

Understanding the Role of Internal Communication in Enhancing Managerial Effectiveness: A Literature-Based Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In the current dynamic business landscape, managerial effectiveness is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in organizational success. This paper explores the role of internal communication in enhancing managerial effectiveness through a literature-based analysis. Drawing on frameworks such as Relationship Management Theory, Dialogic Communication, and the Job Demands-Resources Model, the study highlights how internal communication contributes to trust-building, employee engagement, motivation, and leadership credibility. Findings from previous research show that clear, transparent, and two-way communication improves decision-making, reduces workplace stress, and fosters a positive organizational culture. In contrast, poor communication practices lead to confusion, disengagement, and reduced productivity. The literature also emphasizes the growing need for digital communication skills among managers, especially in hybrid and remote work environments. The paper concludes that internal communication is not merely a support function but a key leadership tool essential for effective management in today's complex organizations. Organizations that prioritize communication training and cultural alignment are more likely to cultivate effective leaders and long-term success. This study encourages future research on the intersection of communication, leadership, and technology in modern business contexts.

KEYWORDS

Internal Communication, Managerial Effectiveness, Leadership, Employee Engagement, Organizational Communication



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INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-changing and increasingly digital business environment, the role of effective leadership has become more important than ever (Cavus & Aghamiri, 2023). Managers are not only expected to oversee tasks and drive performance but also to inspire teams, build trust, and create a sense of belonging within organizations. The post-pandemic era has introduced unprecedented challenges, with hybrid and remote work arrangements becoming the new normal, requiring leaders to navigate physical distance while maintaining team cohesion (Gomes et al., 2023). These demands are not easy to fulfill, especially when teams are dispersed, communication technologies are evolving rapidly, and employees have higher expectations regarding transparency, inclusion, and feedback. Recent organizational transformations—accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic—have fundamentally altered how internal communication is practiced, with virtual platforms replacing traditional face-to-face interactions and requiring managers to develop entirely new competency sets (Kraft, 2019; Yue et al., 2025). Among the many tools that influence a manager's ability to lead successfully, internal communication stands out as one of the most vital and strategic. Far from being just a routine or administrative task, internal communication has become a key factor in enhancing

managerial effectiveness. It shapes how managers engage with their teams, how they build relationships, and how they guide their organizations toward achieving long-term goals.

Internal communication refers to all the formal and informal exchanges of information, dialogue, and feedback that take place within an organization (Robinson & Judge, 2020). This includes top-down communication from leaders to employees, bottom-up communication such as employee feedback and voice, and horizontal communication between departments and teams (Miller et al., 2021). While internal communication has traditionally been viewed as a support function—mainly focused on announcements, newsletters, or internal memos—recent research shows that it is far more influential (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020). Studies from 2020 onwards have documented how organizations worldwide have had to reinvent their internal communication practices, with successful companies implementing real-time digital updates, virtual town halls, and enhanced feedback mechanisms to maintain employee connection during prolonged remote work periods (Jain & Sharma, 2022). Internal communication now plays a strategic role in areas such as employee engagement, crisis management, organizational culture, brand advocacy, and leadership credibility (Kaufman & Martin, 2020). Managers who understand and use internal communication effectively are more likely to succeed in engaging employees, aligning goals, managing conflicts, and leading change (Griffiths & O'Reilly, 2021). On the other hand, poor communication practices—such as unclear messages, lack of feedback, or inconsistent instructions—can weaken trust, lower motivation, and reduce organizational performance (Johnson & Lee, 2022).

Several studies have emphasized that managerial effectiveness is deeply connected to the quality of internal communication within an organization. For instance, Maczuga (2025) found that communication errors—like the absence of feedback or contradictory messages—directly reduce employee engagement and hinder the implementation of quality policies. This is particularly true in complex or hierarchical environments where information does not flow freely. In such situations, employees may feel disconnected or confused, which in turn reduces their trust in leadership and willingness to follow directions. Maczuga's findings also suggest that tailored communication—designed to fit specific age groups or employee roles—can significantly improve engagement and clarity. These findings highlight how managers must adapt their communication strategies to different audiences to remain effective. Simply sending out information is not enough; managers need to ensure that communication is two-way, timely, and meaningful.

