

YOUR **ALL★STAR** PLAYBOOK FOR

Building a Winning Internal Communications Strategy



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Get Stretching

What is Internal Communication, Really?

To get warmed up, let's all agree on one thing: How you communicate with your team matters.

Your people are your best asset, and their engagement can make or break the bottom line. Their individual and collective abilities enable your organization to create products and solve problems for your customers. Their ideas and initiative help grow your company and challenge the status quo. And, importantly, they make work fun.

Your people matter. The relationships among your team matter. Communication is how we enact and constitute those relationships, make decisions, manage projects, celebrate successes, and on and on. Communication creates engagement.

Ergo, your communication—you guessed it—**matters**.

Granted, to communications and human resources professionals, this is old news. But getting leadership and others across the organization on board with a greater investment in your internal communication can be a challenge.

This ebook will help you prove the ROI of great internal communication, think differently about your current pain points, and give you the tools to build a winning strategy—and get others on your team. After all, a basketball team of one won't win many games. Neither will a team who are working from different playbooks.



How do you see IC?

Internal communication entails more than company benefits and policy announcements; it touches on all dimensions of your company, from everyday interactions to new employee training, monthly finance reports from upper management, and beyond.

Everything from productivity to organizational culture is influenced by (or wholly dependent on) your internal communication—how the members of your organization consume, interpret, and share information related to the organization. That's a nice, broad definition.

Heck, internal communication can mean any of the following, and more:

- Organizational mission, vision, and values
- Employee handbooks
- Onboarding materials
- Annual reports
- Newsletters
- Employee portal or company intranet
- Employee social media groups
- Distributed meeting minutes
- Posters
- Reminders or memos
- Benefits information
- Change management campaign materials
- Process descriptions
- Flowcharts or organizational charts
- Survey Results

So remember: How you communicate with your team matters—so much, in fact, that we've built this ebook to help you get your internal communications up and running like never before. Are you ready?



CASE STUDY:

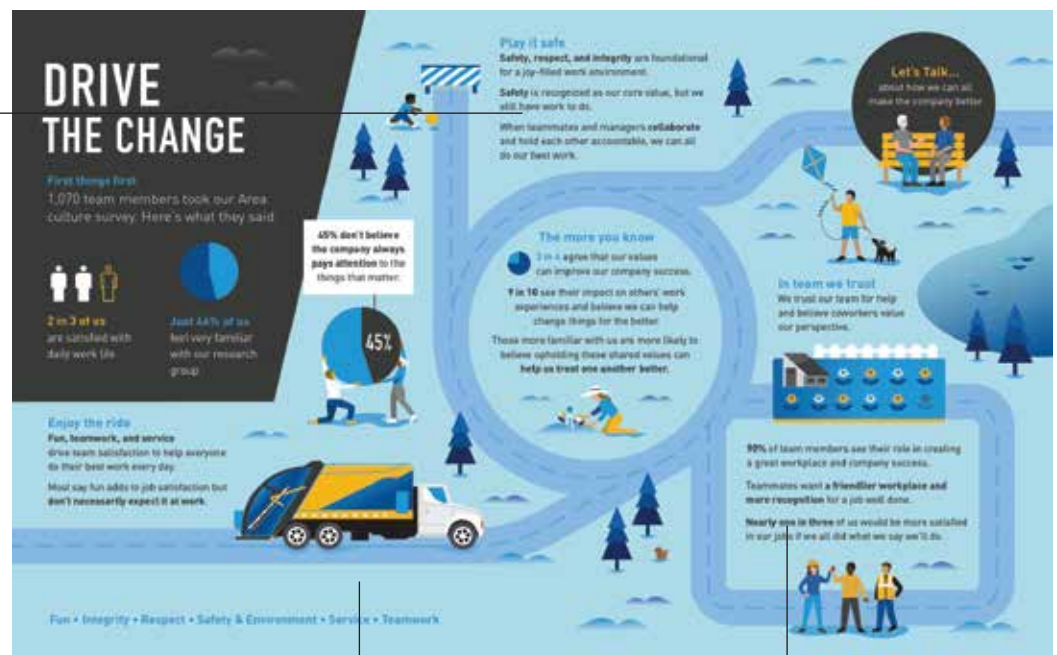
Culture Survey Results Handout

Share internal survey results to start conversations about company culture.

