

# IC 2023 INDEX

The voice of UK employees  
helping to inform strategic choices  
across internal communication

Institute  
of Internal  
Communication



KARIAN<sup>BY</sup>BOX

# Introduction

## **We need honest, reliable communications now more than ever.**

We're living in a state of 'permacrisis', reeling between the immediate consequences of the pandemic, an ongoing climate crisis, and pressing cost of living concerns.

### **In uncertain times, we look to our leaders to provide stability, the way they communicate with us matters.**

Against this turbulent backdrop, the fundamental questions remain the same for UK internal communication practitioners: How do we help those leaders communicate in a way that inspires trust? How do we talk about change? How do we champion diverse voices and enable two-way discussions? How do we manage communication platforms and get the message out on time, every time?

### **The way we work is undergoing its most profound transformation in a century, emphasising the essential role of effective communication to give employees a powerful and articulate voice.**

It's critical in building deeper and longer-lasting connections between employees and their organisation. And it's vital for helping employees feel respectfully, authentically and truthfully informed.



## Why we're working together

### The aim of this study is to identify what employees across the UK want and need from their internal communication function.

Similar reports in this field tend to focus on what internal communication practitioners think is important, or what leaders want from their internal communication teams.

We wanted to take a different approach.

First and foremost, this is about the communication experiences and needs of the UK workforce. We have also brought internal communication practitioners together to home in on real industry needs.

The joint approach of IoIC's practitioners and Ipsos Karian and Box's research rigour has cemented findings in real data, providing robust insights which organisations can use to build improved internal communication strategies.

By providing a UK-wide employee view of what good communication looks like, we hope to champion internal communication as a business-critical function.

We hope you find this report valuable in helping you shape your organisation's current and future internal communication strategy.



*Ghassan*

**Ghassan Karian**

Chief Executive,  
Ipsos Karian and Box



*Jennifer*

**Jennifer Sproul**

Chief Executive,  
Institute of Internal Communication

# What's the story?

## The fundamental insights for the 2023 IC Index story

01

### IC teams make a positive difference

- People value good internal communications – especially at senior levels or in smaller organisations.
- Employees are more engaged, more inclined to stay and more likely to trust what their CEO says when an IC team is in place.

02

### Cheerleaders outweigh cynics, but there's work to do

- A large proportion of the UK workforce are enthusiastic about internal communications and believe messages are clear, trustworthy and useful.
- Be warned, though: there are still large groups of employees who are either negative, confused or unconvinced about the quality of internal communications.

03

### We need to talk about strategy

- Getting strategy communications right is fundamental to boosting engagement.
- People also want clarity around how their organisation is performing and what the business priorities are. When that clarity is absent, confidence and engagement falter.

04

### Time isn't on our side

- Employees spend very little time reading and viewing updates.
- People snack rather than binge. The majority of UK workers dip into communications briefly between – or even during – meetings.



# 05

## Senior leaders should speak up – and use the right channels

- There’s a greater positive response across all organisations when senior leaders communicate directly and authentically on things like strategy.
- People prefer to hear from their CEO through remote channels, like email and staff intranet.

# 06

## Managers matter and could do more, but need help

- People trust communications from their direct manager but want more updates from them on team goals and priorities.
- Managers themselves aren’t always confident communicators – most would like greater guidance from their communications colleagues.

# 07

## People want to be heard

- Many employees aren’t convinced that their organisation is listening to them, or that they’ll see positive action on the feedback they provide.
- Staff surveys alone won’t get the job done. Regular listening and manager feedback are essential for hitting high levels of positivity.

# The 2023 IC Index story in numbers



**Internal communications rated positively by majority**

**6/10**

UK employees rate their employer's internal communications as excellent. Only one in ten see it as very poor.



**More want to hear about employer's strategy**

**22<sup>pt</sup>**

gap between the proportion of UK employees who don't hear enough about their organisation's strategy (33%) and those who receive too much (11%).



**Clarity on organisational strategy is weak for large minority**

**57%**

of UK workers are clear on their employer's strategy – with marginally more believing in it.



**Nearly half of UK workforce are ambassadors for their employer's strategy**

**45%**

of UK workers are ambassadors for their employer's strategy (they understand and believe in it), compared to one in four who are 'passengers' – neither getting or believing in it.



**Email still most common and preferred channel**

**6/10**

UK employees both rely on and prefer email as way of hearing news about and from their employer.



**Very little time to capture and keep employee attention**

**15**

minutes or less per day is what nearly 7 in 10 UK employees say they spend reading / viewing updates from their employer.



**Half trust what their CEO communicates**

**54%**

trust communications from their organisation's CEO, over 10pts less than those from their own manager.



**Large numbers want their manager to better communicate team priorities and performance**

**4/10**

UK workers want their manager to better inform them about the team's priorities and goals, with another 3 in 10 wanting updates on their employer's performance.



**Large minority of managers want more help communicating organisational news**

**1/3**

line managers don't feel equipped to lead conversations with their teams about what is happening across their organisation.



**Organisations listening to and acting on feedback not seen in evidence by half**

**53%**

of UK workers say that their organisation welcomes open and honest feedback, while fewer (45%) say their employer shows how feedback is used to inform action.





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