

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR

Communicating & Engaging With Frontline Teams



The benefits of effective communication cannot be overstated. In this guide we offer actionable tips on how to communicate effectively and enhance employee engagement with your deskless teams.

Good Morning, Jake Khan

Time Clock Quick Task Schedule Directory

Hillary Jones » Sarah Rao 3 hr

Say Hi to Samanta Hass who joined our family 🥳🥳🥳

56 21 comments

Andrew Saeed Welcome Sarah! Good luck 🍀 3 hours Unlike Reply 3

Add Users Add Admins Send an Update Create Task Go to Chat Create an Event Create a Form

Mobile app engagement

Daily Activity

- am Jake Khan and 8 others clocked in
- 8:03 am Hillary Jones completed a task
- 8:03 am Mira Ali submitted an expenses report

4 users are waiting for your approval to join the app

6 users made an entry to the Form: Uniform Order

12 tasks are due to tomorrow

Your cheat sheet

- 01 Walk a mile in your employee's shoes before you start

- 02 We are creatures of habit, build communication habits

- 03 Get the message across with balanced communication

- 04 Be mindful of frequency and dose

- 05 Don't email blast, be targeted

- 06 A picture is worth a thousand words. What about a GIF? Be visual

- 07 Harness humor and make your team smile

- 08 Make it easy for the team to be heard

- 09 Measure and improve to master what you do

- 10 Choose the right tool for the job - consider the medium

01

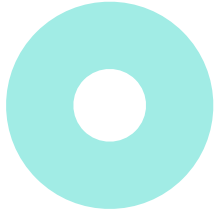
Walk A Mile In Your Employee's Shoes Before You Start

Like with any good communication plan – don't skip the part where you really try to understand your audience. What do they care about? What drives them? What would be of interest to them?

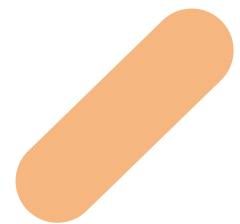
Consider the following:

- What do your front line employees care about?
- What drives them?
- What do they appreciate?
- What does their day to day look like?
- When is the most efficient time to communicate with them?





To ensure resonance and encourage ongoing channel adoption, tailor messages based on employees' motivations, interests and experience – and ensure the timing is relevant.



Here are a few tips from our experience



Really see your employees, their routines, motivations and habits. Employees will engage more when content shared is relevant for them.

01 Front line employees usually wish to be more connected and kept up-to-date.

02 Often the majority of communication they get is 'transactional' and not so much personal or engaging.

03 They really appreciate rank, when senior leadership addresses them, they listen - though it usually doesn't happen often.

04 They are busy most of the time, so it's usually best to get their attention before they show up for work, during lunch or in central places they often visit (like the cafeteria or your messaging board).

05 They have limited ways, if at all, to share their thoughts and feedback.



02 We Are Creatures of Habit – Build Communication Habits

We are creatures of habits, and that means a lot when it comes to efficient communication. Establishing strong habits and a stable routine around communication can really make all the difference.

When we reflect on habits, we do so both from the communicator stand point, and from a communication consumer standpoint:

As a creator, use ‘boiler plates’:

Structure a template for your monthly newsletter, have a format for sharing an announcement on the ‘employee of the month’ or set up recurring town hall meetings every first Monday of the month with the team. In all cases, having a structured process and format will make it easier for you to put things together and will ensure you maintain a certain drumbeat for your team.

As a consumer, make it easy for me to know what to expect, when and where. Just like we all know how the morning news edition looks like and when it’ll be broadcasted, your team should have a clear vision of your core communication activities. The daily hurdles, the monthly newsletters, the quarterly meetings, etc.

communication habits from our customers



Create the routines and habits that will make it easy for you and your team to have efficient communication.

