gets in front of the right people at the right time. It's about creating engaging narratives that employees actually want to read whether it's a sleek presentation, a heartfelt email or an interactive platform that makes them feel like they're part of something bigger.

I've also championed co-creation. People don't just want to be told what to do; they want to feel involved. I've opened up channels for employees to have their say, and more importantly, made sure those voices are heard.

Real two-way communication isn't just lip service; it's about ensuring leadership actually listens and feeds that back into the business plans. It creates a culture where employees feel valued and seen as essential contributors to the bigger picture. **Adesh Chetram**

Within my roles as an IC professional here are some of the things I have done to leverage IC to support the business goals:

Aligning Messages with Strategy: I ensure that all internal communications are aligned with the company's strategic pillars so that employees understand how their roles contribute to broader business objectives. This has helped drive alignment and purpose across teams.

Supporting Change Management: I've led communications for large-scale change initiatives. Through targeted messaging, employee engagement sessions, and transparent updates, I helped guide teams through cost optimisation changes, minimising resistance and promoting a positive view of change.

Storytelling to Promote Culture and Values: I regularly craft compelling stories about employee achievements, such as featuring an employee's journey from tea lady to administrator, to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to growth and development. This not only celebrates individual success but also reinforces company values and inspires others. **Kopano Setlhare-Maruping**

During a project to revamp the intranet, my goal was to make it more vibrant and accessible. This improved navigation helped employees to easily find tools and resources that align with the organisation's objectives, enhancing productivity and internal collaboration. **Thato Leokaoko**



Developing and implementing a comms strategy that aligns with the organisation's overall goals and objectives. For example, when my organisation was launching a new product, I developed a comms strategy that included employee training, internal newsletters, and social media posts to ensure that all employees were informed about the product and its benefits.

Creating and distributing high-quality content that is relevant and engaging to employees. For example, I regularly direct campaign videos to be used in global town hall events, leaning on my experience within Government, particularly as Prime Minister Theresa May's official videographer.

Measuring the effectiveness of communication campaigns and making adjustments as needed. I use a variety of methods to measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns, such as email open rates, intranet page views, and social media engagement. I use this data to identify areas where my communication can be improved.

Providing training and support to employees on how to communicate effectively. I offer training to employees on a variety of communication topics, such as writing effective emails, giving presentations, and using social media effectively. I also provide support to employees who are struggling with communication challenges. **Richard Etienne**

➤ Improving employee engagement within an organisation

Employee engagement is a core part of the IC function. Organisations want employees that are properly engaged and employees want to derive a sense of belonging and meaning from the work they do within the organisation. This can be achieved through IC in the following ways:

Encourage transparent and honest communication at all levels. Recognise and reward contributions. Seek input from employees when making decisions that affect them.

Promote a culture that values diversity and inclusion and ensure all employees feel respected and valued for their unique perspectives and contributions. **Phindile Vilakazi**

Develop a recognition culture. For example, you can implement recognition programmes such as "Employee of the Month" or shout-outs in team meetings.

Peer-to-peer recognition platforms, where colleagues can give kudos for good work, can boost morale and camaraderie. Employees don't just want to be heard, they also want to be appreciated and seen. **Thato Leokaoko**



Listen, listen, listen. You cannot communicate effectively without listening.

Engagement is a two-way street, and so it requires effective listening in order to execute effective communication.

One quote I am always reminded of is one by Isaiah Berlin in relation to Lenin: "Lenin could listen so intently that he exhausted the speaker. I've never known a man who listened to every single word that one uttered more attentively." **Ruth Mthembu**

This tip I got through my Change Management training has been a game changer - prioritise open and transparent communication.

Ensuring that employees feel informed about organisational changes, goals, and challenges builds trust and drives engagement. Regular updates, whether through town halls, newsletters, or digital platforms, help employees feel connected and valued.

Additionally, encourage two-way communication. Create opportunities for employees to voice their opinions, share feedback, and contribute ideas. When employees see that their input is valued and acted upon, it boosts their sense of belonging and investment in the organisation.

Recognise and celebrate achievements. Acknowledging individual and team contributions, whether through formal awards or simple shout-outs in meetings, reinforces a culture of appreciation. This not only motivates employees but also creates a positive work environment. **Kopano Setlhare-Maruping**

True engagement comes from authenticity. It's not about flashy campaigns or over-the-top gimmicks. It's about being real. Be true to your purpose, be transparent and streamline your messages so they cut through the noise. Above all, just be human.

