



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

**Internal
Communications
Toolkit**

Practical
communication
and engagement
for leaders

staff.salford.ac.uk/internalcomms

“Leaders and managers do not have a choice whether to communicate or not. They only have a choice about how much to manage what they communicate.”

Ed Schein, Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sloan School of Management.

Communication is critical. And it starts with you.

As soon as you set foot in the workplace you begin communicating – the way you talk, move your body, listen and interact with your colleagues.

As a leader of people it's vital that you think carefully about the way you communicate with your team.

This toolkit has been designed specifically for you – to help you take positive action to improve communications with your teams. It will provide a comprehensive package of tools to support you and hopefully, you will find it of value.

Inside, you'll find an array of resources and templates to help in two-way communication with colleagues and in strengthening your communications competencies.

Advice and support:

If at any stage, you'd like to discuss your plans and ideas with the Internal Communications team, then please contact:

Catherine Cairncross
Head of Internal Communications
ext 52892

Caroline Boyd
Internal Communications Officer
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Jane Howard
Internal Communications Officer
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or email:
internalcomms-uos@salford.ac.uk

All about Employee Engagement

Your team see you as their communication channel of choice, especially in times of change.

The extent of their engagement depends on you. Effective communication is one of the fundamental drivers in employee engagement.

Be the change you want to see -

There's nothing more demotivating for employees than to see leaders say one thing and do another. So role model the organisation's values and behaviours and be the change you want to see elsewhere.

The delivery of the Strategic Plan is crucial to the success of any organisation and it is important that you make this relevant to your teams; bridging the gap between the corporate message and 'What does this mean for us?' Always ask yourself, 'How can I bring this message to life in a way that's meaningful for my team?'

Cut through the noise - with a 2,000 plus organisation all crying out to be heard, people often complain of information overload, so plan thoroughly, choose maybe four or five points you want to

address and communicate those succinctly.

Once you've got those clear in your head, keep reinforcing the message. Remember the old adage: "tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them and then tell them again."

Make sure it's two-way communication – have an open door policy, walk the floor, eat in the canteen, get out and about and remember to stop and listen. This is particularly important during times of change.

Always act on feedback and if one of your team has done something well, go out there and tell them.

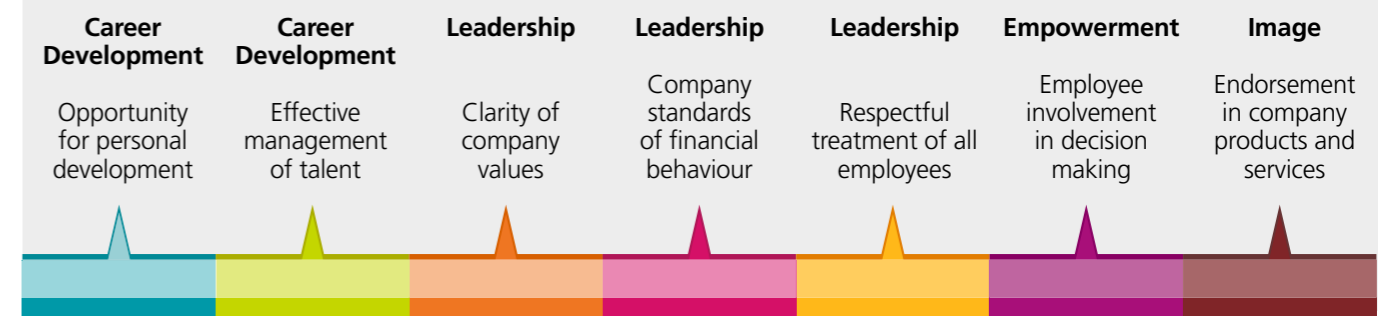
There's nothing better than a simple 'thank you' for a job well done and why not share your team's successes with the rest of the organisation? You might bring in cakes or send a small personalised postcard – it really is the simple things that count.

