

LEADING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

**Moving internal
communications
beyond messaging**



Ask ten companies what their Internal Communications function does and you might get ten different answers. At its best, Internal Communication is a key driver for effective engagement and business performance; in time, hopefully this will become the standard answer.

Historically, the function has taken a backseat to HR, PR, Marketing and Brand. It has been perceived as being operational and delivery focused, acting as a postal service for messaging to raise awareness in a top-down fashion. There is no denying that at times there is a place for this style of communication; but it shouldn't end there.



SHIFTING THE DIAL OF ENGAGEMENT

Many organisations have realised that Internal Communications can do more than simply 'sending stuff out' by helping 'make meaning' of the message. This has seen the rise of greater dialogue, debate and feedback tools. For many, this is where they feel they're achieving engagement; but more often than not it's just a different form of messaging.

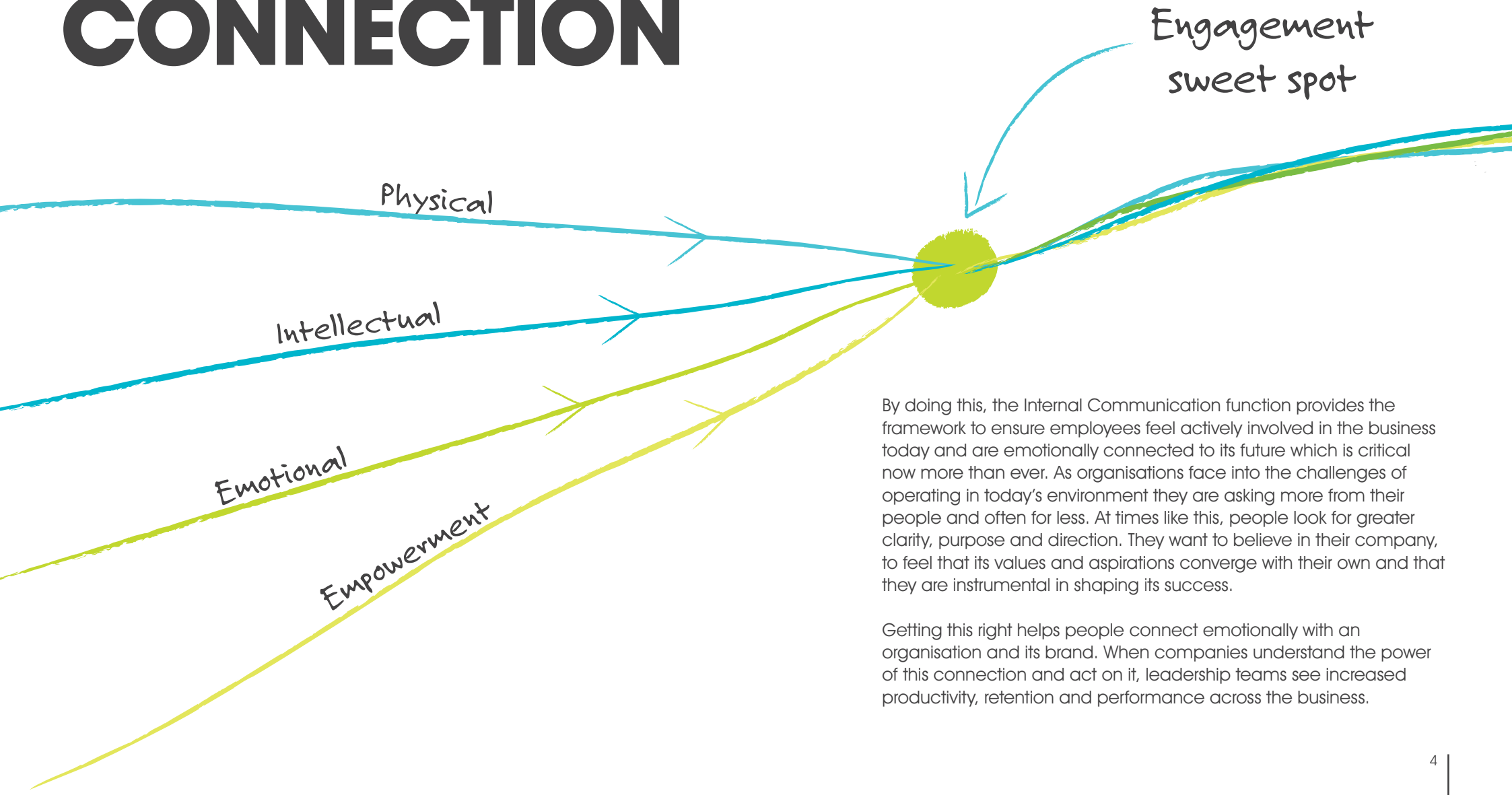
There is an opportunity to shift the dial further; adopting a more grown up role. The more sophisticated Internal Communications functions aim to "own the relationship with people," moving beyond messaging to generate involvement and genuine engagement.

