

## Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement

### Internal Marketing Best Practice Study

---

#### OVERVIEW

Internal Marketing (IM) is a new and emerging discipline that is practiced in multiple companies under different names. Whether called internal marketing, employee engagement or internal communication, the concept is the same: to align, motivate and empower employees -at all functions and levels- to consistently deliver positive customer experiences that are aligned with the firm's organizational goals. This definition of internal marketing advances the notion that the discipline is more than communication tactics -such as workplace posters and employee meetings- or a way to build employee satisfaction. Instead, it recognizes that IM can be deployed as a strategic tool to help an organization achieve its business objectives.

This paper presents the findings of a extensive best practices study of internal marketing. The study was conducted fall, 2005 by students enrolled in a course in Internal Marketing in the graduate program in Integrated Marketing Communications at the Medill School, Northwestern University. Students who conducted the study and developed many of the findings are listed in Appendix A.

The purpose of the study was to further the understanding of the subject by identifying, aggregating and communicating the most effective internal marketing initiatives practiced by U.S. companies.

The study analyzes companies from a variety of industries,, i.e., consumer products and services and business-to-business, ranging from packaged goods manufacturers to health care to hospitality and service. This breadth of industry expertise helped identify the internal marketing initiatives that are truly best practices and thus, can be understood and leveraged by any company seeking improvements in their internal marketing activities.

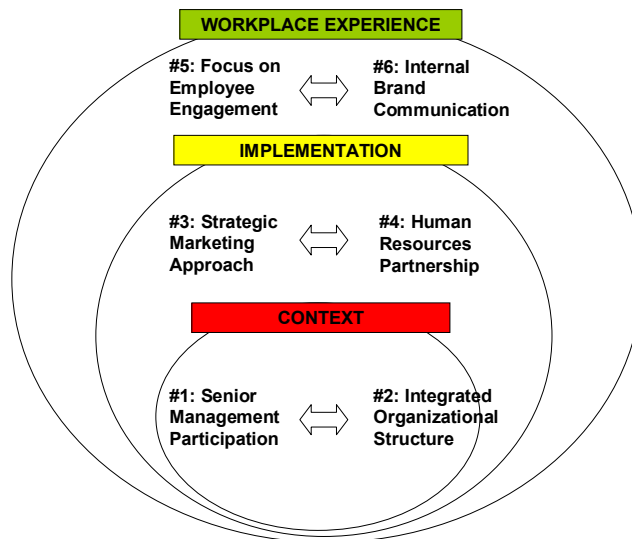
This Executive Summary provides an overview of the key findings from the study and provides examples to support these findings along with some actual verbatim comments from study participants.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Companies at the forefront of internal marketing share particular beliefs regarding the role of employees in achieving business success. For example, the following values are embedded in one way or another in each participating company's culture:

- **People matter:** The main driver for most IM initiatives is to create a work environment where people feel excited and rewarded in their day-to-day tasks
- **IM drives performance:** Employee satisfaction is a key element in developing customer satisfaction, as every employee is considered an extension of the brand.
- **Anyone can make a difference:** Successful results are credited to all employees, at all levels and functions, not just at senior management.
- **Employee loyalty is critical:** Employees will remain loyal to the company, even in difficult times, if the company is transparent about the challenges it is facing and about its strategic direction.
- **Culture can be a competitive advantage:** IM preserves and helps evolve a company's culture, particularly in cases where culture is a source of differentiation for the brand.

Participating companies were found to share six internal marketing best practices. These have been categorized at three levels: general context, IM implementation and workplace experience:



As shown above, the six best practice elements are related to and supportive of an overall IM initiative.

1. **Senior Management Participation:** Leadership initiative, support and/or buy-in are vital for the success of any internal marketing initiative. Major change will come from the top

down, inspiring employees to follow what their company leaders truly believe in.

