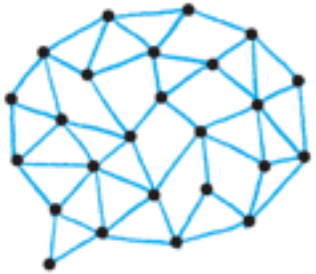


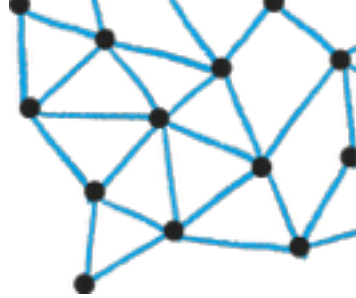
Edward Bernays

First College of Communication Management

The dos and don’ts of Organizational Communication. A theoretical approach

AAQ Institutional Accreditation Day,

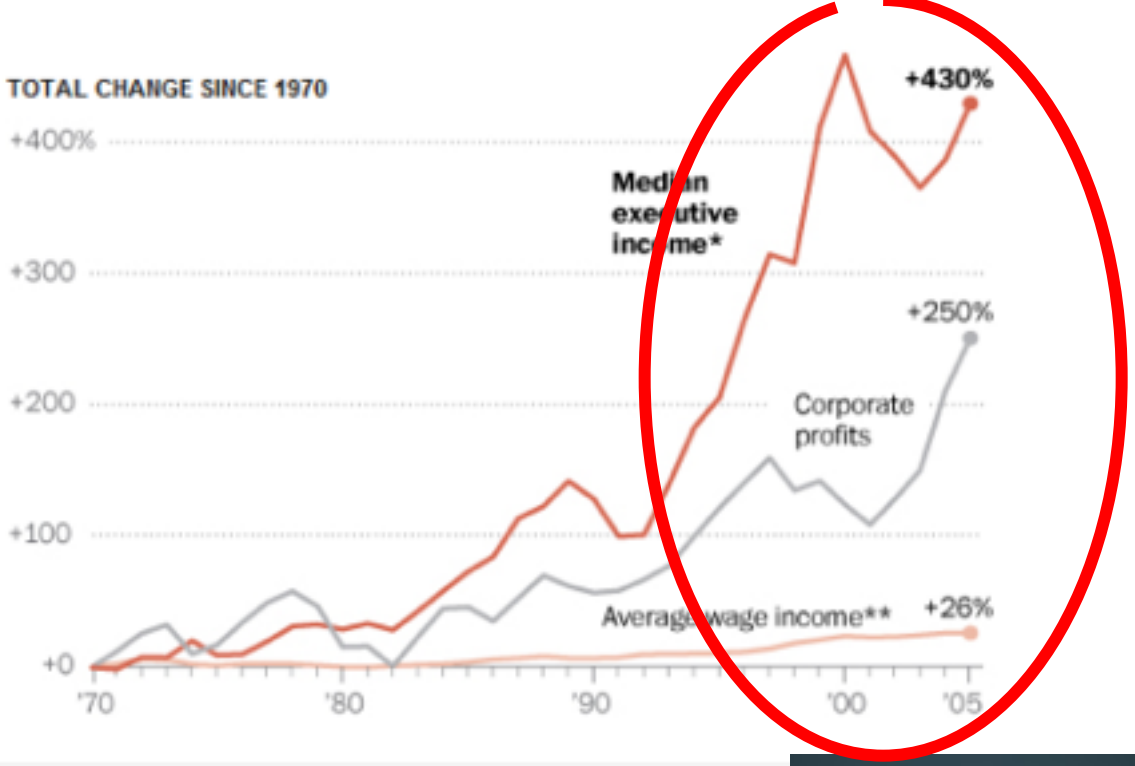
Diana Kobas Deskovic, Bern, Switzerland, November 2016



Internal communication – Why does it matter?

Rising executive pay

Executive pay began to grow around the same time as income equality in the U.S. and has **increased about fourfold** since 1970, while average wages for all workers have remained relatively flat. Defenders of executive pay levels say the higher salaries are justified as the size and profits of companies grow.



*Based on the salary, bonuses and stock options of the three highest-paid officers in the largest 50 firms. * Bureau of Economic Analysis data. NOTE: All figures have been adjusted for inflation.

SOURCES: The World Top Incomes Database and reports by Jon Bakija, Williams College; Adam Cole, U.S. D Treasury; Bradley T. Heim, Indiana University; Carola Frydman, MIT Sloan School of Management and NBER Federal Reserve Board of Governors; Thomas Piketty, Ehess, Paris; Emmanuel Saez, UC Berkeley and NBE Parlapiano - The Washington Post. Published June 18, 2011.

