Quick guide to internal communication

papirfly®

Contents

Strong internal communication carries with it significant value and positive change to organisations that make good use of it.

Moving away from information-dumping emails and newsletters to engaging, relevant and community-building communications that excite and inspire employees has shown significant improvements to companies that have made the change, and gone for a more human approach.

Although we're beginning to see more positive changes here, particularly among younger and tech-savvy companies, there are many who are still stuck in the past, or who haven't quite cracked the code. If a company has a minimal focus on internal communications, more than likely it is because they don't see the value it brings to the organisation, and the individuals within it.

With this guide we're hoping to shine a light on some common issues, and change old perceptions on internal comms. Even if you believe your company has modernised, and improved your internal communications policy already, there may be a thing or two in here that may be useful for you to know, starting with a little factoid.

15%
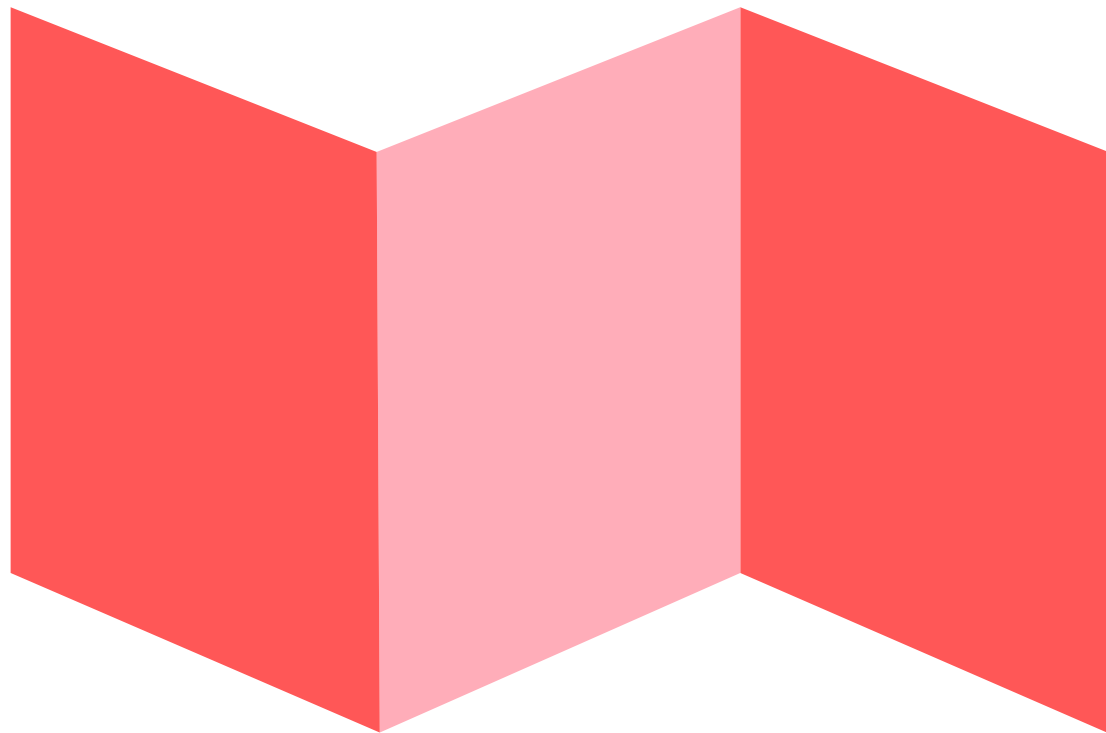
Studies have shown that a mere 15% of employees worldwide feel engaged in the workplace

*Source: Gallup

Considering that employee engagement is a significant factor in productivity, this should have alarm bells going off in the heads of the top management in most every company.

# How good communication will benefit your company

One of the main benefits of good internal communication is that it nurtures this sorely needed employee engagement.

Engagement is the key to making your employees feel like they're a part of the journey, both on a team and individual level, and to inspire loyalty and drive in each of them.

It is important to reinforce this communication with inclusivity, and recognition of the teams and individuals who have put in the efforts to ensure success on projects. Keep in mind that you're speaking **TO** your employees, not **AT** them, and your language should reflect this. Don't be afraid to communicate in a way that addresses people a little more directly. This kind of communication with positive reinforcement helps to forge a circle of encouragement that will keep your employees motivated and engaged from one project to the next, which in turn is notably beneficial to productivity. It will also encourage your employees to engage with and motivate one another on a daily basis as well, which further improves productivity.

Creating and maintaining a positive, inclusive and encouraging company culture will also make for tightly knit teams that work well together, who are also welcoming to new hires and help those newcomers settle in quickly.

