International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)
Volume 7, Issue 05 May 2025, pp: 328-331 www.ijaem.net ISSN: 2395-5252

The Influence of Internal Communication on Employee Engagement: A Perspective from Business Practice

Nguyen Thi Thuy Ha, Vu Ngoc Tu
Banking Academy of Vietnam
Thuongmai University

Date of Submission: 05-05-2025 Date of Acceptance: 15-05-2025

ABSTRACT
Employee engagement is essential to organizational success, as it drives productivity, retention, and overall performance. Among the key factors influencing engagement, internal communication plays a pivotal role in fostering trust, enhancing motivation, and aligning employees with organizational goals. Defined as the structured exchange of information and dialogue within an organization, internal communication encompasses both formal and informal channels, ranging from emails and meetings to storytelling and two-way feedback mechanisms. This study examines how internal communication influences employee engagement in practice, exploring current problems of internal communication in business practice.
Keyword: internal communication, employee engagement

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement involves both psychological and physical presence in organizational roles (Mishra & Mishra, 2025), emphasizing emotional and intellectual commitment (Shaw, 2005). When employees are satisfied with their jobs and organizations, they are more motivated to contribute, thereby improving overall performance (Saks, 2006).

Over recent decades, numerous studies have underscored the vital role of employee engagement in organizational success. Gallup's longitudinal research confirms that highly engaged employees consistently deliver greater value, regardless of industry or economic conditions. Global data from 2020 to 2022 shows a 23% engagement rate worldwide, with Vietnam slightly lower at 21%. Notably, 72% of Vietnamese employees are not engaged, and 7% are actively disengaged (Gallup, 2022), prompting increased interest in how to foster engagement.

To address this challenge, organizations must identify key drivers of engagement and implement focused strategies. Gallup identifies purpose, development, a caring manager, communication, and strength-based focus as essential drivers. Similarly, Mishra & Mishra (2025) highlight connection with colleagues, career development, clear communication, recognition, autonomy, collaboration, credible leadership, and organizational trust.

Among these, internal communication emerges as a critical enabler. Defined as the exchange of formal and informal information between management and employees, it forms the backbone of effective engagement strategies. Without open, credible communication, employees may become disengaged. Poor use of communication tools or lack of trust can increase cynicism and reduce motivation. Internal communication also directly enhances productivity and profitability (Gallup, 2012). De Ridder (2004) emphasize that communication is fundamental to organizational function and effective communication to superior performance.

This study aims to examine how internal communication influences employee engagement in practice, exploring current problems of internal communication in business practice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has drawn growing interest in both academia and organizational practice over the past two decades. Gallup researchers Buckingham and Coffman (1999) defined it as aligning the right people with the right roles and managers. Most scholars highlight emotional and intellectual commitment (Baumruk, 2004; Shaw, 2005), while others see it as

discretionary effort beyond job requirements (Frank et al., 2004).

Kahn (1990) proposed a broader framework, viewing engagement as the integration of cognitive, emotional, and physical energies into work. Cognition reflects beliefs about leadership and conditions; emotion relates to attitudes; and physicality concerns energy exerted in job tasks.

Both scholars and practitioners agree that high engagement leads to better outcomes, including greater productivity and profitability, lower absenteeism and turnover, fewer complaints and injuries, and increased customer satisfaction (Saks, 2006). These reinforce engagement as a strategic driver of organizational success.

Internal Communication

Internal communication refers to the exchange of information between managers and employees (Karen et al., 2014). Dolphin (2005) defines it as the interaction between leadership and employees, while Kalla (2005) views it as a form of "social interaction through messages," highlighting its dynamic nature. Welch and Jackson (2007) emphasize its role in fostering relationships at all levels of the organization.

Internal communication is often described as transactional, involving multi-directional flows and being integral to management processes (Emma, 2014). Quirke (2008) sees its role as connecting information and providing employees with necessary job details, while D'Aprix (2009) stresses its importance in preventing organizational friction during change. Communication is central to management control and organizational functionality.

Scholars have increasingly recognized internal communication as a key function within public relations and corporate communication (Cameron & McCollum, 1993; Ruck & Welch, 2012). It not only shares information but also builds a sense of community (Jo & Shim, 2005). Strategically, it helps employees understand organizational goals and their role in achieving them, fostering greater engagement and performance alignment.

