

- Personnel management

## Setting effective communication goals is key for a thriving office culture

The National - News · 8 Jan 2024 · 17 · MANAR AL HINAI Manar Al Hinai is an awardwinning Emirati writer and communications adviser based in Abu Dhabi

From encouraging active listening to building cross-functional teams, communication leaders in organisations can help to build a thriving and productive office culture.

If you are a goal-orientated person, chances are you have spent the first week of January setting your personal objectives for the year.

This is also a perfect time for setting professional goals, especially for communication leaders in an organisation.

The new year presents an opportunity to cultivate a thriving office culture where information flows freely, employees are highly engaged and productivity is high. Some questions I often get asked are: “Where should we begin” and “what should we prioritise?”

My five tips for effective communication goals that can transform office culture are as follows:

The first step to enhance a team’s productivity is to ensure that they are heard. This means discussing and understanding their proposed solutions, concerns and complaints.

This can be implemented by training heads of departments on how to actively listen and garner employee feedback.

Different office channels can be set up to ensure feedback is received such as an online suggestions submission link or regular meetings between section heads and employees. Secondly, promote information transparency. From my experience, one thing that hinders employee productivity and morale is a non-transparent work culture where information is not shared and employees are not kept in the loop about the organisation’s strategy and goals.

This is why communication leaders should ensure that information regarding the company’s plans and the challenges it faces is properly communicated.

This can take place in the form of town halls, question-and-answer sessions with the leadership, surveys, pulse checks and anonymous electronic forums.

The third important step is recognition of employees’ efforts. When I was a child, one of the things that excited me about school was receiving a star sticker from my teacher for a job well done.

Things aren’t very different for adults. Employee recognition boosts morale and encourages work productivity.

For one of my clients, we implemented two strategies. One was where the head of a department has a monthly lunch with employees and shares what they appreciate the most about each team member’s work that month.

Another was at a companywide level where the chief executive recognised outstanding work by different workers. In addition to the plaque that was handed, employees were

given two plane tickets to a holiday destination.

The fourth important goal is prioritising the emotional well-being of employees.

Many employees commonly experience burnout and stress even when working in organisations they love.

Studies have revealed that stress and emotional burnout negatively affect productivity.

Incorporate well-being strategies where employees' psychology is prioritised.

This can be implemented through weekly circulars on how to manage stress, scheduling periodical mental well-being sessions with trained professionals, encouraging employees to take holidays and creating a supportive and safe environment for people to discuss what is bothering them.

Finally, organisations should encourage inter-departmental collaboration.

Some of my best ideas were inspired when I did something outside my comfort zone or spoke to those from diverse backgrounds. A different perspective is sometimes just what organisations need to help inspire new ideas.

Encourage cross-functional teams to lead different projects.

By incorporating these five goals, communication leaders can help build an office culture where employees are valued, information flows freely and productivity is high.

Active listening, sharing information, recognition and well-being strategies will improve productivity