- 01 Daily updates at the team level (face to face, bulletin boards)

- 02 Monthly newsletter (digital or printed)

- 03 Employee of the month announcements (hang a board on the wall, email blasts)

- 04 Periodical company wide meetings (usually at the C-Level)

- 05 Yearly event planning

- 06 Quarterly 'Ask the CEO' (formats differ: face to face, a physical question box, or via a special email)

- 07 Monthly safety meetings

- 08 Monthly birthday and anniversary announcements



03 Get the Message Across with Balanced Communication

When talking to front-line employees, we often find that the majority of the communication they get is transactional; as in, it's related to operations, things they should do, protocols, or even COVID19. By 'balanced communication' we mean to say that we should maintain a healthy footing between transactional communication and non-transactional communication.

If you are wondering what the key difference is between transactional and non-transactional communication is, it is centered around the goal.

Transactional communication usually has a business purpose behind it: make us more weary to keep a safe work environment, getting us to take action, etc.

Non-transactional communication is all about getting us connected, appreciative, engaged. As a user, it is the non-transactional communication that I mostly relate to, and if we have a healthy balance between the two, it makes me much more tuned in to the transactional communication you send my way.

examples for non-transactional communication



People respond well to personal, non-transactional communication, and this is important for us as managers to create a sense of belonging, but also to ensure that when transactional communication comes across, it is well received.

01 The human aspect

Personal stories of our team such as 'meet John, our production line manager', or celebrating with our team: 'Jessie is celebrating her 20th anniversary with us!'

04 Non work related achievements

Tell the team about Ron winning a chef competition.

02 Team recognition

Communicating and appreciating excellence, could be in the form of 'employee of the month', could be through an awards system, could be by saying Kudos on a job well done and echoing it to the bigger team.

05 Our customers' happiness

Allow your team to be proud - share the letter you got from a thankful patient, the great feedback or review a customer gave us.

03 Sense of togetherness

Share an image from a community event the team took part in or an image of the Christmas tree at the front entrance, something we can all relate to.

06 Make them smile

We dedicated an entire section to this subject, so stay tuned!

04 Be Mindful of Frequency and Dose

The goal here is to create a steady rhythm in your communication without becoming overwhelming. And there are two key factors you want to take into account: (1) frequency of communication, (2) and the dose.

What is the right frequency and dose for you?

Well, unlike our other tips, this one's for you to find out, as this differs dramatically from one organization to the next and depends a lot on the content you are communicating.

As a rule of thumb, small micro doses are always more digestible and friendly for the user. For example, if you'd like to launch a campaign about your company values - release a single core value every week, rather than releasing it all in one gulp.

For those of you that use an internal communication app, we can shed some light on the best practices we have learned over the years: a good balance for push notifications is usually 3-4 push notifications a week. Anything beyond that, we recommend sending silent updates that users can see in their feed once they log in.

Tip No.4

People respond well to personal, non-transactional communication, and this is important for us as managers to create a sense of belonging, but also to ensure that when transactional communication comes across, it is well received.

05 Don't Email Blast Your Team, Be Targeted

All of us receive many emails on a daily basis, and they're almost always not relevant whatsoever, but we're on a mailing list so it's going to find its way to us. And we are all guilty of doing the same to others. Effective communication starts with being targeted, i.e. the right message to the right audience.

With common communication tools that is not always easy to achieve, but there are few simple tricks that can help:

- Manage email lists, so we can use the right email list when relevant
- Manage text lists, for shorter types of communication
- Chat groups, usually less official but just as effective
- Gathering and forums, we can take advantage of those regular meetings to reach our audience

Tailor the message to your audience, work on establishing an infrastructure that makes it easy for you to communicate deliberately and selectively and you'll dramatically improve the efficiency of your communication. The more relevant the communication is, the more engaged your team becomes. This is one place where an internal communication app beats all others. You can easily segment your organization by regions, locations, positions, departments, or in any shape or form, and you can reach every single member of your team.

Tip No.5

Prioritize targeted communication where possible. Do the preliminary work to provide yourself with an easy gateway for targeted communication.

06 A Picture is Worth a 1,000 Words. What About a GIF?

Undoubtedly, visual communication works. The more visual you can be, the better – we read much faster with our eyes than we do with our minds.

So how can you be visual?

- Printed flyers – use bold colors that stand out in their environment.
- If you have digital screens, use videos and images.
- Start your next email with a GIF or meme, people don't expect it but they respond well to it.