Achieving this is multi-faceted. It requires the careful choreography of different interventions. To do this, Internal Communications need to extend their thinking to consider the interplay not only between messages, channels and audience but also between areas such as infrastructure, policy, leadership, culture and strategy. They can't do this on their own.

Working in close alignment with other areas of the business such as HR, Operations, Finance, IT, Marketing and Brand is critical to illicit and embed the desired response and action. In addition, the function needs to deepen its relationship and credibility with the senior leadership team to work alongside them, as well as providing strategic advisory support across the business.



MAKING THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION



By doing this, the Internal Communication function provides the framework to ensure employees feel actively involved in the business today and are emotionally connected to its future which is critical now more than ever. As organisations face into the challenges of operating in today's environment they are asking more from their people and often for less. At times like this, people look for greater clarity, purpose and direction. They want to believe in their company, to feel that its values and aspirations converge with their own and that they are instrumental in shaping its success.

Getting this right helps people connect emotionally with an organisation and its brand. When companies understand the power of this connection and act on it, leadership teams see increased productivity, retention and performance across the business.

DRIVING CO-CREATION, CONNECTING STRATEGIES

The role of Internal Communications continues to evolve; working in alignment with other functions can help transform a business. At their best they are intimately involved in co-creating change with the senior leadership team and provide strategic advisory support across the business. They are instrumental in helping connect strategies, leaders, employees and culture to create sustainable growth. It provides the framework to ensure employees feel empowered and are actively involved in the business today and are emotionally connected to its future.



PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS FOR THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTION





Recognised as a valued enabler

- Span strategic advisory support as well as tactical delivery and implementation
- Set a clear remit, actively endorsed by leaders and understood by all
- Working in close conjunction with HR and areas of external communications

Gain insights and credibility

- Have a strong grasp on the business – it's operating context, products, services and customer offering, business strategy, direction and goals
- Have a clear handle on cultural patterns, audiences and the communications landscape

Deepen relationships and influence

- Develop strong advisory relationships with senior leaders, including the CEO
- Ensure close alignment and coordination with other functions to ensure consistency of employee experience and external proposition
- Identify and establish strong partnerships with key influencers and enabler groups across the business