The Relationship between Internal Communication and Employee Engagement

Internal communication is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of employee engagement within organizations. Although often misunderstood or underutilized, internal communication goes far beyond simply disseminating information—it serves as a foundational mechanism for building trust, fostering alignment with organizational goals, and enhancing employee commitment.

Scholars have consistently emphasized the link between internal communication and employee engagement. Welch (2012) identifies internal communication as one of the key determinants of employee engagement, while Saks (2006, p. 602) defines engagement as "the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles." Internal communication, particularly between managers and their subordinates, plays a vital role in nurturing this engagement. For instance, when managers effectively communicate with their teams, it enhances service quality and strengthens the employee–customer connection, indirectly boosting the firm's reputation (Gronstedt, 2000).

Despite these benefits, internal communication has historically been undervalued, with organizational efforts skewed toward external marketing and public relations (Chong, 2007; Cheney et.al, 2008). However, when employees perceive that they are receiving timely, relevant, and accurate information, they feel more empowered and supported (Thomas, Zolin, & Hartman, 2009), resulting in stronger commitment and reduced vulnerability.

Internal Communication in Business Practices.

Internal communication plays a strategic role in shaping employee engagement, trust, and overall organizational effectiveness. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model highlights supportive communication—especially from supervisors—as a key resource that buffers against burnout and enhances engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Pounsford (2007) further emphasizes that informal channels such as storytelling, coaching, and peer-to-peer interactions foster trust and emotional connection, which in turn improve employee engagement and organizational outcomes.

In 2024, internal communication is shaped by five critical trends that reflect shifting employee expectations and organizational realities (Widera, 2024). These include fostering trust and psychological safety; distinguishing between narrative (strategic messaging) and storytelling (how messages are conveyed); simplifying content to avoid information overload; encouraging two-way dialogue; and ensuring adaptability in communication strategies to meet evolving needs. Among these, enabling feedback and interaction has become central—not only for engagement but also for aligning employees with business goals.

Despite this, many organizations still struggle to fully operationalize internal communication. Confusion remains over whether it belongs to HR or PR, often leading to fragmented efforts. A survey by Karian & Box reported that 53% of communication professionals see it as a function of HR, emphasizing its role in employee experience and human capital strategy.

When it comes to delivery, email remains a dominant channel, with 70% of internal communicators identifying it as their most effective tool (Swift, n.d.). However, overdependence on one-way channels undermines the dialogic nature of internal communication. Whilst in another study, 84% of employees revail dependence on their managers for clear, consistent updates ("Internal Communication Statistics," 2024). Alarmingly, only 38.4% of companies prioritize employee feedback in their internal communication strategies, highlighting a major gap in closing the communication loop. This neglect of feedback loops weakens employee voice, diminishes trust, and ultimately undermines the engagement that internal communication aims to promote. As Munn and Henrickson(2024) notes, feedback mechanisms such as surveys and audits are essential—not optional—in gauging sentiment and fostering engagement.

Poor communication comes at a cost. A striking 86% of employees attribute workplace failures to ineffective internal communication ("Internal Communication Statistics," 2024). These figures reinforce that communication must be more than transactional; it must cultivate connection, clarity, and collaboration.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, internal communication is not merely a tool for information dissemination, but a strategic function that directly impacts employee engagement and, ultimately, organizational performance. As this study highlights, effective internal communication builds trust, reinforces motivation, and aligns individual efforts with corporate objectives. However, many businesses continue to face challenges such as overdependence on one-way channels like email and insufficient attention to employee feedback, which undermines the two-way nature of communication and its engagement potential. Addressing these gaps requires a more holistic, dialogic, and employee-centered communication strategy—one that supports not only operational clarity but also emotional and relational connections within the workplace.

REFERENCE

[1]. Munn, L., & Henrickson, L. (2024). Tell me a story: a framework for critically investigating AI language models. Learning, Media and Technology, 1-17.