2. **Integrated Organizational Structure:** IM should encompass all employees in a company. Using a horizontally integrated management or process structure enables all functions and levels to be involved in a collaborative decision-making process.
  3. **Strategic Marketing Approach:** Best practice companies take a formal approach to internal marketing by applying research and planning processes as well as tools and techniques similar to those used in external marketing programs.
  4. **Human Resources Partnership:** The human resources function provides a vital role in developing strategies that synchronize with internal marketing and business development.
  5. **Focus on Employee Engagement:** Creating an efficient and collaborative work environment where employees feel involved and motivated is critical to the success of internal marketing. Focus is on positive reinforcement of proactive work.
  6. **Internal Brand Communication:** Best practice companies communicate the brand promise to employees across the most relevant channels and then motivate employees to deliver on that promise to all levels of customers.
- 

## METHODOLOGY

The first step in the process was to create a definition of Internal Marketing. The definition used in this study was:

Internal Marketing is the ongoing process whereby an organization aligns, motivates and empowers employees at all functions and levels to consistently deliver a positive customer experience that helps achieve business objectives.

Companies featured in this study were identified using the following criteria:

- Current practice of internal marketing, as observed in programs that met the internal marketing definition. Additionally, IM had to be practiced in some or all business units for at least five years.
- Prior recognition by external institutions specialized in work environment disciplines (i.e., J.D. Powers Award, Great Places to Work<sup>®</sup> Institute, Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For). Companies had to be on a specified list for more than 3 years, be profitable and should be considered as entities that value customer satisfaction.
- Companies selected should also have conducted research and measurement on some aspect of their internal marketing or employee engagement initiatives.

Once selected, a profile of each company including information such as number of years in business, number of employees,

turnover rate and profitability was developed. All selected companies agreed to provide and discuss information regarding internal marketing initiatives and results through on-site or telephone interviews with key executives and participants of their IM team.

Below is a list of the participating companies. While some study participants agreed to be identified by company name, others wished to remain anonymous. Those who wished to remain anonymous are identified only by industry type.

Industry	Company
Consulting	Accenture
Investment banking	FBR
Mutual funds	Oppenheimer Funds
Medical services	Hospira
Hospitality	Ritz-Carlton
Quick service restaurant	Chipotle
Consumer packaged goods	Wrigley
Consumer packaged goods	The Kellogg Company
Retail	Staples
Retail	The Container Store
Transportation	Union Pacific (UP)
Information technology	Cisco Systems, Inc.
Information technology	*
Biotechnology	*
Transportation equipment	*
Canned and frozen foods	*
Consumer and B-to-B	*

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Participating companies were asked to send pre-study information (i.e. organizational charts, job descriptions of people in charge of internal marketing, and general corporate mission, vision and values statements) before the interviews were conducted.

Broadly, the interview questionnaire addressed topics such as:

- How internal marketing is defined within the organization
- Objectives of internal marketing programs
- Who is responsible for the IM function or process
- What types of IM programs have been initiated
- How programs are funded
- Forms of measurement and evaluation

**The information below is a consolidation of the responses from the seventeen (17) companies that participated in the study as agreed upon by the seven (7) study teams.**

## RESULTS

### **BEST PRACTICE #1: SENIOR MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATION**

Best practice companies have CEOs, boards of directors and top executives who truly believe in internal marketing. These company leaders lead the way to organizational innovation. As one

interviewee said, “Major change comes from the top down; not because it is dictated, but because it communicates trust and support. And this makes employees believe and change.” Two key components were observed:

***Senior management enthusiasm for IM can generate a trickle-down effect***

Some participating companies are able to link internal marketing to the belief that it is the moral, right thing to do. Thus, employee engagement can be directly related to customer satisfaction and enhanced profitability.

For instance, an interviewee had a new CEO joining the organization some years ago, and his philosophy of “[the company’s] value in people, people value in [the company]” supported the development of internal marketing. The new leadership crystallized the vision and guiding principles of internal marketing and demanded critical communication support for internal audiences. At this company, communication consistency and effectiveness is ensured by leveraging the management buy-in to drive a trickle-down effect.

