

IDEAS AT WORK

How to Align Marketing and Internal Communications: The Secret to Brand Success

Takeaways

- The most successful brands present a consistent message everywhere
- Employee interactions with customers are branded communications
- Identify and encourage your natural brand ambassadors

Bud Grant was one of the greatest mentors of my life, and I learned so much from him about how to build a consistent culture that reflected from every individual, whether it was the head coach all the way to the newest player.

His Vikings were meant to be a disciplined team that focused on the little details on the field. But Bud made sure that was true all the time, not just when the game started. That's why we were the only team in the league that practiced standing for the national anthem, so that when The Star Spangled Banner started playing, our players were all at perfect attention. The more disciplined we were in everything else, the more disciplined we would also be on the field. It's about a consistent message and practice. It worked!

This article from one of our close strategic partners makes a similar point, talking about the messages we share with customers and the messages we share with our internal teams. Are we being consistent and disciplined with what we say? We can't say one thing to customers and a different thing to employees. To succeed, everybody has to be on the same page.

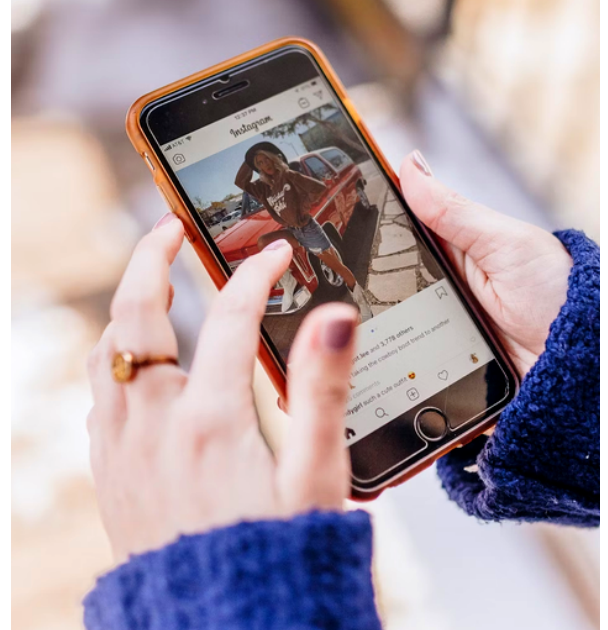


For Tarkenton

How to Align Marketing and Internal Communications: The Secret to Brand Success

Every day, your customers are bombarded with messages from multiple brands – including yours. And if your company’s marketing and internal communications messaging aren’t consistent and aligned, it can create a sizable hole in your revenue bucket.

Most business leaders know that effective “brand messaging” leads to success in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. Brand messaging refers to all the ways you communicate with your customers and prospects, including verbal and non-verbal communications in multiple channels. It encompasses all the marketing, sales, and social media interactions you have with your target audience.



Savvy businesses also understand that brand messaging isn’t only how customers experience your brand. How employees perceive your brand is also a crucial component of success. The right messaging enables your employees to become your strongest brand ambassadors.

Ultimately, people do business with companies (translated: people) they trust. To build that trust, your brand messaging must be consistent, and must authentically express your company’s core values.

So how do you get your employees and stakeholders rowing in the same direction? Here are some steps and best practices to ensure that your messaging and internal communications are aligned.

Consistent messaging is critical to success

The world’s most successful brands present a consistent and recognizable message everywhere they appear, whether on billboards, Instagram reels, or their annual report. These brands repeat and reinforce the same promises and commitments to their customers across all channels, whether online, in print, or via one-on-one interactions. They also broadcast a set of core values that influence and inform the way employees conduct themselves. When these messages are all in lockstep, customers feel a sense of comfort and trust. But when customers encounter a message that is out of step with the brand, they are likely to jump ship.

That's why it's so important that your distinctive and authentic brand voice is reflected in each piece of marketing, publicity, investor communications, and on all social media channels. This includes the "language" of your brand, which is captured in the voice, vocabulary and visual images contained in your content. Perfect consistency is a high bar, but if you do nothing else, make sure you break down the silos between sales, marketing, and content creation. (For more on content strategy, see: <https://tarkenton.com/how-content-strategy-elevates-your-brand-and-drives-growth/>)

Provide opportunities for your teams to contribute ideas. Schedule regular meetings, encourage cross-pollination, share ideas and collaborate across groups. When your teams work together, they are much more likely to be singing from the same songbook. This level of harmony among teams leads to consistent, trust-building experiences with your customers and employees.