In addition, other studies have explored how internal communication contributes to employee motivation and retention. Jiang and Shen (2023), for example, developed a relational theory of employee engagement that connects authentic leadership and transparent internal communication to key outcomes such as trust, satisfaction, and reduced turnover intention. According to their study, when managers communicate transparently—sharing both positive and difficult news honestly—they build credibility and foster a more open organizational culture. Employees in such environments are more likely to feel valued and committed to their work. This supports the idea from Relationship Management Theory, which emphasizes that successful organizations are those that build strong, long-term relationships with their internal and external stakeholders through communication. In this context, internal communication becomes a form of relationship-building. It is not just about what is said but how it is said—and whether the communication promotes mutual understanding, openness, and respect.

Another relevant framework is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which provides insight into how communication can act as a resource to reduce stress and enhance performance. According to this model, employees are more productive and less likely to experience burnout when they have access to the resources they need—such as support, clear instructions, and timely information. Internal communication serves as one of these key resources. When managers communicate clearly and offer channels for dialogue, they reduce ambiguity and help employees focus on their tasks. Conversely, unclear communication adds to job demands, increasing stress and reducing motivation. This model supports the idea that communication is not a “soft” skill but a structural component of workplace well-being and productivity.

Furthermore, in the digital age, internal communication is increasingly taking place through electronic platforms—emails, chat applications, virtual meetings, and internal social networks. Kraft (2019) and Gomes et al. (2023) highlight that managers now require new digital competencies to lead effectively in this virtual context. Their studies found that managers must know how to use different media platforms appropriately, adjust their messages for online settings, and ensure that communication remains engaging and personal even when face-to-face interaction is limited. This brings into focus the importance of media literacy and *E-leadership*, where communication is no longer just verbal or written but also multimedia-driven. Managers who lack media awareness may struggle to maintain team alignment or morale in remote settings. Therefore, investing in communication skills training and digital fluency is essential for modern leadership.

The importance of feedback and two-way dialogue is also central to current discussions about effective internal communication. Fabricius (2020) emphasized that internal communication should not be a one-way street but a dynamic process of sharing and listening. When employees are invited to share their opinions and see that their input is valued, they become more engaged. This supports the framework of dialogic communication, which values mutuality, openness, and responsiveness in interactions. According to Kim (2023), dialogic competencies—such as respect for different perspectives and willingness to adjust communication styles—are especially critical in diverse and inclusive workplaces. In fact, Kim’s study on Asian employees in U.S. organizations revealed that mutual understanding and openness in communication were essential for building trust and psychological safety. Managers who demonstrate dialogic leadership are better at managing multicultural teams and responding to sensitive issues such as discrimination, inclusion, or generational gaps.

As organizations continue to adopt hybrid work models, digital tools, and global workforce structures, the expectations for managerial communication have grown. Employees today expect not only clarity but also authenticity, empathy, and inclusion in every message they receive. This reflects a shift in leadership from command-and-control styles toward more participative, relational, and communicative models. Research by Lee and Kim (2021) showed that when managers engage in symmetrical internal communication—where dialogue is open and balanced—employees are more likely to become brand advocates, even promoting their company on social media. This kind of employee advocacy is not only good for external image but also reflects strong internal leadership and morale.

Despite all this evidence, many organizations still overlook internal communication as a core part of their leadership strategy. In many cases, communication is seen as the

responsibility of HR or corporate communications departments, while line managers are not trained or supported in developing communication skills. This disconnect creates a significant gap between strategy and execution. The current literature reveals that to improve managerial effectiveness, internal communication must be treated as a shared responsibility and embedded into performance frameworks. Moreover, communication strategies should be aligned with broader organizational values, goals, and employee needs.

The review also highlights that poor internal communication can have long-lasting negative effects. Mohamad et al. (2023), in their study of high-risk industries, found that ineffective communication during internal crises led to employee confusion, fear, and distrust. On the other hand, managers who communicated early, clearly, and compassionately were able to reduce negative perceptions and maintain operational stability. These findings reinforce that internal communication is not just important during stable times but becomes even more critical during uncertainty and change. Managers must therefore be trained not only in technical or operational skills but also in communication strategies tailored to different situations—such as mergers, layoffs, health emergencies, or restructuring.