Literature on Internal Communication & host areas

organizational and management theory

human resources

organizational communication

organizational development

public relations

corporate strategy

organizational psychology

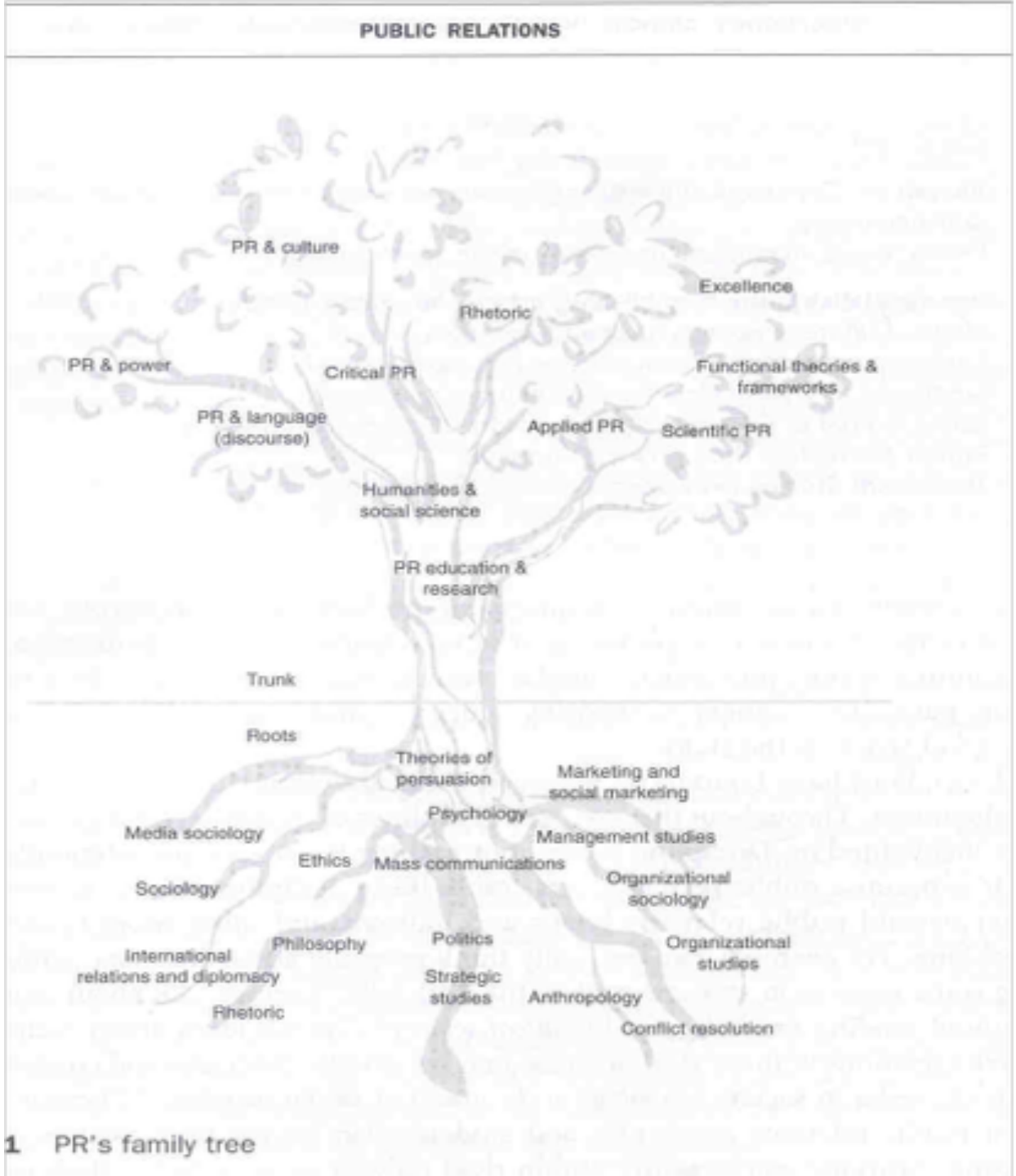
corporate communications

human resources = management tool

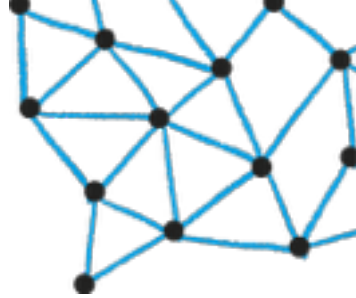
public relations = internal relatio

change management tool

marketing = internal marketin



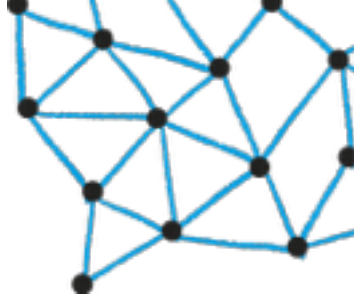
1 PR's family tree



- *L'Etang, 2008*

What are the knowledge and skills needed in internal communication practice? Please rate your anwser, where 5 means agree and 1 means disagree.

Fig. 1. Knowledge and skills for internal communication.



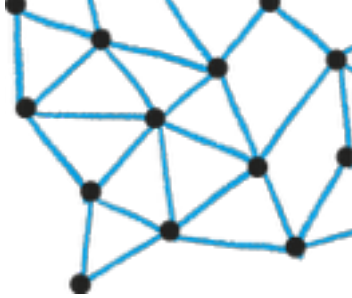
Day to day management (employee relations)

Strategic (mission)

Project management (organisational development)

Kalla, H.K. (2005), Integrated internal communications: a multidisciplinary perspective, Corporate Communications, pp 302-314

Nature of integrated internal communications



- **Multidisciplinarity**

  In the increasingly complex business world communication skills alone are no longer sufficient. Professionals working in that area have to develop a much more divers set of skills and a broader knowledge base.

- **Multilevel**

  Managers act as bridges linking the different levels. - Face to Face communication is considered invaluable by employees.

  Communication professionals can't provide effective communication for the whole organisation, especially in the Face – to- Face format.

  Boundaries between communication function and other functions are no longer so clear.

- **Knowledge sharing**

  Formal and informal exchanges through ongoing social interactions, which mobilise knowledge that is dispersed around the organisation.

  Tacit knowledge transfer – not all knowledge is transferable to written form.

