

Creating a Stellar
**Internal Communications
Program**

About Our Speakers



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Objectives

- » Learn how to build a sustainable internal communications program
- » Understand how conducting an audit can focus and guide your communications efforts
- » Discover how to help the most important communicators in your organizations - your managers - inform and connect with their staffs
- » Learn how executive buy-in and support is critical to the success of an internal communications program

Agenda

- » Definitions of internal communications
- » Importance of internal communications
- » Goal of internal communications
- » Why effective communication is so difficult (especially in healthcare)
- » What we're seeing: results from dozens of IC audits
- » Elements of a successful, sustainable IC program
- » Internal communications: a CEOs perspective

What is internal communication?

Communication that exists within a company between and among employees.

What is GOOD internal comms?

Good internal communication builds and maintains a two-way relationship between employer and employee.

It is a building block for organizational culture and provides a catalyst for employee engagement.

Internal communication is NOT...

- » What you say (it's what they hear)
- » Disseminating information
- » Episodic
- » Message du jour
- » The responsibility of one department
- » Always top-down
- » About the tools
- » Rocket science

Poll Question

What priority does your organization put on internal communications?

- » Number 1
- » Top 3
- » Top 10
- » It's not on the list
- » Don't know

Why is IC important?

- » Organizations that manage change effectively and that have effective communications are 2.5 times as likely to outperform their peers in financial performance. (Towers Watson)
- » 65% of employees say the way their employer communicates with them impacts job satisfaction. (Gallup)
- » “Employee and patient satisfaction go hand-in-hand. Studies from hospitals that use inpatient and employee satisfaction surveys find over and over again...that hospitals that do well in patient satisfaction also do well in employee satisfaction.” (Press Ganey)

“If I could focus on just one thing this year, it would be internal communications.”

2014 Marcom White Paper, Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock

Why is IC important?

- » Healthcare is undergoing its most transformative era.
- » During times of change, we want as much information as possible.
- » Employees are apprehensive about the changes they are experiencing.
- » They are hungry for timely, consistent, relevant information.

Never has internal communication been as relevant and urgently needed as today

Why is it so hard in healthcare?

- » We're not making widgets, we're saving lives
- » 24/7/365 environment
- » Bedside caregivers are busy taking care of patients
- » Wide variety of:
 - Job responsibilities
 - Education levels
 - Languages/ethnic backgrounds
 - Ages
 - Technical savvy



What We're seeing?

Results from Dozens of Internal Communication Audits


How Employees Feel

- » Proud of the work they do
- » Feel like they're making a difference
- » Care about their co-workers
- » Want to understand the company's vision
- » Want to contribute to important decisions that affect their jobs
- » Are nervous about the future
- » Want to know if they're on the right train

How Employees Feel About Communication

- » Information overload but hungry for the “right” information
- » Messages are too complex
- » Too many messages from too many people
- » Directors and managers generally feel connected; it falls apart after that
- » Bedside caregivers and off-shift employees are the least informed/engaged

What Employees Want to Hear

- » You are on the right train
 - » Big picture, not every little detail
 - » Clear, consistent information
 - » The “why” behind decisions and initiatives
 - » Relevant to the work they do
 - » Timely
 - » For goodness sake, tell us some good stuff, too
- 

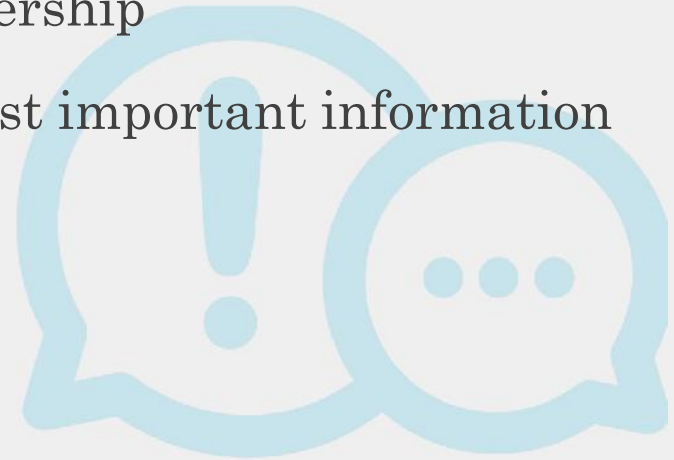
Poll Question

What do employees say is the *most preferred* method of communication?