Lastly, the role of organizational culture cannot be ignored. Nofiyanti et al. (2025) found that a supportive and transparent work culture enhances the effectiveness of communication. When the organizational environment promotes openness, respect, and collaboration, managers find it easier to engage employees and build strong team dynamics. Communication in such settings is not forced or artificial but natural and value-driven. This shows that internal communication and managerial effectiveness are deeply embedded in the larger system of organizational behavior and culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a systematic literature review methodology to examine how internal communication contributed to managerial effectiveness in business organizations. Rather than collecting primary data from surveys or interviews, this research relied on the systematic identification, analysis, and synthesis of existing scholarly works, including journal articles, books, and empirical studies published within the last ten years. The choice of a literature review methodology was based on the goal of building a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the topic by integrating previous findings and theoretical frameworks from communication, leadership, and organizational behavior studies.

The literature selection process followed a structured approach with clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The literature was selected through a purposeful sampling strategy, focusing on peer-reviewed publications that specifically addressed internal communication, managerial effectiveness, employee engagement, leadership communication, and organizational performance. Databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR were used to collect relevant articles using search terms like “internal communication,” “managerial effectiveness,” “leadership communication,” “employee engagement,” and “organizational behavior.” Studies that were conceptual, theoretical, or empirical in nature were included, as long as they contributed meaningful insights related to the research questions. Priority was given to sources published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the analysis reflected the most recent developments in digital communication, remote work, and leadership practices.

The analysis employed a thematic synthesis approach, which was particularly suited for identifying patterns and generating new insights across diverse studies (Yue et al., 2025). The analysis process followed three key steps: identification, thematic categorization, and synthesis. In the identification phase, over 50 scholarly works were initially collected. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria—such as language (English), relevance, and credibility—about 30 core articles were selected for in-depth review. Each selected article was systematically coded using NVivo qualitative analysis software to identify recurring themes, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings. Initial codes were generated inductively from the data, then organized into broader thematic categories through constant comparison and iterative refinement. These articles were then categorized into thematic areas, such as (1) the role of internal communication in leadership performance, (2) communication strategies in hybrid or digital workplaces, (3) employee perceptions of communication, and (4) theoretical models linking communication and managerial success. Each theme was analyzed to extract common findings, contrasting viewpoints, and gaps in the literature.

To guide the interpretation and structure of the analysis, the study applied several theoretical frameworks, including Relationship Management Theory, which emphasized the value of long-term trust-building through communication; the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which highlighted communication as a resource for improving employee performance and reducing burnout; and Dialogic Communication Theory, which framed internal communication as a two-way, responsive process that enhanced understanding and participation. These frameworks provided a structured lens through which the literature was analyzed and allowed the study to draw connections between theory and practice.

In summary, the literature review methodology used in this research offered a deep, interpretative understanding of how internal communication affected managerial effectiveness. This method was particularly appropriate for synthesizing a broad and interdisciplinary body of knowledge, identifying patterns, and laying the groundwork for future empirical research. The insights gained from this literature-based approach were expected to help organizations, scholars, and practitioners better understand the strategic importance of internal communication in modern management.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Internal Communication as the Foundation of Managerial Effectiveness

Internal communication (IC) plays a vital role in shaping how managers lead, engage, and align teams with organizational goals. The reviewed literature consistently shows that well-structured internal communication enhances managerial effectiveness by enabling clarity, transparency, and employee trust. Fabricius (2020) emphasized that internal communication goes beyond just the delivery of information—it involves ensuring that messages are understandable, accessible, and aligned with company goals. Employees are more productive and goal-oriented when they understand the "why" behind their tasks. Furthermore, Jiang and Shen (2023) highlight the significance of transparent communication in fostering employee engagement and influencing performance behaviors. Managers who communicate openly and with authenticity foster better relationships with their teams. Transparency helps reduce misunderstandings and creates an environment of mutual respect, which is essential for effective leadership.

Trust emerges as the cornerstone of managerial credibility, with studies demonstrating that consistent, honest communication over time builds psychological safety—a condition where employees feel secure enough to take interpersonal risks, share ideas, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences (Kim, 2023). This trust-based foundation becomes particularly critical during organizational transitions, where employees look to managers for reassurance and direction.