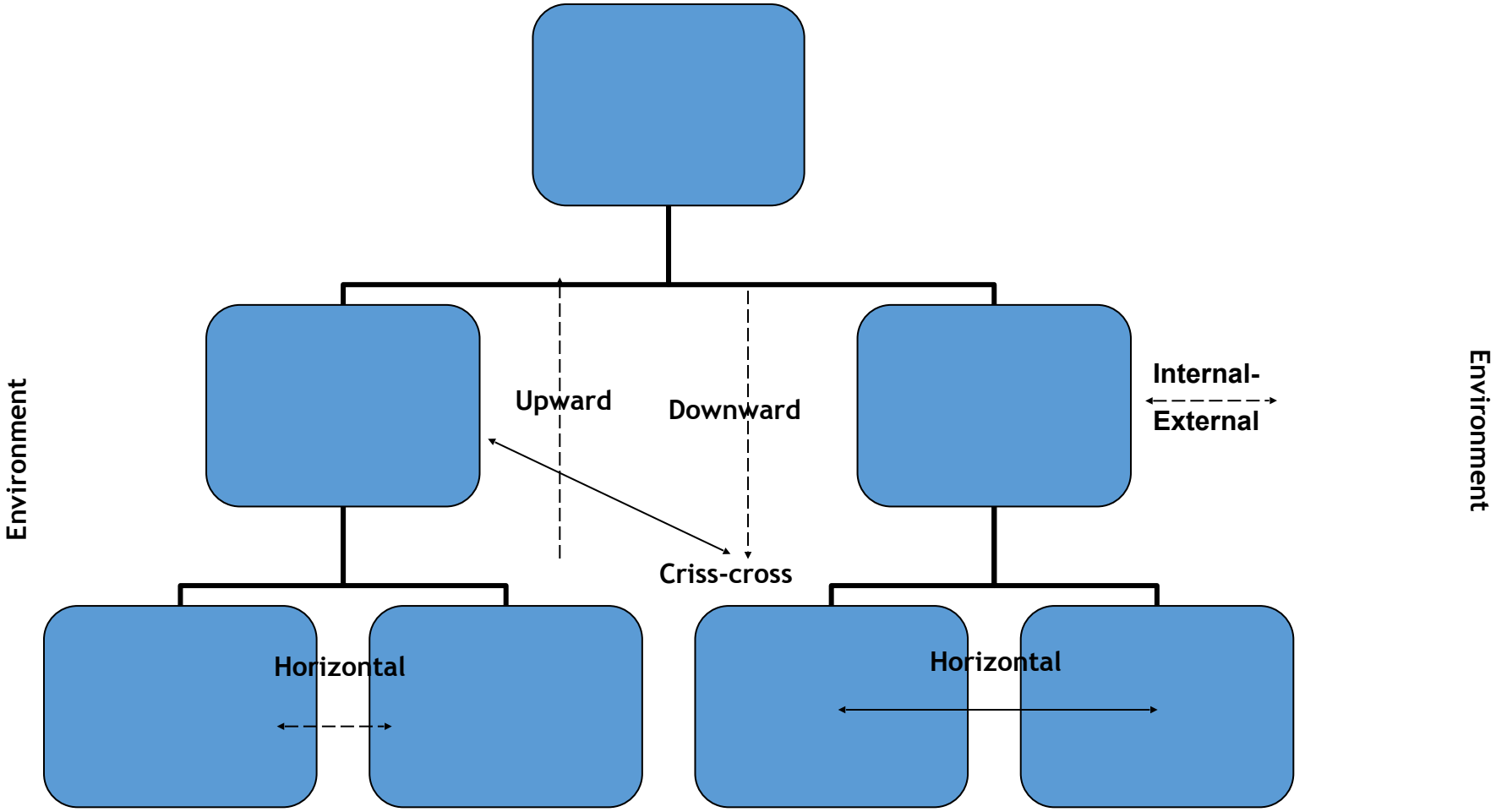
- **Efficiency**

  effective knowledge sharing is fundamental for maintaining competitive advantage.

"Internal communications happens constantly within organisations and includes information chat on the "grapevine" as well as managed communication."

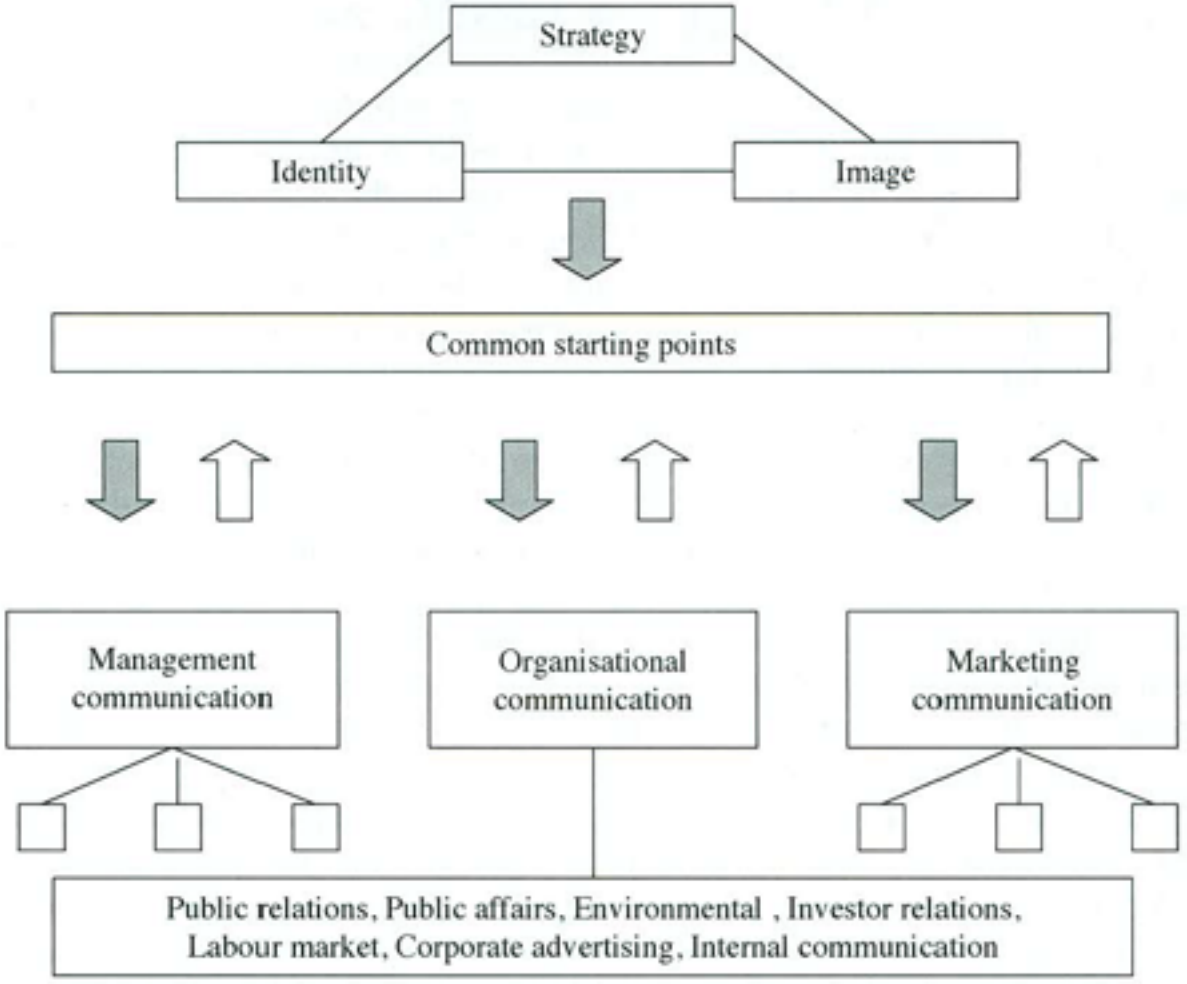
Mary Welch, Lancashire Business School, UK

