



## Transcript for S13 E01 Internal communication as a vital enabler of colleague engagement with Sarah Pass

**Intro:** Welcome to the future of internal communication podcast. I'm Jen Sproul, CEO of the Institute of Internal Communication.

Since we launched this series in 2021, the world of work has been disrupted by event after event. A pandemic, geopolitics, AI, extreme weather events, remote and hybrid working, generational shifts, inclusion, diversity - the entire nature of how we work needs transformation.

This podcast explores opportunity for internal communication in the future of work. Internal comms is a crucial function that helps organisations achieve lasting change, building trust and relationship between people, in pursuit of shared goals.

Join me, Dominic Walters and Cat Barnard as we dissect what this means for internal communication.

With relentless change the new normal, it's time to reimagine our profession.

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Jen Sproul (00:43)

Hello and welcome everybody to another episode of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. And for a change this episode, I'm only joined by one of my co-hosts, Dominic Walters. So we will hopefully between the two of us guide what I think is going to be a very interesting conversation. And today we're going to be talking about colleague engagement and IC is a vital driver of colleague engagement. And to do that, we're absolutely thrilled to be joined by Sarah Pass. So Dr. Sarah Pass, who is a practice orientated academic who concentrates on employee experience and engagement, but also is a member of Engage for Success advisory board. And as IoIC, we have been a huge supporter of Engage for Success since its inception. So it's really, really great that Sarah is going to be coming on today to talk about some of their research and some of the things that they've been doing and how we can make the most of it as a profession.

So Sarah leads E4S projects focusing on all different aspects and influences of engagement in practice and is also the chair Engage for Success East Midlands Area Network. Sarah is also a fellow of the RSA, an academic associate of the CIPD and a member of the Involvement and Participation Association Working Insights Groups. And in 2023, Sarah was ranked by HR Magazine as an influential thinker in HR and besides all of that, what she does on a voluntary level, may I say as well, Sarah also has a day job and currently works as a senior lecturer at Nottingham



Business School. So Sarah, welcome and thank you for coming on to the podcast to talk about the work that you're doing at Engage for Success and how we can sort of highlight that as a for internal communication to become a vital enabler of colleague engagement.

Sarah Pass (02:24)

Thank you for inviting me on Jen and Dom. It's brilliant to be here and it's like you say, internal comms is a key key aspect of it so it's fantastic to be able to connect.

Jen Sproul (02:33)

Well, hopefully today we're going to be talking about the recent research that you've been doing. But also I think before we get into the sort of research and that sort of colleague engagement part of it, it'd be great for our listeners if we could just kick off with talking a little bit about what the story of Engage for Success, how did it come about and obviously the original MacLeod report and just to give that background for our listeners so they can understand engaged assessors work and how we can leverage that for the work we do as internal communicators.

Sarah Pass (03:01)

Of course, sure. So David MacLeod and Nita Clarke were asked back in 2009 to explore employee engagement in the UK. So the UK government were aware there was lot about it. There was, certainly from a practitioner perspective, there was this big emphasis on its importance. So they were quite keen to understand what is it? And other organisations that are doing it and doing it well, what is it that they're doing? How can we replicate this good practice?

So David and Nita and a group of people did an awful lot of research, spoke to lots of different organisations, lots of different case studies and as a result of all that wrote the MacLeod report which came out in 2009. And as a result of that report the Engage for Success movement was launched. It was seen as employee engagement is something fundamental, it has such a huge impact on, and we can see evidence from the impact on customer services, health and wellbeing, productivity, innovation, there's so many different aspects that engagement impacts, let alone just making the day job just that bit nicer for everybody, which I think we all appreciate. So as a result of that, the Engage Success Movement was launched at number 10 by the Prime Minister. So it was a, it's a movement, it's a voluntary movement. So everybody that's there volunteers to support and it's just to develop our understanding around engagement, more focused on how to do it. What's the examples of good practice? How can we actually do this? And there's so many different aspects and elements of it. So we have all these different, we call thought and action groups tags for short. And we look at all sorts of different



areas. Some that are just kind of long standing areas. For example, all of the line manager. Others might be sort of hybrid working, the pandemic, it might be a bit more topical at the time and we do lots of different activities in that way but also we're really keen to share everything that we do so we do lots of different online events, podcasts, we appear at conferences, we put on lots of different activities but also we have so many different types of resources and they're all available on the Engage for Success website and it's all free. I think that's a big part of it as well that it's free and by free, you don't even have to give us your email address. It really is, you can just download. There's toolkits, there's reports, case studies, activities, podcasts. So there's an abundance of stuff just with the sole aim of sharing good practice to try and improve employee engagement in the UK.