- » Email
- » Newsletter
- » Face-to-face from my manager
- » Rumor/word of mouth
- » Intranet
- » Bulletin board/posters
- » Town hall meetings with senior leadership
- » Videos

How Employees Want to Hear It

- » Face-to-face communication from managers is most preferred
- » Email is effective, but it's not a catch-all
- » No one method of communication meets everyone's needs
- » Want to see and hear from senior leadership
- » Want a few key places to go for the most important information
- » Want to hear some good news, too
- » Crave two-way communication



Elements of a Stellar IC Program

- » Start with a goal and know what are you trying to accomplish
- » Commit to telling employees first
- » Over communicate. Where there is a void, rumors become reality
- » Articulate your mission, vision
- » Pick your strategies
- » Make the complex, simple
- » Celebrate wins

Elements of a Stellar IC Program

- » Meet employees where they want to be reached
 - So find out where that is
- » Written communication is a tool, not a replacement for face-to-face
- » Recognize that managers are always the most trusted source of information
 - Give them the tools they need to communicate the right messages
- » Good communication skills must be taught
 - Train your managers
- » Build a team

“Today, the trend is for Communications and Marketing departments to empower a team of communications professionals to work with operations and human resources to develop strategic employee communications programs aligned with an organization’s mission, vision and values.”

2014 Marcom White Paper, Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock

Getting Started

- » 90% of communication is listening
- » Don't ASSUME you know what your employees want
- » Ask them:
 - Survey
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups



MedStar Harbor
Hospital

Case Study

Lessons Learned from a Hospital President

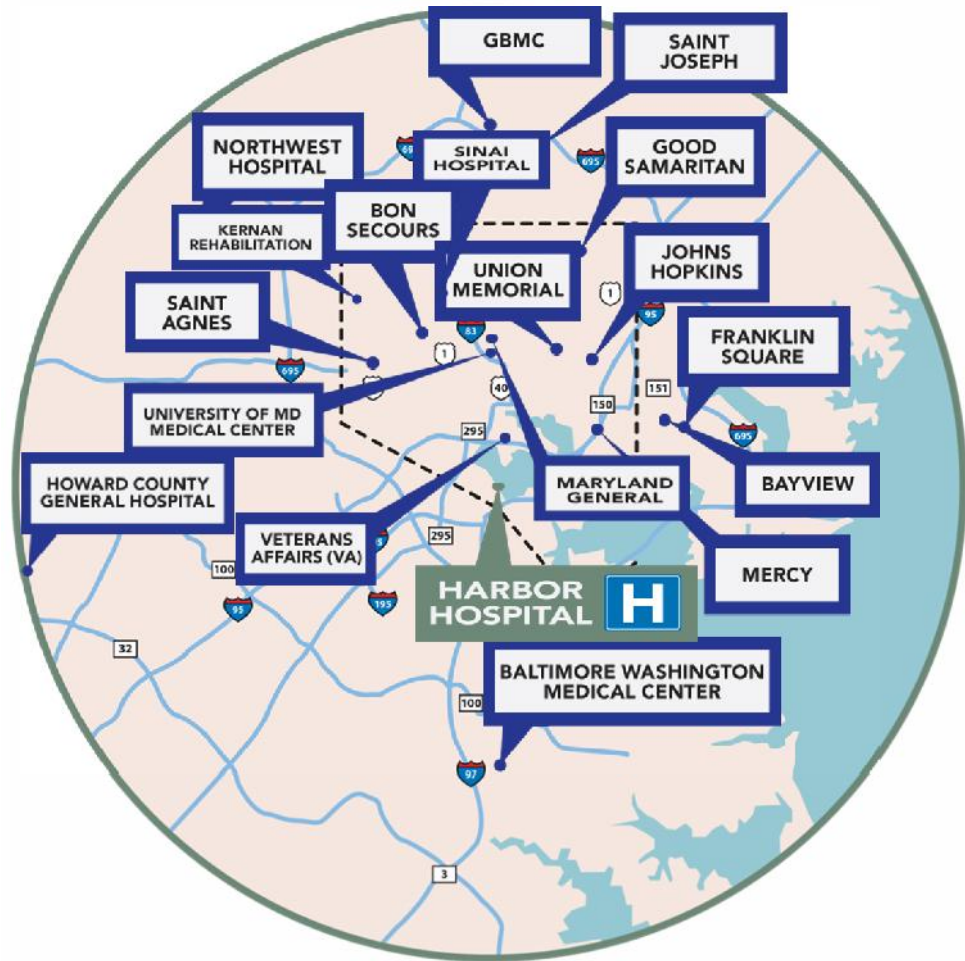
About MedStar Harbor Hospital

- 180-bed hospital located in Baltimore City
- 337 affiliated physicians
- 1,250 associates
- 190,000 patient encounters annually
- Part of MedStar Health—a 10-hospital system
- MedStar Health serves a half-million patients annually