Internal Communication Flows in an Organisation



Grunig, J.E. & Hunt, T., L. (1984), 'Managing Public Relations"

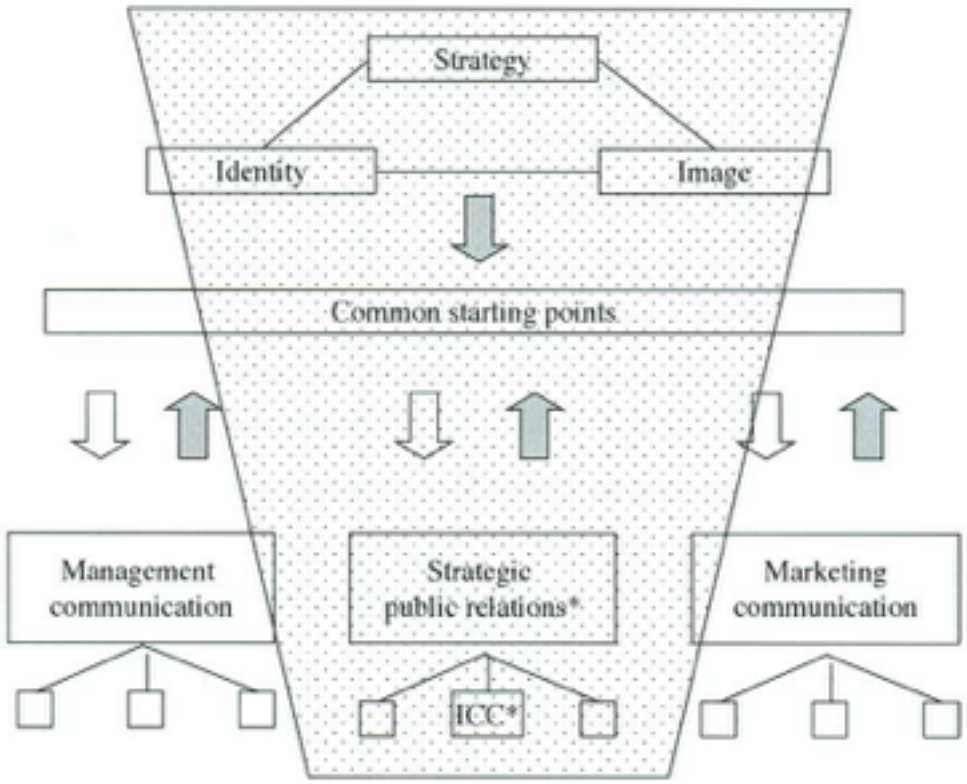
Managed communication system



The outcome is relationship, thus relationship management is relevant for internal communications.