Communication Errors as Barriers to Managerial Success

Maczuga (2025) found that communication errors—such as lack of feedback, inconsistency in messages, and poor delivery—are major barriers to employee engagement and the execution of quality management policies. These errors lead to confusion, reduced motivation, and eventually poor performance. Interestingly, older employees were more sensitive to these inconsistencies, suggesting that communication strategies should be tailored to demographic factors within organizations.

The findings support the idea that internal communication must be intentional and audience-focused. For instance, younger employees may prefer digital and fast-paced communication, while older employees may require more direct and detailed communication approaches. Managerial effectiveness improves significantly when these nuances are addressed. These organizational implications suggest that managers should conduct regular communication audits to identify gaps, invest in multi-channel communication strategies that accommodate diverse preferences, and establish clear protocols for message consistency across all organizational levels.

Digital Communication and E-Leadership in Modern Organizations

Kraft (2019) and Gomes et al. (2023) both explored the concept of E-leadership and how managers use digital tools like emails, video calls, and social platforms to communicate with dispersed teams. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital communication technologies, transforming platforms like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Zoom from supplementary tools into primary channels for organizational interaction (Yue et al., 2025). With the rise of remote work, the effectiveness of a manager is no longer solely determined by in-person interactions but also by their ability to use digital channels effectively. While digital tools offer flexibility, they also create challenges. Kraft's findings suggest that managers must be media-literate and aware of how to choose the right platform for the right message. Misuse of these tools can lead to misinterpretation or information overload. Therefore, training in digital communication is increasingly essential for modern managerial roles. Specific competencies identified include: understanding platform affordances (e.g., when to use synchronous versus asynchronous communication), maintaining virtual presence through consistent engagement, and creating digital rituals that replicate the social bonding of physical workplaces.

Gomes et al. (2023) further argue that when leaders effectively use digital communication strategies, they not only improve team collaboration but also reduce turnover intention. In hybrid work environments, managers who establish clear communication norms—such as designated "focus hours" free from meetings, standardized response time expectations, and regular check-ins—report higher team satisfaction and performance (Mohamad et al.,

2023). Managers must develop clear protocols for online communication to maintain productivity and a sense of belonging among remote teams. Real-world examples demonstrate these principles: companies like GitLab and Automattic have successfully scaled entirely remote operations by implementing transparent documentation practices, asynchronous communication defaults, and explicit guidelines for digital collaboration, resulting in measurable improvements in employee retention and productivity.

Internal Communication and Employee Engagement

Several studies strongly support the link between internal communication and employee engagement. According to Fabricius (2020), engagement is not just about enthusiasm at work—it reflects how connected employees feel to the organization's goals. Communication that includes two-way feedback, clear expectations, and emotional acknowledgment creates a strong engagement culture.

Jiang and Shen (2023) supported this by identifying transparent and authentic communication as key antecedents of engagement. Managers who show sincerity in their messages, especially during difficult times like organizational change or crisis, are more likely to retain committed employees. Their findings confirm that effective internal communication leads to lower turnover and better individual performance. Maczuga (2025) also confirmed that better communication practices lead to higher employee engagement, especially when feedback mechanisms are in place. Employees feel heard and valued, which increases their willingness to follow managerial direction and contribute beyond basic tasks. For organizations, this translates into practical strategies: implementing regular pulse surveys to capture employee sentiment, establishing feedback loops where employee input visibly influences decisions, and training managers in active listening techniques that validate employee concerns while maintaining organizational objectives.

Communication and Employer Attractiveness

Another aspect highlighted by Gomes et al. (2023) is how internal communication affects employer branding. Good communication builds a company's image internally, making it a more attractive place to work. When managers consistently deliver clear, motivational, and inclusive messages, they influence how employees view the organization.

This attractiveness also influences performance and retention. Employees are more likely to stay and perform well in companies they view as supportive and communicative. The study encourages organizations to integrate communication strategies into their human resource management plans to enhance long-term effectiveness.

Symmetrical Communication and Employee Advocacy

Lee and Kim (2021) examined how symmetrical communication—where both sides (employees and managers) actively participate in dialogue—leads to greater employee advocacy, especially on social media. Managers who adopt a symmetrical approach by listening, acknowledging, and adjusting their messages create a strong culture of trust. This trust becomes the foundation of advocacy. Employees who feel respected by their managers are more likely to speak positively about the company, both offline and online. In today's

digital world, such advocacy boosts the organization's reputation and supports managerial efforts in brand and culture building.

