

Unit Introduction



"Miller, before you leave for the day, would you mind getting our 4,500 employees worldwide up-to-speed on whatever is going on here...thank you."

Every organization has goals, objectives and missions. In order to achieve those goals and objectives and accomplish the mission, you need to have well-trained, well-informed and highly motivated people. As a PAO, you share in the responsibility of mission accomplishment by creating innovative, well-rounded and proactive internal programs.

Internal information, also known as command information, is one of the three core functions of Public Affairs. Internal information helps an organization establish, maintain and employ two-way communications channels. Internal information links the leadership with the people of an organization. Successful internal information programs require complete integration of PA personnel in all staff planning.

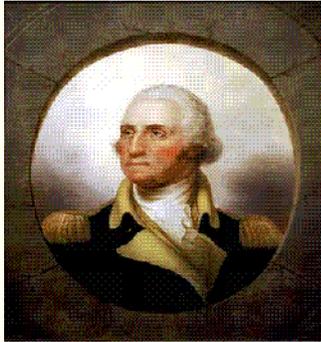
Objectives

- Identify elements of an internal information program
- Explain how an internal information program supports the commander's information strategy

Overview

- Purpose
- Goal
- Objectives
- Seven conditions of an ideal work environment
- Publics
- Internal information communication formats
- PAO's responsibility

Historical Perspective



General Washington

General George Washington was the first American military leader to emphasize the importance of internal information. At the time, Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," communicated the ideals of the American Revolution. Washington ordered this document to be read to the Continental Army.

Washington expected his officers to communicate regularly with their superiors. He was also responsible for the creation of the first military newspaper.

Baron Von Steuben, the man Washington placed in charge of training Continental Army troops, noted that American troops were not like European forces he was used to dealing with. Unlike German conscripts, Americans always wanted to know the "whys" behind everything. This was a constant source of great frustration to him.



Baron Von Steuben

While Washington realized the importance of keeping his troops informed, it took more than 150 years for the U.S. military to establish a formal information program.

Internal Information in World War II

The first paper named Stars and Stripes was produced by Union soldiers during the Civil War, in 1861. Using the facilities of a captured newspaper plant in Bloomfield, Mo., the first one-page paper edition was published. This was its debut—and it appeared only four times.

Stars and Stripes was revived during World War I with the first edition appearing Feb. 8, 1918, in Paris. It was produced weekly by an all-military staff to serve the doughboys of the American Expeditionary Force under General of the Armies John J. "Black Jack" Pershing.



The newspaper ceased printing after the war ended, but 24 years later, on April 18, 1942, Stars and Stripes enjoyed its second renaissance. During World War II, a small group of servicemen founded a four-page weekly paper in a London print shop. Working in very tight quarters, the enterprising group quickly established an audience.

The newspaper sold each copy for "tuppence," (two English pence or about 5 cents), and in no time had doubled its page count to eight pages, printing daily instead of weekly.

Operations expanded, following GIs to the battlefield to bring them the news. During World War II, Stars and Stripes published as many as 32 separate editions, with page counts running as high as 24 pages per issue.

At one time, there were as many as 25 publishing locations in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific.

The Pacific edition of Stars and Stripes was launched a week after VE day (Victory in Europe, May 8, 1945) and became the forerunner of the Pacific Stars and Stripes.



Internal Information in World War II

Hollywood was enlisted in the effort, producing films such as Frank Capra's "Why We Fight" series. These movies plainly explained to new service members what was at stake in the fight against the Axis Powers.

The need to keep a global military informed led to the development of American Forces Radio, that later expanded to include television.



Keeping Today's Troops Informed



The troops of today are not that much different from the Continental Army troops. They still want to know "why." This is where you, the PAO, must play a leadership role in keeping the men and women of your organization informed of issues of interest to them and the command, such as deployments, pay and benefits, promotions, retirement, etc. Keeping them informed on these issues and others leads to higher morale, stronger motivation and eventually, mission accomplishment.

With today's modern technology, we have more tools than ever before available to us to communicate with the internal audience. From the timeless base newspaper and call-in radio shows for commanders to television productions and Internet sites, we have many tools in our communications toolbox. We will look at these options in more detail later in the lesson.

What is Internal Information?

Internal information is organizational communication with target audiences that:

- Creates awareness of the organization's goals
- Informs them of significant developments
- Increases their effectiveness as ambassadors
- Keeps them informed of what's going on in the organization

Internal information is inseparable from external information. This means our internal and external messages must be consistent. What we tell our internal audiences must 'jive' with what we tell the public and the media.