What is "good internal communication"?
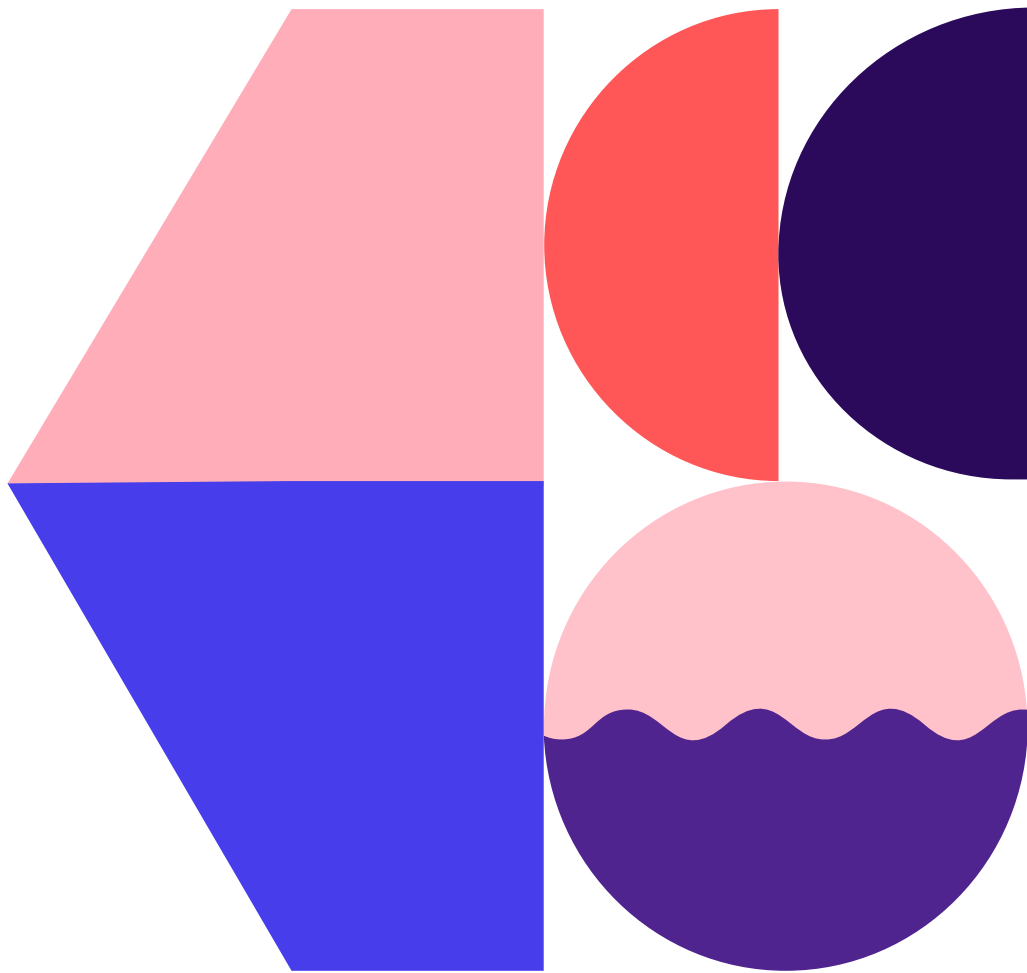
There are certainly no absolutely set answers here, and some things may work better in certain types of companies, but there are several points that you should take note of when planning out what you want communication to look like within your organisation.

There is of course the matter of confidentiality too, which will play into some of the aspects we will touch on in this guide. With no hard lines to stick to, this guide is perhaps more of a lighthouse to steer by, or a set of ideals that can be helpful to understand when forging your internal communication guidelines and company culture.

Communication is a two-way street

Top-down communication is of course far better than no communication at all, and there are of course cases where it's appropriate for communication to be one-way, for example in the early days of a new development within the company. But whenever possible, opening up for discussion, feedback and ideas will help make your employees feel like they are taking an active part in the corporate journey, and can also provide management with valuable feedback, ideas and perspectives to consider.

Strive for a good level of transparency

Poor levels of transparency is a surefire way to turn your employees disinterested and uncaring, or worse: angry and antagonistic. It's difficult to feel enthusiastic about change if you can't see what it is before it happens. It can also turn into a real nightmare scenario if organisational changes that you expect to be welcomed by the staff, turns out to be anything but. Being as transparent as possible with all levels of the company will help ease people into potential changes, and avoid any misunderstandings. Potentially you could even get the feedback and warning you need to avoid a major mistake in direction.

