



CASE STUDY

EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES TO AMPLIFY IMPACT

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications

CHALLENGE

Boost employee engagement beyond leadership channels

SOLUTION

Use a data-driven methodology to uncover informal influencers and empower them to serve as trusted conduits for internal communication

EXPERTISE

Organizational network analysis
Internal communications | Employee engagement
Strategic change communications

A prominent U.S.-based cable and telecommunications company was facing a paradox. The company's employee engagement survey came back with a 75% score, yet the CEO was dissatisfied. Why? His goal was 100%.

While that number may seem unrealistic, it sparked a deeper conversation. When the internal communications team told us about their CEO's disappointment, we knew the number itself wasn't the real story. The key was understanding who was engaged.

We helped the company realize that not all employees have equal influence. Some employees are connectors and translators – team members whom their colleagues instinctively turn to for advice, clarity, or energy. These internal influencers shape how culture flows through an organization. And the company needed to know who they were.

INSIGHT BEGINS WITH INQUIRY

To identify its influencers, the organization partnered with the Arketi Inside team to use a scientifically validated, peer-nomination process built around three simple questions:

1. Who gives you energy?
2. Who do you go to when you don't know who else to ask?
3. Whose advice do you trust more than anyone else?

Through a digital survey platform, employees could select any colleague within the company. The results were presented in a heat map that illustrated an actual internal network for how influence was distributed across the organization.

The most frequently named individuals were rarely formal leaders. In fact, 98% of influencers identified were not managers. They were installers, analysts, and coordinators – or, as Sly and the Family Stone would say, “everyday people.” Their influence is typically behind the scenes and off the typical HR and leadership radar screens but essential to how information and culture move within the company.

MORE THAN JUST NAMES ON A MAP

Once identified, these influencers became a strategic asset.

The company's comms team began using them as an informal feedback loop by inviting them to focus groups, soliciting pre-roadshow insights, and following up with them post-events to understand what truly resonated. These employees were bridges to the broader workforce.

Additional survey data showed that influencers had higher engagement scores than both regular employees and even managers. When asked why, many said they felt a responsibility to stay informed because they knew others relied on them for answers. They were more likely to read internal comms and absorb strategy updates to better serve their peers.

HIGH STAKES AND STUMBLER

The value of these influencers became especially clear during an organizational downsizing. Some influencers were among those laid off or voluntarily exited. The aftermath was striking: nearly 40% of those influenced by one departed employee left shortly thereafter. A lesson the company took to heart.

In subsequent restructuring efforts, they used the influencer heat map to assess performance and relational

risk: Who is at risk of leaving if this person leaves? This allowed the company to make more informed, people-sensitive decisions that better protected team cohesion and culture continuity.

A COMMS EXTENSION TEAM – WITHOUT ADDING HEADCOUNT

With Arketi Inside's continuing support, the company embeds influencer insights into its internal comms strategy. These key individuals are now integrated into the planning and pulse-taking process. They provide immediate insight into what employees care about, understand, or need clarified.

Though these internal influencers lack formal titles, this 3% of the workforce effectively functions as a powerful, authentic extension of the communications team.

“We could never hire enough people to be in touch with every employee every day. But if we identify, engage with and empower our influencers, they help us do just that.”

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS LEADER
Telecommunications Company

THREE TAKEAWAYS

Through this initiative, the organization uncovered powerful truths about influence and engagement inside its workforce:

- **Every company has influencers.** You just need to find them. They may not be the loudest or highest-ranking, but they shape how culture and information flow.
- **Influencers amplify engagement.** Keeping them informed and engaged improves the sentiment and satisfaction of the wider workforce.
- **They're a listening post.** Leveraging influencers as an informal intelligence network gives leaders a clearer, unvarnished view of employee sentiment, and in ways that aren't always clear from traditional employee surveys alone.