Not everyone's a born communicator, but the most important thing is to be genuine. That's when you're at your most powerful so remember what works for you.



Always act on feedback and if one of your team has done something well, go out there and tell them. There's nothing better than a simple 'thank you' for a job well done.

Core factors influencing employee engagement



When change is happening, people naturally go through a series of responses. First, they may deny the change, then actively resist it. Next they explore it and finally they commit to it. Watch out for tell tale signs of where members of your team are on that change curve. Put yourself in their shoes and try and remember that each person may be dealing with a number of other challenges in their life.

Set the context and make time to deliver any important news. Your team look to you as a leader, so 'own' the decision and involve everyone by discussing how you will work on it together. Listen and acknowledge concerns, but stay focused on your goal.

And in the middle of any change programme, celebrate the quick wins and praise those involved.

When one project's come to an end, draw a line under it and celebrate your successes together.

Everyone brings something different to the table and we've highlighted some core issues which may impact on employee engagement (see diagram above). Try to think about whether you are addressing these, as you plan your communications.

"... an engaged employee understands what to do to help her company succeed, she feels emotionally connected to the organisation and its leaders, and she is willing to put that knowledge and emotion into action to improve performance, her own and the organisation's." Julie Gebauer "Closing the Engagement Gap"

The importance of face-to-face communications

A key part of engaging employees is to involve them by regular, two-way, face-to-face communications.

With 55 per cent of meaning conveyed through facial expressions, 38 per cent through the way something is said and just seven per cent through words themselves, face-to-face communication is the University's most powerful means to motivate colleagues and engage them with our Strategic Plan. Your monthly Talk Time bulletin can help you with this.

Planning is essential

What you have to say is important, so before you communicate anything always take a few moments to plan and prepare. Make sure you are clear about your purpose.

There are three essentials you need to consider:

- **What do you need your audience to know?**
- **What do you want them to do?**
- **How do you want them to feel afterwards?**

Share your ideas with other managers to ensure consistency, even if it's no more than sharing your communication materials to make sure you are singing from the same hymn sheet. Where the same news is being conveyed elsewhere in the University, try to schedule events concurrently to avoid the danger of inaccurate information getting out.

When you invite people to a briefing, make it clear what the benefits of attending are, so they will know what's expected.

Set the scene - Have you thought about how many people will turn up? Is the room adequate for that number and does it provide a pleasant environment? Not too hot, not too cold, no distractions outside the room.

Have you tested any equipment/props you may need?

Think about the format - Is it a formal presentation with slides or would a round table event be more appropriate for a more interactive style presentation? Get your timing right – 27 minutes is about the optimum length for people to be able to retain key messages. If you can break this up to kick-start discussions, so much the better.

Tone is important - Vary your tone and speed of delivery to give light and shade to your communications. Newsreaders are a great source of inspiration and remember to start with a bang and finish with a flourish – it's the middle where people sometimes 'check out'.

Watch your body language - Your words only account for about seven to ten per cent of communication. The rest comes from the way you say it. So try to match your body language to your message. For example, don't say you are keen to hear people's views as they are important, while looking like you'd rather they went away. Make sure you give plenty of eye contact and use open gestures. Don't stand while others sit.

Tailor your talk to your audience - Tailoring what you say and how you say it will help others to understand it better. Remember not everyone has the same level of knowledge as you. So talk their language, avoid abbreviations and jargon.

Choose your words carefully - Words mean different things to different people so it's vitally important to make sure others are completely clear on what you mean. Rather than say "It's a priority", tell it straight and say, "We need the reports by next Friday."

Pictures paint a thousand words, so try to use words that paint a picture in people's minds.

Remember - There's a host of new technologies to help you communicate, but if you think about it, how do you want to find out about the important stuff. When it matters, face-to-face still tops the list.