Remember to share in a manner that dispels anxiety, rather than cause it - An anxious employee can become a toxic member of staff very fast.

Fostering an open, honest and constructive culture will keep communication clear, prompt and helpful, and will play a big role in creating a positive atmosphere in the workplace and company as a whole on all levels, even in times when bad news comes around.

Your core values should always permeate communications

Your company's core values and ideals aren't just something you project externally, they are also something that must be embodied within the company as well, and this is one of the places where your internal communications play a very important role.

One of the things your core values help to provide is a foundation for what types of people are attracted to work in your company, and what your company culture will be. It's important that everyone keep these values and the culture in mind as they communicate regularly. In doing so, the culture and values will be reinforced daily, and stay at the forefront of everyone's mind, And it confirms to your employees in a subtle - maybe even sub-conscious way, that they are in the right place. This inspires loyalty in your employees, which will organically have a positive effect on your turnover rates. Loyal employees are far more likely to stay put. There's obviously more than just internal communication and core values that play into fostering this loyalty, but they are an integral part of it nonetheless.

Encourage the exchange of ideas

It's impossible to know just how many good ideas are lost forever because the employees who had them decided not to share. Whether it be out of fear of violating strict rules of hierarchy or communication, a lack of drive and engagement, or any other reason you could think of, many employees will let good ideas die unspoken. Whatever the reason, it can usually be boiled down to a lack of communication and/or openness in the company culture.

Sometimes great ideas will come from the most unlikely of places (or people!) and sometimes even a half-baked or downright bad idea can be the inspiration for a good one. Giving your employees the freedom to share their thoughts and ideas on the fly without fear of being put down will promote good teamwork, and could potentially lead to the discovery of new paths and ideas to follow.

Be visual and uncomplicated

Words are powerful but too many of them can weaken the impact of your messages. Communicating in a way that people can understand, digest and then reflect on is the key to success.

Internal communications doesn't mean a 2-hour presentation and a 50-page leave behind full of corporate jargon. It's about getting the key points across in an engaging and simplistic way, because realistically nobody is going to have time to read those lengthy documents with any solid comprehension. If you really do need to give your team a 50-page leave behind, provide them with visuals and summaries. **Nobody likes a wall of text!**
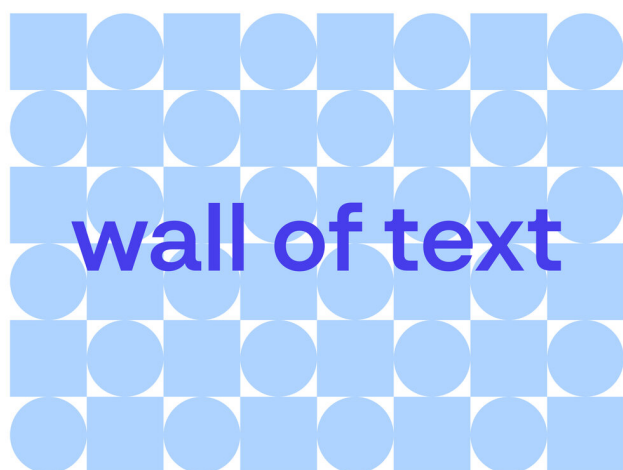
In other words, don't be afraid to destil and shorten your leave behinds, lengthy announcements and updates into shorter summaries with a bit of visual flair and lingual flavour. Allowing for a little bit of creativity in how you convey important information will make it more digestible, and easier to retain for the reader, in the case of information that should be remembered for future reference.

If you also use Papirfly's brand management platform, creating smaller or bigger documents that incorporate visual elements without breaking with brand guidelines becomes easy as pie.

Determine what channels you will utilise

With internal communications, many companies believe the only way is email. In fact, the breadth of channels that these messages can be delivered is vastly different from just a couple of decades ago. Determining which platforms will best reach your employees will depend on your personas, your goals and your budget considerations

Examples of good internal communications methods you may wish to consider in your business include:

- **Intranet forums and chatting tools** - applications like Slack, Trello and other Intranet forums offer a great space for co-workers to communicate and announce important information to many people at once, and can often be branded around your organisation

- **Face-to-face meetings** - your members of staff might prefer a more personal form of communication to inform them of how they're progressing, areas they can improve on and discuss ideas that can benefit the whole company moving forward. These meetings also reduce the potential for ambiguity in tone for cases of more serious feedback that could leave the employee(s) in question more anxious than necessary if done via a stern email or private chat message