This handout uses character illustrations and data visualization to share the results of a company-wide survey about a new culture initiative. The results indicated that employees who were more familiar with the company values were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, and this piece of visual content helps build that awareness of culture across the company. Plus, this graphic is print friendly so deskless employees can take it with them on the road.

Full graphic [here](#).

Be upfront about your desire to improve the status quo



Use visuals that represent aspects of work employees can identify with

Provide takeaways for managers and employee across the org chart

DIY DRILLS

1. How does your organization define internal communications?
2. How does that definition differ between departments or teams?
3. What primary purposes do your internal communications serve?
4. What are the biggest challenges?
5. Which channels and formats does your company or organizations use for internal communications?
6. How do you tailor your message or delivery based on employee subgroups?





CHAPTER 2:



Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

Internal Communication and Company Culture

Internal communication shapes the culture and ethos of your company—for better or worse.

Healthy internal communication aligns your company by linking organizational goals with employees' professional and personal goals.

HEALTHY INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MESSAGES:



Are thoughtfully curated to avoid information overload



Promote engagement through concise and compelling messaging



Are catered to employee preferences

With effective company alignment, everyone on your team can answer the “what?”, the “why?”, and the “how?” of your organization’s work.

Getting your team on the same page is one thing; keeping them on the same page through the ebbs and flows of daily, monthly, and yearly operations is another. Both require consistent, clear, and strategic communication.

This creates a rhythm of reminders and updates about the status of the company, but it also opens up platforms for employees to communicate with one another and with leadership.



Reinforce Your Organizational Identity

Every company has a brand image—a message they connote to the wider world. The question is whether it's the message they want to convey. If your employer brand is positive, prospective employees will think, “Wow, I want to work there!” and current employees will think, “Wow, I love working here!” If, on the other hand, your employer brand is negative, well...you get the picture.

Healthy internal communications will help build a positive and consistent employer brand for your organization—positive because employees are engaged and, as a result, more satisfied with their work; consistent because you've cleared up any ambiguity surrounding the vision and values of the company.

Sometimes company culture looks like strong employee engagement, job satisfaction, or productivity. Sometimes it's high retention, lively office chatter, and great employee benefits. But ultimately, great company culture is a communicative experience that begets all of these things. In other words, organizational culture is built through communication.

Communicate Your Company Culture

Great company culture allows employees to be their best and do their best work.



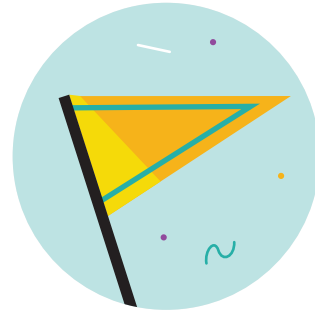
Talk about your company culture

Culture talk helps keep your organization's mission and vision top of mind. When employees come to work, are there conversations about the organization's goals, people, and purpose? Does company leadership report culture initiatives and successes to stakeholders?

- Communicate about your company culture in staff meetings, one-on-ones, annual reviews, interviews, and onboarding.
- Create a recurring agenda item to share a culture “win” from the past week.
- Ask coworkers and peers from other companies about their experiences of organizational culture.

Show your company culture visually

It's absolutely true that our nonverbals communicate just as much as, if not more than, our words. When employees aren't talking, nonverbal visual reminders can keep the organization's values top of mind.



Display core values using banners, murals, or custom artwork.



Give every employee a framed graphic, poster, or calendar to serve as a visual reminder at their desk.



