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Transcript.

Season Six. Episode Three.



## **Transcript. Season Six Episode Three. March 2024**

You're listening to the Candid Comms podcast with Rachel Miller. Tune in for practical advice and inspirational ideas to help you focus on all things internal communication related.

Hello and welcome to the show. Today's episode is focused on how to create an internal communication vision, and we're going to work through one thing to know, one thing to do, and one thing to think about. If you've never considered having an internal communication vision before, I wonder whether you'll change your mind as a result of listening to this episode.

Grab a notebook, get ready. And let's get started. What we need to know when creating an internal communication vision is what your organisation's vision is first. That's super important. The purpose of internal [00:01:00] communication isn't telling people what to do. It's to create a shared understanding and a shared meaning so our employees can align themselves with our organisation's goals and priorities.

Let me share an example with you. This is taken from my book, Internal Communication Strategy, which is available to order now. It's published by Kogan Page. Debbie Chapman is the Head of Communications at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home here in the UK. And alongside the internal communication team, she used The MILLER Framework that I introduced you to in episode one of season six of the Candid Comms podcast.

She used the framework to design and develop their internal communication strategy, which is in support of Battersea's organisational strategy. Let me tell you a little bit about them. They're an amazing organisation. They have employees working across operations. So they're on the front line in clinics and in three [00:02:00] sites.

And that includes 250 people in animal facing roles. It also has hundreds of volunteers who contribute over 100,000 hours across each year. Just over a third of their employees are working in a hybrid fashion and they have rotas that include working weekends. And public holidays. Now most employees who work at Battersea are motivated by a connection to the cause.

The charity have a vision which is Battersea is here for every dog and cat and we believe they should have the chance to live where they are treated with compassion. Care and respect. How lovely is that? It gives me the feels when I see that. I love it. So the charity's vision is Battersea is here for every dog and cat and we believe they should have the chance to live where they are treated with compassion, care and respect.

Thinking about the internal communication team, their mission is to support Battersea's organisational goals [00:03:00] so they provide channels and expertise that empower their colleagues to effectively carry out their work, that they help them communicate, collaborate and share their own stories and lived experiences.

The team say that they raise awareness, build understanding, promote inclusivity, and they help their people play their part in achieving their mission to help more dogs and cats. Now that

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mission sits alongside Battersea's internal communication vision, and that they've defined as having a culture where open, honest, two way communication is the norm.

How gorgeous is that? Is the norm and employees feel informed, listened to, involved and valued. Colleagues are purposeful and engaged with the cause and understand how everyone plays a part in contributing to Battersea's vision. Did you spot there were two things there? There was the internal comms mission and the internal comms [00:04:00] vision.

So the mission was supporting Battersea's organisational goals by providing the channels and expertise to empower colleagues to effectively carry out their work, communicate, collaborate, share their own stories and lived experiences. And the team are raising awareness. Building understanding, promoting inclusivity, and helping their people play their part in achieving their mission to help more dogs and cats.

Really clear mirroring of language there, they've repeated, helping more dogs and cats. And then you've got the internal communication vision, which is making sure that there's a culture where open, honest, two-way communication is the norm and employees feel informed, listened to, involved and valued.

Colleagues are purposeful and engage with the cause and understand how everyone plays a part in contributing to Battersea's vision.

I wonder whether any of that wording resonates with you when you're thinking about your own [00:05:00] organisation, it might be that you think, actually, that sits really well with me that actually feels like that's language and terminology that we would use inside our organisation. Brilliant. Be inspired by Debbie's work and the brilliant team that are in place at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.

Have a look at the work that they're doing there and really think about that for your own organisation. What can you be inspired by? What could you pull into your organisation? Or, if you listened to that and thought, no, that wouldn't work for us and that's not right. That's also okay. That's completely appropriate for the culture of their organisation.

That language mirrors the culture and how they speak internally inside that organisation. You know, what's right for your organisation. So what is it that didn't feel right? As you were listening to me, describe those visions. Now Debbie has written a really lovely expert view for me in my book, and as part of that she's very generously shared her [00:06:00] knowledge and shared what her team have been doing.

Debbie says that using The MILLER Framework has set a really clear course of action for how the charity can harness the power of its people to achieve its goals. And their internal communication strategy that they've created using The MILLER Framework is a detailed PDF document. It's lovely because it's got lots of really important statements, it's got really good evidence about how their organisation communicates and it also, as you would expect from an organisation, as lovely as Battersea Dogs and Cats Home has lots of images.

of dogs and cats in as well. I'm not saying you have to put these into your strategy, but it was lovely to see that. I would say if I have to put a number on it, I probably see 10 to 15 internal comm strategies a year. Might be more than that. Might be, might be nearer 20. I'm not sure. I have to have a count.