In another company, the CEO took the leadership in internal marketing and created a committee responsible for identifying and agreeing upon annual key success factors for all aspects of management. The CEO’s committee has representatives from departments such as human resources, operations, product/brand management, and sales and marketing.

***Senior management support for IM leaders builds trust for IM initiatives***

A manager of corporate communications (and IM leader) at a best practice company asserted that she does not need to make a case for internal marketing because the CEO supports it, serving as an effective brand protector and ambassador. She also said senior management openly supports cost-effective internal media such as memos, speeches and the Internet as vehicles to efficiently reinforce the company’s brand message.

Another company designed an IM program to deal with cultural clashes. This program developed a unique approach with its own terminology, which is supported and used by senior management. Phrases include, “You’re on the red train” if an employee is communicating from a position of anger or “You’re on the blue train” if an employee is open and willing to communicate. Because the program has buy-in from top managers, employees use the phrases without sarcasm and feel free to speak their minds.

The best drivers of change within an organization are its thought-leaders. Obtaining the buy-in of such leaders, coupled with that of

senior management, is crucial to the success of internal marketing programs.

## **BEST PRACTICE #2: INTEGRATED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Companies at the forefront of Internal Marketing build integrated, horizontal business structures that enable open communication and participation by all functions and levels of the organization.

To encourage employee commitment, best practice companies minimize hierarchical management processes and empower employees in many key business decisions. IM initiatives are successful in these companies due to cross-functioning teams that bridge the gap between silos and form a seamless flow of responsibility and communication. Best practice companies show integration in the following ways:

### ***Enabling feedback mechanisms at all levels to facilitate seamless communication***

Listening to employees is critical when a message is often passed through many layers in an organization. For instance, best practice companies use feedback mechanisms in which small groups of employees from different functions and levels meet with company officers for candid discussions and the answering of questions. Some companies also use face-to-face communication based on particular events, such as quarterly earnings release, company milestones or a company crisis.

Another aspect of two-way communication is to measure the effectiveness of the messages employees receive. One best practice firm solicits feedback from its employees through an online survey conducted twice a year to measure employee satisfaction. This tool helps the company keep an eye on internal trends and understand and predict the focus for next year's efforts.

### ***A cultural identity that reflects company values helps align organizational efforts***

Best practice companies truly believe that all employees are representatives of the company, its brand and vision. This belief is reflected in their corporate culture and philosophy. Internal marketing is crucial in conveying corporate philosophy and creating a uniform culture across the organization.

One participant said that keeping employees focused on the company mission is imperative. The company uses internal marketing as a means of encouraging employees to help reach the goal of providing consumers an excellent service experience. They also believe that having employees understand the vision

and direction of the business and “live” the corporate culture is important for successful internal marketing.

Another company describes its culture as “all about giving back.” It is about changing the world for the better, in whatever ways one can. Customer advocacy is rooted within company culture as is employee engagement. New employees at all levels are sufficiently oriented through HR training sessions to understand the culture of the company better. Most importantly, the firm perpetuates its culture by listening to employees and adjusting its message accordingly.

### **BEST PRACTICE #3: STRATEGIC MARKETING APPROACH**

When it comes to marketing internally, best practice companies borrow from external marketing methodology. The internal audience is approached in a manner that parallels how a company acquires, retains and grows its customer base by applying the same planning processes, tools and techniques of consumer marketing to internal marketing. Four main actions were observed:

#### ***Implementation of formal marketing processes to cater to “internal” customers***

Best practice companies use strategic planning processes that begin with the development of a communications brief outlining objectives, strategies, tactics and metrics involved with the IM program. As an interviewee stated, “Any new decision needs to be viewed strategically; always keeping in mind the intended message, the target audience, the desired behavior and the most appropriate communication vehicle.”

Various best practice companies have a centralized strategic planning resource that serves as a consultant to “client” functions within the organization. This resource, which is sometimes called the “internal agency”, implements IM by applying formal marketing tools and techniques such as the STP (strategy, targeting and positioning) approach found in consumer marketing programs.