Jen Sproul (05:28)

That's such a wonderful thing and I think it's really great for our listeners to understand how the movement works and that it is voluntary and it is there with a really, really clear purpose and everyone can engage with. And I know at IoIC, we refer a lot to your website and the researchers, particularly for our students, because it's trying to crystallise what does that actually mean in an everyday working situation? How does it manifest? How do you help create it? How do you drive it? And I think it's been obviously a very interesting time since the original MacLeod report came out in 2009. There's been a few things that have happened here or there. I think that it's about what's the constant of engagement we need to keep close, even though our environment may feel even more complex and challenging. But I think that what engagement should look and feel like perhaps maintains that constant. And what I'm trying to lean into is obviously when the MacLeod report came out and you still work with them today, which is the fundamental articulation of what is engagement is the four enablers. So I guess I want to know, could you explain a little bit more about the four enablers? And I think that that piece around, is there any reflections from Engage Success about how they stand the test of time with all of that complexity and change that's sort of happening around us?

Sarah Pass (06:50)

Yeah, definitely. I've been doing research on employee engagement and employee experiences work for 20 plus years now. And like you say, there's lots of things that go on. There's lots of external political context, things that change. But there are some of those fundamentals that, regardless of all those different things, they remain the same when it comes to engagement. Certainly we'd fill up the whole podcast if we were to debate how to define engagement.

Jen Sproul (07:16)



Yeah, that would be a challenging one.

Sarah Pass (07:18)

The MacLeod report found 50 different definitions and that was in 2009 I'm sure there's more now but as a kind of concept when we said about what the organisations are doing engagement well are doing there was definitely sort of four key things or certainly four key things that David and Nita found and the first one being **strategic narrative** so that's where did we come from that story where do we start from and I think certainly from small and micro organisations, when you set out, you really have a clear, why are you developing this business? What is your focus? And then suddenly as we get bigger and bigger, things might change or the sheer size and scale of the organisation. But it's about knowing where we started our ethos, what we're talking about, that journey, like I say that past history, where we currently are, but also where we're planning to go, where is our focus? The second enabler is around **engaging managers**.

So a manager who can stretch you, who can support you, who develops you. I'm sure we can all recall a time in our lives of working in a team or department where the manager might not have been so engaging and how that feels. And yet the difference of having that manager that supports you, promotes you, develops you, makes you just feel like they've got your back.

So that was definitely a key aspect too. The third one was around **employee voice**. And that's kind of, it's not just about telling employees stuff, it's about listening to what they have to say as well. So finding out what they've got to say. So they're doing the job. They're able to actually pass on the information and let you know for a start, any warning signs, any issues, any problems, these things need to be addressed. But also in terms of how the organisation feels. You want an organisation where people feel like they can speak up, where they can say what's going on and that they feel listened to as well. I mean, again, it's one of those when you feel like you're putting forward your ideas, your thoughts, your voice, you're sharing and it's not going anywhere, nobody's listening to you. And it might be, they might say great idea, but, for these reasons we can't do it. But it's still interaction, that two-way communication.

Sarah Pass (09:28)

Employee voice takes on so many different aspects as well, but certainly it's about having that employee voice running through the organisation. And then the fourth enabler was around **integrity**. That kind of say do gap. What we say we're going to do, we're actually doing. And that's something that goes from senior leaders, from right from the top to those right at the front. So to enable that trust, that feeling of psychological safety and ethical behaviour.



So they're the four key enablers. Like I say, they came out of that research in the original report back in 2009. And like I say, they have stood the test of time. It's not like we don't keep looking at them. We do, we keep reviewing them. We keep going to sessions and events. We do a lot of work with a lot of different organisations. And we talk about them and get feedback on them. And it's very true how they sort of say, well, yeah, actually, yeah, these still resonate very strongly with us.

