

# Internal communications: integral part of business

 By [Zimkhitha Mqutheni](#)

12 Nov 2012

Most businesses focus more on their external communication strategies forgetting that the main drivers of their brand are its employees. Employees can play a major role in acting as ambassadors of the organisation through an internal communications plan. Involved, valued employees are much happier at their work environment.

A company that has done a great job since its inception is SAS, which lead to it being part of the Top 100 Best Companies to work for in the world. An article published by [simply-communicate.com](#) shows how SAS has managed to get it right: "SAS often adds an element of humor into its internal communication. The company recently celebrated "Talk Like a Pirate Day" and "Pi Day" (14 March). To further humanise its employee communications, daily polls and quizzes are a significant route taken by Becky Graebe (internal communications manager) and her team to get employees engaged and participating in the dialogue." This is just a tip of the ice berg.

To build such a strong organisation with happy staff members, the Corporate Communications Department along with the Human Resources Department can build stronger relations in ensuring that staff engagements with the right programmes are done. An internal communications plan does not have to be expensive, compared to the external communication plan which looks at the perceived views of the external stakeholders like the clients, suppliers, investors etc.

## Applying the inside-out approach

Applying the inside-out approach gives organisations the opportunity to understand what their most valued resources need to do their job and that result in the improved customer satisfaction. Companies only realise the importance of internal communications when they have a public relations crisis on their hands.

With the Lonmin Mines debacle for instance, management failed to engage staff when they had the opportunity; hence the strike resulted in approximately 34 deaths, leaving 34 families without breadwinners. The inside-out approach should be looked at not only when there is a crisis but right from inception. That gives employees confidence that they are taken seriously and their contribution towards the organisation is valued.

## Making the environment bearable

Speaking of the inside-out-approach, that is what SA Roadlink Bus Company tried during its never-ending bad publicity. "In terms of marketing, we are currently restructuring and focusing on internal communication strategies to strengthen our brand equity from an inside-out approach," Lumka Oliphant, the then spokesperson said with the aim to facilitate a better strategy to get the company back on the good books of its customers by starting with the staff.

Unfortunately, the strategy did not work well at SA Roadlink as it was summoned by the Western Cape Provincial MEC for Transport and Public Works, Robin Carlisle and MEC Dan Plato to discuss the SA Roadlink's plan of commitment to passenger safety. This was due to many road accidents that took place.

An internal communication strategy is not a solution for all problems but it does make the environment bearable for employees.

## ABOUT ZIMKHITHA MQUTHENI

Zimkhitha Mqutheni is the MD of Ukhanyiso Communications, a communications agency that focuses on assisting clients with cutting edge communications solutions and developing internal and external communication strategies and plans. Follow [@ZimkhithaM](#) on Twitter.

- Employees - brand champions of organisations - 21 Nov 2012
- Internal communications: integral part of business - 12 Nov 2012

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>