Visual communication can also include infographics, maps, flow charts, visual reports, presentations, memes, pictures, posters, brochures and more.

Remember that today, generating visual content is not as difficult as it was. You don't have to turn to a marketing team to create a compelling visual content.

Tip No.6

Visual communication is very intuitive, but is often overlooked. Test yourself and look back at your last email and printed communication to the team. How much of it was visual?

07 Harness Humor and Make Your Team Smile.

We have all heard about medical clowns that are used to brighten spirits in the hospital – for patients and workers alike. Well, they work – when we laugh, we feel better and we heal better. That also applies to the way we communicate. The more positive we are, the more willing we are to listen, and the more efficient our communication becomes.

But there is more to it. When we are smiling or happy, our brain releases chemicals that make us more at ease and marks our experience as a positive one, making us want more of it. Or in simple terms – if we are able to make our team smile, they are more likely to come back, looking for more, which is ideal for us as communication managers.

So how can you make your team smile and feel good?

Often we preserve a tone of voice that is very official when communicating to our team, especially with deskless employees. Don't be afraid to have an informal tone of voice at times.

Find sources of inspiration and get creative – You can use funny memes, shoot a video of a senior leader with a funny hat, or just launch a 'cat competition' in your organization. We also invite you to subscribe to our 'Creative & Effective Communication' email list where we share examples of creative ideas from internal communication managers around the world.

Tip No.7

Think a bit differently in your communication, modifying the tone of voice to be more engaging, human and positive.

08 Make It Easy For The Team To Be Heard

Keep things controlled and simple, but put in place the channels and mechanisms that let your team communicate with you and provide feedback.

Best practices usually include:

- A physical suggestion box
- Clear channels to address HR (emails, dedicated lines)
- Gathering with senior leadership

A survey or poll is a great way to uncover and understand how your employees are feeling. Don't just wait around for an exit interview, instead, ask for feedback on a regular basis. Bi-weekly or monthly (once a quarter) can help you achieve results.

Tip No.8

Don't overlook the importance of getting feedback from your team, while making sure it is healthy feedback, conveyed via controlled channels.

09 Measure and Improve to Master What You Do

Like with anything in life, the more we can measure, the more we can understand and the better we can become.

While simple in principle, living up to this idea is not an easy task. The classical measurements usually applied to traditional communication means would usually evolve around survey scores, email open rates and gut feeling.

This is one more area where we recommend taking advantage of an internal communication app, as it allows you to easily understand metrics like

- How many people got this message?
- How many employees engaged with your message (liked, commented or replied)?
- How many survey or poll results did you gain?
- What was the most engaging piece of communication we had this year?

Tip No.9

You must measure what you can so you can improve over time. Ask yourself what tools in your possession can help you evaluate the efficiency of your communication?

10

Choose the Right Tool for the Job – Consider the Medium

Depending on what you wish to communicate, consider the right medium for the task. It might also be helpful to map the mediums at your disposal so you have a 'mental map' of the tools in your possession.

We mapped out some of the popular communication mediums often available to deskless teams:

- Face to face meetings
- Company/department gatherings
- Bulletin boards
- Emails
- Digital billboards
- Newsletters (printed or digital)
- Texts, chat groups, Facebook groups, etc.
- Intranet
- Internal communication app

Tip No.10

You must always consider the right tool for the job, and remember that sometimes there could be more than one.

Wrapping Up

Effective internal communication and employee engagement are two of the biggest challenges managers face, and there is no one way to do it right. Getting started with any of the tips above can have a positive impact on your organization – from improved performance and productivity, to lower employee turnover. But mastering them all can really take your business to the next level.

While many of the principles we shared can apply to bulletin boards, emails and even face to face gatherings, using an internal communication app is the easiest way to reach 100% of your workforce in real-time, while on-the-go.

With your own internal communication app, you can easily foster communication habits, balance between ‘formal’ and ‘soft’ communication, moderate the frequency and dose, and target the most relevant audiences. There is no better way to create visual, engaging content and to measure the impact of your communication.

connecteam

Communicate, manage, and train your frontline employees better with an **all-in-one** company app

Learn how at [Connecteam.com](https://connecteam.com)