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Creating a communications plan

A good communications plan doesn't have to be complicated, but time spent planning it is time well spent

Any strategy should consider the following:

- What message do you want to convey?
- Who is your audience and what do you want them to know, feel or do?
- How to deliver your message?

A sample communication plan will also consider the following elements:

Background, Goals, Objectives, Audience, Key Messages, Any challenges, Approach, Criteria for measuring the success.

Background: Start with putting a bit of context around the plan. Any analysis (SWOT, or PEST) of where we are now will help.

“In this way your plan will be recognised not as an ‘add-on’, but something fundamental to achieving our overall strategy.”

Determine your goal: Your strategy needs a goal and your goal should answer the question ‘What do you want your team to look like in the future?’ Your plan should track back to the University’s Vision and Strategic Plan and your communications plan should help deliver these strategic goals.

In this way your plan will be recognised not as an “add-on”, but something fundamental to achieving our overall strategy.

Here’s an example of a goal: “To ensure that everyone in the team has the right level of information to enable them to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.”

Define your objectives: Your objectives will differ from your goal because they will be more specific and measurable. Here’s an example:

“To ensure that every colleague within a team has a face to face meeting with their line manager at least once a month.”

Audience: In this section, you should give a detailed description of your main audiences – both external and internal.

These might include colleagues, partner agencies, research funding bodies, policymakers and the media, for example.

Knowing whether employees are full or part-time, based on-site or off, office-based or mobile will really help.

Are they mostly academics or will your message need to go to Professional Services colleagues as well?

What do they know already?

Key messages: These don’t need to be complicated. Too many messages and you won’t have focus. If your messages are a paragraph each, you will not be effective. Writing your messages down makes sure they are short, concise, and understandable. Make sure they are relevant for your audience. Keep it simple!

Any challenges: Take account of any risk implications and plan your response.

Approach: Think about the different channels you may wish to use for your communications.

There is more information on this in the next section. Sometimes, a blanket broadcast is advised – other times, more targeted communications are appropriate.

Your budget will also play a role here. Set out a timetable – Excel or Microsoft Project are great for this – of all communications activity to ensure you keep to deadlines and you can identify any overlaps or resource needs at particular times.

Criteria for success: This is the most important bit. What does success look like? Are there any quantifiable ways you can analyse this, or can you identify a clear shift in attitude amongst colleagues? Think about the tools you will use for evaluation.

Your plan should track back to the University’s Vision and Strategic Plan

Choosing the right communication channel

Once you've got your strategy and action plan in place, you can now consider some of the communications channels to use.

You need to think about whether a face-to-face or at-a-distance approach is best and consider using a combination of channels to convey the same message and really get it across.

The diagram below highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of channels available at the University.

Channel	Advantages	Potential downsides	Think about
Team meetings/Face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can make communication personal and relevant to the team involved Opportunity for discussion, feedback, questioning and ideas Good line manager can facilitate a lively and interactive session Can help build understanding and engagement Supported by Talk Time – the monthly update of key messages provided by Internal Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time commitment for both manager and audience Beware of content overload: other channels are more effective for information delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the best possible use of this time – it's valuable Training line managers
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can reach mass audiences quickly Cost effective, simple to use Consistent and controlled message Reaches the recipient directly Good for information, awareness or instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not everyone may have access Impersonal and open to misinterpretation Can result quickly in information overload Can't always tell if messages have been read Doesn't generate dialogue or discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has access to the distribution lists Using the subject box clearly to get across your key message Keeping it short and simple Use headings and bullet points to break up text
US News Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches a wide audience, so good for university-wide Professionally written Can be visually appealing Ideal for 'good news' stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleagues without PCs may not have access Relies on people seeking out information Not suitable for long information pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early submission and advance notice to Internal Comms to ensure it can meet your deadline Do you have an eye-catching photo? Do you have links for more information?
University Website www.salford.ac.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches a wide audience, so good for university-wide and external audiences Professionally written Can be visually appealing Ideal for 'good news' stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not everyone may have access Relies on people seeking out information Not suitable for long information pieces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early submission to Press to ensure it can meet your deadline Contact brand-enquiries@salford.ac.uk for photography advice Do you have links for more information?

