

Channel	At its best	Potential downsides	Think about
Team meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make communication personal and relevant to the team involved • Opportunity for discussion, feedback, questioning and ideas • Good line manager can facilitate a lively and interactive session • Can help build understanding and involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success depends on skill of leader • Time commitment for both manager and audience • Beware of content overload; other channels are more effective for information delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the best possible use of this time – it's valuable • Training line managers • Making sure you uphold meeting discipline if you want them to happen
E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach mass audiences fast • Cost effective and simple to use • Consistent and controlled message • Reaches the recipient directly • Good for information, awareness or instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone may have access • Impersonal and open to misinterpretation • Can result quickly in information overload • Can't tell if messages have been read • Doesn't prioritize messages • Can't generate dialogue or discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling access to mass distribution lists • Using the subject box to get across your key message • Keeping it short and simple • Using headings and bullet points for key messages and to break up the text
Intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast and consistent • Possibilities are endless – can be entertaining and visually snappy • Good for information store, reference, awareness raising • Info shares and bulletin boards good for involvement and discussion • Web stats show who is reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone may have access • Relies on people seeking out information • People may not have time to read it • Difficult to police • Can become unwieldy, hard to navigate and full of outdated information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including “killer content” to draw people in (expenses forms, classified ads, processes people need to do their jobs)
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative and entertaining • Can show real people talking about their experiences • The camera never lies – can show proof of progress • Makes people and places accessible for a mass audience • Consistent, controlled message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially expensive • Not interactive on its own • Can be seen as glossy corporate propaganda • Talking heads alone are rarely engaging • Can be difficult for mobile workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using as part of a briefing session to stimulate debate • Using “real people” to talk about their experiences, not just senior execs

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Print magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach the entire company with a consistent message Even time-pressured staff can read in coffee breaks, on trains, etc. Can address/reflect staff feedback and respond Can show how everything fits together and reinforce company brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be seen as biased and not credible Information dates quickly Challenging to make it relevant to all audiences No opportunity for discussion or checking understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to encourage people to open it, e.g., a competition Using a staff editorial board to test content and make sure articles address the real issues
Audio tapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for remote workforces Effective for information and instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on people choosing to play it Some cars now only have CD players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including a hook that will make people listen (e.g. as above, a competition)
Notice boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible and may catch people's eye when too time pressured to read anything else Good for instructions and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be read Usually no owner – how often do you see out-of-date posters? Lose their impact if over-used by every project in the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting a “display until” date on posters Posting in prominent places such as in the lift or by the coffee machine
Text messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for reaching remote workers Good for crisis communication Can be used to direct people to further sources of information Can update senior managers on important news whilst on leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will annoy people very quickly if overused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure you have mobile contact details for all your senior team in case of crisis
Events/road shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for key people to reach mass audiences face to face Flexible and responsive Can include Q&A sessions, break-out groups and involve people Can build team spirit and motivate Can be used to address controversial issues by the best communicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be one way “tell” sessions Agenda set by center may not be what the audience wants May be expensive Time consuming for organisers, presenters and audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving staff in setting the agenda and format Involving staff in event itself, as hosts or facilitators Using interactive voting technology to maximize audience involvement

Sample toolkit materials

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Open forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives opportunity to raise and discuss the real issues • Genuine open dialogue • Helps leaders to understand how things really are • Enables people to feel heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismissive or aggressive response to questions can close down dialogue • Line managers can feel disempowered if their decisions are over-ruled or contradicted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing a summary of discussion for everyone to see • Proactively raising difficult issues or asking for questions in advance to prompt the real debate
Site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows leaders are listening and want to see what the real issues are • Keeps leaders in touch with the real issues • Promotes dialogue and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders won't experience the real issues if treated as "royal visits" • May do more harm than good if leaders show by what they say that they are out of touch • Time-consuming for senior leaders to visit multiple sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including a spell of work shadowing/call listening alongside organised forums • Giving leaders a good brief on site issues before they visit • Tracking issues raised and reporting back on actions
Voice mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful for remote workers • Opportunity to hear about issues from senior leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will hang up if the message is too long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a text message to alert remote workers to an urgent voice-mail announcement
Web-casting and similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for senior leaders to reach mass audiences with consistent message in real time • Can involve Q&A sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be expensive • Need the right technology in place • Noise levels may be inappropriate in some offices • May be difficult for all staff to be available at the same time (e.g., call centers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding out about new technology continually emerging in this area