



DISABILITY LAW
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Internal Communications Recommendations

September 17, 2021

Committee Members

1. Esther Brieno - Admin
2. Christie Doherty – Human Resources
3. Shelbie Engelking – SLTCOP
4. Angie Garberding – P&A
5. Mark Ivandick – P&A
6. Mary Kay Kisseberth – Board
7. Leah McMahon – SLTCOP
8. Sara Pielsticker – P&A
9. Olivia Pilcher – P&A
10. Mike Robbins - Development
11. Michelle Thom – Board

Analysis Highlights

- The data indicates that the majority of communications opportunities were at the Agency level.
 - Lack of timely, transparent information was a consistent theme.
 - Monthly meetings were the primary source of communications and these meetings were often cancelled due to conflicting priorities.
 - Overall status information from various departments was not predictably shared by the departmental leaders.
- Departmental or team communications were reported to be “good” and were meeting most of the needs of the employees in those groups.
- Information from the Board was inconsistent and also lacking in content and transparency.

Agency Level Recommendations

1. Establish & follow protocols for quality communications, timeframes, and delivery strategies.
2. Review opportunities to decentralize decision-making and communications responsibilities.
3. Establish specific functional owners for distribution of all-employee communications on a monthly basis.
 - a. Finance – financials & budgets
 - b. Development – grants and fundraising
 - c. Board – direction and new initiatives
 - d. HR – hiring and policy
 - e. Programs – updates and new initiatives
 - f. Executive Director – Agency-wide initiatives and news
4. Create a monthly Newsletter to share agency-wide info from all departments and share “employee shout-outs”.

Agency-Wide Recommendations

5. Revamp 3C meeting structure to improve employee experience and interaction. Change meeting date to reduce cancellations.
6. Enhance and improve usage of Onboarding document and process for new employees and Hiring Managers.
7. Consider using “Employee Action Committee” approach to enable greater input on various Agency decisions.
8. Expand Leadership Meeting agenda to include employee morale and satisfaction indicators.
9. Examine need for “intranet” site for storage of policies, procedures and other status information.
10. Track communications initiatives through implementation and ongoing for effectiveness. Adjust as needed for improvement.

Department Level Recommendations

1. Each Department and/or team creates individual communications strategies to include:
 - a. Strategies to address team level and inter-group communications gaps.
 - b. Assess and improve departmental meeting effectiveness.
 - c. Create “emergency” communications strategy
2. Identify ways to “have fun” and get to know each other better.
3. Directors share Leadership meeting info as appropriate information.
4. Actively participate in and provide info for monthly “Newsletter”

Board Related Recommendations

1. Board improves direct communications opportunities with Staff, including:
 - a. A column in the monthly newsletter.
 - b. A regular posting on the intranet.
 - c. Host periodic Kaffe Klatch type opportunity for staff members to talk with a Board member or two.
 - d. Rotating Board members attend monthly 3C meeting.
2. Post Board meeting schedule with open invitation to Staff to attend.
3. Continue to have Staff members invited to present to Board on programs and initiatives.

Next Steps

- Collect additional feedback from Staff and Board.
- Finalize Recommendations & share with Staff & Board.
- Launch recommendations and track progress.
- Adjust as needed to ensure improved communications.