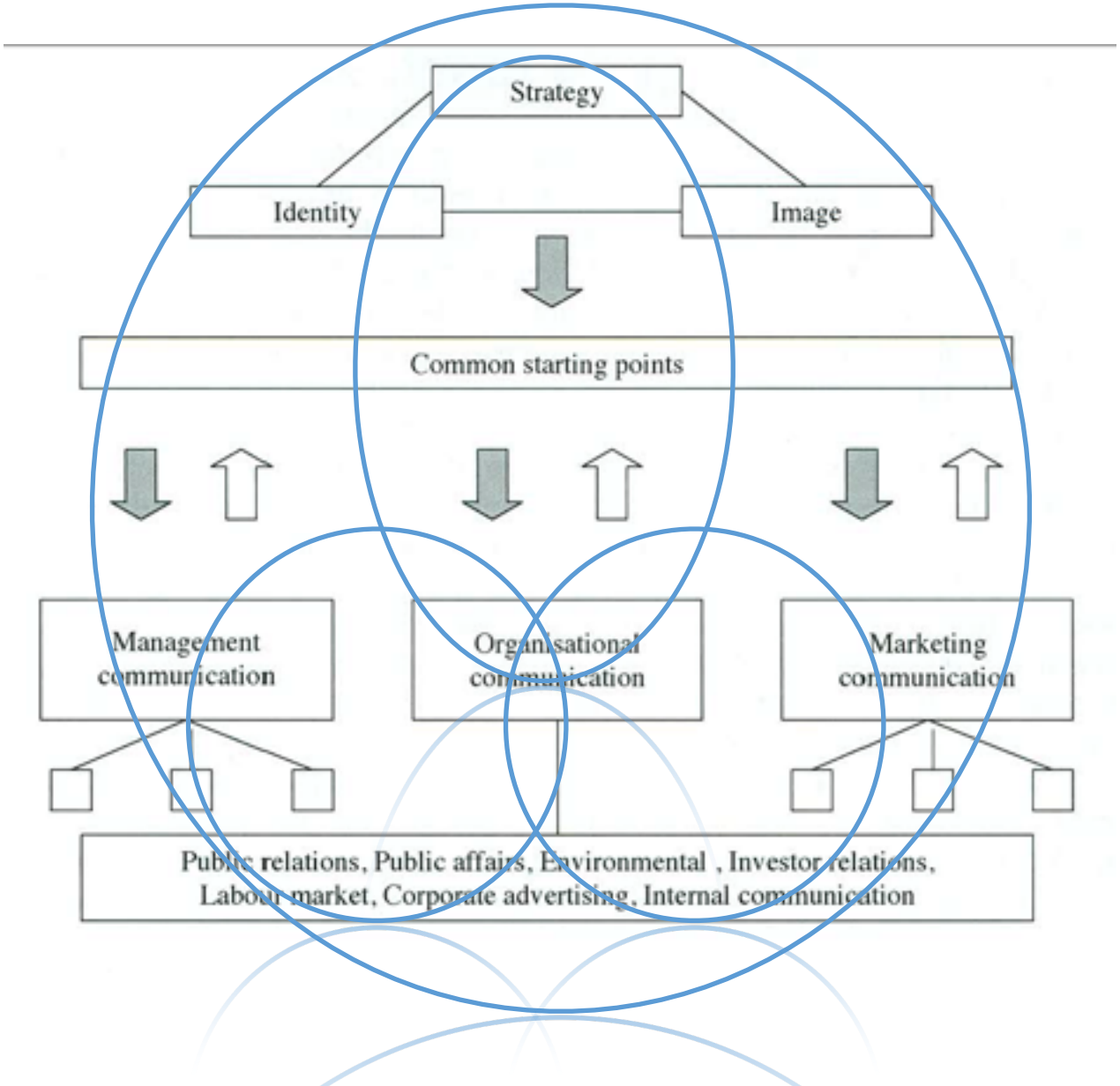
Riel (1995), Integrated corporate communication model

…or focus on public relations discipline?



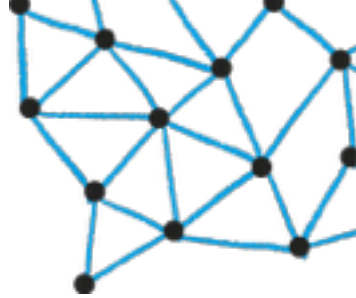
Van Riel 's (1995), Integrated corporate communication model, adaptation with Argenti's (1996) view

…my choice is managed communication system



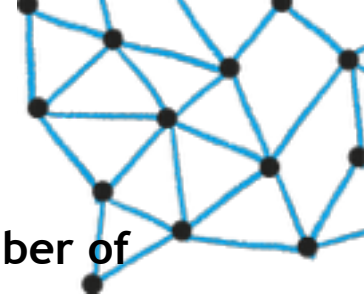
We can not isolate other communications in organisations, not create clear boundaries.

A stakeholder approach to internal communication



But, employees are usually treated as a single public

To overcome that misguiding principle, newer theoretical approaches differentiate internal stakeholders groups.



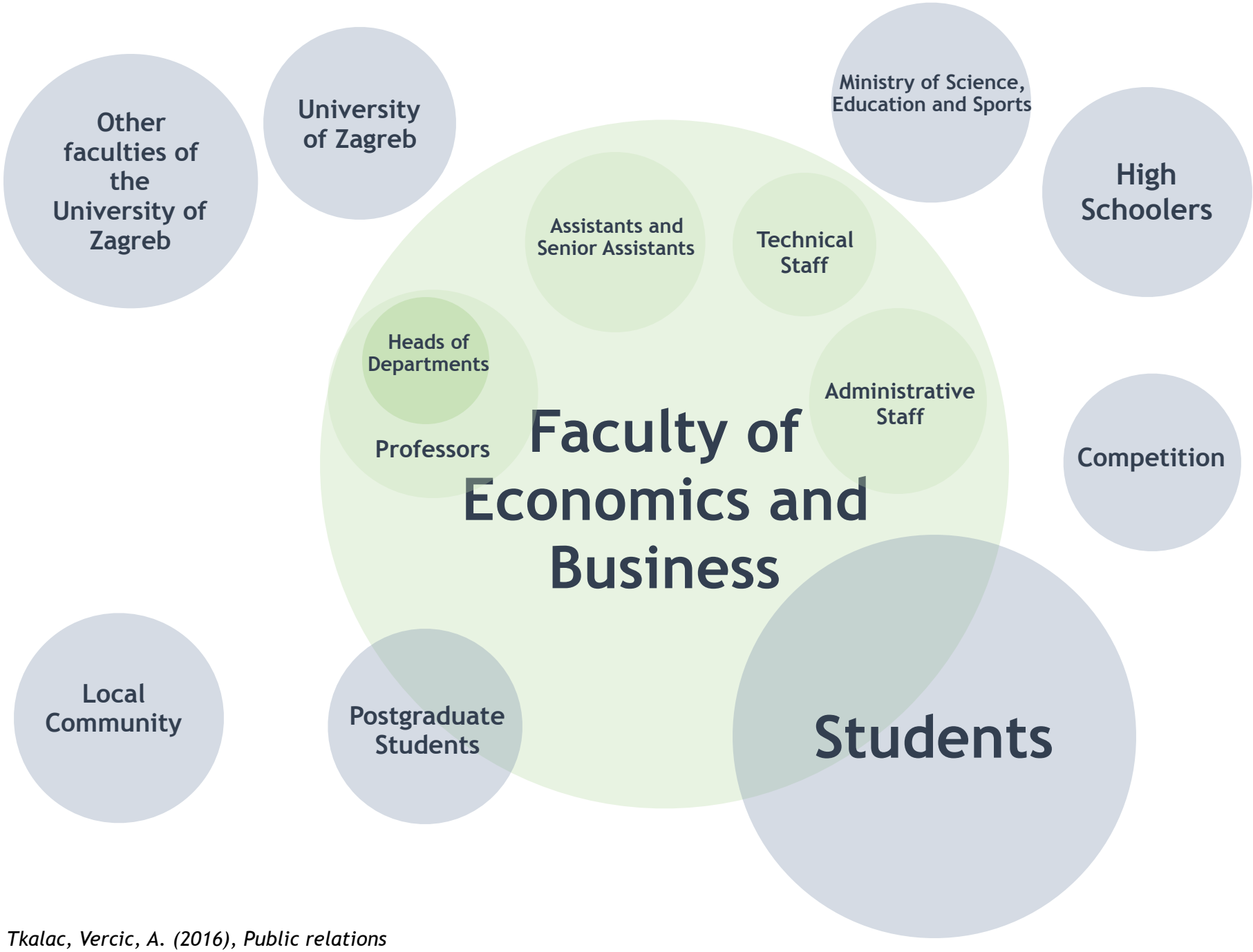
Differentiating internal stakeholders could be approached from a number of directions:

