



Global research and training for internal communicators

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

February 8, 2008

### **Research highlights growing interest in more democratic approach to corporate communication**

Communication approaches that look to involve employees in conversations about what the business is trying to achieve, rather than simply "cascading" information from the top down, are gaining interest. This is one of the findings of a recent global survey of how organizations are approaching employee engagement, published in Melcrum's new Practitioner's Guide, *Essential Techniques for Employee Engagement*.

The survey asked communication and HR practitioners around the globe to indicate which engagement techniques their organizations currently use. Each of the four most popular techniques – described in depth in the new guide – reflect a common desire to make employees part of the communication process, rather than just passive recipients of messages from the leadership team.

The four engagement techniques currently favoured by organizations are:

**Action teams** (55%) – employee teams created to work with leaders to identify engagement goals and develop strategies to achieve them.

**Storytelling** (49%) – distilling information about what the company is striving for and how it can get there, into more human and persuasive "stories" that involve employees on a more emotional level.

**Appreciative Inquiry** (29%) – a communication approach that encourages employees to work with leaders to envision corporate goals and share ideas on how best to achieve them.

**Message maps** (19%) – a messaging approach demanding an in-depth understanding of the audience, their perceptions and attitudes.

Melcrum's new guide contains chapters by leading experts on each of the techniques, along with key findings from the global study into how organizations are currently approaching employee engagement.

#### **New techniques for more demanding audiences**

Internal communicators have increasingly been looking to more interactive and emotive techniques to encourage employees to "go the extra mile". Melcrum's latest research suggests that 86% of organizations with employee engagement on the agenda are now using at least one of the four key techniques.

"After so much research and honing of practice, good communication departments are skilled at producing clear messages, strong copy and straightforward mission statements and values," says Tony Quinlan, Principal and

Founder at Narrate and one of the expert authors of the new guide. "But neuroscience, psychology and related disciplines show us that people rarely make decisions on the basis of rational analysis of data at the best of times."

In addition, technological advances and socio-economic fluctuations have made audiences all the more demanding. "People have far greater access to information than ever before and more ways of expressing their own opinions," Quinlan adds. "They're no longer willing to take at face value what's being told to them by the organization. They can be skeptical and cynical when it comes to the everyday volley of messages that leadership, managers and internal communicators send them."

### **Key findings from the global survey**

Other interesting findings to emerge from Melcrum's latest global research into employee engagement include:

- Around 81% of organizations worldwide now have employee engagement on the agenda.
- A quarter of organizations address engagement through a formal engagement program, while 54% treat engagement as part of a general philosophy incorporated into overall people practices.
- Employee engagement programs in 40% of organizations worldwide are overseen primarily by HR, while for 27%, internal communication is the key function.

A full summary of survey findings can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.melcrum.com/offer/etee/surveysummary.pdf>

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### **Notes for editors**

*Essential Techniques for Employee Engagement*, the new Practitioner's Guide published by Melcrum, helps readers understand the four key techniques for engaging employees, why organizations need these techniques and how to apply them. Each chapter has been written by an engagement expert specializing in that area:

- Action teams – Linda Dulye, President of LM Dulye & Co
- Appreciative inquiry – Caryn Vanstone, Business Director, Ashridge Consulting
- Message maps – David Grossman, President and Principal **thoughtpartner**<sup>TM</sup>, dg&a
- Storytelling – Tony Quinlan, Principal, Narrate

The focus is on providing step-by-step processes, practical advice, key considerations, tips, checklists and troubleshooting recommendations so that communication professionals can get up and running with the techniques.

Also included are data from an extensive, global employee engagement survey conducted for this publication. This provides readers with insights into how organizations are approaching engagement, what techniques they're applying and what they're planning to do in the next 12 months, and includes key data segmented by size of organization and region. The summary above is abstracted from this chapter. A full summary of survey findings can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.melcrum.com/offer/etee/surveysummary.pdf>

## **About Melcrum**

Melcrum is a research and training business, expert in all aspects of internal communication, with offices in London, Chicago and Sydney. Founded in 1996 by Robin Crumby and Victoria Mellor, Melcrum has customers in over 90 countries. Through its global networks, Melcrum connects more than 25,000 professional communicators in sharing what works.

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