- **Videos** - highly interactive, easily consumable and accessible for employees, it is no surprise that more businesses are using video for internal communications, whether it's in the form of helpful tutorials for employees or a way of showcasing your social events and developments across your entire workforce

- **Social media** - with 53% of people interested in improving their application of digital channels for this purpose, employing social media for your internal communications can present engaging pieces that demonstrate your organisation's events, values and celebrations to build a stronger bond with your employees

- **Workplace displays** - many brands are benefitting from incorporating internal displays, posters and designs within the workplace to consistently motivate and inspire employees, as well as keep them constantly engaged with your brand messages

- **Adapt your language** - leave your management jargon behind. Not everyone will understand what certain terminology or acronyms like ROI or ARR mean. Take the time to write it out in a manner that ensures anyone can understand what you are talking about, regardless of department or position

By applying all of these in a way that encompasses all members of your team globally (while taking care not to overwhelm them with too many channels at once), you are in a great position to reinforce the link between your workforce and the brand they work for.

# Who needs to implement best practices in internal communications?
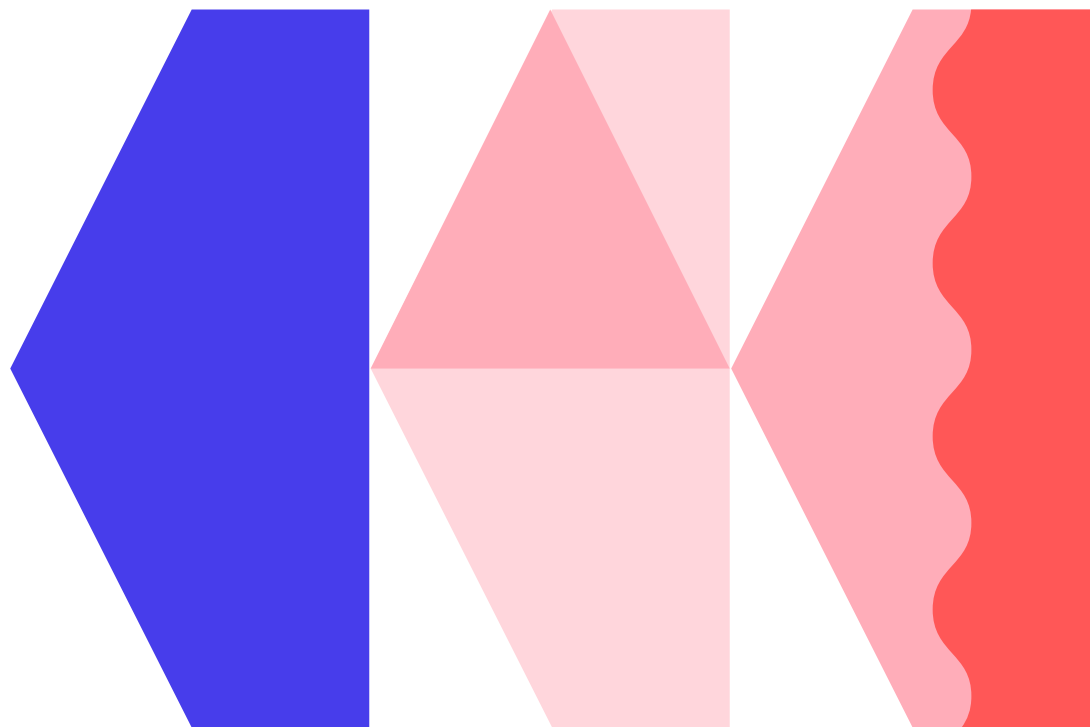
The short answer is everyone. But the internal communications strategy should outline who is responsible for driving each strand forward.

At a very basic level, there should be communication from an organisational level, at a managerial level and on an individual level. The points below stand to systemise the points we have gone through so far:

- Organisational comms should focus on internal business communication; anything that's to do with company-wide changes, growth, recognition of long-serving employees or bigger picture initiatives

- Managerial comms hinge on being able to create relationships with employees that encourage two-way conversation and feedback. It's not just another layer for top-down directive or announcements. A manager's role is as much about listening as it is making sure their employees are kept informed and engaged

- Individual comms are as much about communicating problems or issues constructively, as it is in keeping the culture alive in a company. This category could cover everything that's taken care of by HR, social events, improving working conditions and more

Every company is different, which means no internal communications plan should look the same. That said, the above points are absolutely pivotal best practices in internal communications.