Set a compelling engagement agenda

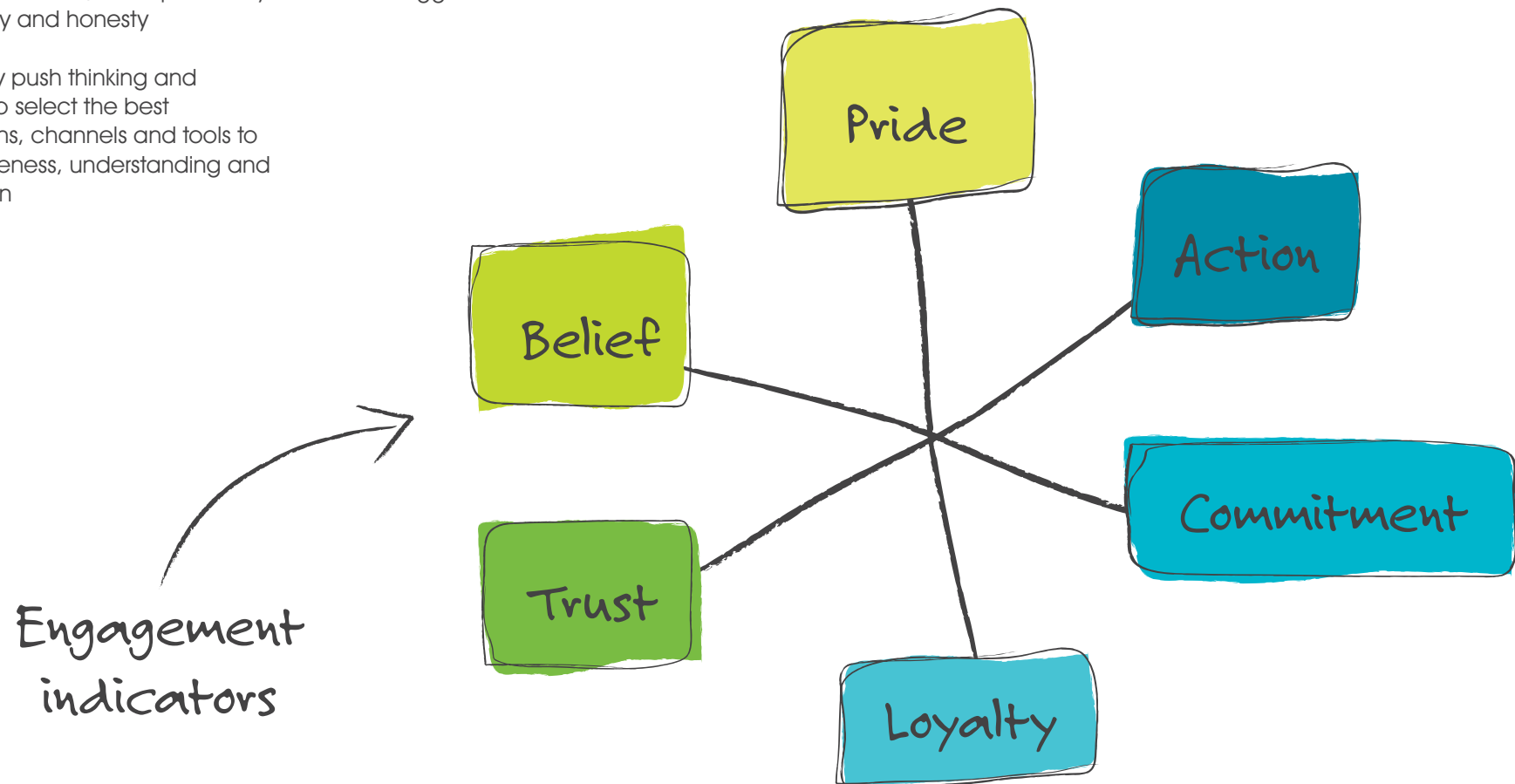
- Develop an engagement strategy and plan aligned to business strategy and goals, and tightly integrated with other functions
- Establish and stick to a regular rhythm and routine, underpinned by authenticity and honesty
- Continually push thinking and creativity to select the best interventions, channels and tools to drive awareness, understanding and co-creation

Measure progress and impact

- Define clear performance indicators agreed with senior leaders
- Measure, monitor and share progress against measures
- Continually review and refine approach in response to feedback and suggestions

Build Leadership capability

- Actively work with business leaders at all levels of the organisation to support their development in powerful engagement techniques - they are the glue that holds the whole together



We have been leading employee engagement
in organisations for 20 years.

For more information contact Claire Smith:
clairesmith@seraclimited.com
+44 (0) 20 8948 0000

Serac Limited
34 The Quadrant
Richmond
Surrey TW9 1DN