#### ***Gaining employee insight through internal research before making decisions***

Best practice companies use qualitative and quantitative research to support the decisions they make regarding employees. For instance, during a period of workforce downsizing, a best practices company believed it was vital for employees to understand the company challenges and strategic direction. An assessment of employees’ informational needs was completed through focus groups at a variety of office locations with employees of varying functions and levels in the organization. As a result of this initiative, the company now provides opportunities

for online learning and allows employees to decide what information is relevant to their specific position.

Also, in another company, it was found that employee health directly impacted business performance. The company now conducts periodic assessments to gain insight into determining how internal marketing efforts can better address employees' health and lifestyle issues. These assessments are also used to measure the impact IM programs have over time.

### ***Segmenting employee audiences to improve relevancy of medium and messages***

Internal marketers are increasingly using STP (segmenting, targeting and positioning) to generate the most impact from multiple messages. One best practice company stated, "Only certain employees need to receive all messages, otherwise they feel overwhelmed and end up ignoring them all." Each employee segment receives only the messages relevant to them.

The communication medium of best practice companies is also adjusted to meet employee segment needs and accessibility. For example, half of the employees in one company do not have daily access to a computer. Therefore, the company uses traditional mail to reach these employees. For those who do have computer access, the company has an employee intranet that is used as a corporate touch-point and feedback channel.

Another interviewee has a standing segmentation scheme for its internal marketing targets, that is, company to all employees, business unit to business unit employees and region to local employees. Additionally, it customizes IM campaigns by world region to make programs more relevant to each area's employees.

### ***Measuring effectiveness of IM programs to support further investment of resources***

Before implementing any new IM program, a participating company conducts a pre-measurement study to provide a baseline of employee attitudes and behaviors. Ongoing measurement throughout the change process helps ensure that shifts in attitudes and behaviors are taking place. Post-measurement studies help management better understand whether the change was effective and if it impacted business performance.

In another best practice firm, every department has to identify its own internal clients and their performance metrics. One manager said, "Once you measure the service provided, you can have the goal to improve it. Continuous improvements in processes and



outputs directly correlate to customer satisfaction.” This company measures internal customer satisfaction on a monthly basis.

The IM team at another company provides quarterly updates for senior management. Metrics are compiled via employee surveys, face-to-face communications and focus groups. While the company recognizes that some online surveys lack statistical validity, results can still be used to provide an understanding of employees’ perspectives.

#### **BEST PRACTICE #4: HUMAN RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP**

Best practice companies’ have human resources (HR) departments that take a strategic role in internal marketing initiatives. Human Resources coordinate efforts with IM to consistently select, train, inform and retain the best people. Following are examples on each process:

##### ***Understanding the talents required to succeed in a particular business***

According to the corporate director of training and organizational effectiveness of a best practice company, “We focus on innate talent more than on previous experience. We look at potential future success,” he explains. “We conduct research on our current five-star employees and their levels of performance, and eight talents kept coming up,” he continued. These identified talents include ethics, self-esteem, teamwork and empathy. The company acknowledges that using these characteristics to help select future individuals has been an important predictor of employee success.

##### ***Developing appropriate training and acculturation programs to align employees with company vision***

Providing employees with proper training is vital to the success of any effective internal marketing program. For instance, in their first year, employees of a best practice firm receive 310 hours of training, and they typically spend 100 hours in training every year after. “This keeps us fresh,” the vice president said. “Training is so important that we willingly invest financially in our employees. This also allows them to reinvest with us, and allows us to reconnect with each other.”

Another best practice company places emphasis on pioneering internal marketing efforts to employees across all business functions and cultures. For instance, two-thirds of its workforce is Hispanic and speaks English as a second language. To minimize potential language and cultural barriers with customers and between employees, the company instituted Spanish and English classes. Both corporate and customer-facing employees are given

the option to participate in these courses and are paid for their time to attend.