Goals of Internal Information

The goals of internal information are to:

1. Provide timely, accurate and consistent information to DOD personnel and their families to:

- Improve morale
- Increase retention
- Increase productivity
- Enhance organizational credibility

2. Enhance mission accomplishment by providing accurate and timely information to DOD personnel and their families.

Objectives of Internal Information

Internal information programs are designed to accomplish several specific objectives:

- Link service members and their leaders through a free flow of news and information
- Help service members understand their roles and missions
- Explain how policies, programs and operations affect them
- Promote good citizenship and build pride in members of the civilian community at home and in foreign countries
- Recognize individual and team achievements
- Provide avenues for feedback

The PAO's Responsibility

As the PAO, you provide advice and counsel to the commander regarding the conduct of an internal information program. Your responsibilities include:

- Establishing positive, aggressive, two-way communication programs to promote internal information objectives
- Developing communication programs tailored to unique mission and audience needs that take into account the specific identification of publics, messages and media
- Developing ambassadors who will help spread the word about the unit's mission and policies

By understanding the commander's overall goals for an internal information program, we can better identify our affected publics and select appropriate strategies and tactics to effectively communicate our messages. Doing so will further enhance morale, retention, productivity, command credibility and ultimately, mission accomplishment.

Seven Conditions for Ideal Working Relationships

According to *Effective Public Relations*, effective employee communication develops in a climate of trust. Creating such a climate is, in large part, a byproduct of an effective internal information program. Ideal working relationships are characterized by at least seven conditions. While these conditions may not always be completely attainable, they are nonetheless something for which to strive. These conditions include:

- Confidence and trust
- Candid information flowing freely up, down and side-to-side
- Satisfying status and perception for each person
- Continuity of work without strife
- Healthy surroundings
- Success for the enterprise
- Optimism about the future

Knowing Your Publics

One of the secrets to delivering an effective speech is to know your audience - know what interests them, what motivates them and what sorts of information they want or need. Likewise, the secret to running an effective internal information program is to know your audiences, or "publics" as they're usually known. Understanding your publics' needs, interests and concerns is paramount. Balancing the needs of your publics with your own goals requires particular attention. Your ability to accomplish your mission depends on it.

There are four basic types of publics: internal vs. external and primary vs. secondary.

Internal publics are those who are members of your organization or closely associated with it. Examples of internal publics could include:

- Active duty military: officers, NCOs and first-termers
- National Guard and Reserve members
- Civilian employees
- Family Members
- Retirees
- Academy / ROTC cadets
- Local nationals (if overseas)
- Contractors

It is important to understand that publics can be transient and can vary depending on the issue.

For example, you could have a group of people complaining about the noise associated with training range operations. Your organization listens to their concerns and decides the training could take place on another part of the range without degrading the training. Because you were able to make the change, this particular public now ceases to exist because their issue has been resolved.

External publics are those that do not have a direct relation to your organization and include those not listed as an internal public. Examples include local chambers of commerce, school boards and other community groups or organizations.

Primary vs. Secondary Publics

Primary audiences are those you specifically want to target with a message. For example, let's say that your installation is experiencing an unusually high number of motorcycle rider accidents resulting in injuries and death. To help reverse this trend you implement a motorcycle safe riding campaign. Your primary audience would be motorcycle riders. Your message to this group is, "Tips for operating your motorcycle safely."

Secondary audiences are those who may have a role in or be indirectly affected by the same issue. Continuing with the scenario outlined above, you identify a secondary audience as being all other vehicle operators. Your message to this group is "be courteous to motorcycle riders."

The following example may help you better understand the concepts of internal vs. external publics and primary vs secondary publics. The subject is Guard and Reserve members.

While on active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel might be part of the internal audience, but when not on duty, they're more like an external (civilian) public.

Likewise, if personnel officials were announcing a change of policy affecting active duty officer promotions, their primary public would be active duty officers. But, Guard and Reserve officers might be your secondary audience (public), since they should be at least aware of changes in the active duty officer promotion system.

Communication Tactics

Communication tactics are the tools you use to communicate your messages. Some tactics work better than others to reach specific publics. These include:

Direct/Verbal - Face-to-face communications, such as commander's call, briefings, speeches, meetings, etc.

Advantages

Seen as most Credible
Offers instant Feedback

Disadvantages

Uncontrolled (messenger can't control feedback)
Closed Loop (message restricted to individuals in the group)

Face-to-face communication is considered the most credible form of communication because you receive immediate feedback as a natural byproduct of the communication process. You can tell from facial expressions or body language how your message is being received.