Publish your mission, vision, values, and benefits on your public website so fans and prospective employees know exactly what you're about.

Celebrate your culture and your people

Your team is full of great, talented people who deserve to be celebrated. Food is one way to communicate your appreciation and care for your employees, but this is really all about doing something unexpected. Surprise and delight—unexpected moments of joy—create powerful positive impressions in our minds.

- Provide a spontaneous treat or an occasional lunch-and-learn.
- Create opportunities for community building through an office book club or party planning committee.
- Spread joy throughout the community by supporting local charities using some of your annual profits.

Create interactive touch points for employees.

Think about all of the objects and spaces your team interacts with throughout the day. Maybe you have a team uniform, branded attire, or company swag; a locker room or backstage area; company vehicles for salespeople or delivery drivers; an online portal or intranet. Each of these touchpoints presents an opportunity to communicate your organizational identity in a tangible, visual way.

- Provide company swag in an onboarding bundle with custom packaging featuring illustrated representations of your values.
- Enliven the break room or backstage area with illustrated or photographic wall coverings.
- Create stickers with company branding, icons, or small illustrations to easily make any mundane object a talisman for the company culture.



CASE STUDY: Recruitment Infographic

Show off your culture and recruit new talent with an infographic.

This infographic provides an engaging visual summary of the company's culture—designed specifically for prospective young employees. It shows off cornerstones of the company's culture, like growth pillars and key perks, as well as unique touches, like using movie characters to identify personality types.

Full graphic [here](#).

Explain what your company does—your business offerings, products, or services

Highlight employee resource groups that build camaraderie among team members

Give prospective employees a sense of what it's like to work here



DIY DRILLS

1. How do employees talk about the culture at your company or organization?
2. How could your company best use nonverbal reminders to advance its values?
3. What was the last thing your team celebrated? What would have made the celebration even better?
4. Brainstorm three new touch points that could visually and tangibly communicate your organizational identity.



Get Your Head in the Game

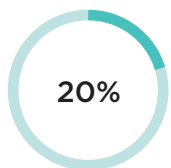
Internal Communication and employee engagement

The right internal communication strategy generates greater employee engagement across the board.

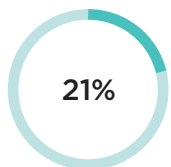
And make no mistake: An engaged workforce is a productive and profitable workforce. Engaged employees are invested in their work, their colleagues, and their company.

A Gallup meta-analysis showed that companies with high employee engagement outperform companies with lower engagement.

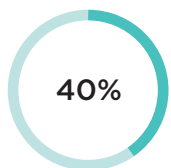
While the proliferation of tech-based solutions have made internal communication easier in some ways, the changing world of work has opened up new challenges, too.



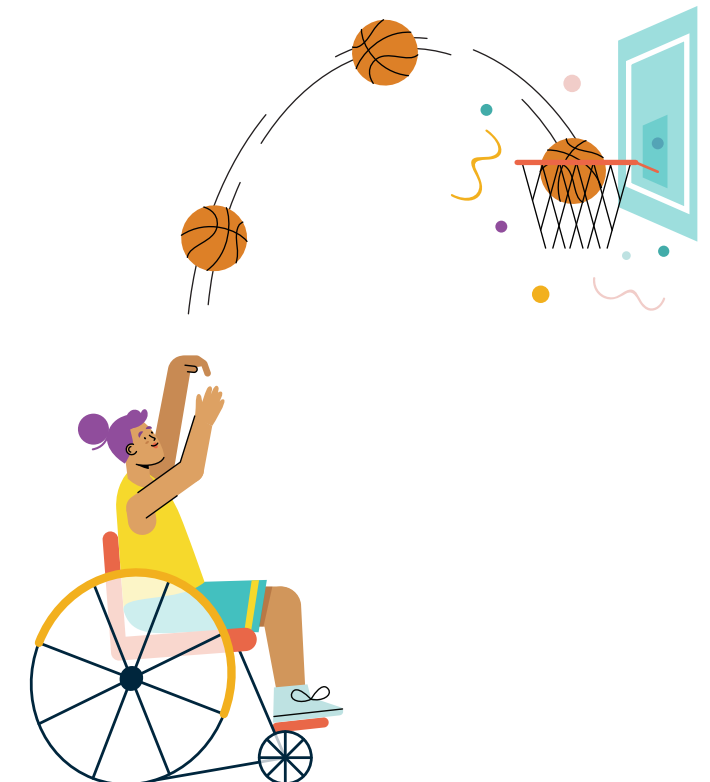
Higher in productivity
(sales)



