

## **Employee Communications as Critical as External Marketing**

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Most organizations spend a majority of their time focused on marketing and communicating to external audiences – customers, vendors, media. But just as critical to any business – profit or non-profit – is the need to effectively communicate internally as well.

As we've talked about in this column before, staff can, and should, be the number one marketer of your organization. If they clearly understand the vision and goals and recognize their vested interest in the success of the company and its products and services, the better your business will do. And, even more importantly, if you can fully engage your front-line employees, they will come up with some incredible ideas and marketing opportunities the company can implement that enhance your bottom line.

But employee communications will take time and resources previously allocated to external communications.

- Start by conducting a communications audit within each department. This can be done through a focus group, email or written survey or departmental meeting. The goal of the audit is to understand what employees see as the company's objectives and vision.
- Offer brainstorming session to allow your staff to promote their ideas and offer suggestions to make the company run more efficiently. Because not every employee likes to discuss ideas publicly or may want to remain anonymous, also offer a written brainstorming session in which departments give their staff one hour on a chosen day to throw their ideas on paper and send them in with or without their name disclosed.
- Follow through with communications and ideas. Take the time to set up an internal communications vehicle to ensure your team knows what is going on and if/when some of their ideas are being utilized by the organization. Credit and recognition will go a long way in inspiring others to get involved.