



Global research and training for internal communicators

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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New study finds all-round skills are key for internal communicators

Internal communicators need good all-round skills and tend not to specialise too heavily, according to new research. These findings from development experts Sue Dewhurst and Liam FitzPatrick challenge common views that the best professionals are focused on providing strategic advice rather than getting involved in delivery work.

Dewhurst and FitzPatrick began researching competencies among internal communicators to support their training courses. In a global survey, which they claim is the largest of its kind, they explored what jobs communicators are doing and the attributes they need to be effective.

“In recent years there’s been a general feeling that all internal communicators need to be high-level consultants,” says Dewhurst. “But when we talk to people, we hear that they’re really doing a much more balanced range of things.”

Adds FitzPatrick “What this seems to be saying is that organisations need their internal communicators to be strong all-rounders – writers, planners, advisors and organisers. And what it’s not saying is that IC people can only make a difference if they’re working as internal consultants”.

Introducing 12 model competencies

Their findings are published in a new report by Melcrum, *How to develop outstanding internal communicators*, which also includes a set of 12 model competencies that can be used to help recruit, develop and promote internal communicators.

The 12 model competencies are:

1. Building effective relationships

2. Business focus
3. Consulting and coaching
4. Cross-functional awareness
5. Craft (writing and design)
6. Developing other communicators
7. Innovation and creativity
8. Listening
9. Making it happen
10. Planning
11. Specialist
12. Vision and standards

These competencies cover the core skills, knowledge and experience that communicators say they need to do their jobs well. As a follow-up to the survey, the researchers interviewed dozens of practitioners and held focus groups to refine these competencies and identify the behaviours that might be displayed at a basic, intermediate or advanced level.

Importantly, the competencies highlight the need for communicators to have both advisory and delivery skills. Says Dewhurst: “We were continually told that IC professionals are most valued when they make things happen and don’t just talk about it.”

Expertise in core areas

The study also showed that there was agreement among practitioners at every level on the core skills that all IC practitioners should display. “Although no one could be expected to be a master of new media and all the tools at our disposal, there’s a clear consensus that IC people need to be able to at least write well and be skilled in the core areas that matter in their workplace,” explains FitzPatrick. “Our research confirms that colleagues expect the IC team to be able to provide expertise in some fundamental areas.”

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Notes for editors:

Sue Dewhurst and Liam Fitzpatrick are co-founders of Competent Communicators (www.competentcommunicators.com) which offers bespoke training for internal communicators, including craft skills, team building, strategy and planning, and change communication. It is Melcrum's official training and development partner, designing and delivering its Black Belt program. For more information, please e-mail daniel.gregory@melcrum.com

Melcrum is a research and training business with offices in London and Chicago. Founded in 1996 by Robin Crumby and Victoria Mellor, Melcrum has customers

in over 90 countries. Through its global networks, Melcrum connects more than 18,000 professional communicators in sharing what works.

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