Higher in profitability



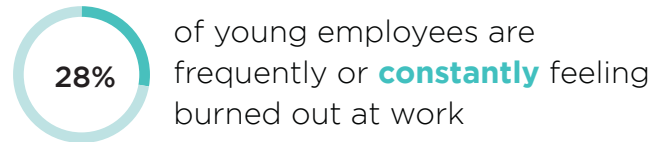
Higher in quality
(fewer defects)



A changing workforce means higher stakes for communication and culture

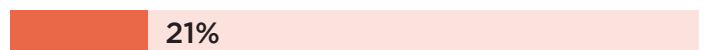
Millennials dominate today's workforce, and Gen Z is right behind them. This shift brings challenges and opportunities for internal comms and culture. Burnout and low engagement are real issues, especially for younger employees. Gen Z wants to feel connected to a company's mission — tech tools are a given, but a compelling story matters more.

To resonate with a younger workforce, internal comms need to be efficient and visually engaging. Attention spans are short, and Gen Z filters information rapidly. Visual content cuts through the noise, driving quicker understanding and impact for your team's key messages.



7 in 10 Millennials feel some level of burnout

Gen Zs are likely to change jobs as many as **10 times** between ages 18 and 34

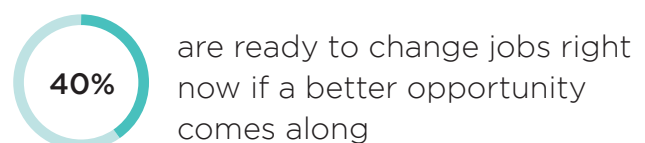


of Millennials have changed jobs in the past year.



plan to leave their job in the next 2 years.

Less than half of all Millennials and Gen Zs feel connected to their jobs.



6 in 10 Gen Zs want multiple check-ins from a manager each week



Put your internal communication where it counts

With an increasingly remote and/or mobile workforce, it can be difficult for businesses to connect widely distributed employees with the organization's mission, vision, goals, and updates—even with the many technologies available to support communication.

Visual content is the perfect opportunity to continue strengthening how these employees identify with the organization.

On top of day-to-day visual communications, the onboarding process gives you the opportunity to attract and retain your employees from the very start.



You attract and retain by creating understanding. Present your company policies and employee benefits in easily digestible visual formats:

- A handout with tables that compare different options they can choose from
- An interactive microsite walking them through how your company handles parental leave
- A poster that explains how your business works with key selling points

But visuals alone aren't always the end-all solution. Say your organization has business development employees who spend significant time driving between prospects or clients. They might be interested in continuing education or training, but their schedules make it difficult to carve out time to watch webinars or read materials. In this case, the solution could be as simple as having someone do a voice recording or podcast communicating information these employees would want to know. Meet them where they are.

CASE STUDY:**Future goals infographic**

Draw team members into your company vision through visual content.

This infographic recalls past wins and outlines future goals in vibrant visual form. Notice how the piece incorporates organizational values, vision, and mission throughout. It clearly and beautifully tells a story for team members to read, visualize, and join.

Full graphic [here](#).