Employees want to feel heard, valued and understood. So, listen, really listen. Take their feedback, comprehend what's being said, and bring it back to the business for real action. But here's the kicker: don't leave them hanging. Close the loop by telling them what you did with that engagement, how their voices shaped decisions and what changes were made because of their input.

It's not just about creating touchpoints; it's about making sure those touchpoints are meaningful, and that employees can see the impact of their involvement. If you want real engagement, don't fake it. Be human, be transparent and be responsive. That's what makes the difference. **Adesh Chetram**

Ensure your employees are fully aware of your Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and empower them to become advocates of it. Encourage them to utilise the EVP benefits for themselves and their families.

Chart a clear path for their career growth within the organisation, showing them what their future could look like and how the organisation can support them in achieving it.

Keep employees informed about organisational developments and foster collaboration across teams. By doing this, you create a culture employees are proud of. Give them something meaningful to contribute to, allowing them to feel proud of their work and the organisation they represent.

This pride naturally leads to organic advocacy and increased engagement as employees will be excited to share their positive experiences with others. **Mosima Phale**

To improve employee engagement within an organisation, it is essential to promote transparency and build trust through clear and consistent communication.

Recognising and rewarding employees' contributions can boost morale and motivate individuals to perform at their best. Encouraging cross-functional collaboration in diverse projects enhances teamwork and promotes innovation.

It is also crucial to be inclusive in all initiatives, ensuring that every employee feels valued.

Regularly communicating the organisation's vision, mission, and strategic objectives helps employees to understand how their roles contribute to the bigger picture, promoting a sense of purpose.

Finally, leadership engagement is vital. When employees feel seen and valued by leadership, it significantly enhances their sense of belonging and encourages higher levels of engagement. **Mathaka Mkhumane**

➤ Measuring the Impact of Internal Communications

One question every IC professional needs to ask senior leaders with an organisation is, "What does success look like for you?"

Knowing from their perspective what success looks like and the value communication should add to the organisation, will provide a baseline through which you can measure the impact of your work in IC.

Your activities and results should always align with what is important to your organisation and your senior leaders. Here is how our contributors have measured the impact of their work with their organisations:

The proof is in the pudding as they usually say. You will know if you've succeeded when you meet the objectives you set out in the beginning, whether that is to raise awareness, educate, shift perception, influence behaviour, or drive adoption.

While most of the comms objectives and outputs are qualitative, there are a number of metrics you can employ to see the impact of your communication efforts. These include reach, engagements, web visits, views, event sign-ups, shares, etc.

If you are intentional with measurements, you can usually trace when there's a shift in activity as a result of the audience engaging with a particular piece of content. **Bongi Mbuli**

We do the usual review of analytics and metrics. But one of the things we are most proud of is the "feel factor." Not an easy emotion to measure! The "feel factor" is high when people comment on a comms, connect over a comms, and engage with each other through a comms.

Our comms planning document poses three questions: What do you want people to do, think, and feel? To me, the last one is the most important.

A lot of comms professionals and organisations don't like to talk about feelings. Well, I do! **Nancy Bercaw**

Employee surveys: I have used employee surveys to measure employee engagement, satisfaction with internal communications, and awareness of important company initiatives. For example, at one organisation, I used employee surveys to track employee engagement over time. I was able to demonstrate that employee engagement increased by 10% after I implemented a new internal communications strategy.

Focus groups: I have used focus groups to get in-depth feedback from employees on my communication efforts. For example, at another organisation, I used focus groups to get feedback on a new employee onboarding programme I developed.

Website analytics: I have used website analytics to track traffic to the company intranet and to measure employee engagement with different types of content. For example, at one organisation, I used website analytics to track the number of views of a new video series I developed.

The data showed that the video series was very popular with employees, and it helped to increase awareness of an important company initiative. **Richard Etienne**

Surveys are an excellent tool for assessing the effectiveness of our communications and identifying areas for improvement.

Over the past two years, we've transitioned to using an internal social media platform as our anchor communications platform, moving away from more traditional channels, though we still utilise emails and other channels where necessary.

By making internal social media our primary communication platform, we've been able to track the impact of our communications, whether it's campaigns, updates, or other initiatives, through measurable metrics.

The data we collect has been invaluable in helping us to continuously refine our IC strategy, while also driving increased engagement across the organisation. **Mathaka Mkhumane**

It's important to do the right things and get a little creative. The right thing? At least one annual survey that asks employees how they feel about the content and channels we're using. Are we hitting the mark?

And after every big campaign, a quick pulse survey to gauge immediate reactions. Add in a few focus groups for deeper dives into what worked and what didn't, and now you're starting to build a clearer picture of the impact.