But when I look at the internal communication strategy, I should be able to cover the logo or cover the name of the [00:07:00] organisation, and it is so nuanced to that organisation's culture and the way that they communicate and the way they operate that it shouldn't matter that I've covered over the logo. It should be really clear.

If I've been working with them, it should come through to me of who they are, how they work, what's important, looking at their mindset, insights, logistics, leadership, evaluation, revision. The culture of the organisation and how they are and who they are should jump off that page, whether it's a PDF, whether it's a PowerPoint, whether it's a word document, whatever that internal communication strategy format is, should be really obvious who the organisation is more often than not.

It isn't. When I look at internal comm strategies sometimes I could cover that logo over and I don't know whose strategy I'm reading because it's not tailored enough to the organisation. I mean as soon as you open Battersea's you have this lovely animals jumping at you from the pages so it's obvious it's [00:08:00] theirs.

But think about that for your organisation, if you're trying to create an internal communication vision, it has to be yours, it has to be really nuanced to your organisation. So what we need to know is your organisation's vision, look at the language that's used, and if there isn't a vision in place, it's not ideal.

Let's be honest, comms friends, because we can't align ourselves with it if there isn't one in place. But in lieu of having one, take control of internal inside our organisation.

Let's move on to what I want you to do. And what I want you to do is think about creating that internal communication vision. It might be. That you used to have one, it might be that you've joined a team, or maybe you've inherited a team and they have an internal communication vision in place. I've shared this before, I think it was in season two or three of the Candid Comms podcast, I'll look back, where I talked about the fact [00:09:00] that I shared an internal communication vision, it was more of a positioning statement, really, it was kind of who we are, how we work, what's important to us from an internal comms team.

And I shared one on a screen when I was working with an in-house team, and we were doing a strategy day together. And I put this up on a slide, and we were debating it, and I was saying, what do you think of this statement? And they were saying, oh, that doesn't quite work for us, and oh, we don't quite agree with this wording, Rachel.

And then I left it a little bit and then I said, do you know where I got that from? And they said, no, is it, is it from a client? Where's it come from? And I said, it's yours. I got this from your current version of your internal communication strategy. And that told me, and I didn't say that to

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embarrass them, but that told me what I assumed and I wanted to make sure that was, I was certain of, was actually they weren't living and breathing that statement.

It was just some aspirational words, a setting out of their store, a positioning [00:10:00] statement, but it didn't pull through. Tangibly into the day to day behaviors and actions. So this is something that we need to do when we're creating an internal communication vision. Part of that thinking for me is making sure that it's tangible.

That it reflects reality. That it, we're trying to set our stall out and be aspirational. Which is what a vision should be after all. Brilliant, but actually be really clear that it's shared vision amongst your team members. If you have a wide team of organisational communicators inside your company, maybe if you're working with your HR colleagues or your external comms colleagues, talk about this vision, share it as a work in progress.

Be really clear and there's two things I want you to do here. I need you to make a decision. Is this an internal communication vision for your team? Or is this an internal communication vision for your organisation? [00:11:00] That could be two very different things. It's important that you know the answer to that question.

So, when you're creating an internal communication vision, is it for your team, how you're holding yourselves to account, or is it for the organisation? We have a vision of how we need to communicate as an organisation. They could be similar. I imagine they probably would be, but be really clear on that. It might be that you have to in place.

Don't get too complicated would be my advice when I have visions in place, which are there's an organisation vision. There's a vision for how leaders communicate. There's a vision for how people managers communicate. There's a vision for how our, um, Company communicators communicate. So in different countries, for example, there's a vision for you get my drift.

Like there's loads when there's too many visions. I don't think any of them are going to feel tangible. So I urge you to consider what's important. For you, [00:12:00] for your team and your organisation. Where's the gap? Don't just create a vision for vision's sake. I am certain that you have enough filling your diary day in, day out.

And it feels like I hear what you're saying, Rachel. I don't really have time to think about this. I don't think it's a problem that we need to solve right now. Fine, totally fine. But consider what difference would it make having a vision. Imagine you're having a scenario where you've got a difficult conversation with a stakeholder and they want you to communicate in a certain way, and they're not following your advice.

Would it make any difference to you if you had a very clearly stated vision that you'd Already written that you'd published that perhaps goes on the bottom of your email footers, say, or it goes in the comms section of the intranet, say, or is part of your induction process when you're helping new colleagues understand the vision for how we communicate.

What difference would it [00:13:00] make for you to have that in place already? And if you think it wouldn't, fine, totally fine. But just consider those scenarios. If you think, you know what, actually, Copyright All Things IC Ltd. All rights reserved. Cannot be reproduced without explicit written permission.

yeah, it might be quite helpful to be able to push back by saying, I hear what you're saying. I know what you're requesting, but it doesn't align with our professional recommendations, or our vision, our aspirations of how internal communication could be inside our organisation.