Creating
an internal
communications
plan

papirfly®
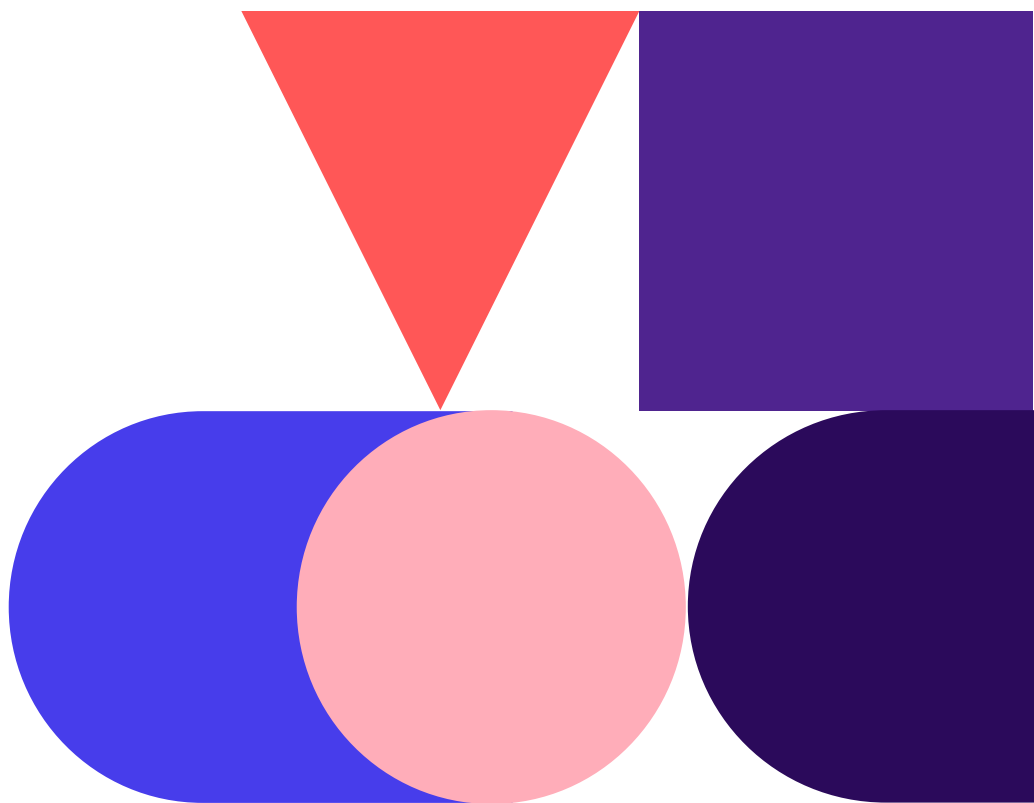
Now that we've established the importance your internal communications plan has on keeping your workforce engaged, invested and encouraged, how do you implement it into your organisational structure?

A fully-formed approach means a lot more than just regular email chains and annual performance reviews - it should be a fleshed-out, functioning process that covers all bases.

To help you achieve this, we've compiled some effective tips to consider when developing your internal communications strategy. Note that this is not an exhaustive list, and there could be other things worth considering, but we've tried to include the most important points beyond the topics we have already covered in this quick guide:

Assess your existing tools and approaches

First of all, take an objective look over how you currently communicate with your employees:

- What are your most widely used channels? Do you stick primarily to email or offer a more diverse range of internal comms?

- Which channel or approach is performing most effectively? Could you sacrifice others in order to place more emphasis on this?

- What message are these materials sending to your workforce? Does it encompass the values and emotions you want to invoke?

- Are your internal communications consistent? Do they deviate from piece-to-piece or from country-to-country?

A thorough assessment of your internal communications strategies, their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, will lay the foundation for you to identify any issues that need to be addressed and help you hone in on solutions.

Identify the personalities of your audience

In the same way your external marketing materials will need to be targeted around your ideal customers, your internal marketing communications have to be positioned based on your employee persona. Take the time to analyse and discover what your workforce wants from your communications:

- What information are they interested in?

- What are their likes and dislikes?

- What channels do they interact with outside of work?

- What cultural values and beliefs do they hold?

- Who is most actively interested in communications?

Knowing your audience is the first step in finding ways to engage with them. Identify what they're looking for from your brand and tailor your messages to best build that connection between the members of your global team.

Craft your company's tone of voice

Based on what you've learned about the personalities within your team, adjust your organisation's tone of voice accordingly.

There's a good chance that this will differ from how your brand communicates its products, services and values to your customers. This tone should be geared toward attracting and welcoming new staff to your ranks, as well as keeping your existing workforce motivated and attached to your brand.

