

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

As the way we work undergoes change, how line managers communicate with their teams is more important than ever in spreading commitment and engagement throughout the organisation.

by Christopher Bones



It is a truth universally acknowledged that an organisation in possession of engaged employees must be able to outperform its competition. Universally acknowledged it maybe, but not often achieved. Regardless of whether it is pride, or prejudice, many managers seem incapable of engaging their people sufficiently so that they are prepared to go the extra mile in pursuit of the goals of the organisation. Without engagement, no organisation can hope to align the efforts of its people to the goals it has set itself. Without alignment, there is far less hope of successful execution of strategy. In the context of changing organisational process, structures and cultures this desire to go the extra mile is a crucial delineator of success. Management by its nature, from Chief Executive downwards, is confronted with a series of dilemmas, and when faced by a dilemma, you have to make a choice. The right choice requires good data, critical analysis, an understanding of goals and strategy and an appreciation of the wider implications for the reputation of the organisation. Disengaged people are far less likely to make the right choices and ultimately are far more likely to make the wrong choices which could, at the very worst, so badly damage reputation that it may never recover. This is a risk that no modern organisation, voluntary, public or private sector, can ignore.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE There is plenty of research out there which makes the point about engagement and success. Gallup, Sirota and others

have all done work which demonstrates the correlation between engagement and superior performance. They have also pinpointed an important distinction between commitment and engagement. While commitment is about the emotional attachment one has to the organisation within which one works, and the pride one has in its achievements, engagement is more; it is the demonstration of discretionary effort to ensure the organisation achieves its goals. Pulling these thoughts together generated two insights which have influenced my thoughts on this subject matter and impacts upon the role and development of effective leaders and managers.

COMMITMENT GAP The first is that there is likely to be a gap between the level of commitment in any organisation and the level of engagement (commitment always being higher than engagement); superior performing organisations being those with smaller gaps. The second is that while commitment can be influenced significantly, though not exclusively, by the leadership of an organisation, engagement is primarily, though not exclusively, the outcome of the interaction between an individual employee and their line manager. At Cadbury Schweppes we expressed this second insight in the following way: "My line manager is the lens through which I look at the company, and through which the company looks at me." This single observation explains in my mind why so many organisations find it difficult to convert commitment into engagement. To do so requires every line manager to be able to impact positively on everyone who works for them...

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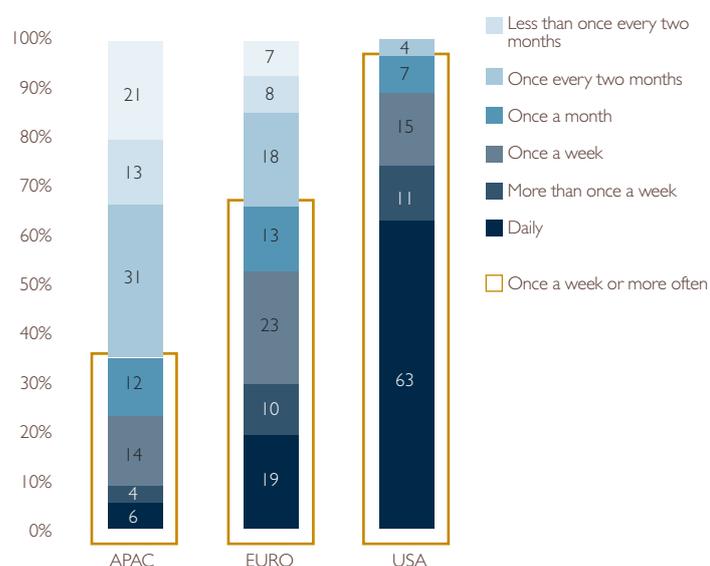
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FACTS & FIGURES

Following our look at PR professionals and blogs a few months ago, Text100 Global PR company has reported on the different attitudes of bloggers from the US, Europe and Asia Pacific (APAC) towards PR. The survey (conducted from April 6 to May 18 this year) began by looking at the frequency of contacts initiated by PR firms or corporations with

