

# Are you a third generation communicator?

 By [Daniel Munslow](#)

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An increasing amount of pressure is being placed on internal communication specialists in large organisations, as financial decision makers and business leaders seek to understand the tangible business benefits of the discipline and how it is delivering on and contributing to business priorities.

In order to achieve this coveted place at the table, where communicators have reporting lines into C-suite executives, it is important that communication shifts from a largely tactical and operational role to a more strategic one. This entails a fundamental mind shift as to what internal communication does, and can do, to assist organisations enhance their brand equity.

Communicators globally are visibly striving to be third generation communicators, which positions them as business partners and key counsellors to the business on all matters that affect employee engagement and consequently reputation management.

So what does it mean to be a third generation communicator? Ask yourself if you follow these steps:

1. Are you part of key business decisions from the time they are made, in order to ensure you are able to provide sufficient business support on all aspects and initiatives? This is a key area for communicators to guard, as forming part of decision-making processes means they can offer better services and counsel to leaders during the internal implementation of any projects.
2. Do you have research to prove the efficiency and effectiveness of your communication? Increasingly, business leaders are demanding to see the benefits previous initiatives have delivered to the business, before releasing additional budget for future projects. Measurement must be conducted across all three key areas: process, content, and impact. Impact measures recall and total understanding of messages, thereby ensuring communication has shifted opinions and behaviours.
3. Do you have a documented three-year internal communication strategy and policy?
4. Is your internal communication department composed of generalists or specialists?
5. Do you train and ensure the delivery of effective line management communication and provide tools for face-to-face communication, beyond town hall meetings?
6. Is your internal communication aligned with best-practice governance and *King Report III*?
7. Are your leaders/managers/executives involved in the approval processes of your internal communication strategies?
8. In decentralised businesses, are you able to manage the consistency of information flow and relevance, without duplications and ensuring audience relevance?
9. Are your audiences segmented per message, or do you adopt an internal spray and pray approach?
10. Do you form part of decisions around external communication and brand and form part of business strategy discussions to help shape communication?

Analysing these questions will illustrate the importance of and direction to position internal communication as a non-negotiable business pillar within any organisation. The foundation, however, remains to ensure that communication speaks a business language to deliver continuously on strategic priorities; and is able to provide empirical evidence as to the return provided by communication.

It is with these questions addressed that many companies today are repositioning strategic internal communication and rising to the role of third generation communicators.

## ABOUT DANIEL MUNSLOW

Daniel Munslow is the owner and founder of MDC Consulting and former director on the International Association of Business Communicators' International Executive Board. He has 16 years' experience in business communication consulting. He has worked across Africa, as well as in the Middle East, the US, Europe, and AsiaPac.

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