



# STRUCTURING YOUR COMMS PLAN

From explaining benefits  
to shaping culture

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You know that a connected, engaged workforce is critical to organizational success. But how do you move from knowing it's important to structuring your overall communications strategy? How will you reach every employee? What should you communicate? How often? Will employees, especially dispersed or deskless, adopt what you deliver? These are important topics to research, understand and plan for within your unique organization.

Once you identify and implement a strategy, there are many advantages to a comprehensive communications plan, and especially an employee mobile app. The world is more digital than ever before, and employers have an opportunity to take advantage of smart phone ubiquity to empower their people with information and connection in the workplace.

## **THE WHY BEHIND COMMUNICATIONS**

Thoughtful communications help employees understand the value of their benefits and keep them informed on the latest company news. More than that, a successful communications plan ensures that employees feel included and appreciated as a part of their company's vision.

Whether you invest in an app or build your own program from the ground up, use the following strategies to structure your communications for success and display ROI to your leaders and decision-makers.

# THE POWER OF REACH

## ENGAGE YOUR PEOPLE AND PROVE THE VALUE

With HR's ever-increasing responsibilities, communicating benefits and policies isn't always easy, and it's only the tip of the iceberg. There's another dimension to communications. Companies are competing to attract and retain great talent, and that takes investment in culture. It means showing appreciation, creating opportunities for engagement and building connections company-wide. Relevant, regular communications support all of these goals.

Here are four tips to help you build an effective, multi-faceted communications plan and, when applicable, prove its value to everyone involved.

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### DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE, RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Regular, relevant communications show your employees you care — and the data shows they want more.

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A recent study found that

**41%**

of employees said their top complaint about their employers' benefits program is that

**communications are too infrequent<sup>1</sup>**

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Giving benefits a consistent platform marks the beginning of a two-way dialogue between you and your people, opening the door for future initiatives around well-being, engagement and culture-building.



Whatever approach you decide to take, an in-house program or a mobile app vendor, it needs to be comprehensive. But what does that entail?

Research, research, research. Identify your key audiences. Categories might include:

- Full-time or part-time employees
- Field-based or remote employees
- Office or deskless employees (from manufacturing facilities to coffee shops)

Understanding the landscape will help identify the best way to reach your employees later.

In the meantime, you need to create key messages for each audience. Keep these three effective communications pillars in mind:

1. Clarity
2. Specificity
3. Simplicity

**EXAMPLE:**

You're trying to reach an hourly retail workforce. Employees are frequently moving, interacting with customers and when they clock out, they're gone.

Key messages for this audience should be simple — create a system that allows them to see that a particular message is relevant to benefits or policy changes, for example. If you go with a mobile app, designate a channel that collects this essential information. Once they're tuned into the simplicity, you can deliver the specifics and introduce them to more engaging content.



## SEND MESSAGES OFTEN, BUT CONSOLIDATE WHEN POSSIBLE

Set expectations early by sending out frequent information, especially when it comes to policies and benefits. Consistency is key. Year-round messages and reminders give employees the access and prompts they need to make necessary changes throughout the year, and they reduce manual processes and work streams for HR professionals.

Frequency and accessibility are important in benefits. Though employees deserve regular updates on the deeper information such as company announcements and news, they might lose impact when overdelivered.

Give company updates, employee news, events and more the attention they deserve: deliver visually appealing newsletters, solicit employee stories, spotlight wins. Make this content an event in-and-of-itself and anticipation will build.

### PROVING THE ROI OF CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS

Sometimes increasing engagement is about consolidation. When Jennifer Mitchell, Director of Internal Communications at Hackensack University Medical Center, heard that emails were often instantly deleted, she remade their newsletter. In addition to improving content, she added news normally delivered in multiple daily emails.

Now, each newsletter Mitchell sends includes the line: *"This edition saved your inbox (#) emails."*

The numbers back it up: the weekly newsletter helped **reduce employee communications emails by 92 percent and increase open rates by 46 percent. People are getting engaged.**

## CHOOSE THE BEST COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR YOUR AUDIENCES

Take inventory of your channels and determine the best way to reach every employee. Think back to each unique audience in your company and its key messages. What do you think might succeed? Maybe you're using a system that isn't working for your people, maybe they're overwhelmed by emails. It never hurts to ask for input as you narrow down the options.

### ENHANCE YOUR REACH WITH A MOBILE APP

Give employees easy access to important benefits information and culture-enhancing conversation with an employee app. It keeps relevant information all in one place, and you can easily tailor messages for different groups and regions.

Think your non-digital workforce is unreachable?

A recent Pew Research study found that

# 77%

of Americans now own a smartphone and 1 in 5 Americans use a smartphone as their primary means of online access <sup>2</sup>

Mobile usage is even growing among older generations.<sup>3</sup> It could be the solution that finally works for your workforce.

### PROVING THE ROI FOR AN EMPLOYEE MOBILE APP

To justify a technology solution, it's helpful to show how it amplifies internal messages. Alison Pase and her team at Cengage Learning often produce communications videos, but without a mobile platform, viewership was limited.

With a mobile app, Pase not only tracked more views but saw faster uptake. Knowing this, more leaders were willing to appear in videos, boosting visibility and connection within the company culture.

*"It used to take a couple of weeks to get good penetration, and now it only takes a few days — so messages are timelier."*

Alison Pase, Vice President of Internal Communications at Cengage Learning



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### REACHING YOUR DESKLESS WORKERS

Employees in dispersed locations complicate communications — especially for large employers. When job functions and locations vary, you need a system that reaches people quickly but you also need to ensure employees don't miss the messages if they check in later.

To communicate with these hard-to-reach employees, leverage mobile technology to surface announcements, changes and news and elevate content that employees can interact with whenever, and wherever.

### WHEN IT COMES TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN, ROI IS MORE THAN THE NUMBERS

Showing executive leaders that your employee communications strategy is working doesn't always mean accumulating click-throughs and spreadsheets. It also means proving that your campaigns change how employees do their jobs. It means showing that people are more excited to contribute to your organization's success.

With the strategies and examples above, you can build a plan that works for your organization. You can start a conversation about the growth areas with your leaders and you can define how you'll prove the ROI. Think about the internal metrics that matter in your company and always remember to bring human stories to the table — your people, their well-being and engagement, are truly your greatest asset.

## ABOUT LIMEADE

Limeade is a software company that elevates the employee experience and helps build great places to work. The Limeade ONE platform offers employee well-being, engagement, inclusion and communications solutions in one seamless user experience. Recognized for its own award-winning culture, Limeade helps every employee know their company cares.

To learn more, visit [www.limeade.com](http://www.limeade.com).

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