And that was actually one of the things behind our current survey report actually was to test them. So we have actually tested the four enablers and can say that they are strong and there is a very clear connection between the four enablers of engagement and engagement levels, regardless of which engagement index or measure you use, there's that consistency. So those four enablers are still holding strong.

Jen Sproul (10:40)

Wonderful to hear, I think Sarah. And I think the other thing to say is you as you go through the four enablers they do feel really current right now as you talk through like narrative strategy, where are we going? What does that look like? Manager, how are we behaving? How are we enabling dialogue, which we need so much to make sense in complexity. So and obviously, yes, ethical leadership, I think is probably more under the microscope now than it was now than it was some time ago.

And as you talk through them, I can certainly, as a professional community for internal communicators, there's a lot of work that we do that helps support the driving of those. So as you talk them through, there's examples popping in my head, go, yep, yep, yep. But there's also still a lot of work that we need to do to put those into action and to really feel them. And I think the word feel you said a lot as well. And that is certainly something that as we sit here right now with them standing the test of time that we need to really dial up and focus in on if we're going to help organisations thrive through this next challenge, because they're all really relevant and all still need work to really drive up. So obviously, you talked about those things, the four enablers and the things that we're working on. And as I just said, I feel like right now we need to focus in on and put action and reality around them now more than ever when I think the world does feel uncertain, work does feel unsafe and behaviour and what we say and what we do is under a microscopic level from every perspective. And I think one of the things that we've talked a lot about as internal communicators and as IoIC as well as particularly the one where you talk about voice, this listening and this feedback loop, which when we look at it from an internal communication perspective, employees still feel, yeah, listening is good, but the feedback isn't there. And what that does to someone's feeling around an organisation is huge. And I guess I'd be keen to hear from your point of view, why do you think colleague voice is such a driver of



engagement? I guess what do we need to do to really drive up dialogue in what is a more distributed, hybrid, that's probably less personal workspace than we've ever had before.

Sarah Pass (12:51)

So back in sort of 2022, we were very keen to see the impact of the pandemic on engagement and certainly to try to understand some of those aspects that you say, the four enablers, what organisations are doing, but the actions actually find some key examples because so many times we talk to people and he's like, yeah, we definitely need to do engagement. Yeah, the four enablers are great. But where do I start? What can I do tomorrow and what plans can I put into place for the next year ahead and so on. So we started looking into engagement by collecting data from a UK representative sample of the working population. And we asked questions around voice, all the different practices and things that organisations did, experiences of work from, where are you physically working, your background, your experiences. And certainly one of the things we saw

really, really key was around that communication. It was around, being able to feel connected and to feel that you have that voice. You mentioned about that kind of feedback loop and a classic example of that is the annual survey. Many organisations complete an annual survey, whether they're looking at specifically satisfaction or whether they're talking to, actually engagement. But, there's this annual survey which you go out, you collect all the data, somebody puts forward their voice, their suggestions, and naturally, by the time you get your data coming in, you actually go through your data, you sit down as teams to work out what you need to be doing, start to put actions in place, it's time to collect that data again. But from that employee perspective, what you're seeing is, well, I gave my thoughts and ideas last year and nothing's happened. Nothing's been done about it and sometimes they don't necessarily see this. It's actually just collecting the data and analysing data just takes so much time, let alone putting plans into place. And I think that's it's really important having that communication to be able to show what is happening, to be able to show some of those initial feedbacks and those initial thoughts so that people can see that while some things might take time and there's a process, we are listening. We are picking those things up.

Sarah Pass (15:01)

And certainly during the pandemic, we saw organisations that were asking for employee voice, that were listening, that were feeding back on multiple different platforms, which I think is also important as well when it comes to communication, using so many different platforms from your general emails to your podcasts, to all your internal different apps and programmes, because, like you say, people are so dispersed now. Even as we're kind of moving back into a less hybrid, there is still





that element of and certainly being able to connect and communicate in a way that fits with the individual. And also, I mean, we know ourselves, we need to say these things more than once. You have to keep repeating it, don't you?