Channel	Advantages	Potential downsides	Think about
Multimedia/Video news bulletins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative and entertaining Can show real people 'talking heads' to bring messages to life Consistent, controlled message The Marketing Team can provide video advice and assistance via brand-enquiries@salford.ac.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes time and planning Could have cost implications Some people may feel uncomfortable watching videos in work time Not ideal for non-campus based employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using 'real people' to talk about their experiences and not just senior leaders Could use it as part of a briefing session to stimulate debate? Keep it short and start with a bang and end with a flourish.
Plasma screens and Screensavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative and entertaining Consistent message, professionally managed by Student Life Reach a wide audience Visually appealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only in a few locations Needs time to arrange design Not everyone has access to a PC/screen Can only give a brief message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep it simple as people will only catch the message for a few seconds Needs planning in with Student Comms to ensure it is designed and produced in time.
US Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches everyone in the University Well-respected Even time-pressured colleagues can read in coffee breaks/trains etc Can address feedback Visually appealing Can be read online Editorial Board ensures content addresses real issues Good at reinforcing messages which may already have been conveyed by other means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long lead times, so needs planning in advance Information can date quickly Challenge to make it relevant to all audiences No opportunity to check messages have been understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting potential articles for US Magazine to Internalcomms-uos@salford.ac.uk Keep Internal Comms aware of upcoming events
Noticeboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual and may catch the eye Good for instructions and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information can date quickly Challenge to make it relevant to all audiences No opportunity to check messages have been understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having someone to 'own' the noticeboard Keep Internal Comms aware of upcoming events Can use Marketing team's services to assist with messages and design
Text messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for crisis communication Can update senior managers on important news while on leave Good for reaching remote workers Can direct people to further sources of info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be seen as intrusive Has cost implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you have mobile contact details for all your senior team
Roadshows/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for senior leaders to engage with large audiences face to face Flexible and responsive Can include Q&A session, break out groups and involve people Great opportunity to get feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda you set may not be what the audience wants May be expensive Time consuming for organisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving colleagues in setting the agenda and format and even hosting the event The Events team and the Marketing team may be able to help – involve them early on in the project

In-house newsletters

It's a great idea to have something either digitally or in print to convey information or recognise employees' achievements.

Your Internal Communications business partner is here to help you produce an in-house newsletter for your School.

We can provide on-brand templates which you can use in Word to create a consistent, professional style by simply dropping in text or images.

It's a great idea to have something either digitally or in print to convey information or recognise employees' achievements.

Employee feedback shows that it boosts morale and improves collaborative working.

Think about having a small group of people to make up an editorial panel who can check the content is interesting and reflects the diverse range of projects going on in your area.

Write as if you're talking to someone next door – avoid jargon, acronyms, technical or flowery language. Try to think about your audience when writing and try to be as open and straightforward as you can.

Aim to use short words and as few as possible.

Try to find the people behind the stories. It might be a new process and you are trying to explain that, but find the person who's training colleagues on it and tell it from their side, or the academic who's trialing it and ask them what they think.

People are interested in people and seeing it from someone's point of view can bring it 'alive' for the reader.

Less rather than more is best for news and a short online bulletin may be more manageable.

And finally, photos: in print, a picture of the entire team may be reduced to a few tiny dots. Think about focusing in on a couple of colleagues and capture something more interesting than 'Mary receiving her award' – Mary in the middle of an archaeological dig for which she received her award may have more impact.

The Marketing team can provide advice and assistance in relation to photography if and when required.

So, try to show people in the place where they make things happen – let the photo tell the story.



Click the image to download an overwritable template that opens in Word.

All about Email

There's no doubt email has revolutionised the way we communicate with each other – both at work and in our personal lives.