While the nature of your tone of voice will be unique to your business, to reap the full benefits of your internal communications plan, it must:

- Present a totally clear and unambiguous message across your various channels

- Embody the core values your company stands for

- Maintain complete consistency at every touchpoint

- Give the right impression to your audience based on the values they hold close

Once you have settled on your tone of voice, keeping the guidelines for this in a central, easily accessible location empowers your teams across the globe to craft their own internal communications while toeing the company line. If you'd like to find out how this can be achieved, explore our effective communications solutions.

Remember also that tone of voice flows downstream. Most of your employees will notice how upper and middle management communicate in the channels, and will follow the examples made. The leadership should therefore be involved throughout the process of crafting the company's tone of voice, to ensure that they buy in and will actively take part in it going forward.

## Align your external and internal communications

Finally, while there is no question that the messages, tone and audience of your external communications will differ from your internal communications, there needs to be a level of consistency between the two. If the communications you are sending between your team vary significantly from the content you are disseminating to your outside audiences, it can cause a disconnect among your employees or your customers, and in some cases both.

Particularly on the channels that you utilise for both forms of communications, such as your website, social media and emails, it is important to assess whether both sides are clearly following the values and personality of your brand. If they diverge too significantly, discuss both concurrently to identify where changes can be made on both sides to bring them in line.

All communication is part of your brand

Ensuring that the translation of your brand vision is achieved in your internal communications across borders, and that everyone feels a sense of belonging to your organisation regardless of what location they operate in, is a challenge, but not an impossible one.

# How Papirfly can help improve your internal communication
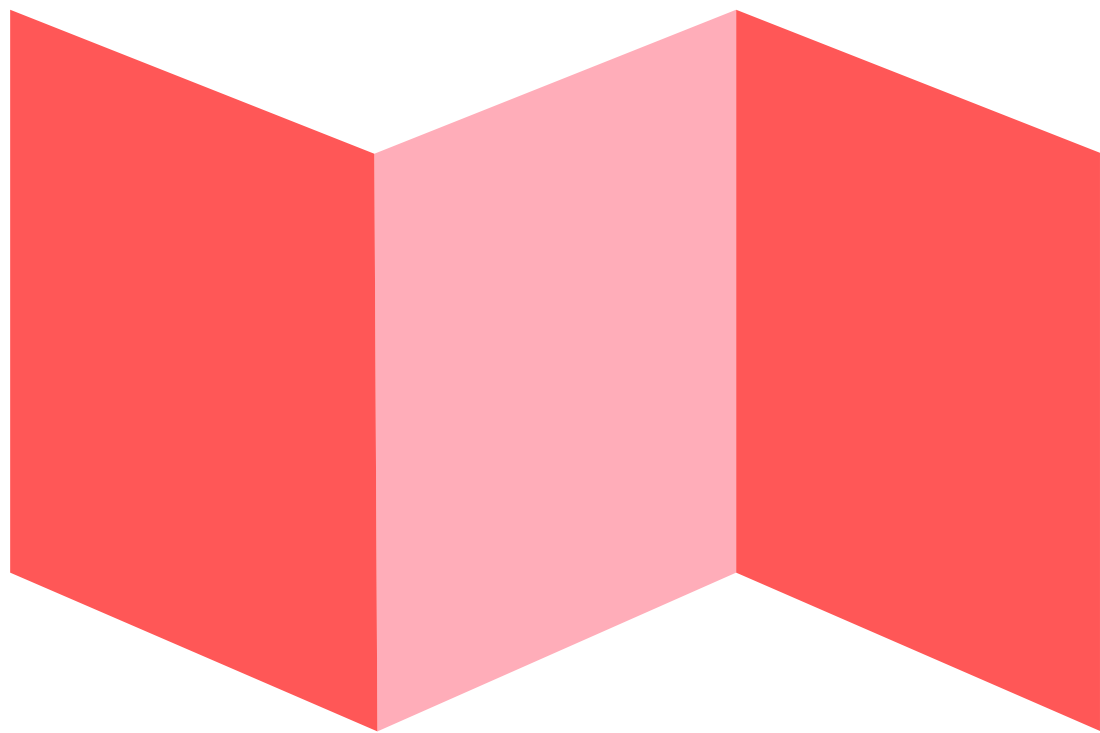
Communicating the right way internally is essential to keeping your employees happy, productive and helping them feel like they're truly a part of the company.

We hope this guide sheds light on just how important it is for keeping your company sailing smoothly.