Jen Sproul (15:47)

It has to be repetition. We have to embed that in. And I do remember, when I joined in one of the engagement sessions, it could have been nearly eight years ago now. And I remember somebody from engagement came to speak at one of our events and they said, when we talking about feedback, that silence is the most negative form of feedback. And I think your point around how long it takes for that annual survey to complete that cycle. So it's how do we enable the behaviour and that agility of continuous listening and feedback from micro to macro moments? Yes, the surveys are there, but how can we enable our managers or link all those things together or enable the communication frameworks that we have so that listening and feedback is a continuum? And I think that there are more ways to do that now. The challenge is to do that in a sort of fleet of footway where perhaps everything isn't always perfect, but it feels from an employee perspective that I'm always heard, listened to and fed back to. Not necessarily acted upon, but fed back to. And I think that's the really important piece. One of the things that has been a big debate when we talk about picking up on this topic of colleague voice between internal communication when we think about being internal communicators who are we the voice for? I think that debate about are we there for the employee or are we there for the business? Should we be playing both sides? And I think that from an engaged for success point of view, when we're thinking about how we enable voice and how we enable the feedback for voice, where should we as a professional community sit between the side of the leadership and the employee?

Sarah Pass (17:34)

That's a really interesting debate actually and I think what's interesting is it it parts to put that divide. So many organisations are trying to move away from the them and us but actually even in trying to define that you're defining yourself in a them and us and actually what's kind of needed is that connector, that facilitator who can facilitate the communication, that can facilitate the conversations. So for employees to feel engaged in it, they need to be part of that communication. They need to be, whether it's communication about some of the activities that they're doing, having some kind of involvement or some kind of say, because then they'll engage with the communication more. But certainly you need senior leaders behind it as well. You need to be able to communicate that right kind of information and connect with them. So I'd kind of encourage that there isn't an either or.



But there is that kind of, that person who connects. And I think that's missed a lot because I mean, the day job is senior lecturer in HR and the background was kind of from more of a HR perspective. And I certainly know there's often a debate of, HR is the policing department, or you just go to HR for payroll or discipline or absence. Whereas actually a lot of what HR was about was again about being that connector between senior leaders and the employee as well. And I think the more that we can kind of do that and help support and enable those conversations, the better. Certainly because there is this disconnect. And you mentioned earlier on about managers too, and it's helping them get that information across and through the different channels. Because I think one of the things we find and why internal comms is so vital is, you have in so many organisations this kind of, this hole. Whenever I do any research or do any kind of projects, I always make sure I listen and speak to everybody. From the chief exec, the senior leaders, to those right on the front line. And there's so many times that you go into organisations and the senior leadership team really are bought into and are keen to improve engagement. They are really focused on those things. When you speak to people who actually doing the job, it's not how it's coming across. It's not how they're feeling.

And certainly from all the research that we do, we see that there is this massive gap down the middle. And it's around that perception. And certainly when we talk to organisations and, or we say, well, no, but we do do those things, but it's not necessarily coming across right. Or, I mean, an example could be, for example, we can see all the different policies and practices that organisations offer to support employees has an impact on engagement.

We can see that every single year we've done this survey, we can see it every single time. Let's take wellbeing for example, the more different wellbeing practices or benefits or offerings you can provide to your employees, the higher the level of engagement is. But for many of those practices and offerings, it's not that the employee is necessarily using them. It's knowing that they're there, knowing that the organisation cares and supports for them, that it's there if they did need to use it. And you know what it's like, you start a new job, you know everything that's there because you get all the terms and conditions, you're like, what's my benefits? What can I get? And you read it all, don't you? And then the longer you're in the organisation, you forget, you forget that it's there, well, maybe the policy's changed or new things have come out. And it often takes that new person to come in going, so this benefit, you go, what benefit? So it's that perception of making sure that communication of what the organisation stands for, that it does care, that it is trying to do these things, that it is trying to, I mean, we went to go back to what we said earlier on about that annual survey, it's that having that constant communication with everybody at all levels, that activities are going on, and it's not just about the survey, the survey's just a touch point, that we shouldn't have to wait for an annual survey to have that communication, to have that voice going





through. That should just be like a pressure point, you get somebody to check your boiler every year. It's the same type of sort of scenario. And I think that's why, yeah, **comms has a really vital role to kind of connect rather than them or us.**