Give it a go. It's worth giving it a go. I'd love to know what you think about this. Do get in touch with me if you've got any comments or queries. I always love hearing from you. You can find me. On LinkedIn, Rachel Miller, or Instagram, @RachelAllThingsIC, or send me a message via the website, [hello@allthingsic.com](mailto:hello@allthingsic.com).

We're going to take a short break, and when we come back, I'll leave you with one thing to think about. See you in a moment.

The Candid Comms podcast is brought to you by All Things IC. My [00:14:00] brilliant team and I offer consultancy, training and mentoring to support in house internal communicators so you can thrive in your role.

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Welcome back. In the final part of today's episode, I'm going to share something for you to think about when it comes to all things related to internal communication visions. [00:15:00] Imagine that you are in an interview situation. Maybe you are job hunting, or maybe you are recruiting somebody. I wonder whether talking about an internal communication vision could be helpful.

Imagine that you are job seeking at the moment. Perhaps you don't have to imagine it, perhaps you are. If you are, do check out [www.allthingsic.com/jobs](http://www.allthingsic.com/jobs) as we have a jobs board on my website. Imagine that you have been successful in securing an interview. I wonder how comfortable you would feel asking, perhaps, the head of internal communication or the director of internal communication, what's your vision for internal communication inside this organisation?

You know that bit where they say, have you got any questions? If this hasn't come up as a topic, I think it's a really good question to ask. I'm impressed when people ask this question. So, if people ask you, what's that vision for internal communication that you have inside your organisation, if [00:16:00] you're listening to this as a head of internal comms or director.

What would you say? Do you have a really clear answer already? And if you are that candidate, if you are going for an interview and you are listening to that senior leader, perhaps, or maybe even the CEO, if you're a director of internal communication, and you're asking that of the CEO, what's your vision for internal communication?

I think it gives you a really good insight into the organisation, gives you some clues as to what's important. If all of their answers are around channels, then it probably tells you that internal

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comms is quite tactical inside the organisation. It's focused on the channels and the tools and the methodologies.

However, if the answer is more about the way the organisation communicate. The role of leaders, the role of people managers, it's much more strategic. You've got the thinking there, beyond the channels, beyond the tools and tactics and methodologies. There's some green ticks [00:17:00] there for me as I'm listening, thinking, yep, good, okay, right.

It gives you a clue as to how tactical or how tangible internal communication is inside an organisation. How it's seen, how it's perceived. So asking that question. It also could be a good question to ask if you are interviewing somebody and you're asking them what does your vision for internal communication look like from what you understand about our organisation, from what you've seen and read and experienced from us, what do you think an appropriate internal communication vision could be for us?

Oh, I'd love to know the answer to that. I encourage you to think about that for your organisation. Think about what an appropriate internal communication vision could be. So that's a way to use it if you are seeking a new team member or perhaps if you are job hunting. It could also be a really useful question to ask if you're seeking a mentor.

So asking a suitable person [00:18:00] who you're looking to be matched up with, perhaps whether you're a mentor or a mentee, is do you have a vision? For internal communication, or what does good look like? What does excellent internal communication look like for you? I wonder what they would say. It would give you an indication into how they think about internal communication, which may help you know whether there'd be a good fit for you as a mentor or a mentee.

It's also a good question to ask your boss when you're working in house in a team, asking your boss, what is our internal communication vision? Because you want to align your efforts and energies against that vision. How does it show up for you day in, day out? Ask your boss, do they have a clear view of what an internal communication vision is for the team?

Or, remember we talked about just before the break, we were talking about the difference between an internal communication vision for the team, the internal comms team, and an internal communication vision for [00:19:00] the organisation. How do they answer? Do they answer in the day to day work behaviours, work streams that the internal comms team are doing?

Or, are they thinking bigger? Are they thinking, this is the way that we need to communicate as an organisation? Again, it gives you a really good understanding of, of how people are working and it helps you know. What to focus on. I hope you found this episode useful. If you start to write an internal communication vision and you want to share it with me, please do.

I shared my contact details earlier. As a reminder, you can find me via Rachel Miller on LinkedIn. I'm @rachelallthingsic on Instagram, or why not send me a message? hello@allthingsic.com. If you fancy sharing your internal communication vision with me, and if you want me to have a look and give you some feedback, I'm more than happy to do that.

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You know where I am. Feel free to get in touch and best of luck. If this episode has made you think, yeah, I [00:20:00] think we do have a vision, but it probably does need dusting off. Let me know how you get on as well. What did you change? Or if you looked at it and thought, yeah, this is good, but it's not known and it's not pulled through into our daily work.

It doesn't show up in the goals and objectives of team members, for example. Tell me that. I'd love to know what you're doing as a result of listening to this episode of Candid Comms. You can find the show notes at [www.allthingsic.com/podcast](http://www.allthingsic.com/podcast). Thank you for tuning in and remember what happens inside is reflected outside.

See you again soon.

Ends