Customer interactions equal brand communications

Branded communications isn't just about advertising and marketing – it includes how your employees interact directly with your customers. When employees demonstrate an understanding of the company's promise to the customer and a commitment to the company's core values, they are on their way to building long-term relationships with their customers. Remember: Today's consumers are adept at spotting imposters. When brands don't live up to the values they claim to stand for, customers will walk away.

That's why organizations need to make sure employees understand and practice the core values on which the company is built. Onboarding, training, and employee motivation techniques such as rewards and gamification are all effective ways to teach and reinforce brand commitment. One often overlooked strategy is to make sure that your internally facing team knows what the marketing and sales folks are saying. Perhaps you already ensure that your customer service reps are aware of marketing promises and sales promos (and if not, you should be). But what about HR, accounting, finance, IT, product development, logistics, manufacturing, and fulfillment? Make sure that every single department in your organization is familiar with the messaging that's reaching your customers.

When teams are well-versed in the brand messaging, and genuinely embrace their company's brand values, customer engagement comes easily. When customers have consistent experiences every time they interact and communicate with your company, trust is continually reinforced. When customers return for the next good experience, and then share the story of that great experience, acquiring new customers becomes even easier.

Align your marketing message with your internal communication

Meanwhile, company leaders need to demonstrate the same core values that shape customer experiences in their own interactions with employees and stakeholders. For example, if your company claims to be a people-first business, but leadership doesn't support a solid work-life balance, you are not aligned. The result: employee loyalty will dissolve, bad reviews start popping up, and your bottom line suffers.

In other words, the way you communicate with your employees internally is another vital part of your brand messaging. So, look for ways to share your company's brand and core values via internal communications channels and company-only social media. Make all your employee-facing, company onboarding platforms, intranet, internal newsletters, recruiting materials, and HR documents reflect your brand attributes and core values.

Find your best brand ambassadors

Honoring your core values with your employees is not just the right thing to do. It also yields a wonderful side benefit: it turns your internal employees into your best and most engaged brand ambassadors.

In today's hyper-connected world, brand messaging is often outside of your control. It happens on "dark social" and in hundreds of channels where your employees are engaging with friends, colleagues, competitors ... and customers. When your leadership and your employees are completely aligned on core values, this creates a powerful engine for great brand messaging.



Some employees are natural brand ambassadors; they love to share news about the company. Others are potential ambassadors, but they may need a little support. The best business leaders incentivize employees to promote the brand on social media channels. And they look for ways to make it simple. For example, employees don't need to create their own content, they may be more comfortable and willing to share, like, comment on, or tag existing posts. Make sure your team is aware of all the ways in which they can help promote the brand.

People like to be part of a winning team, so anytime the company has a "win," make sure you inform every member of your team. By doing so, you are reminding them that they played a role in the company's success, and you are also giving them something fun and exciting to share with friends outside your organization. Good news is always great brand messaging.

Managers should take note when employees take extra steps to become “brand ambassadors.” Be sure to recognize employees who are consistently amplifying your brand. Let them know their efforts are seen and valued. You don’t always need to provide huge, formal recognition. Consider fun and casual awards. Give props to outstanding team members through internal communications such as employee newsletters, during internal team meetings, or in a companywide town hall. Be creative. Use storytelling and other memorable techniques to celebrate your employees’ contributions.

Core values should be more than a poster on the wall and your brand promise is more than a slogan in the company handbook. When you authentically communicate and demonstrate the mission of your brand, it becomes second nature to your entire organization. Aligned brand messaging improves team spirit – and the chances that your customers will not only remember what your company stands for but believe in it, too.

Strategic and aligned brand messaging often plays a vital role in growing brand awareness, gaining new customers and keeping your existing customers engaged. Reviewing your brand messaging to make sure it’s aligned and consistent is a key step in the process. [Our teams at Tarkenton and Liger can help you get started today.](#)



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Cynthia expertly harnesses the power of integrated marketing and communications efforts for clients in various industries. She crafts, executes, and tracks strategic communications and marketing plans that achieve business objectives by attracting and engaging desired audiences.