The Strategic Role of Dialogic Competence

Kim (2023) emphasized dialogic competencies such as openness, mutuality, and responsiveness as essential qualities for effective internal communication, especially in diverse workplaces. Managers who practice dialogic communication not only improve inclusion but also foster trust and satisfaction across different employee groups. These competencies are especially crucial in sensitive contexts, such as during social or cultural tensions. Managers who demonstrate authentic communication during these times strengthen their legitimacy and earn long-term loyalty from their employees. The study provides strong evidence that managerial effectiveness depends significantly on a leader's communication style and interpersonal skills.

Performance Management and Communication Analytics

Schlafke et al. (2012) introduced the concept of using business analytics within performance management, which can also be applied to internal communication. Managers can now track engagement levels, feedback rates, and message effectiveness through digital dashboards. These tools help identify which messages are resonating and which are not, allowing managers to adjust their communication strategies in real-time. Analytics offer managers a way to measure the effectiveness of their internal communication, which in turn supports performance improvement and organizational alignment. These data-driven approaches mark a shift from intuition-based communication toward evidence-based leadership.

Organizational Culture as a Communication Enabler

Nofiyanti et al. (2025) found that a positive and collaborative work culture enhances communication effectiveness. Managers who operate within an open and respectful culture can communicate more efficiently and achieve better outcomes. Organizational values such as trust, fairness, and transparency act as communication enablers, empowering managers to lead more effectively.

This culture-communication link suggests that managerial effectiveness cannot be seen in isolation from the larger organizational environment. Managers who promote and align with core cultural values are more likely to succeed in engaging and guiding their teams.

Internal Crisis Communication in High-Risk Industries

Mohamad et al. (2023) examined the internal communication strategies used in high-risk industries. They found that employees' perceptions of crises are heavily influenced by how managers communicate during turbulent times. Managers who anticipate risks and maintain consistent communication reduce anxiety and maintain performance under pressure. Their findings reinforce that internal communication is not only a routine managerial function but also a critical tool in risk and crisis management. Managerial effectiveness in such environments is closely tied to the ability to manage internal narratives and maintain trust through stable communication.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Communication

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) have become central issues in organizational communication. Kim (2023) showed that employees from marginalized groups—such as Asian employees in the study—respond better to managers who are open, empathetic, and inclusive in their communication. Managerial effectiveness, therefore, requires an understanding of cultural context and the ability to adapt messages accordingly. D&I-oriented leadership combined with dialogic communication strengthens relationships, especially when employees face societal challenges. This type of leadership is more relevant than ever in the post-pandemic, socially aware workplace.

Media Literacy as a Managerial Competence

Arsalani et al. (2025) introduced the concept of media literacy as a managerial tool. In today's information-saturated world, managers need to critically assess digital information, identify misinformation, and communicate effectively using multiple platforms. Those who lack media literacy may mislead teams or fail to capitalize on digital opportunities. Improved media literacy allows managers to craft accurate, timely, and relevant messages. This competence enhances not only individual performance but also overall organizational efficiency.

Voice and Empowerment through Social Media

Ghani and Malik (2023) explored how social media offers employees a platform for voice and participation. Managers who embrace this by encouraging controlled and constructive digital dialogue foster a more democratic workplace. This empowerment boosts motivation and trust, both of which are essential to managerial effectiveness. However, managers must also set clear boundaries and expectations for digital conduct. When done right, social media becomes a two-way tool for communication and performance feedback.

CONCLUSION

This literature-based analysis demonstrates that internal communication serves as a powerful driver of managerial effectiveness in modern business organizations, with clear, consistent, and transparent practices enabling managers to align teams, engage employees, build trust, foster inclusive cultures, and achieve long-term outcomes like retention, brand advocacy, and satisfaction. Two-way dialogue, feedback mechanisms, digital literacy, dialogic competencies, and adaptation to hybrid environments prove essential, reducing misunderstandings and resistance during crises or transformations, while extending beyond operations to strategic leadership functions requiring ongoing training and investment. Organizations prioritizing these elements through supportive cultures and tools are poised for competitive success.

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