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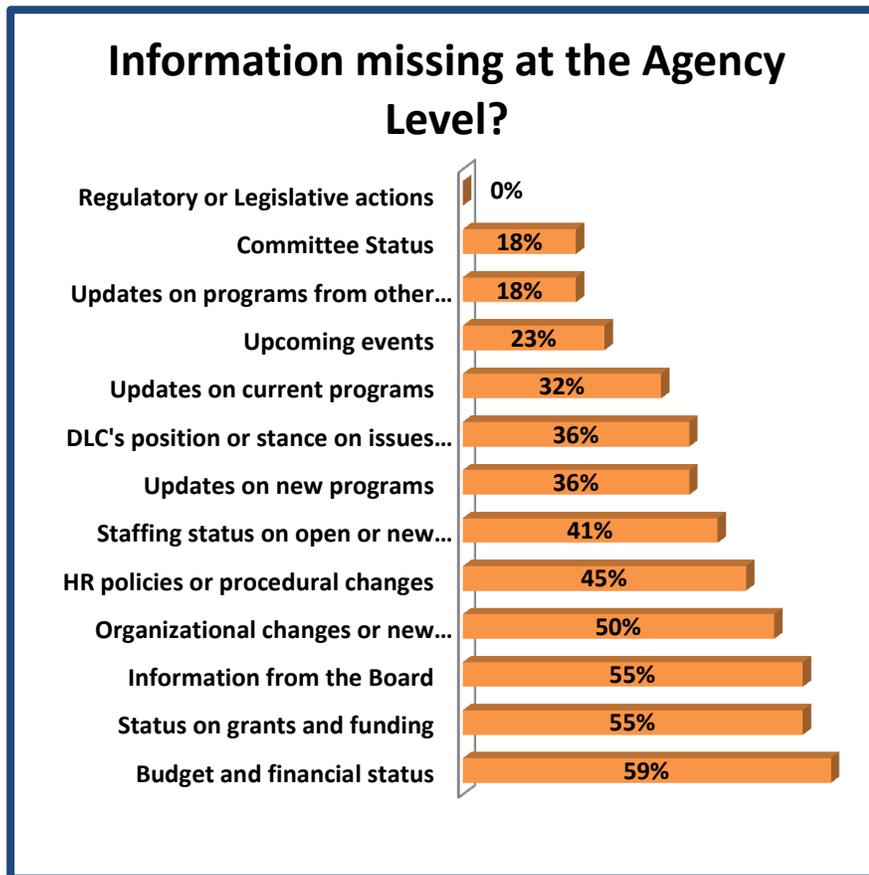
2021 Communications Survey

Recommendations

September 17, 2021

Prepared by DLC Communications Committee

Analysis & Recommendation Summary



Agency Level Recommendations

1. Follow Agency-wide protocols for communications:
 - a. All communications should be timely and provide complete information on topic. If a new decision or policy is being announced, rationale and context should also be provided.
 - b. Provide a contact for additional information or questions.
 - c. Provide status on decisions or initiatives that require a longer cycle time than two weeks for resolution.
 - d. Share in writing new or changed policies, with context, and allow for Q&A in 3C or other venues.
 - e. Do not wait to share time-sensitive information for monthly meeting schedule.
2. Consider use of Employee Action Committee (EAC) approach to engage representatives from each department who meet monthly to discuss issues, concerns, provide feedback on upcoming decisions. Rotate participants annually.
3. Expand Leadership Team meeting agenda to include employee satisfaction and morale discussions.

4. Expand sources of communications to all employees to Directors and others for specific content on a predictable schedule (see below).