To discover how you can enable your teams to play an active and valuable role in improving your internal communications into something that helps you realise total brand governance, check out our innovative brand management platform

Unleash your brand with Papirfly
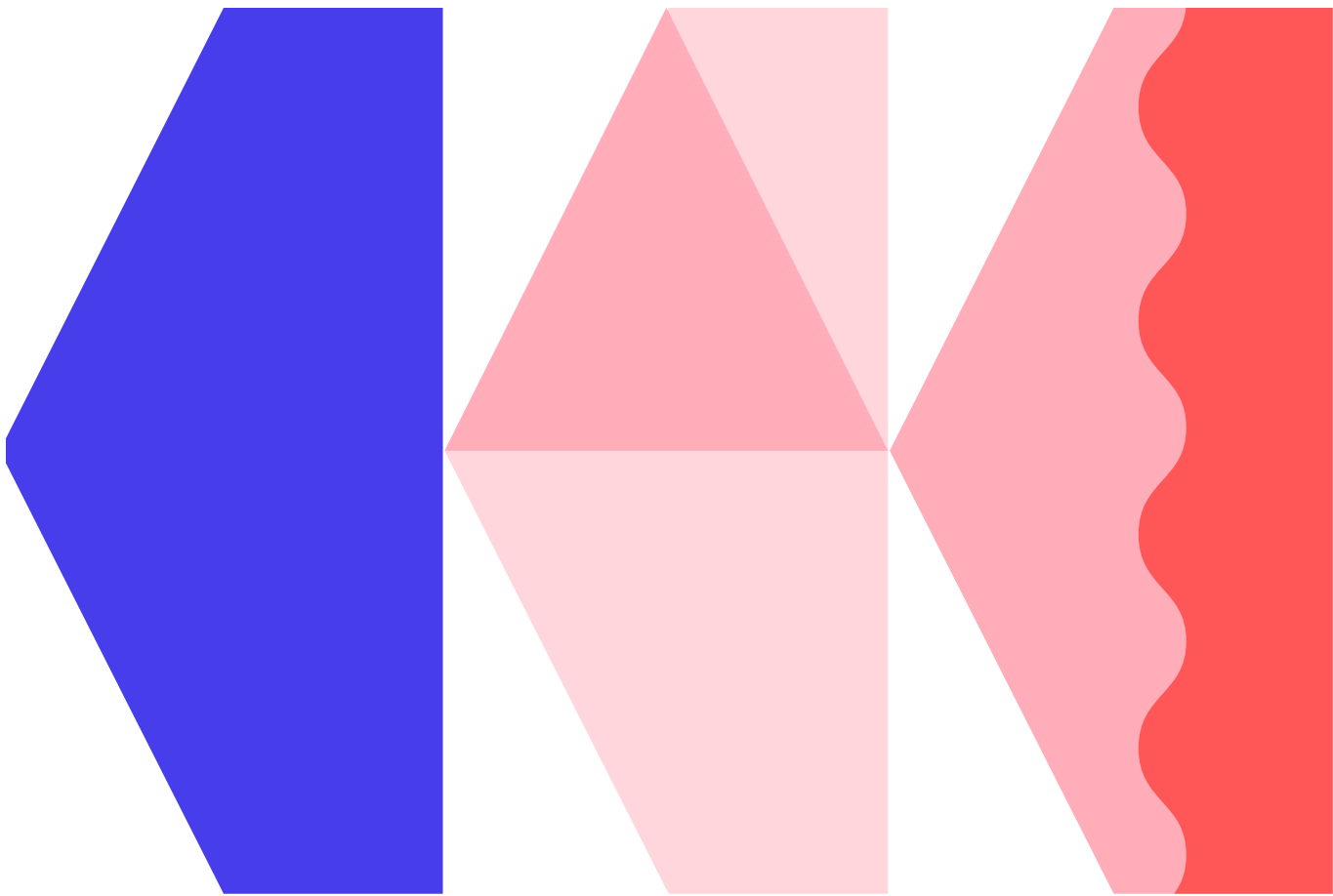
How does Papirfly empower your people?

We believe every enterprise should be able to provide tools to teams, so that the brand can be delivered to customers exactly as it was intended to be experienced.

At Papirfly, for over 20 years we've been driving innovation in brand management software to support brands in delivering consistent, multichannel experiences for their customers.

We empower people to unleash their brand.