Use visual cues to enhance understanding of your organizational identity

Remind team members of organizational values and vision



Emphasize commitment as a driver of positive results

DIY DRILLS

1. Do your current internal communications practices engage your employees?
2. How do you currently track engagement with your internal communications?
3. What forms of internal communication does your company use when onboarding and training new employees?
4. How does your organization communicate about upcoming changes? Where might your change management process be falling short?





CHAPTER 4:

Keeping Score

Internal Communication and ROI

At this point, you should have a handle on what internal communication is, why it benefits your team, and how it shapes your organization's culture and workflow. But, in the end, we also need to know why investing in internal communications is really worth it—because it is an investment. Here are just a few reasons why you should be investing (more) in your internal communication.

Employee retention

Replacing one employee can cost a company anywhere from 50% to 200% of the employee's salary. If a strong internal communication strategy boosts employee engagement, as we've seen, then it's also a means to retaining the right members for your team—and avoiding the steep costs of turnover.

Change management

Effective change management has positive effects on a company's bottom line. Organizational change truly succeeds or fails based on whether or not individuals are on board.

Organizations don't change until people do.

Organized approaches to change management include opportunities for effective, visual internal communications. A content marketing-style campaign isn't the end-all solution for change management in an organization, but it lays a good foundation.



Examples of content formats that align with the steps of one of the most popular change management models:

Step 1: Awareness of the need for change

- Letter from the CEO
- Introduction of campaign to fix the problem

Step 2: Desire to participate and support the change, knowledge on how to change

Specialized content (blogs, infographics) that explain how this change will make things better for stakeholders

Step 3: Ability to implement required skills and behaviors, reinforcement to sustain the change

- Resources contained in a microsite
- Ongoing visual reports showing the initiative's progress and results

Customer satisfaction

A well-oiled machine does what it was made to do. And a finely-tuned organization comprised of engaged employees will increasingly satisfy customers by exceeding their expectations.

From this perspective, internal communications are a means of keeping the promises you make to your customers—your brand promise.

Profitability

Leveling up your internal communications strategy is good for company culture and the bottom line. Remember our conclusion from Chapter 3: *An engaged workforce is a productive and profitable workforce.* Therefore, treat your internal communications more like content marketing—including developing a segmented, multichannel strategy using visual content. Measuring employees' engagement and understanding from existing and new internal content will point you in the right direction.

Your people matter. The relationships among your team matter—and so do your relationships with your clients. Thankfully, an investment in your internal communications is an investment in your clients and your organization's success at large.

CASE STUDY:

Strategic vision poster

Align the company around a strategic plan for success.

This poster brings to life a strategic vision for the future using illustrations and icons to express the organization's identity. What would have been mundane or easy to ignore as a simple text-only brief is made vibrant and memorable through thoughtful design.

Full graphic [here](#).