Jen Sproul (21:46)

I love that. And I think that that chimes a lot of what we're doing here. And I agree, that is a huge gap. And therefore that's a great opportunity to help fill that gap between what we're doing, but actually making it feel like what we're doing is what is enacted in every facet, behaviour, connection, touch point between that. And obviously you talked as well a little bit there about some of the research that you've been doing. And I know today you've got new research out as Engage for Success.

So I guess now really picking up on that with that sort of, I think that's a really big opportunity in mind, but can you just tell us more about your most recent research? What are sort of any of the key findings or things that you think really, internal communicators should be tuned into?

Sarah Pass (22:28)

So yes, we've been collecting this data annually. And I say it's a representative sample of the UK working population. By that, it means it's across age, across gender, and across ethnicity. So we're able to look at the data according to different organisational size, different sectors, but also backgrounds as well. And certainly, one of the things we saw as we came out of the pandemic was, as expected, employee engagement dramatically dropped. I mean, there was a lot going on.

So there was a significant drop, but what was kind of concerning was the lack of rebound as we came out of the pandemic. And certainly in the last few years, that engagement level hasn't moved. It's been quite stagnant. So the positive is last year it did move. We actually started to move into a positive. So we've moved up by 3%. So we're heading in the right direction, but we're still significantly lower than we were before the pandemic. But equally, we can see that drop and that rebound is different according to what organisations are doing. So organisations that are focusing on engagements, that are trying to help support their employees, that drop was less and they've already rebounded. Whereas for many organisations, there's a big group, that drop was quite significant because the people issues aren't seen as being important in their organisation. I mean, one of the things in terms from an internal comms perspective as well was, we mentioned about connecting that story, is it that those organisations don't get it? Or is it that it's just not being communicated right? Is it that those employees aren't feeling it



as opposed to those organisations aren't getting it? So I think that's a key area to look at. I think some of other things we've looked at as well is the individual and people with different individual backgrounds having different experiences of work. We think of engagement as this big thing. Everybody's engagement is different and engagement cycles are different as we go through different stages of life or different experiences. So certainly those with, for example, long term health conditions, neurodivergence are having a less positive experience of work. But again, not always the case. It depends what the organisation is doing and it depends on how those people can feel that they can connect to their organisation and feel that they get the help and support that they need to be able to move on. I think another key area to focus on for communication is around this big debate around hybrid work. So we can certainly see, oh yeah, we can certainly see, obviously during the pandemic, we could see the huge numbers of people that said, I'm working fully at work. And then we can start to see this transition and one of the things that we noticed that organisations that support hybrid work have much higher levels of engagement than those that don't. There's also, in terms of the organisations that don't support it, presenteeism, so coming to work whilst still ill and therefore underperforming because of it is high. Unmanageable job stress is higher if you're mandating coming back into work. Even if you're sort of encouraging mandating a few days, it still has that negative impact.

But if you actually ask employees about where do they feel that they work best, where do they want to work, it's not that they don't want to be in the office. I think it's that gap between being told, that kind of feeling like, well, why, is it that you don't trust me? Is it that all of a sudden it was okay for me to do my work and now I'm having to come in because you want to just, I'm not performing enough. So it's again, that communication of coming back into the office and why are we wanting to come back into the office? And making sure that when the organisation, when senior leaders are saying, because it's best for collaboration, employees actually believe that and trust that. Because otherwise, if they feel they're being marched back into work because of a lack of trust, it's going to have a negative impact. So I think that's really key as well, that communication through that.

Jen Sproul (26:22)

I agree and I think one of the most unfortunate things when we talked about return to the office is we brought this word mandate into a lexicon. Nobody wants to be mandated anything. I think it's a very, I don't know how we got to mandating, but it feels like that's the kind of word that then runs through it, which I think is unfortunate because I think that as working people in a working society, we want to be treated like adults, like grownups, like peers, like respected and valued and heard and that we all have something to contribute and I think that as you quite rightly say how we communicate that can dictate how that feels to the recipient



and the challenge is we all respond to language and different things in different ways but fundamentally there is something that runs through that I think is a core.