How teams work today:

- Customers are experiencing inconsistent and diluted branding across touchpoints
- Stressed teams aren't getting the marketing materials they need or quickly enough
- Too much already-limited budget is being spent duplicating work and on multiple tech solutions
- Assets are not centralised or trackable resulting in loss of data to analyse budget spend

We know what brands need:

- Global brand governance now and for the future with guaranteed consistency at every touchpoint
- Faster go-to-market, creating assets in-house with the flexibility for on-brand, hyper-local messaging
- Increased ROI, saving money on every asset produced, creating space for teams to focus on strategy

We give you the tools to:

- Do **more for less**
- Produce all assets **in house**
- Create with **no previous design skills**
- Achieve **100% brand consistency**
- Reach **all markets, in any language**
- See a **complete bird's-eye view** of your branding and marketing efforts

Discover our all-in-one brand management platform

⌂ **Point**
Educate and Control
Brand guidelines

🖾 **Place**
Manage and Share
Digital Asset Management

▦ **Produce**
Create and Activate
On-brand templating

⧉ **Plus**
Integrations
Seamless integrations

ꔷ **Plan**
Plan and Collaborate
Effective workflows

▥ **Prove**
Measure and Optimise
Enterprise-grade analytics

Trusted by the world's most recognisable brands

1M+
regular
Papirfly users

600+
brands using
Papirfly worldwide

Build your on-brand culture with Papirfly

Our brand management platform enables complete brand adoption, and the creation of unlimited on-brand assets with our suite of enterprise-grade products-building brand equity and long-term customer loyalty.

Point
Educate & Control
Support global teams to understand your brand, through clear guidelines, official assets, core values, and more from online access point. Go local with unique hubs with local languages and nuances.

Place
Manage & Share
Centralise all assets with a dedicated DAM solution, categorising content for global and local usage in onesecure place for all approved material. Ensure every location has assets that serve their unique audience nuances.

Produce
Create & Activate
Guarantee 100% brand consistency with design templates aligned to brand guidelines and produce infinite studio-quality digital, print and video assets. Empower everyone to personalise to their audience using localised images, video and text options.

Plan
Plan & Collaborate
Achieve your bird's-eye view of all campaigns and activities, displaying status, budgets, contacts, and official design templates for use. Ensure every location utilises workflows that drives campaign responsivity.

Prove
Measure & Optimise
Analyse marketing activity via your dashboard, delivering reports and data across your business. Ensure local sites get feedback on best-performing content across the business, and give them data to let them know when their efforts are driving brand strategy success.

Plus
Integrations
Papirfly works seamlessly with your agency tech stack – removing hacks and workarounds, improving productivity and organisational efficiency across the business.

FORRESTER®

- 212% ROI
- 80% reduced effort in asset creation
- Enhanced content quality and improved business outcomes

"It's become super crucial for us with more than 50,000 users at the brand portal, both internal employees and external agencies. We are working with a huge number of downloads of all of the assets."

Interviewee from pharmaceutical

Source: A commissioned TEI study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Papirfly

Global brands trust Papirfly

Mondelēz International · SNACKING MADE RIGHT · Unilever · DANONE ONE PLANET. ONE HEALTH · MARS · IBM · SAP · Mercedes-Benz · BMW · ROLLS-ROYCE MOTOR CARS LTD · Audi · Europcar · BRIDGESTONE · IHG HOTELS & RESORTS · vodafone · H/H · Specsavers · e·on · sse · TJX · PHILIPS · Pfizer · sanofi · DNB · Deutsche Bank

IBM

"Life without Papirfly would be stressful. It would be slow, time consuming, and costly. Papirfly has enabled us to have a system in place where we can create assets that we need very quickly.
We can go to market much faster, we can react to our business and our clients a lot quicker, and it is also extremely cost effective."

Jo Bedford
Global Recruitment Branding Manager, IBM

Empower your people. Unleash your brand.

Discover our game-changing brand management platform.
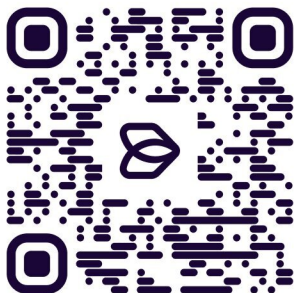
At papirfly.com you can

- Book a demo
- Explore brand management resources
- Hear success stories from empowered customers

Follow us on: (f) (in)

Where we're located:

Norway

Universitetsgata 2
0164 Oslo

Norway

Havnegata 15
4306 Sandnes

USA

1 High St Ct
Morristown
NJ 07960

Sweden

Torsgatan 26
SE-113 26 Stockholm

Sweden

Kaggensgatan 39
SE 392 48 Kalmar

Denmark

Frederiksgade 34
baghuset 3 sal.
8000 Aarhus C

Czech Republic

Nám. Míru 5469
760 01 Zlín

Czech Republic

Běhounská 18
612 00 Brno

Germany

Bahnhofsplatz 12
76137 Karlsruhe

United Kingdom

Techspace
25 Luke Street
EC2A 4DS London

papirfly®