

# Power of your Employees: How to Create Change and Innovation through Effective Internal Communication and Increased Staff Engagement

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## **Presenter:**

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# Today's Agenda

**The power of internal communication**

**A protocol for organizing and communicating key messages**

**Understanding internal implications of brand and culture**

**Five questions for assessing the foundation of internal communication**

**How to effectively engage internal audiences**

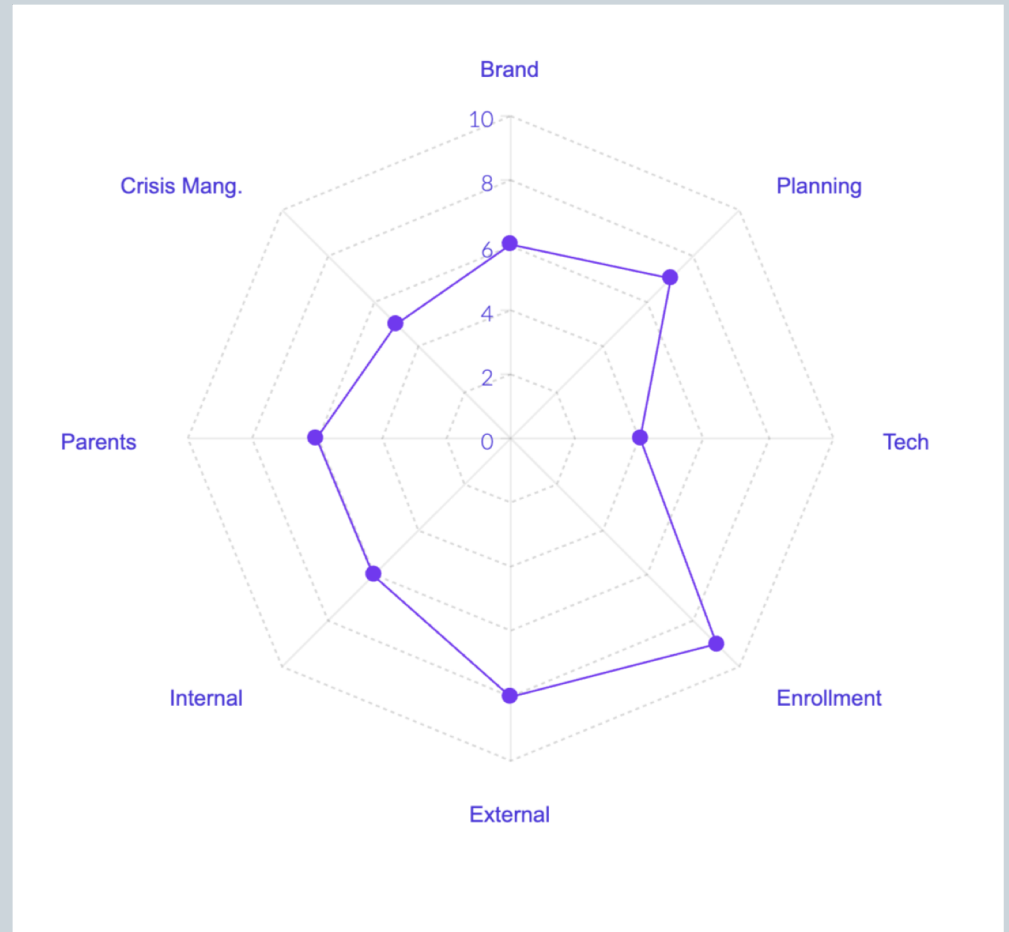
**A model for internal communication**

# Power

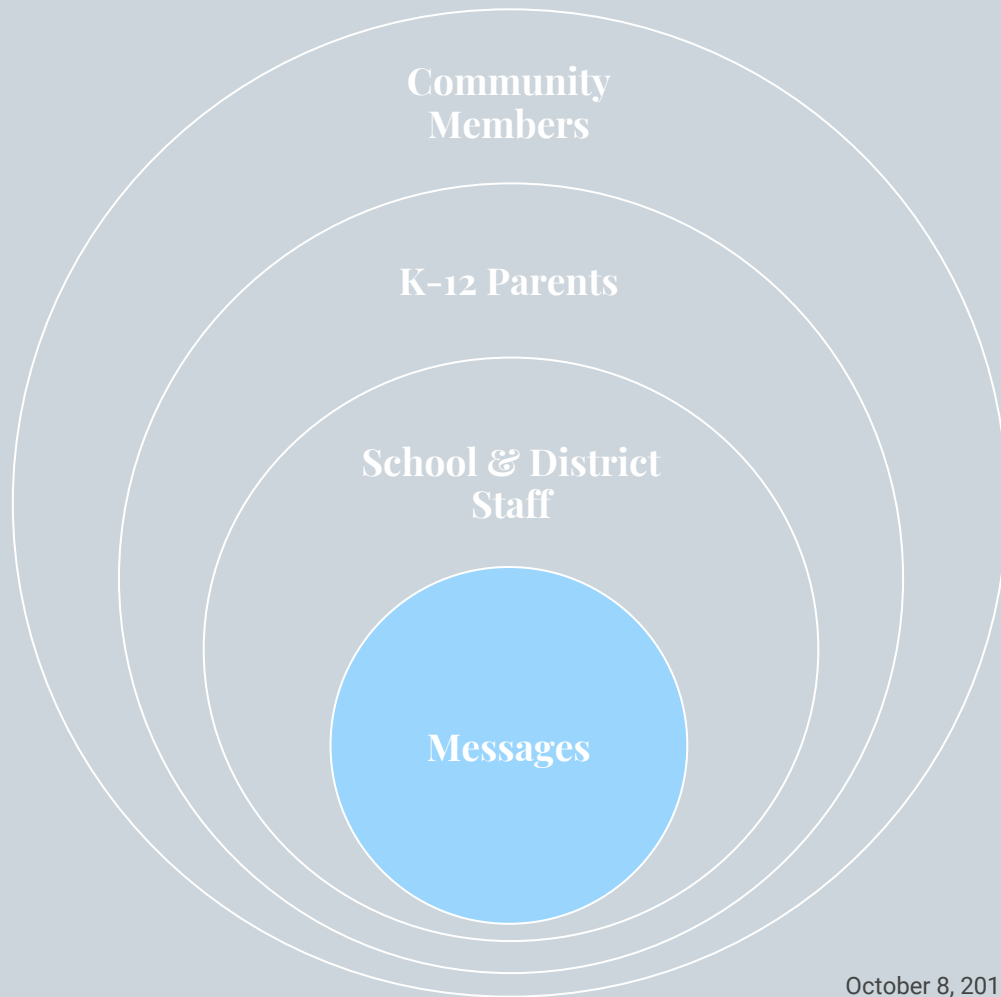
Of Internal Communication

# Eight Strategies for Effective K-12 Communication

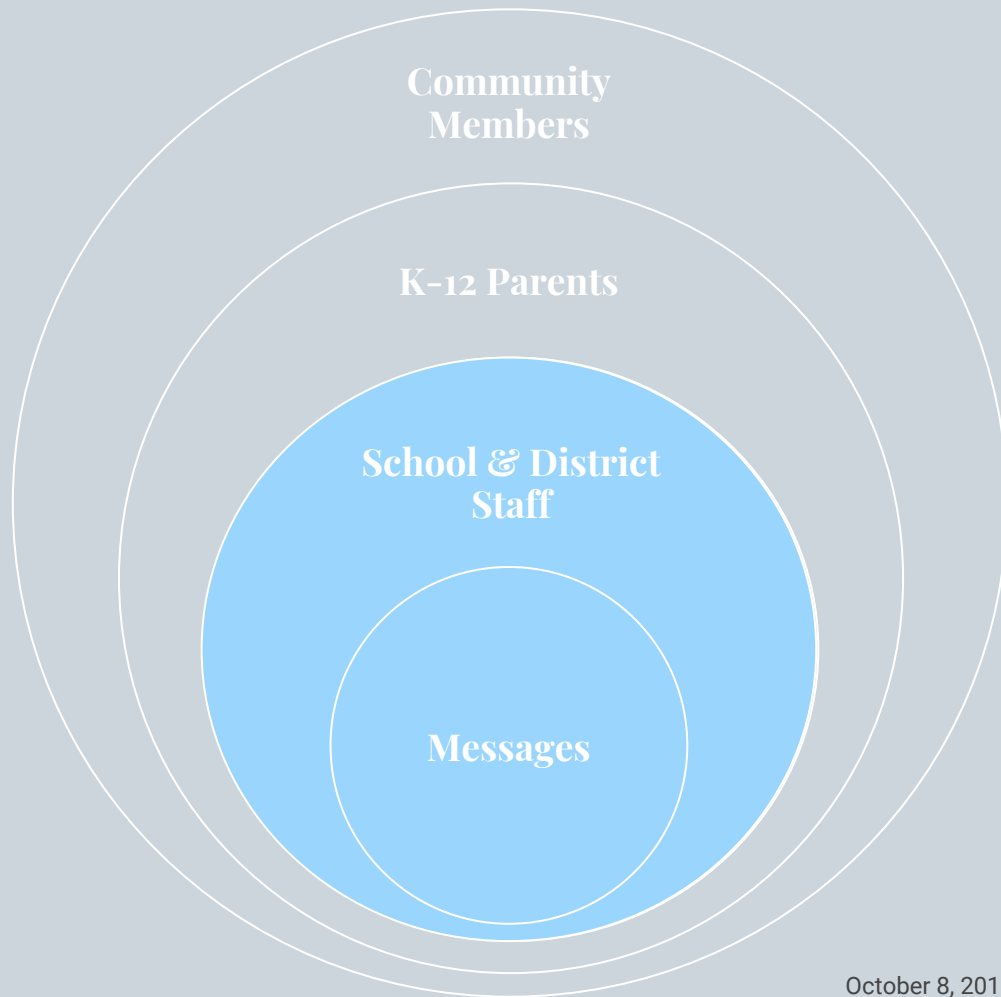
We have organized an approach to effective K-12 communication into eight strategies. The most effective communication programs address each of these eight strategies. Today's presentation and content will focus on the Internal Communication and Engagement strategy.



# Importance of Internal Communication



# Importance of Internal Communication



# Additional Thoughts

**Strong connections and communication with employees can reduce concerns and increase loyalty**

**Employees are our first-line ambassadors and function best with information and understanding**

**Employees are usually seen as highly credible by the public**



# Protocol

For Organizing and Communicating Key Messages