But let's not stop there. I've also segmented feedback by business units to understand different perspectives because let's be honest, the front-line staff will often have very different needs and reactions compared to those in the back office. Nuance is key, and what works for one group may fall flat for another.

Now, here's where I've gotten a bit more creative: partnering with other teams to track whether employees are acting on the communications we send out.

For instance, if a communication goes out on a Wednesday and we see a spike in the relevant business system's activity that same day or the next, that's a strong indicator that our message worked. It's not exact science, but it's where the rubber meets the road. Did they actually do what we needed them to do?

Partnering with HR is also crucial, especially when it comes to understanding culture and tracking employee engagement through metrics like the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS).

These insights don't just measure the effectiveness of comms, they help create alignment between key departments, turning communication into a driver of cultural change.

In the end, data without insights is just noise. We may not have AI-powered measurement tools (yet), but with thoughtful surveys, creative data sources and strong partnerships, we can make informed decisions that show real impact. **Adesh Chetram**

➤ Measurement Metrics for Internal Communications

These are some metrics you can use to measure the impact of your IC work:

METRICS	WHAT IT MEASURES
Open Rates	Number of emails actually opened against the number of emails sent.
Page Views	Counting the number of times a page was viewed on the intranet or landing pages.
Page visits	Number of visits to a particular page per day.
Reach	Percentage of people in a target group that have received communication from a specific campaign or activity.
Click Rates	Tracking how many people clicked links contained in an email.
Time on Page	The amount of time a user spent on a particular page.
Average View Duration	How much of a video was watched in terms of the number of seconds or minutes watched.
Shares	Measuring the number of shares, likes and other interactions on your corporate social media.
Likes	Volume of likes on your corporate social media.
Employee Retention Rates	Measuring the percentage of staff being retained.
Employee absenteeism Rate	Measuring the increase or decrease in the levels of absenteeism.
Sentiment	Is employee sentiment positive, negative or neutral?
Internal Customer/ Employee Satisfaction	The percentage of colleagues who are satisfied.
Attendance	Number of colleagues that attended physical or online meetings.
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Using a score of 1-10 to see how likely someone is to promote your organisation to a friend or colleague

(Source: Nielsen and Budiu, 2021; Hanlon, 2022)

➤ Staying Relevant Within Your Organisation

Many IC professionals have felt the frustration that comes with being sidelined or being brought into conversations at the very last minute. This shouldn't be the case because of how critical the IC function is.

To overcome this, IC professionals need to educate internal stakeholders about the essence of the role. Beyond this, however, it is critical to remain relevant within the organisation. Here is how you can achieve this:

IC professionals can stay relevant within an organisation by building and maintaining strong relationships with various team leads, ensuring they are always engaged with leadership, and staying informed about key organisational developments.

Regularly attending team alignment meetings allows them to understand the work being done across departments, enabling them to effectively package and communicate important messages.

This proactive approach not only ensures they are up-to-date with the organisation's goals and initiatives but also positions them as trusted advisors who can deliver timely, relevant, and impactful communications that support the broader business strategy. **Mosima Phale**

You can stay relevant by understanding the business context, staying in tune with audience needs, leveraging their expert power, and demonstrating the value you bring to the business.

You can accomplish this by providing valuable and strategic counsel on how the business can connect with its stakeholders and connect with the different audience groups.

Ideally, this should be backed by data and examples of success. **Bongi Mbuli**

Stay connected to stakeholders! Call them. Write to them and about them. Visit them. Be curious every day about what your organisation is doing and who's doing what. **Nancy Bercaw**

Be useful, and be critical to the success of the business. Staying relevant means we can't just sit in the background; we need to make sure others understand just how crucial we are to business success.

Start by profiling yourself within the organisation. Be proactive in showcasing your impact through metrics and insights. It's not enough to say, "I sent an email". You need to have a compelling story about how your work moved the needle in a meaningful way.

Did your internal campaign boost participation in a key initiative? Did it improve employee sentiment or drive a measurable outcome that contributed to profit and loss down the line? Businesses need to see that we're not just messengers; we're strategic partners with a direct impact on results.

To remain relevant in the future, you need to evolve with your audience. What matters to them? How are they consuming content? The way employees engage with media is constantly shifting. You need to be there, moving with them.

It's also about staying integrated with the rest of the business. What's happening in HR, marketing, IT? The more you understand how different departments function and what their pain points are, the more you can tailor your communications to address those needs and stay indispensable.