### ***Establishing loyalty strategies to keep and grow the best employees***

Among successful internal marketers, ongoing retention strategies ensure that the best employees stay and grow with the company. One best practices company's exceptionally low turnover rate of 14 percent demonstrates the success of its employee retention initiatives. The company takes pride in its well-known culture of employee trust and is continually adopting new training methodology to educate and retain staff. Whether a salesperson, a merchandise buyer or a member of the distribution team, all employees are recognized as the company's greatest asset.

Another best practice company strongly believes in treating the workforce with respect and trust. "Our [employees] are in the service business, but they are not servants," said the corporate director of training and organizational effectiveness. "For many in the U.S., service is considered subservient. We've changed that. We consider it an honor." This makes people feel valued and builds loyalty to the company.

In this same company, all new hires must undergo a vigorous 21-day training and certification session that marks the beginning of the retention process. "We know that things can go terribly wrong in the first 21 days," said the regional vice president of operations. "That's where turnover can occur. If a person does not do well, we go back to training. We stay with them until they get it," she explained.

### **BEST PRACTICE #5: FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Employee engagement is the result of a collaborative work environment where employees know they can have an effect on company results and have evidence of that as well. Engagement is cultivated by open communication, positive reinforcement of proactive work and by interpersonal support. It is observed through the following initiatives:

#### ***Aligning corporate goals with employee goals***

Best practice companies realize there is more to engagement than just letting employees know about company activities. They know that employees that understand the business direction will be more focused and motivated to obtain results. They understand the need to have structured programs designed to facilitate alignment of employee and business goals.

For instance, the employee engagement group of a best practice company established the GOLD (Goals, Outcomes, Learning & Development) program, which is intended to help associates succeed through a four-phase process (Planning, Renewing, Reviewing & Growing, and Rewarding). This program enables employees to be active participants in the appraisal of their performance against corporate goals. Employees become engaged because they realize their value in reaching business objectives.

### ***Creating a work environment that fosters employee empowerment***

Achieving employee engagement requires supportive management that empowers employees to demonstrate autonomy of thought and initiative to solve business problems. For example, human resource managers of best practice companies are encouraged to foster new initiatives to engage employees or partner with the community. Ideas are sought from all employees and all managers believe that the need for increased budget should not be a barrier to implementing a new employee project.

In addition, empowerment implies that front line employees are allowed to exercise a degree of discretion during the service delivery process. For instance, employees of a best practice company can spend up to \$2,000 to handle a customer complaint. For a product or service that needs to be customized, employees need to be empowered to make the necessary decisions in order to satisfy customer needs.

### ***Designing a rewards and incentive system that is aligned with corporate goals***

Incentives are tools that motivate employees to exhibit desirable behavior towards customers. Rewards recognize those who have demonstrated their level of engagement in the company. These methods of recognition are the most common and tangible methods of influence in organizations, as they help enforce the standards emphasized during the internal marketing process.

Likewise, in addition to the typical financial incentives and awards employees receive, one best practice company hosts an annual "Leader's Retreat." This is a four-day resort retreat for top executives and top financially-performing employees and their spouses. The objective of this program is to reward employees for an increase in sales and other support of corporate initiatives.

Finally, best practice companies know that employee contests are a creative way of generating healthy competition while giving employees the objective of solving a company challenge. For instance, one best practices company created a contest for employees to come up with the best product innovations.

Employees became very enthusiastic about this initiative, especially after one associate was selected as winner in a company-wide broadcast meeting and awarded \$25,000 for her product idea.

***Partnering with philanthropic causes that align with company values***

Some organizations sponsor activities to address employee needs and interests and advance business goals. These activities are designed to generate the greatest benefits for all parties, by encouraging employees to become involved with a cause that they believe in while also strengthening the company's brand promise.

For instance, one best practice company started a major community relations effort 12 years ago that has since blossomed into an annual tradition. The company sponsors employee teams that wish to participate in non-profit fundraising events like the AIDS walk, American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days, American Lung Association's Bike for Breath, American Heart Association's Heart Walk and Susan G. Komen Foundation's Race for the Cure.