# Communication Protocol – Basic Process for Framing and Communicating Key Messages

While not just useful in preparing key messages for internal audiences, our Communication Protocol is helpful in developing messages and identifying audiences. When used regularly, the Protocol will become second nature.

# Communication Protocol – Basic Process to Follow When Communicating

**What is the issue or problem?** – Discuss and clearly identify the core issue or problem

**How will the issue be framed?** – Consider how the district will outline the issue or problem, and how it will be presented to audiences

**How does this issue or problem affect other issues?** – Consider how a particular issue or problem will affect other issues in the district, which will guide how to respond to each issue

**What stakeholder groups need to know about this issue?** – Identify the stakeholder groups that are the primary audiences for this issue

**What are the key messages that we will communicate about the issue?** – Identify the key ideas for stakeholders to know about this issue, attempting to focus on three-five key thoughts

**How will this issue be communicated?** – Identify the methods and strategies to communicate with identified stakeholders

**What is the time line to publicly release or respond to this issue?** – Develop a time line for communicating about the issue

**Who is the main spokesperson on this issue?** – Identify a person who will serve as the main spokesperson on this issue

# Understand

Internal Implications of Brand and Culture

**An organization is the accumulation of every choice made by every employee.**

**”Culture is the result of every choice, big and small.”**

*Josh Levine, “Great Mondays: How To Design a Company Culture Employees Love”*

# A strong, well-articulated brand is critical for both internal and external audiences

Your school district's brand is the soul of your district – and it is not just your logo. For internal audiences, your brand helps define who you are as an organization. And a strong brand helps to define the culture of your organization. And your culture can flourish through effective communication and engagement of staff.

# What is Brand Strategy?

The purpose of the brand strategy is to clarify your truths and amplify what makes you unique. Among other things, your brand identifies your district's:

**Why** – We exist to . . .

**How** – We create value by . . .

**What** – We deliver . . .

**Your district's culture is one of the single biggest contributors to overall performance.**

**“Culture is the foundation that can support or undermine an employee's behaviors and choices. Culture isn't a problem to be solved; it's a business function to be supported, evaluated and applied.”**

*Josh Levine, “Great Mondays: How To Design a Company Culture Employees Love”*



# Maintaining a healthy, supportive internal culture takes constant care and feeding.

The internal health of your district can quickly sour if left unattended. Internal communication and engagement can never be left to chance and must be a key strategy of other district. Without it, it is challenging – if not impossible – to maintain positive relationships with other audiences.