And then, never stop learning. In today's fast-paced world, staying relevant means embracing new technologies and skills. The key is to stay curious, stay adaptable and always be thinking about what's next.

If you're constantly evolving, you'll never fall behind. And you'll always be a driving force behind the business's success. **Adesh Chetram**



Experiment and innovate with new tools, formats and approaches that can enhance your internal comms.

Test different types of content and see how it resonates with your audience. **Elsie Ofulue**

IC professionals can stay relevant within an organisation by continuously evolving their skills and adapting to the changing needs of the business.

It's essential to align communications with business goals and embrace digital transformation, particularly in today's digital era.

Encouraging and promoting two-way communication is vital. It shouldn't just be about disseminating information but also about actively receiving responses from employees. Cross-functional collaboration can be incredibly beneficial in this regard.

Additionally, consistently measuring and adapting communications through data, metrics, and employee feedback is crucial for ensuring effectiveness.

Finally, developing a strong understanding of the company culture enables us to craft messages that resonate with employees and reinforce organisational values. **Mathaka Mkhumane**



4

Career Growth for Internal Communicators

Career Growth for Internal Communicators

➤ Career Lessons From Our Contributors

Starting your career in IC can sometimes feel like a lonely journey, especially within the African context because in many ways, IC is an emerging field with career paths not clearly defined for IC professionals.

We asked our contributors what they wished they had known at the beginning of their careers in IC and this is what they had to say:

Early on, I focused on creating content but didn't fully appreciate the importance of measuring its impact. I later realised that using data such as engagement rates, employee feedback, and participation metrics is crucial for improving strategies and proving the value of communications to leadership. **Thato Leokaoke**

I wished I had known that working in IC can be so deeply rewarding. A lot of people associate IC with conflict about content, tone, and timing.

I have come to learn that humanity emboldens humanity. Be kind, respectful, clear, and supportive and your comms stakeholders will be too. Listen with your heart as well as your head. Be authentic. **Nancy Bercaw**

IC isn't copy and paste - different audiences require different strategies.

Speak up! While it can seemingly be uncomfortable to raise concerns to leadership when you're starting out, providing valuable feedback to management can actually benefit your career and position you as a critical thinker and contributor. **Elsie Ofulue**

If there's one thing I wish I'd known when I first started out in IC, it's just how important we are. When I began, I took instructions. I was a dutiful messenger, passing along updates, organising newsletters, playing my part.

But as the months went by, I began to see the bigger picture, and I realised something crucial: IC isn't just about "getting the word out". We're a driving force behind business success. We're the pulse of the organisation.

Looking back, I wish I'd understood that earlier. I wish I'd known how much influence we have on the real business outcomes, and how the way we communicate can shape company culture, drive employee engagement and even impact profit and loss.

I would have pushed harder, sooner, to make sure others saw this too. Because here's the thing: when you truly understand the weight of Internal Comms, you stop seeing yourself as a mere facilitator and start acting like a strategic player.

I want every IC professional to realise that their work isn't just nice-to-have. It's critical. We're the ones aligning employees with the company's vision, getting them excited about the future, and ensuring everyone is rowing in the same direction. Without that, organisations are hampering themselves, leaving so much potential on the table.

So, if I could go back and tell my younger self anything, it would be this: don't wait to step up. Don't wait to realise your value. IC isn't the final piece of the puzzle, it's the framework that holds the entire thing together. **Adesh Chetram**

I wish I had known the patience it takes in order to effect change with communication, as well as the challenges of feeling like you are meant to solve all the problems within the workplace through better communication within the business.

I wish I had also known the sheer value of IC instead of just underestimating its effect on the success of the organisation. **Ruth Mthembu**

It is okay to make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, especially when they are new to a role or field. The important thing is to learn from your mistakes and move on.

It is important to ask for help. Don't be afraid to ask for help from your colleagues, manager, or other professionals in the field. There are many people who are willing to help you succeed.

It is important to take care of yourself. IC professionals can often become overwhelmed with work. It is important to take care of yourself both physically and mentally. Make sure to get enough sleep, eat healthy foods, and exercise regularly. **Richard Etienne**

My career in IC has been an awakening both in my personal life and in the corporate world. What I didn't know was the importance of being both the voice of employees and the organisation.

Communicators shape an organisation's culture, policies, and overall employee experience. We create a bridge between leadership and staff, ensuring that messages are not only heard but understood and valued. However, with great power, always comes great responsibility. **Phindile Vilakazi**

At the beginning of my career in IC, I wish I had known just how many different roles we must take on.