Sarah Pass (27:09)

Yeah, definitely. I say, it's that feeling, you picked up on the word perfectly, mandate, you have to do this. And we know, well, it depends on individual circumstances, how that fits anyway, and having those kind of conversations, which is hard. You can kind of understand in some ways why your organisations have gone, look, this is just the way we're going. Because actually, to try to do it on a more individual basis, to engage with people on an individual basis, it's hard.

It's difficult, but it's worth doing. It certainly is worth doing. If we're told we have to do certain things, you might be physically there, but if you've disengaged and therefore you've had a knock on your productivity, your innovation, and we can see that, that willingness to go the extra mile, to support others when they need the extra help, you can see that kind of coming through quite strongly. So yes, it's certainly how do you communicate that, making sure those messages are getting across, especially if it's for an organisation that do get it and they do support it, and making sure that those things are coming across to the employees in the right kind of way.

Jen Sproul (28:17)

Yeah, absolutely. I guess from your research, as one of the things you're doing, for the organisations that do get it, as you quite rightly say, have you seen sort of particular successes or approaches in that that have helped that upward trend in kind of engagement for those that get it? I guess, what does done well look like?

Sarah Pass (28:35)

Yeah, and again we can see this consistently both in the survey research but also as mentioned before we do a lot of case study research, we go into lots of organisations and I might add actually even those are doing it well and doing it good they do go through phases still because sometimes they need to adapt or change or you get a new manager coming in and it knocks everything or something politically or from a bigger context happens and again it needs to be adapted. So it's never something that is just set, it is something that you need to be keeping to work on. But certainly the organisations that are ensuring good communication, they're listening to that voice, there is no say do gap. And even with that, managers, senior leaders being able to even say, yeah, actually we tried that, it didn't work.



We try different things and to feel that you can try new things or develop new things and that's okay is also important. The organisations that embed engagement, those managers that it's not just that they need to do engagement but it's embedded in terms of their appraisals, their action plans, their activities.

It's part of their job as a manager to engage with their team and to look at their engagement levels because it is important throughout the organisation, it's embedded throughout the organisation and, from a senior leader perspective, that strategic narrative, it's in, we know where we're going, we know where we stand in engagement and our people are at the heart of that and we need to focus on that. So, yeah, definitely, just to go back to the four enablers, we can definitely see **that organisations that score highly in the four enablers have higher levels of engagement as well**. And the reports, we have got details in there about different activities, individual practices. So it's not so high level, but it's about some of those things. But certainly, as a takeaway, organisations that are using action plans, for example, where teams, individual teams can look at their own team engagement levels and scores to say, what do we as a team need to help improve us and let's do some of those kind of things. They're really, really key.

Jen Sproul (30:36)

Brilliant. And like you say, communication has a role to play in all of those sorts of the four enablers and all the challenges that you're talking about, particularly when it's feeling about how we talk about things, but how people, whether they feel it, whether they get it. And I think that's a really important thing to seek out to understand an organisation because, if we don't get it, then how are we going to feel it? One doth lead the other, if you like.

We've talked a lot about internal communication and its role throughout that, but I guess thinking at your latest research and what you found out and the things that you're seeing, what role do you think or the main area can internal communication really work on to help foster that engagement at work from what you're reading and seeing, particularly with your most recent research?

Sarah Pass (31:21)

Yeah, again, I think it's that ensuring that the communication is coming out in multiple different ways and then it's reaching different people, especially because individuals are having these different experiences of work. And we can see for employees who have a different experience of work, say for example, long-term health conditions and neurodivergence, feeling that they can actually speak to their organisation, that they feel that their organisation is supportive and open. We can see a huge impact on organisations that enable reasonable adjustments. So



we might all be supposed to be doing that, but actually the significant number of people who say they have long-term health conditions, both mental and physical, who have said so and asked for reasonable adjustments and they haven't had them, is huge. But also, there's a huge number of people who haven't told their employer about long-term health conditions or neurodivergence because of fear of discrimination, because of fear of the impact or wanting to keep it themselves or sort of stigma around that. So communicating a supportive organisation, a psychologically safe organisation, because if they're having a lower level of engagement and there's nothing being done about it, just by listening, supporting, hearing, adapting to enable them to remain in work as well is really, vital.