# Questions

For Assessing the Foundation of your Internal Communication Efforts

# Core Questions: Do You Have:

**A regular newsletter or some other way to connect with staff?**

**A documented process for providing information to front-line staff so they can share it with others?**

**A new employee orientation to provide information on the brand, culture, vision and overall direction of your district?**

**A program/programs to recognize staff for such things as years of service?**

**A process to regularly seek input and feedback from staff members?**

# How to

Effectively Engage Internal Audiences

# Tips for Effective Engagement

**Be clear how input/feedback will be used and who is making the decision at the start of the process**

**Use quick-hit conversations and surveys to gather input/feedback**

**Use regular newsletter to share information and updates, and turn staff meetings into discussions and input sessions**

**Show staff how input has been used**

**Implement an internal opinion leader model**

# Internal Opinion Leaders

**Opinion leaders have influence with others and can motivate behavior of others**

**Opinion leader model is research based – 1-45-8-45-1**

**Opinion leaders have followers who are influenced**

**Opinion leaders will help to build and strengthen relationships**

# Model

For Internal Communication in School Districts

# The purpose of this model is:

**To more effectively communicate with district staff members**

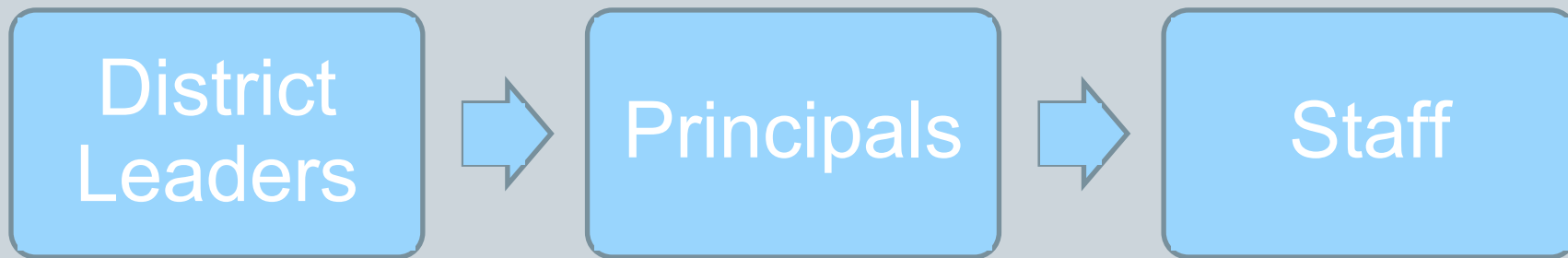
**To reduce the amount of email sent by district leaders and principals to staff members**

**To help district leaders and principals plan ahead and look out to what to communicate**

**To streamline how information flows to and from staff members**

**To increase each staff member's accountability to stay informed about school and district issues, events and activities**





# Steps in the Process:

**District leaders create/organize content for a weekly email to be distributed to principals and other leaders; content should be organized in the following categories:**

**Know** – Information for the principals not to be shared with others

**Do** – Information/tasks that require action by the principals

**Share** – Information that needs to be shared with all staff members and/or parents

**The content for each week's newsletter should be discussed and planned at least a week in advance**

# Steps in the Process continued:

**Days of the week should be identified for when the district email gets sent to principals and when the principals email gets sent to staff**

**A simple “KDS” email format should be created to consistently organize content**

**Each department or team member will be responsible for creating and submitting content for each week’s newsletter; these weekly newsletters are the only email (other than emergencies) to be sent to staff so it is important that leaders plan ahead**

# Keys to Making this Work

**Leaders need to commit to only sending one email to staff each week unless there is an emergency**

**Principals need to communicate to staff on the importance of reading the weekly email – this is how we will communicate with you – and there needs to be accountability for reading it**

**Resist the temptation to send other emails – it will clutter email in-boxes and will diminish the effectiveness of the model**



# Thank you.

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