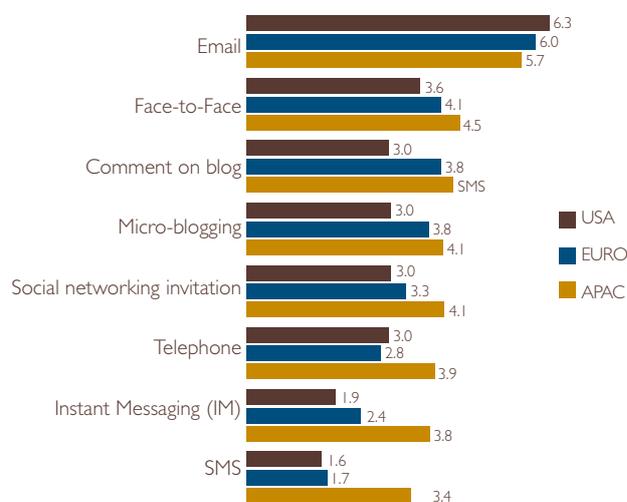
Frequency of contact



bloggers in the previous 6 months (below left). 65 per cent of European bloggers get contacted once a week or more, in contrast with Asia (36 per cent) and the US (96 per cent). Email is the most preferred means of contact with bloggers, while SMS and IM are least preferred. APAC bloggers seem to be more flexible in their preferred means of contact (below right).

Taken from Text100

Preferred means of contact



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COMMENTARY

A Culture of Impunity

Another human rights campaigner has been murdered in Grozny, Chechnya. Following the abduction and killing on July 15 of Natalia Estemirova, an activist working in the North Caucasus area, the bodies of Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband Alik (Umar) Lechayevich Dzhabrailov were found in the trunk of a car on 11 August. These recent killings follow those earlier this year of human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova, and of journalist Anna Politkovskaya in 2006. Sadulayeva had been vocal in exposing human rights violations in the area. Activists believe that it is the Kremlin's support for Chechnyan president Ramzan Kadyrov (pictured in conversation with Medvedev) which has created a culture of impunity that allows kidnappings, tortures and killings, for which many believe Kadyrov is indirectly responsible. When accused of responsibility for the death of Estemirova, he



retorted: "Why should Kadyrov kill a woman who was useful to no one? She was without honour, merit or conscience". The martyrdom of human rights campaigners in this unstable part of the world needs more international attention and condemnation.

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PERSONNEL

RENAULT NISSAN



Simon Sproule

(Head, Internal & External Communications)

Institution: Renault-Nissan

Start: September 01



France: Sproule returns to the automotive industry

Former Nissan PR head SIMON SPROULE has returned to the automotive industry after a brief sojourn in the US at Microsoft, which he joined as corporate vice president for corporate communications earlier this year. He moves to Paris, where he will be head of internal and external communications for the Renault-Nissan alliance. He is replaced at Microsoft by Frank Shaw, who led the Microsoft account worldwide for Waggner Edstrom.

Austrian



Martin Hehemann

(VP, Corporate Communications)

Institution: Austrian Airlines Group

Start: July 01



Austria: Hehemann takes flight at Austrian Airlines Group

MARTIN HEHEMANN is the new vice president of corporate communications at the Austrian Airlines Group, where he succeeds Livia Dandrea-Bohm. Hehemann began his career as a business journalist and has worked as press officer for Raiffeisen Zentralbank. He has also managed the group communications and marketing of Bank Austria before being appointed as head of brand and change management at UniCredit.

SASOL



Claudia Wagner

(Head, Communications & Public Affairs)

Institution: Sasol Olefins & Surfactants

Start: August 01



Germany: Wagner replaces Reif at Sasol Olefins

CLAUDIA WAGNER is head of communications and public affairs at the international chemistry company Sasol Olefins & Surfactants. In this function she is responsible for global external and internal communications. Wagner comes from the affiliated firm Sasol Solvents Germany, where she was responsible for press and public relations in Germany, Europe and the USA. In her new position, she follows Anke Reif, who has retired.

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EVENTS



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CSR'09: Turning Innovation into Responsibility

In the continuing quest for business growth and the current state of financial crisis, many companies are readapting their strategy to an essential source of growth: innovation. The fourth edition of the International CSR Conference in Romania, CSR'09: Turning Innovation into Responsibility, features CSR thinkers from Intel Corp., Canon Europe, Novo Nordisk, Cadbury, European Commission, WWF International, P&G and more.

► Saga Business & Community,
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► NCCR Climate Management Centre, Zurich

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27.10.2009 – 30.10.2009

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► Valamar Lacroma Resort, Dubrovnik

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