

23 Ways to Help People Remember Important Information (about your organization)

So the information can be put into practice

Changes to business activities, behaviour and especially culture take time to implement and produce results. There is often a huge amount of work involved in identifying the status quo, identifying possible alternatives, deciding on the new direction and working through the detail of the future state. And that is even without mentioning engagement with and communications to the people involved.

Along the path of making a change, information about the changes has to be communicated to affected staff and some of that information may be mission critical to the organization. A key example of this is when an organization commits to a new strategic plan. Often organizations identify three key elements that determine the desired future identity of the organization: its *mission*, its *goals* (and/or *objectives*) and its *principles* (or *values*). There are a lot of ideas around about how to go about identifying the correct mission, goals and principles for an organization - this is at the frontline of developing a business strategy - and about how to implement them.

For the purpose of this resource though, we are interested in exploring what methods organizations can use to get their staff to remember these key elements. Knowing where to go to recall these key elements is a good start, but if your staff is able to remember and internalize these key elements, I would suggest there is a much greater chance that over time the organisation's desired identify may increasingly (1) influence business activities and behaviour, and (2) have a chance at being realised.

So, without further ado, here is a (hopefully helpful) list of 23 ways to help people remember important corporate information.

The Basics First

1. Make sure the mission, goals and principles resonate with (key) staff – maybe this isn't really a method for remembering things and is the MOST IMPORTANT thing on this list, but it is also pretty good indicator of whether it can be easily remembered or not.
2. Make sure they're right – see 1
3. Make sure there are not too many to remember – see 1



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4. If possible, make them mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive – so that staff that want to action them in their work can understand how they relate to each other and how it all hangs together.

Write them in Memorable Ways

5. Make them catchy – which may be a different type of catchy for an advertising agency vs an engineering firm. Make them catchy for the context, where possible using the language that is most readily understood by the staff and not making phrases too long.
6. Use acronyms – yes, I can't believe I'm suggesting the creation of yet another acronym for your organisation, but applying acronyms can be helpful to people in the early stages of memorising something, or can be helpful if you wish to... (see 7).
7. Write the words as an acrostic in some form – if you are like me (and not everyone is, thank goodness!) then visual presentation of words is a great way of learning something. This way you have something visual to hang the words on and reflect on in your mind's eye as well as on paper.
8. Present them as an image – some people are just visual learners full-stop and if you present the words as part of a bigger image or diagram, this can help them these people remember.
9. Associate them with images – a different way of presenting the words visually, which focuses on associating each word or phrase with an image or icon. Then people have the option of using the pictures to prompt recall of the words.

Display them in Meaningful Ways

10. Create an infographic – to make visual and verbal sense of the organisation's aspirations and how they work together.
11. Create posters – for display in areas where people do their loitering. Suggestions include, by the printer, next to the kettle, in meeting rooms and on toilet doors.
12. Include them in email signatures, corporate templates and letterheads – so they are on constant display to staff and external stakeholders.
13. Include on intranet – give them a prominent place on your intranet and ideally internet also.
14. Display on all random places – on mugs, uniforms, windows, doors, plant pots, fridges, staplers and basically any asset you can.

Make it Fun

15. Make a song or rhyme about it – I know I know. There may be people reading this rolling their eyes at me and that is fine. I would agree. Except I have a preschooler who can learn ANYTHING if it's put to song. As an experiment I put my mobile phone number to a tune and within a week he could reel it off with or without music.
16. Make up a game about it – I'm thinking ludo style with aspirations colour coded on the squares and the requirement to reel off all goals when you land on a particular square. Catchy yes? May not be cost effective if you are an organisation of 3, but you know... something to think about. Find-a-words could be good too.
17. Replace buzz word bingo cards with aspiration bingo cards – so that those members of your team that get distracted during meetings can use their distraction productively.
18. Make collectible stickers and sticker champions – I quite like this one but haven't explored the practicalities much. Create sets of stickers for all the aspirations and appoint a select number of people to hold each type of sticker (the champions). The aim is for the champions to promote the principle / goal they hold the stickers for and look for deserving people who earn each sticker. The aim for the rest of the staff is to try and collect all the stickers. If you give everyone a template board for them to put their stickers on you have a situation (in a dream world maybe) where everyone has their game board on display which has the goals and principles written on it, and then everyone is trying to earn all the stickers. Couple this with a reward for the first 10 people to fill their sticker board.... Well it would work in a school anyway!

Make it Deathly Serious

19. Fixed agenda slot – recitation or discussion about the aspirations and how they have been made alive at the beginning of every team meeting. Hey... if you put it to music it could be like your organisation's anthem.
20. Mandatory desktops and screen savers – put them on everybody's computer and ban anyone from overriding the standard settings.
21. Online course /quiz – develop an online course and/or quiz and make all staff use it every month.
22. Mandatory reporting – Require regular reporting on how staff are contributing to each of the organisation's aspirations.
23. Intensive sessions – whether it be as a once-off awareness raising session or regular workshops, actually give people time and methods to learn about and internalise the organisation's aspirations.

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