All Employee Communications

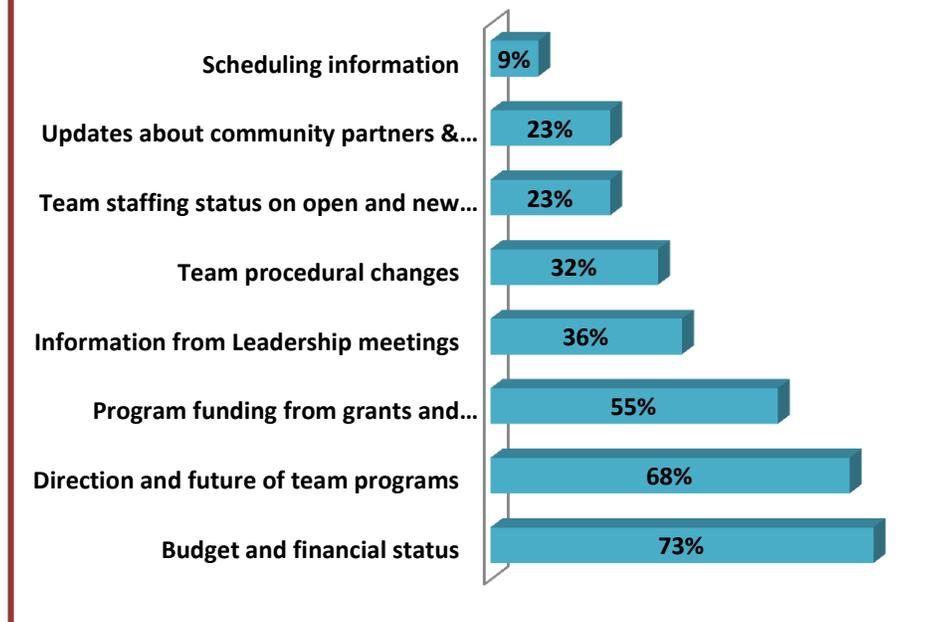
1. The Finance Director will develop monthly reporting for departmental financial and budgeting information.
 - a. After approval of annual budget, Finance Director and Board Treasurer present the budget to the staff, including budget assumptions, constraints, etc.
 - b. Quarterly updates sent to all employees of top line financial status.
2. Development Director and Chair of Board Development Committee, to report at least quarterly, or as needed, status on Grant and Development efforts, to include status for all pending or approved grants and other fundraising achievements.
3. Directors will provide quarterly or as needed updates on program status and any new initiatives. Could hold in-person sessions with interested employees to gain greater connection to interests of team and perspectives about programs.
4. Executive Director to send out at monthly or least quarterly, written strategic Agency updates and any Agency level organizational changes. Encourage communications before holidays or other big Agency events.
5. Development Director will gather monthly “All Team” status info from each Team and “shout outs” from employees and distribute to all employees. Could be in “newsletter” format or posted on website “bulletin board”. Each team commits to send data on the monthly due date, following the established format.
6. Human Resources to send out bi-weekly, or as needed, status on updates and progress on hiring, initiatives, policy clarifications, etc.
7. Revamp 3C Meeting to be more interactive, informative and targeted to needs of employees and leadership for connecting, interacting and sharing across the team. Ideas include:
 - a. Rotate monthly Leadership of Meeting.
 - b. Create Agenda based upon requests from employees and new or upcoming initiatives for discussion. (Reduce one-way info sharing by relying on emails to staff).
 - c. Use time to discuss upcoming efforts, potential policy changes, or new initiatives.
 - d. Review opportunity to use time to do team building and connections across departments.
 - e. Share successes and celebrate Team accomplishments.
 - f. Have some fun!
 - g. Take minutes on action items and key discussion topics.
 - h. Quarterly for the next year, get feedback on effectiveness of meeting and address any meeting improvement opportunities.

Supporting Recommendations

1. Review opportunities to decentralize decision-making and communications responsibilities.

2. **Human Resources and Finance to update information for use in Onboarding and orientation (Org chart, function/program descriptions, etc.). Also improve notifications of new employees to rest of team (picture, bio, pronouns, favorite food, etc.).**
3. **Increase use of current Onboarding process and tools. Increase focus on new hires for all Hiring Managers.**
4. **Examine need for an “intranet” site to post information and store policies and other resource information. Potentially Microsoft Teams platform.**
5. **HR periodically seeks out feedback on effectiveness of Agency level communications and uses internal Communications champions to develop actions steps to resolve any significant issues.**
6. **Leadership and 3C meetings:**
 - a. **Recommend meeting schedules to move from Mondays and reduce impact of holiday and out of office time.**
 - b. **Review time for meeting to encourage conversations among staff.**
 - c. **If key leaders can't meet, can still go on with meeting for rest of team.**
 - d. **Reschedule, as soon as possible, any Leadership or 3C meeting that is cancelled. Let team know why meeting was cancelled and send along information that was to be shared in the meeting. Don't wait until the next month.**