Jen Sproul (32:41)

Absolutely. And that's certainly something when you're talking, around that sort of support and neurodivergence and those sort of, I guess, the hidden disabilities is that we certainly have seen that actually getting people to feel comfortable to self-identify or to declare something is an absolute challenge. But there's also the opportunity, I think, particularly from a communication angle to embed accessibility as a matter of course.

Sarah Pass (33:03)

Yeah, and we've seen some great examples of organisations who are doing that, they're not necessarily doing anything different from a policy perspective, but they're communicating it differently. They're ensuring that it's a everyday conversation, it's an organisation that supports all these different things and let us know what we can do to help you stay in work and wherever we possibly can, we will do that because you're important to us.

Jen Sproul (33:27)

I think we can all hark back to our own personal experiences, good, bad and indifferent, to make sense of what we're trying to think about and how we can dialogue that up. So I guess my sort of closing question, if you like, and I know that after the show as well, when we put this out there, we'll make sure there's clear links to the research report and to Engage Success, because like you say, there's tons of things on your site, but also so that people can come and really read and get into the research that you've produced. But if there's one action that you think someone should take today or should really go away and really focus on thinking about, what would that be?



Sarah Pass (34:01)

That would be have a look at your communication channels. I think during the pandemic we've suddenly got all these new ways of doing things you know Teams, Zooms, there's all these other apps available.

Jen Sproul (34:17)

Good disclaimer.

Sarah Pass (34:20)

Yeah there's so many different ones but with that you almost get too much you know there's almost that kind of another team group made another WhatsApp chat made and it kind of gets overwhelming sometimes with the amount of ways that we talk about things and communicate things. So actually enabling different platforms is really great, enabling different methods of communication is really great, but also just to try and make sure that it's not too overwhelming and that we can kind of streamline those voices and streamline those communication to keep it concise with a if you want more information, click here kind of thing, because sometimes it can just, we are just full, there's information overload from so many different perspectives, let alone from a home and personal perspective. I'm a mum of kids and there's multiple WhatsApp chat groups and newsletters and websites and apps and it's like, whoa, my brain. And that's not an easy task to do, because you wanna make sure the communication's coming out. You wanna make sure that, and like you say, you have to keep repeating it. So it is a huge challenge, but really have a think through those communication channels and see what's coming across best.

Jen Sproul (35:26)

Absolutely, and I take that away and I think that we need to calm the noise if we want things to be understood and felt. I'm not a mum, but I'm overwhelmed. I literally finish work and I pick up my phone and my goodness, I'm like, I could be here till midnight. I'm like, I can't take it. And over stimulation, I think is something. But Sarah, thank you so much for doing this. Obviously when we set out this podcast, Dom was with us.

Unfortunately, due to technical issues, he had to depart the podcast, but I hope Sarah that between the two of us, we've actually a really lovely chat and it's really great. And I love the work that you do engage for success. I think it's so important. And I think bringing those case studies to life, the research that you produce,





making it so accessible is a great thing. And what I'm hearing from today is engagement is a slight uptick. And if you put in time to it, if you invest in it, if you care about it, it does make a huge difference and we have some current challenges, but those enablers will cast us through and let's spend some time making sure people can access communication, get it and feel it to therefore make sure that everything else we do comes around that. So Sarah, again, thank you so much for your time today and we'll make sure that we circulate the report to our listeners and all of the members of IoIC as well.

Sarah Pass (36:37)

Thank you, Jennifer, great to be here. And for anybody listening, we're keen and from Engage for Success to work really close with our internal comms. A lot of our volunteers come from the internal comms community. So if there's anything we can do, just please reach out.

Jen Sproul (36:49)

Brilliant, love it. Thanks everybody.

Sarah Pass (36:51)

Cheers, thanks, bye.