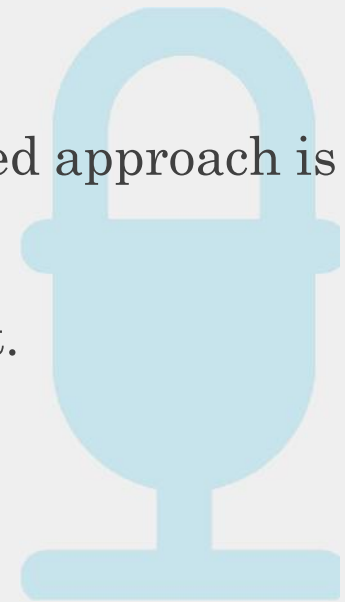
Small Community Hospital; Large Competitive Market

- » A highly competitive environment
- » There are 18 hospitals within a 15 miles radius of MedStar Harbor
- » Several other area hospitals competing for patients as well as physicians and associates



Philosophy on Communication

- » I consider myself the Chief Communicator for the hospital.
- » It is important to have a structure in place which informs and engages associates; physicians; donors; patients; the communities we serve.
- » Consistent, clear messaging, using a multi-layered approach is important in a large organization.
- » Challenging times in healthcare—be transparent.



Importance of Rounding

- » I believe in deliberate, planned and purposeful rounding.
- » I round on every unit on a nearly daily basis.
- » By putting forth a concerted effort, I'm showing associates I am accessible to them and available to answer any questions they have on the spot.

Role of Communication-the Key is Accountability

Accountability means that you personally “own” your role and success within the organization.

- » For leaders –communicate information from weekly *Manager’s Minute* with staff; attend monthly Leadership and Patient Experience meetings; hold daily huddles and weekly meetings.
- » For associates—I attend the New Associate Orientation each month. I go over the three W’s with all new associates on their very first day.
 - What I believe
 - What I expect
 - What they can expect

Role of Communication-the Key is Accountability

- » *Pullin Us Together*—Monthly column highlighting critical information about what's happening at the hospital and throughout the system.
- » Quarterly Town Hall meetings at which attendance is expected of all associates.



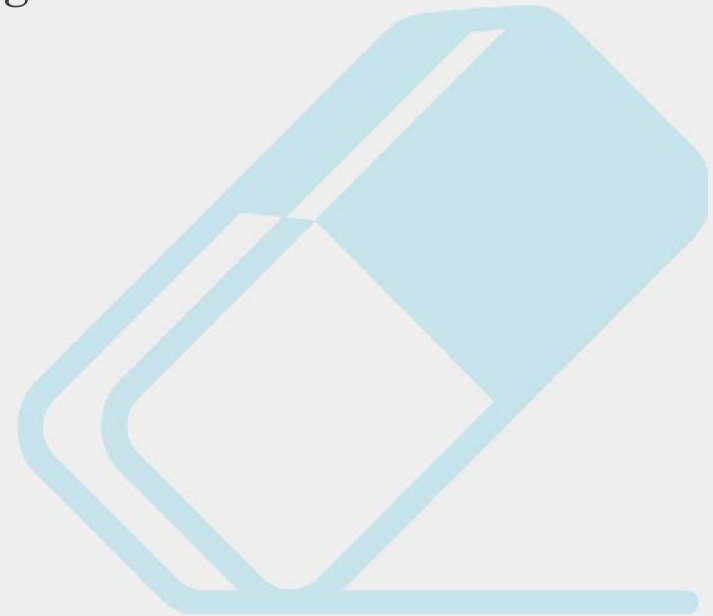
Results of Audit

There were two key recommendations from the internal communications assessment:

1. Create one central place where associates can find important information they need.
2. Arm manager's with the tools they need to communicate verbally to their staffs on a regular basis and hold them accountable for making sure that happens.

Changes We Made

- » Our intranet, StarPort was designated the central hub for information.
- » Leaders are expected to use *Manager's Minute*, huddles and weekly meetings when communicating with their staff.



Key Take-Aways

- » Ask your employees how they prefer communications.
- » Managers are the most important communicators in your organization, arm them with the tools they need.
- » Make the complex, simple and be consistent.
- » Find a few places to put the most important information.