**BEST PRACTICE #6: INTERNAL BRAND COMMUNICATION**

Before an organization can deliver its brand promise to customers, it must first communicate and explain that promise to employees and motivate them to deliver it to customers. Internal branding bridges the gap between promise makers (marketers) and promise keepers and deliverers (employees). It helps organizations be true to their brand promise.

Communicating the brand promise is also critical during company transformations (i.e. mergers & acquisitions and organizational change processes). Companies that are true to their brand promise foster employee advocates who display behavior beyond the call of duty. Following are examples on how best practice companies deliver their brand promise:

***Aligning internal branding material with external communications***

Regardless of size and scope of branded communication, branded material must identify the brand name and promise in a consistent manner. Furthermore, it should be updated as new campaigns are rolled out to reflect the most current information.

Best practice companies make use of internal communication material that mimics the look and feel of the company's external communications. By incorporating the same visual cues,

employee messaging underscores that the corporation has the same promise externally and internally.

### ***Using technology to better interact with employee segments***

Intranet portals are among the most frequently used internal marketing communication technologies. They are especially useful in global environments where employees are dispersed over large geographic areas. Intranet portals are also used to align business units and keep employees abreast of corporate news. For true credibility, portals must be user-friendly and remain updated, relevant and engaging.

Some best practice companies are also using blogs as two-way communication systems. These companies have an intrinsic belief that it is not possible to over-communicate and regard their employee efforts as key to the achievement of results.

### ***Launching internal marketing campaigns to share important news with employees***

Best practice companies often share new campaigns or product launches with employees before releasing them to customers. By carefully monitoring the timing of communications, companies ensure that employees understand the message, are excited by it and are prepared to deliver it to external audiences.

For example, a participant company celebrated three major product approvals with all of its employees. The company rewarded employee accomplishments with milestone celebrations, and each employee in attendance received a special t-shirt. Finally, three customers who had benefited from these products explained to employees how important these products were to their lives.

### ***Fostering brand ambassador teams as an informal communications tool***

People tend to believe people they know. That's why best practice companies assemble advisory boards and train brand ambassadors to disseminate information to, from and about employees. These teams typically represent a cross section of employee evangelists, ranging from 10 to 20 participants depending on the scope of the project.

While several departments tend to be involved in brand ambassador teams, a certain department often takes the lead in initiating, developing and managing internal marketing practices. The leading subject could be the internal communications, HR, or marketing department.

Finally, it should be noted that a company delivers its brand promise not only through explicit messages, but also by its measurement system, its reward system and through its structure and culture. Thus, a complete and cohesive approach is necessary.

Successful communication of the brand promise should foster understanding within the organization, primarily focused on the internalization of company values by all employees. Employees are essentially asked to embrace values appealing to their characters and not just focus on achieving numerical results. How something is achieved becomes, therefore, increasingly important in relation to what is achieved.

### **MOVING FORWARD: NEXT STEPS IN INTERNAL MARKETING**

Based on the study results and their own analysis of the current status of internal marketing, the authors of this study believe the following areas will be very important in the development of the internal marketing field going forward:

#### ***Talent acquisition and employee retention are becoming more critical***

Organizations need to take a strategic approach to attracting desirable new talent. Companies must begin treating employee acquisition similar to customer acquisition. To properly implement this, organizations need to first understand the market of desired employees, detect competitors who are targeting the same employee pool, and conduct appropriate segmenting, targeting and positioning. One organization stated, "If marketers can do it for their customers, why can't we do it for our employees?" The idea is to be able to segment employees based on their background or life stage and thus communicate differently to them.

Additionally, employees are seeking higher levels of flexibility, more opportunities for meaningful career development, and customized rewards packages that go beyond the basic paycheck. As competition for talent continues to increase, these desires will soon become demands. In fact, one company explained during this study discussion that their next biggest challenge is dealing with its competitors' attention to its employees. In essence, they need to ensure that the employees are not only satisfied but are being well communicated with about meeting their specific needs.