- segmentation by demographics
- occupational classification systems

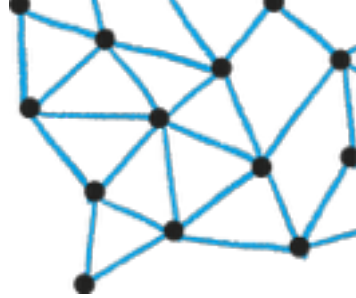
Different sectors have different employee grouping depending on their particular purpose.

e.g. UK **higher education**, following staff groupings are commonly identified:

- manual and assistant workers
- academic support
- administrative
- academic
- research



Tkalac, Vercic, A. (2016), Public relations



Or structural levels could be used to identify broad organisation stakeholder groups

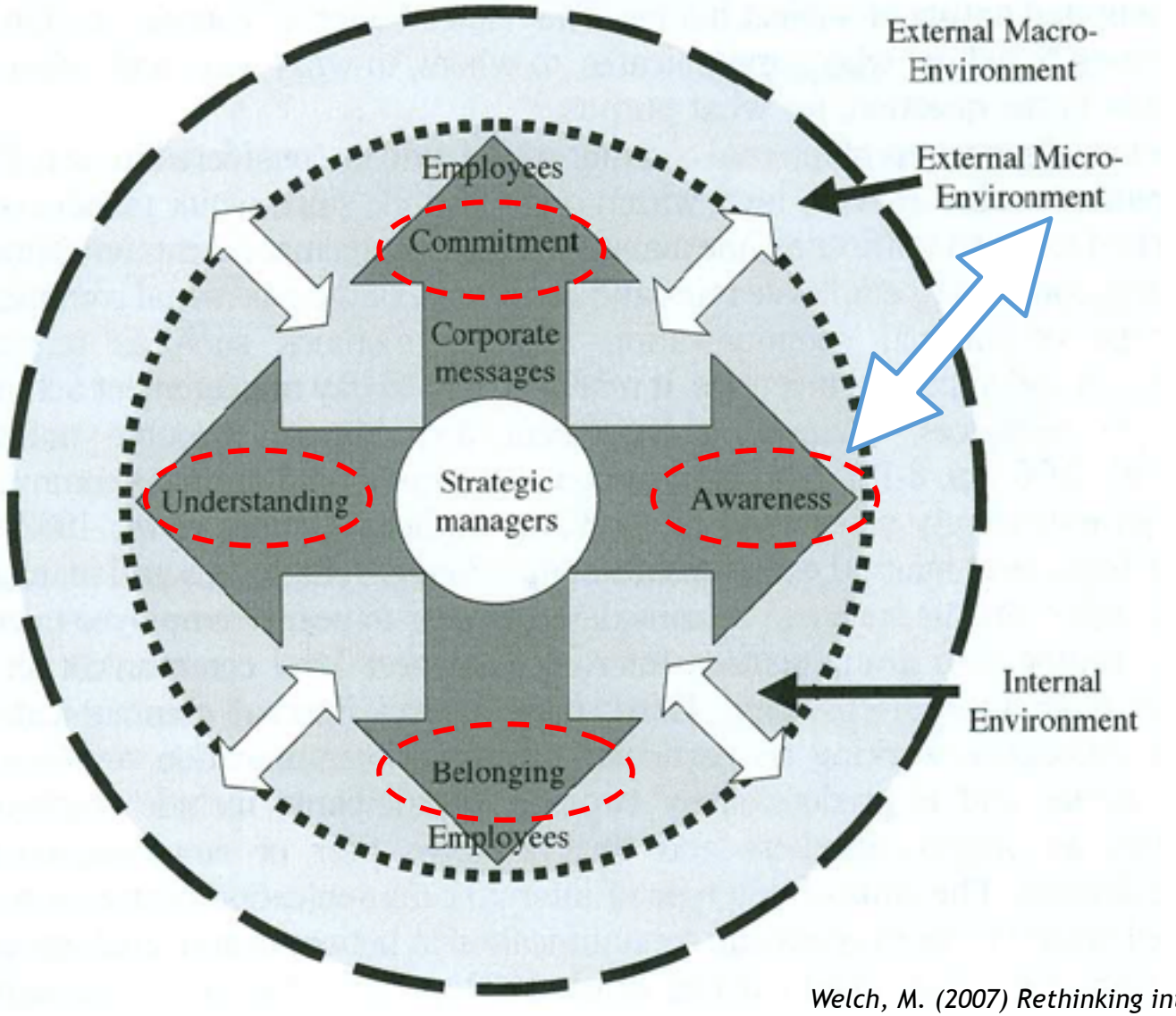
- **Strategic management** - the dominant coalition, top management or strategic managers (CEOs, senior management teams)
- **Day to day management** - supervisors, middle managers or line-managers (directors, heads of departments, team leaders, division leaders, the CEOs as line managers
- **Work teams** - departments, divisions
- **Project management teams** - internal communication review group, company wide e-mail implementation group

Internal communication matrix - WHO communicates, to WHOM, in what WAY, with what content, and for what PURPOSE?