The downside to email is that it is in some ways way too easy – and the temptation is there to inundate people with emails unnecessarily.

If this is the case, employees can feel they are suffering from 'information overload' and will simply start to delete your email without reading it first.

Think before you send – could you just pick up a phone or meet in person?

Your School Operations Manager will have mailing lists – all School employees, all School academics, all Teaching and Learning staff for example. These are great to target messages to the right groups of people, but be wary of a 'scattergun' approach.

ITS can set up mailing lists for you, which will make any lists easier to maintain and operate.

If you want to email all employees at the University, speak to Caroline or Jane in Internal Communications on 55235/54035 who can assist with this or advise on other channels.

Make clear in the subject line what the purpose of your email is.

Avoid sending large attachments – look at using shared folders instead.

Keep messages short and to the point so they are easier to read.

Do not treat email like spoken communication. Email is a more informal medium than memos or letters, but it lacks the signals and clues that spoken language contains.

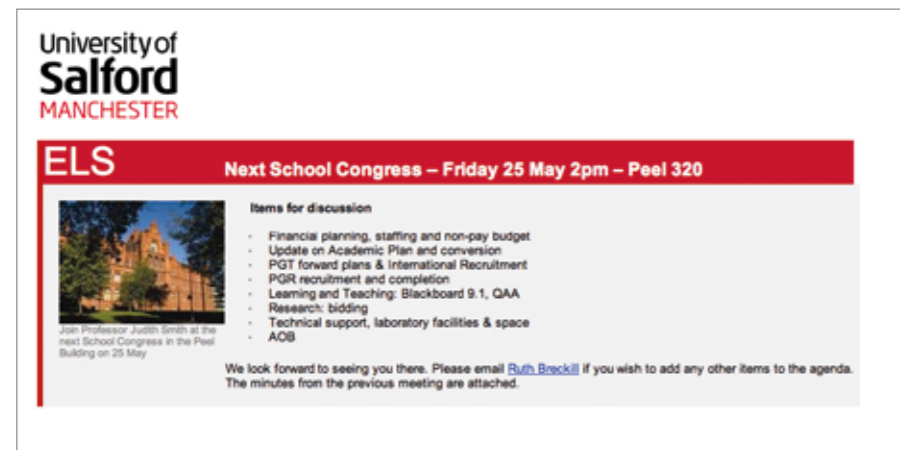
Avoid using UPPER CASE, as it looks as if you are SHOUTING. Italicising a word is an easy way to add emphasis, if needed.

Once drafted, it's a good idea to re-read your email before you press 'send'. See the University's guidance on email use at <http://staff.salford.ac.uk/page/e>

If you want to make your email 'stand out' from the crowd, we have templates available, which you can easily overwrite in Outlook.

Keep messages short and to the point so they are easier to read.

Email is a more informal medium than memos or letters, but it lacks the signals and clues that spoken language contains.



Click the image to download an overwritable template that opens in Outlook.

Email bulletins

These can be an effective way of getting good news across regularly and with a professional template can have immediate impact.

Rather than a hard copy School newsletter, you may wish to send an email bulletin.

These can be an effective way of getting good news across regularly and with a professional template can have immediate impact.

You can set up a subscription to this, so people only receive them if they want to.

Templates are available from Internal Communications and can also be downloaded from the online version of this toolkit at <http://staff.salford.ac.uk/internalcomms/toolkit.pdf> by clicking the image.



Above and right: examples of email templates

Click the image to download an overwritable template that opens in Outlook.

Your Internal Communications Business Partner can help you with:

- Internal newsletter templates
- Branded email templates for internal use
- Help with employee engagement
- University-wide internal publicity of your School news using appropriate channels
- Face to face with employees or with colleagues
- Support at Professional Services meetings
- Key contact for all internal communications
- Auditing your communications
- How to manage local internal email distribution
- Helping deliver effective communications plans

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