

What do CEOs really think of

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION?

What's the true perception of IC?
 Where do CEOs see us adding the most value?

14 CEOs were interviewed

89 IC PROS were surveyed

AND THE RESULT?

The importance of IC **CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED**, however the strategic role we play is **NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD** by CEOs.

Place and value

CEOs strongly associated IC with culture and engagement – believing we have a real impact on it.

IC is seen as critical to success

but not as important as functions that are more closely linked to profits.

We're trusted to develop messages and programmes that align to vision, values and strategic goals.

"It's all about the people. The industry will stand or fall based on the culture. In many respects culture comes from the top."
 CEO, Construction

"If you don't communicate effectively with your people, you're probably going to have a dysfunctional organisation."
 Chairman, Technology

Perception

Senior leaders had a good understanding of the value of IC but focused on broadcast rather than two-way communication.

"Internal communication is communicating strategy, communicating key actions, communicating culture change. So basically, it's the glue that holds the organisation together."
 Global CEO, Hospitality

"As a function, its role is to curate, enable and advise on best practice for organisations to communicate effectively, efficiently and in an engaging way."
 Jenni Field, Chair, CIPR Inside

Worryingly, IC practitioners talked about internal communication and employee engagement interchangeably.

IC

We need to align our understanding of what IC is and the value it adds – among IC practitioners as well as senior leaders.

Driving performance and productivity

92% of internal communicators believed that IC could drive financial performance.

92%

"In terms of financial, it is extremely difficult to make a direct link. My gut feeling would be it's extremely valuable and important."
 CFO, Construction

CEOs believed IC has an impact but think it's difficult to prove - and that's ok.

Meaningful data is the language business leaders understand and respond to.

"IC gives us the ability to provide clear direction, to allow our staff and teams to be fully engaged, which therefore impacts the financial performance and the general development of the business."
 Chairman, Support services

Making an impact

Senior leaders said IC was strategic, but many talked tactics instead.

More dialogue with senior leadership is critical for IC to move forward strategically and increase clarity on what IC can do for every area of the business.

"Once an organisation has achieved unlocking employee voice, the next challenge is helping leaders know what to do with this."
 IC practitioner

"I think it's like anything, you have to know your audience so a good communication department has to be intrinsically linked to the strategy of the business, they need to understand what the strategy is."
 CEO, Hospitality

There is work to do to help business leaders understand the strategic value of IC.

The good news is that they believe it's important and are open to conversation.

It's an exciting opportunity to evolve the perception and value of IC and we can all help to shape its future.

Research undertaken and the Making it Count report was created by the 2017 CIPR Inside committee.