Dimension	Level	Direction	Participants	Content
1. Internal line management communication	Line managers/ supervisors	Predominantly two-way	Line managers-employees	Employees' roles Personal impact, e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings
2. Internal team peer communication	Team colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Team information, e.g. team task discussions
3. Internal project peer communication	Project group colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Project information, e.g. project issues
4. Internal corporate communication	Strategic managers/top management	Predominantly one-way	Strategic managers-all employees	Organisational/corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements

Welch, M. (2007) Rethinking int.comm

Goals of internal communication



1. Awareness
2. Understanding
3. Commitment
4. Engagement
5. Efficiency

Welch, M. (2007) Rethinking int.comm

Controlled media

internal newsletters
newspapers
mgmt.'s annual address to staff

video presentations
podcasts

allow control of message content, format and channels

Uncontrolled media

print and broadcast media

line management

gatekeepers
filter & distort message

Which media is more efficient?

Ethical dilemma

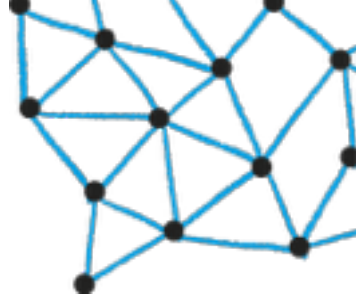
Internal communication & controlled media

Isn’t that propaganda?

Heath’s revision of Roman scholar of rhetoric Quintilian’s maxim

“The good organisation communicating well”

It is all about effectiveness!



The quality of **supervisory communication** & **information exchange** within the peer group