#### ***Exploration of new messaging technologies to better reach employee audiences***

Many organizations today are comprised of an internal audience that includes employees of all ages, job codes, technology skills,

and geographic locations. That means the organizational managers must investigate which emerging technologies, such as blogs, wikis, podcasting, RSS feeds and other electronic social networks can be leveraged as a vehicle for communicating more effectively and efficiently without disrupting daily workflow.

The advantage of implementing some of these technologies includes speed of message delivery, coverage area of message, cost-effectiveness and ability to influence and engage employees at a whole new level. For instance, the use of a blog (a virtual online diary) to deliver a leadership message allows communicators to reach large audiences quickly. It also enables employees to provide instant feedback without having to go through formal channels or “black holes.” One company hosts internal blogs where employees can chat on a daily basis with top executives. The company wants to hear what its employees are thinking, and employees are free to speak their minds.

Podcasting is another technology that is making its way into the employee communications realm. This is essentially a radio show which is delivered through the Web and can be downloaded to a computer or portable media player such as an iPod. Again, this is a cost-effective method for actually hearing a leadership message at an employee’s own convenience. This may be on his or her commute to work or even during a work out and it sounds much more personable than the standard office memo.

In addition, social networks enable employees to learn about one another in a global economy. This makes organizations operate as networks rather than hierarchies as employees of all levels communicate with each other without any formal boundaries. In turn, employees feel motivated to build a knowledge network where experts can be identified and contacted around the world at anytime.

While all of these technologies play an enormous role in adding value to internal marketing initiatives, it is important to recognize that some of the everyday, traditional media forms of communicating are still just as effective as ever. For example, CEO visits to employee desks or a traditional “pat on the back” from a supervisor may never be replaced by sophisticated web tools.

### ***Improvement in measurement of IM tactics to better justify future IM investments***

As companies begin to feel the impact of internal marketing on bottom-line profitability, measurement becomes an increasing challenge. Most companies today are limited to non-financial measures of their communications programs which is a trend that will continue but needs to be complemented by more direct measures of the financial returns as well.

Communicators need to increasingly create hard performance measures and assessment techniques that clearly demonstrate how a program or campaign contributes to achieving corporate goals. Hard measures include communication audits, objective evaluation of employee behavior and the impact communication has on company performance.

Another crucial element is pre and post measurement. Pre-measurement provides a baseline of attitudes and behaviors which gauge the impact of the change on employees. Simultaneously, ongoing measures ensure that a change in attitudes and behaviors is taking place, while post-measurement guides management to better understand whether the change was effective and if it impacted business performance.

### ***Need for more sophisticated communications function***

The demand for high-level, experienced communicators who demonstrate the ability to reason, analyze, and solve business problems has never been greater. A study of the current business environment, including a changing dynamic in the employer-employee relationship, intense shareholder pressure, and a lack of control over media access to company information validates the need for a sophisticated communications function to aid companies in meeting bottom-line business objectives.

As leaders in internal marketing continually emerge and evolve, more followers will begin to benchmark the practices of their predecessors. With this, the authors of this study anticipate an increase in the number of organizations who develop best practices in attracting and retaining top talent, grasp the technological revolution in employee communications, link communications with bottom line results, and engage top management with the significance of organization-wide internal marketing efforts.



---

**CONTACT INFORMATION** For more information about these research findings, contact:

Frank Mulhern  
Associate Professor and Department Chair  
Integrated Marketing Communications Program  
Medill School  
Northwestern University  
1870 Campus Drive, 3rd Floor  
Evanston, IL 60208  
fjm274@northwestern.edu

or

Don Schultz  
Professor Emeritus in Service  
Integrated Marketing Communications Program  
Medill School  
Northwestern University  
1870 Campus Drive, 3rd Floor  
Evanston, IL 60208  
dschultz@northwestern.edu