An IC professional often wears multiple hats, sometimes acting as the voice of the organisation, regardless of personal shyness; at other times, coordinating events, analysing data, designing content, or even navigating digital platforms.

Realising the breadth of these responsibilities early on would have encouraged me to proactively develop skills in these areas.

However, I've come to appreciate that IC is a field where we learn and grow through experience, adapting to various challenges as they arise. **Mathaka Mkhumane**

➤ Tools and Resources for Professional Growth

To wrap up this Guide, here are some tools and resources you can leverage to develop yourself in the IC field:

Young professionals in IC can benefit from leveraging a variety of tools and resources to grow in the field. First, mastering collaboration platforms such as Microsoft 365, SharePoint, and Viva Engage can significantly enhance internal communication processes.

Tools such as Canva and Adobe Spark are great for creating visually engaging content without needing advanced design skills, while platforms like Trello and Asana help manage campaigns and tasks effectively.

For personal development, online learning platforms like LinkedIn Learning and Coursera offer courses in communication strategy, leadership, and digital tools.

Additionally, networking through professional organisations like the Institute for Internal Communication Africa (IFICA), provides valuable insights, mentorship, and industry trends to stay current and expand your expertise. **Mosima Phale**

Recommended books include:

- Strategic Internal Communication by David Cowan
- The New Science of Managing Chaos by Stephen R. Balzac
- Effective Internal Communication by Lynn Gaertner-Johnston.

For podcasts, consider:

- The Internal Comms Podcast
- The Communication Guys Podcast
- Inside Internal Communications.

Mathaka Mkhumane



Industry Publications and Blogs: Reading publications and blogs such as All Things IC and PR Week can help young professionals stay up-to-date on the latest trends and developments in the field.

Professional Organisations and Conferences: Joining a professional organisation or attending a conference can be a great way to network with other professionals and learn from experts. An example of popular professional organisations is the Institute of Internal Communications (IoIC).

Mentorship: Finding a mentor who is an experienced IC professional can be a great way to learn from their experience and get guidance on your career.

In addition to these tools and resources, young professionals in the IC space can also develop themselves in this field by:

- Volunteering to work on IC projects for nonprofits or other organisations. This can be a great way to gain experience and develop your skills.
- Reading books and articles on IC. There are a number of books and articles available on IC topics. These materials can help you develop your knowledge. **Richard Etienne**

Platforms such as Microsoft Teams, and Slack, or WorkDay facilitate collaboration and communication within teams, making it easier to share information and updates in real-time.

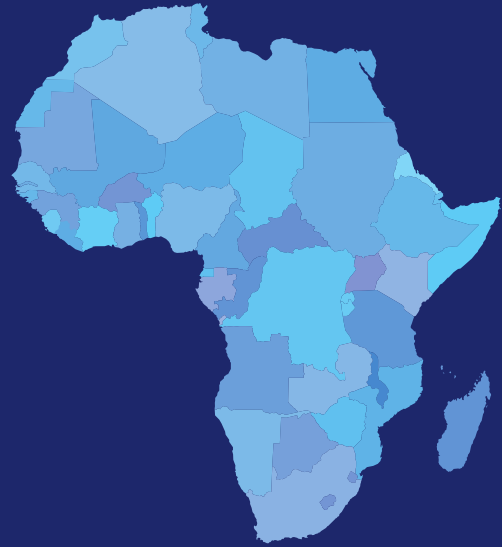
With the rise of multimedia content, tools like Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, Canva Video, allow for easy video editing. Podcasting platforms like Anchor, BuzzSprout or Podbean enable professionals to create and share audio content effectively.

Understanding audience engagement is crucial. Tools like Google Analytics, HubSpot, or internal survey platforms can help track the performance of communications and tailor content based on data insights. **Kopano Setlhare-Maruping**

ABOUT THE COMMS AVENUE

The Comms Avenue is a capacity building and networking platform for communications professionals across Africa and beyond.

We currently have over 1600 communications professionals from 25 African countries in our mission-driven community.



Our vision is to become a close-knit community of communicators who work collaboratively and who are empowered to contribute to positive change in various industries, across Africa and globally.

To achieve this, we put together programmes, webinars, knowledge exchange and networking events that allow our community members to Learn, Collaborate and Connect with senior communications professionals and peers across the African continent and beyond.

We also produce practical resources and learning materials to help communications professionals to perform better on the job.

To support the work we do or partner with us, click [here](#).

Have questions about this guide? Contact us!

Website - www.thecommsavenue.com

Email - letstalk@thecommsavenue.com

LinkedIn - [The Comms Avenue](#)

Instagram - [@commsavenue](#)