The disadvantages of face-to-face communication include misspeaking or saying something different at other venues. Additionally, you do not have total control of what is said by members of your audience. Finally, this form of communication is considered to be a closed loop because there is no new input from outside the group.

Communication Tactics - Print

Print - Newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, etc.

Advantages
Genuine credibility
Low cost
Storable
In-depth reporting

Disadvantages
Slow
Bulky
Distribution challenges
Outmoded?

Print products are generally considered to have high credibility and are relatively inexpensive to produce. Such products are portable, reach a wide audience and have a long shelf life. A more complete and in-depth message can be conveyed with a higher degree of quality control.



The physical bulk and awkwardness of print products can be a hindrance to their effective use. Additionally, because of the print medium's relative long production time, the facts or circumstances of an issue often change by the time it reaches the reader. Finally, with the advent of modern technology, such as computers and sophisticated cell phones, some people perceive that the print medium is becoming obsolete.

Communication Tactics - Electronic Media

TV/Radio - Public service announcements, advertisements, videos, etc.

Advantages
Immediacy
Perceived credibility
High impact
Medium of choice

Disadvantages
High cost
Shallow coverage
Minimal coverage
Transient audience

The fact that messages can be sent very rapidly and to a large audience is clearly an advantage for electronic media. Furthermore, its perceived high credibility and "ease of use" by the audience make it the medium of choice for many people.



Broadcast media do have their disadvantages. These include: high startup and maintenance costs, shallow coverage and the transient nature of the audience. While the electronic media can create a large initial impact on a story, it does tend to fade rapidly. If the intended audience doesn't see or hear the message early, it could miss the story entirely.

Communication Tactics - Displays

Displays - Marquees, billboards, posters, bumper stickers, etc.

Advantages
Powerful symbols
No time constraint
Portable

Disadvantages
Overload
Can be manipulated
Background



Displays such as marquees, posters, bulletin boards and static displays can present powerful symbols that are relatively permanent and low in cost. When done well, displays are easily understood, and their concepts and messages are retained longer.

The realities of today's military budgets make it difficult to establish a mass advertising effort to establish a new symbol people will accept and retain. Because of sensory overload - in other words, too much to see - a potential audience might not even look at some displays.

Those displays that are highly visible quickly fade into the background. While relatively easy to change, displays do require frequent updates.

Communication Tactics - Computers

Computers - E-mail, Internet Web sites, chat rooms, etc.

Advantages

Fast
Wide and growing audience
Detailed information
24-hour accessibility

Disadvantages

Requires equipment
Expensive
Accuracy of information?



Computers are revolutionizing the communication environment. Not only are they fast, they are also becoming smaller, more portable and capable of retrieving larger amounts of information.

While the price of computers continues to come down, they do require a sizeable investment to purchase and maintain, not to mention the need to be computer literate. If you intend to use the Internet to target your audience, it is important to remember that not everyone is computer literate or has access to a computer. Additionally, few people or organizations police the Internet for accuracy so it is important to double-check the information you decide to use. Also, keep in mind that the Internet is a passive medium; the audience must seek out the information.

What is Your Strategy?

When developing your communications plan, (FA1 Unit 16) one of the critical elements is the development of a sound strategy. Here are some of the issues you need to consider:

- What is your objective? (What is it that you want to accomplish or achieve?)
- Who are your primary and secondary publics?
- What is your communication strategy? Is it to inform (increase knowledge), persuade (encourage support), or instruct (change behavior)?
- What is your command message(s)?
- What tactic(s) will you use:
(direct/verbal, print, radio/television, displays, banners, billboards, Web pages?)
- How will you evaluate your results? Will you use statistical tracking from a known baseline, surveys, focus groups, etc.?
- What is your media strategy? Is it active or passive? (An active media strategy is one in which you take a proactive approach to getting your message out to your targeted audience (s). A passive strategy is one in which you develop a communication plan, but do not implement it until someone asks, or the issue demands that it be implemented.



Unit Summary

Done well, internal information can be a force multiplier in mission accomplishment. It's every commander's desire to have well-trained and highly motivated people to carry out the mission. This begins with the establishment of a well-planned and executed internal information program. Such a program creates an organizational environment in which people are dedicated, motivated and committed to the mission. It's up to you, the PAO, to be sensitive to the information needs of the people in your organization and use the strategies and tactics outlined in this lesson to get that information to them.