Team Level - Missing Information



Team Communications – Recommendations

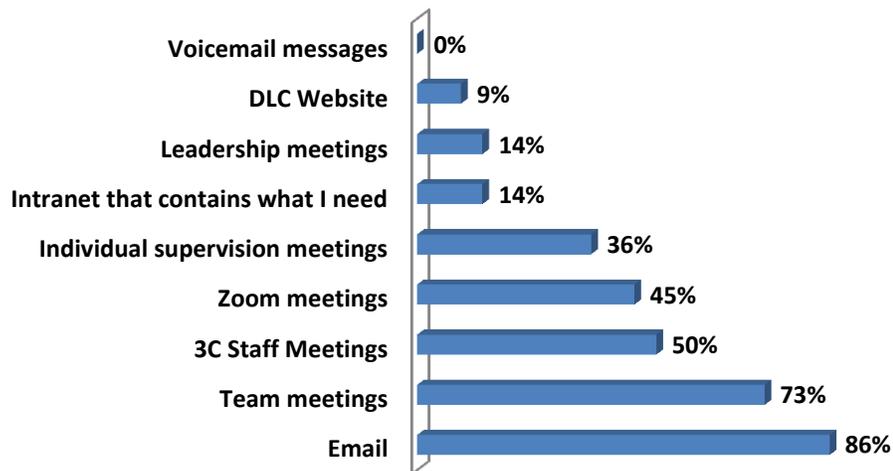
1. Each team creates their own unique Communications plan based upon the needs of the group/team for staying in touch as a team or with other teams. Items to consider for inclusion are:
 - a. Identify and address inter-group communications needs (identify interdependencies related to information with other groups). Set up periodic meetings with groups you work with often to discuss communications and working relationships.
 - b. Review effectiveness of current team meetings and improve where needed.
 - i. Objective of meeting
 - ii. Agenda, timelines and materials shared in advance, including program or department updates and discussion topics
 - iii. Include time for check ins
 - iv. Don't put on the agenda what you could have emailed
 - v. Share meeting leadership across the team
 - vi. Participants come prepared and ready to contribute
 - vii. Take minutes/capture action items to track progress on key issues
 - viii. Discuss feedback on effectiveness of team meetings and communications
 - c. Identify other critical information needed by team and the responsible party, timing and delivery method.
 - d. Directors consistently share Leadership meeting information (as determined in the meeting) and provide context when necessary.

- e. Create “emergency” communications approach when information needs to be shared immediately.
2. Teams/departments share status monthly for inclusion into All Team update, created by Development Director, for distribution.
3. Identify ways to have fun and build the team connections and relationships.

Board Communications – Recommendations

1. Board should consider direct communications opportunities with Staff, including:
 - a. A column in the monthly newsletter.
 - b. A regular posting on the intranet.
 - c. Occasional Kaffe Klatch type opportunity for staff members to talk with a Board member or two.
 - d. Rotating Board members attend monthly 3C meeting.
2. Board meeting schedule posted with open invitation to Staff to attend.
3. Continue to have Staff members invited periodically to present to Board on programs and initiatives.

Delivery methods that work best.



Communication Protocols - Recommendations

1. Create email protocols to support efficiency and effectiveness of communications- may include:
 - a. No "Reply all" on general announcements, birthdays, etc.
 - b. Mark "Urgent – Need Response By ___" in subject line, if needing a response quickly to request.
 - c. If only FYI, then add FYI to Subject line.
 - d. Only send to individuals directly involved in the discussion or request.
 - e. Do not send more than two emails in any chain. If more discussion needed, call a meeting to discuss.
 - f. Remind team periodically by sharing protocols in newsletter.
2. Assess effectiveness of meetings held, get immediate feedback and pivot on approach when needed (checklist format).
3. Follow "excellent communications" tactics and tips to ensure timeliness; and transparency, content and context requirements
4. Establish and share Zoom "best practice" tips to improve effectiveness of Zoom meetings by email or in company newsletter.
5. Improve "two-way" discussions within teams and across the agency.