positive correlation with revenue and performance

improved productivity

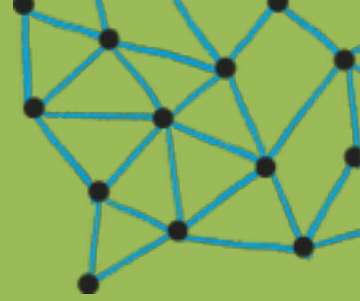
higher quality of service and products

increased levels of innovation

reduced absenteeism

reduced costs

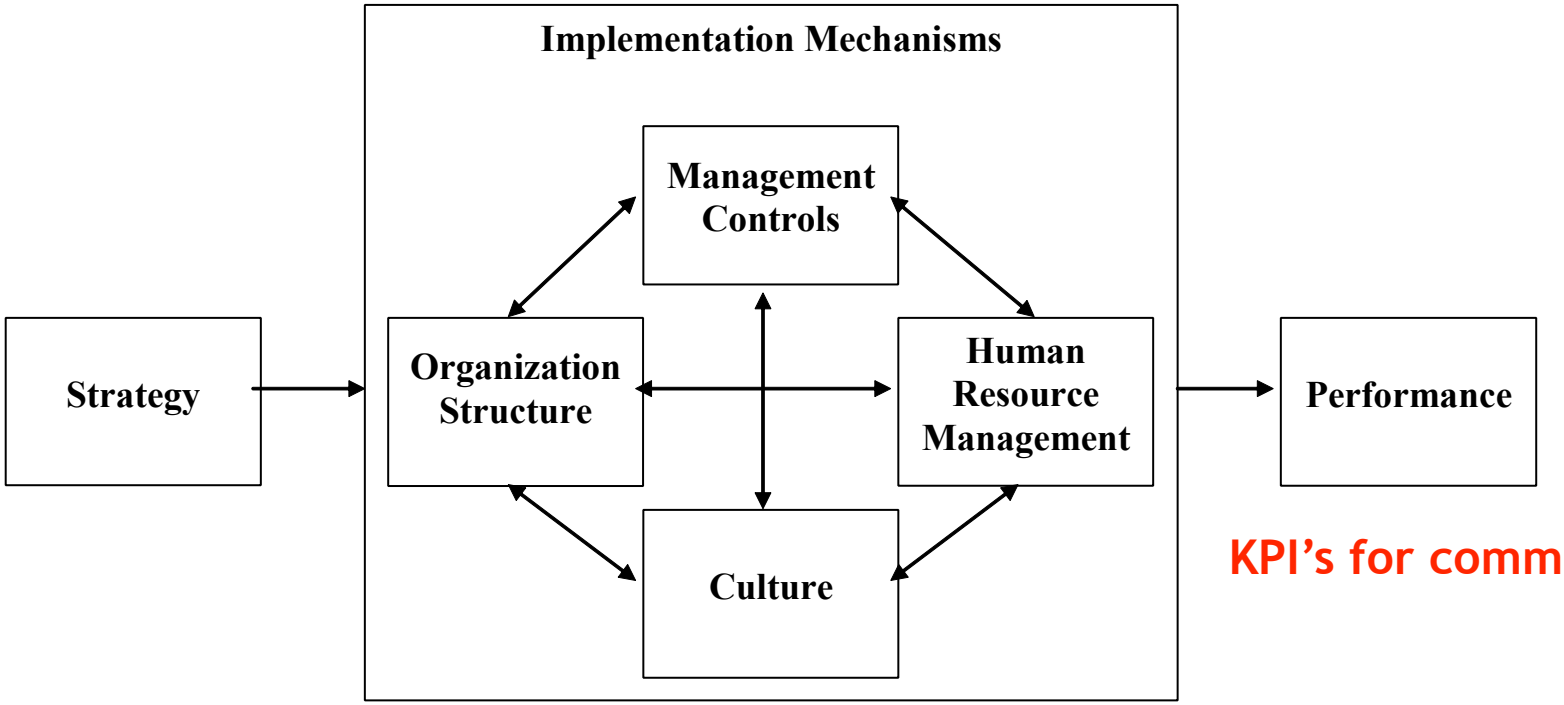
fewer strikes



Do’s

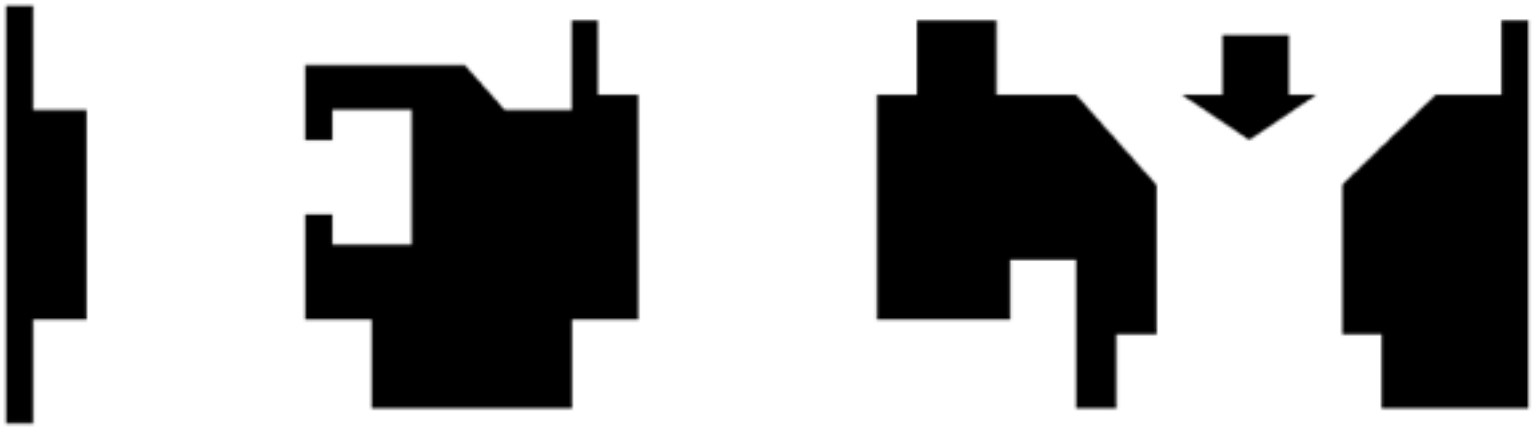
#1 Create internal communication strategy!

Framework for Strategy Implementation

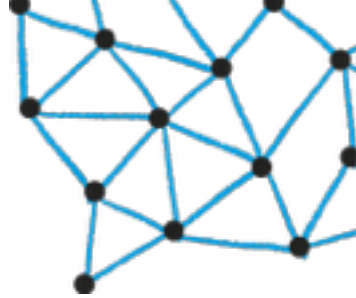


KPI's for communication

Anthony, R.N., Govindarajan, V. (2007), 'Management Control Systems"



#2 two-way



ask

create

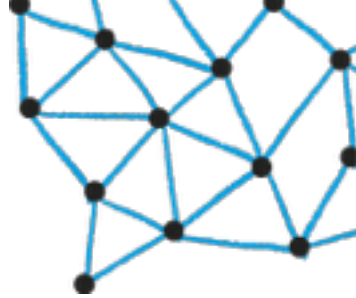
deliver

feedback

create

deliver

#3 walk the talk



#4 WE feeling of importance

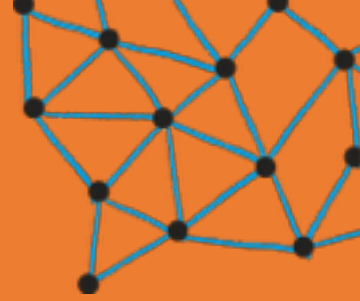
starting from awareness, to get understanding and develop commitment which leads to the feeling of belonging = WE feeling

#5 responsive to environment/align with external communication

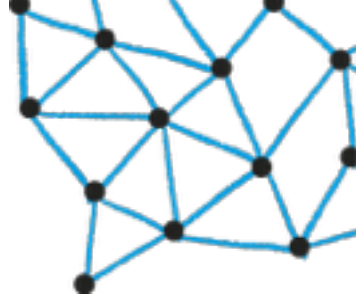
#6 communicate early, don't wait for rumours

#7 use new technologies instead of paper based communication channels

#8 make it simple, straightforward



Dont’s



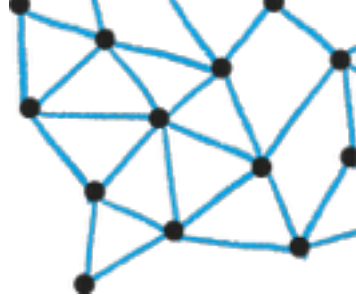
#1 Don't manipulate

#2 Don’t forget to develop listening skills, especially management

#3 Don’t forget to ask for feedback and apply what you have learned

#4 Don’t think only about communication channels

#5 Don’t deliver too much content. More is not necessarily better.
Information flood leads to information overload.

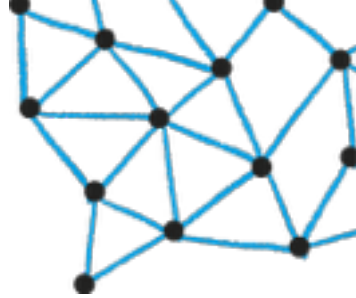


Before we close dont’s

don’t forget

what brings the best results…..

Unity of Purpose



THANK YOU!

QA

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