[2]. Widera, L. (2024). 5 internal communication trends you need to know in 2024. Staffbase. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://staffbase.com/blog/internal-communication-trends/

[3]. Swift, P. (n.d.). 25 internal communications metrics that matter most. Cerkl. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://cerkl.com/blog/internal-communications-metrics/

[4]. Internal communication statistics: Numbers you need to know. (2024, March 7). Sociabble. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://www.sociabble.com/blog/employee-communications/communications-statistics/

[5]. Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Journal of managerial psychology, 21(7), 600-619.

[6]. Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. Academy of management journal, 33(4), 692-724.

[7]. Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (1999). How great managers develop top people. Workforce, 78(6), 102-105.

[8]. Baumruk, R. (2204). The missing link: the role of employee engagement in business success', Workspan, Vol 47, pp 48-52

[9]. Shaw, D., & Edwards, J. S. (2005). Building user commitment to implementing a knowledge management strategy. Information & Management, 42(7), 977-988.

[10]. Shaw, K. (2005). An engagement strategy process for communicators. Strategic Communication Management, 9(3), 26.

[11]. Gallup. (2012). 2012 Q12® meta-analysis: The relationship between engagement at work and organizational outcomes. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://employeeengagement.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2012-Q12-Meta-Analysis-Research-Paper.pdf

[12]. De Ridder, J. A. (2004). Organisational communication and supportive employees. Human Resource Management Journal, 14(3), 20-30.

[13]. Gallup. (2022). State of the global workplace: 2022 report. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://www.gallup.com/394373/indicator-employee-engagement.aspx
[14]. Mishra, K., & Mishra, S. (2025). Employee engagement. Available at SSRN 5126442.
[15]. Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Journal of managerial psychology, 21(7), 600-619.
[16]. Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., De Jonge, J., Janssen, P. P., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). Burnout and engagement at work as a function of demands and control. Scandinavian journal of work, environment & health, 279-286.
[17]. Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior, 25(3), 293-315.
[18]. Pounsford, M. (2007). Using storytelling, conversation and coaching to engage. Strategic Communication Management, 11(3), 32.
[19]. Dolphin, R. R. (2005). Internal communications: Today's strategic imperative. Journal of marketing communications, 11(3), 171-190.
[20]. Welch, M., & Jackson, P. R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach. Corporate communications: An international journal, 12(2), 177-198.
[21]. Kalla, H. K. (2005). Integrated internal communications: a multidisciplinary perspective. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 10(4), 302-314.
[22]. Karen, M., Lois, B., & Aneil, M. (2014). Driving Emloyee Engagement: The Expanded Role of Internal Communication. International Journal of Business Communication, 51(2), 183-202.
[23]. Karanges, E. R. (2014). Optimising employee engagement with internal communication: a social exchange perspective (Doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology).
[24]. Quirke, B. (2008). Are you ready to meet the challenge?. Strategic Communication Management, 12(5), 7.
[25]. D'Aprix, R. (2008). The credible company: communicating with a skeptical workforce. John Wiley & Sons.
[26]. Cameron, G. T., & McCollum, T. (1993). Competing corporate cultures: A multi-method, cultural analysis of the role of internal communication. Journal of Public Relations Research, 5(4), 217-250.
[27]. Ruck, K., & Welch, M. (2012). Valuing internal communication; management and employee perspectives. Public relations review, 38(2), 294-302.
[28]. Jo, S., & Shim, S. W. (2005). Paradigm shift of employee communication: The effect of management communication on trusting relationships. Public relations review, 31(2), 277-280.
[29]. Cheney, G., Zorn Jr, T. E., Planalp, S., & Lair, D. J. (2008). Meaningful work and personal/social well-being organizational communication engages the meanings of work. Annals of the International Communication Association, 32(1), 137-185.
[30]. Chong, M. (2007). The role of internal communication and training in infusing corporate values and delivering brand promise: Singapore Airlines' experience. Corporate reputation review, 10, 201-212.
[31]. Thomas, G. F., Zolin, R., & Hartman, J. L. (2009). The central role of communication in developing trust and its effect on employee involvement. The Journal of Business Communication (1973), 46(3), 287-310.
[32]. Welch, M. (2012). Appropriateness and acceptability: Employee perspectives of internal communication. Public relations review, 38(2), 246-254.
[33]. Gronstedt, A. (2000). The customer century: Lessons from world-class companies in integrated marketing communication. New York, NY: Routledge.