Keep your core values
top of mind

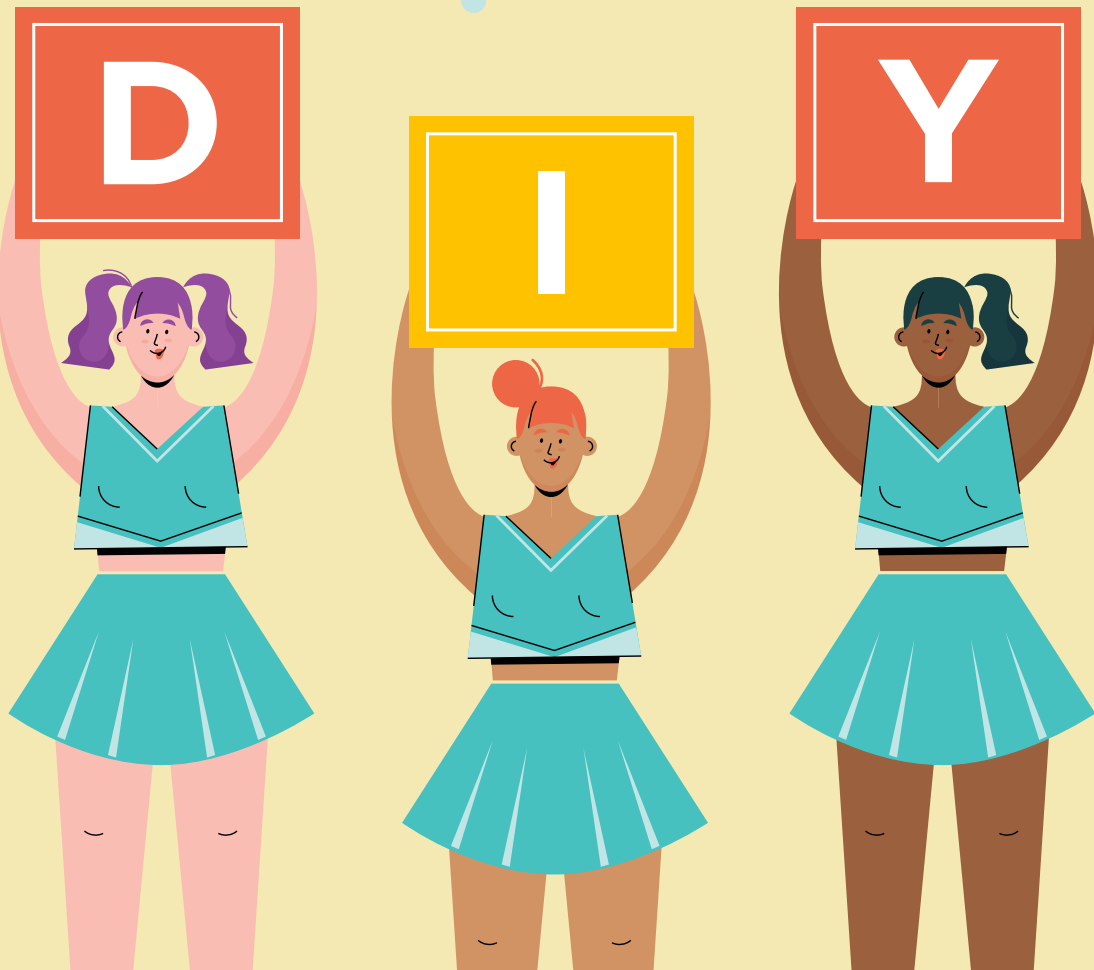
Identify your target
customers



Use concise messaging to
summarize strategic initiatives

DIY DRILLS

1. What would make an investment in internal communications worth it for your organization?
2. How might focusing on internal communications help your organization to better operate by its values?





Building a Game Plan



Internal Communication and Content Strategy

Nearly every other area of your business has a strategy for success—a thoughtfully developed and road-tested process to ensure you accomplish your goals. Undoubtedly you have a marketing strategy for your external communications to engage target customers. Likewise, you should have a strategy for your internal communications to engage your employees with the information they need.

Your Internal Communications are Content Marketing

In fact, your internal and external communications should share playbooks. That's because your internal communications are content marketing. Or at least, they should be.

Given the enormous volume of communications we receive within and outside work, you definitely want your business to be on your employees' "Stuff That Matters" list. As long as the employee receiving the communication can easily see the relevance to their specific role and responsibilities, internal communications are shown to have a positive effect on employee engagement—in other words, helping them buy in. A focus on relevance will also cut the volume of communications down to a more manageable number.



The best way to underline relevance and gain buy-in: visuals

Subject matter and messaging drive the value and relevance of your communications, but your strategy shouldn't ignore the content's presentation.

Including relevant visuals in your content shows that you...

- Value the message you're distributing enough to make it look intriguing and professional
- Respect your audience's time and realize that effective visuals (charts, graphs, icons, photos, illustrations) communicate your message more efficiently, saving them comprehension time

Using visuals in your internal communications content might seem like a tall order, especially for small teams. Working with a content partner can help get things moving faster and augment your team's skill set, all while saving you time to focus on your #1 priority—your people. You want to tell your organization's story and engage employees around your mission.

An external design agency can be the expert coach you bring in to help take your team all the way to the championship.

Like every other part of your company, effective internal communication requires strategy. Treating your internal communications like content marketing will help you engage your employees with relevant, actionable information.



CASE STUDY:

Franchisee information deck

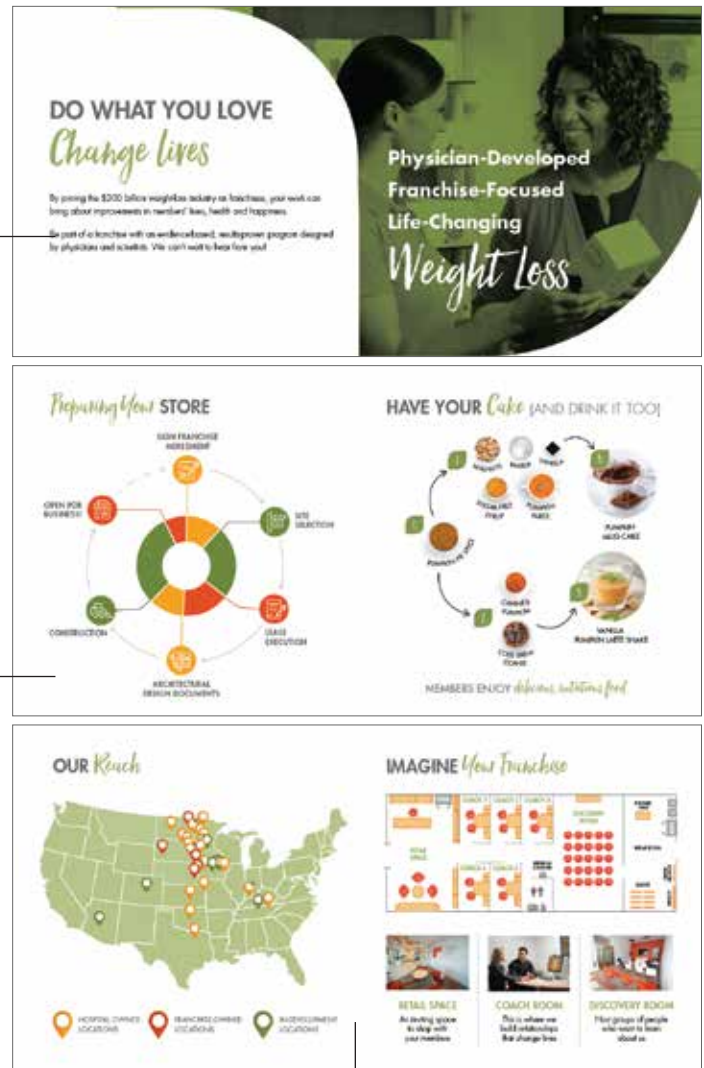
Engage your employees like you engage your clients.

This piece illustrates what treating internal communication like content marketing looks like, addressing employees with a particular agenda and action points. It's informative, visually striking, and appeals to reader's interests like any good advertisement should.

Full graphic [here](#).

Target your employees as a distinct content marketing audience

Visualize multi-step processes to turn complex into simple



Provide information that matters to your internal team

DIY DRILLS

1. What could your internal communications learn from your organization's content marketing strategy?
2. What role do visuals play in your internal communications?

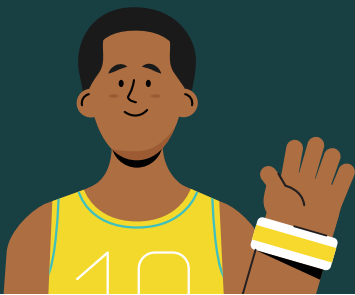


Ready for the big leagues?

We'd love to talk more with you about crafting your all-star
internal communications playbook.



**Book an internal
communications strategy call**
with the Lemonly Team



BOOK A CALL

