

Measuring employee awareness, understanding and opinion at times of organisational **change**

thinkbox

Provoking thought
Generating discussion
Delivering results
Making a difference



KARIAN^{AND}**BOX**

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF

Do you know what your employees are thinking and saying about your organisation's current business priorities? Have they received and understood the messages you've been communicating? Do you know which audience groups amongst your employees don't understand or support those messages? Ultimately, have your recent communications worked?

Most organisations are unlikely to know the answers to these questions. The iC Survey 2006 showed that most organisations conduct annual or biennial employee engagement surveys. This gives a broad picture of how engaged and supportive employees are with their employer, their management and the business' overall strategy. What these important surveys don't give is timely information on employee awareness, understanding and support for current or immediate issues and priorities. It is this information that helps an organisation's leaders and communicators know if their communications are working. It enables them to re-shape, refine and refocus both communications and management activity.

Without this, organisations are working blind. No sensible business or organisation would launch a product or run an external campaign to affect customer opinion and behaviour without regular research and testing.

Communicators can use measurement to identify whether their work has had an impact on employees. Indeed, there is a virtuous circle that some organisations use when shaping both their communications activity and their measurement framework.



UNDERPIN YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH REGULAR MEASUREMENT

This process of regular or ‘pulse’ checks of employee awareness, understanding and opinion can provide invaluable data to inform strategic and tactical communication decisions. As such, you have a virtuous cycle with an iterative, ongoing process of:

- Communicate** ⇨ **test**
- ⇨ **define and re-define messages** ⇨ **communicate**
- ⇨ **test** ⇨ **ongoing...**

When you’ve communicated one set of messages to a range of audiences, testing understanding and opinion helps you identify which audience segments haven’t ‘got’

messages. Once you’ve run a few focus groups with members of the target audiences, and understood why they haven’t got those messages, you have the chance to re-shape those messages. Changes in the channels used to get those messages across can also be made. Or the organisation’s leaders can make business decisions that help improve understanding and empathy of the organisation’s priorities. The key thing is adapting what you do until you get it right, i.e. when the audiences have the necessary levels of awareness, understanding and opinion – and the right kinds of behaviour.



The above process starts at the stage of defining what it is you want to say to your employees (step 1). But it is just as correct to start the process two steps earlier – by testing employee opinion and awareness ahead of defining and shaping your messages. Either way, they are your two key starting points. The other steps are essentially subsidiaries of these two. Delivering the communication messages; ensuring what you test or measure is directly linked to your narrative and communication messages; and, once you have useful data from testing employee understanding and opinion, digging deeper to understand why employees think or behave the way they do.

PUTTING THE THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Karian and Box specialise in the development and execution of employee measurement techniques that test employee engagement and mobilisation in support of delivering operational goals.

The Karian and Box PulseCheck is a powerful measurement tool, which accurately identifies changes in audience awareness, understanding and opinion (AUO) as a result of an organisation’s communication and engagement activity. PulseCheck uses tried-and-tested market

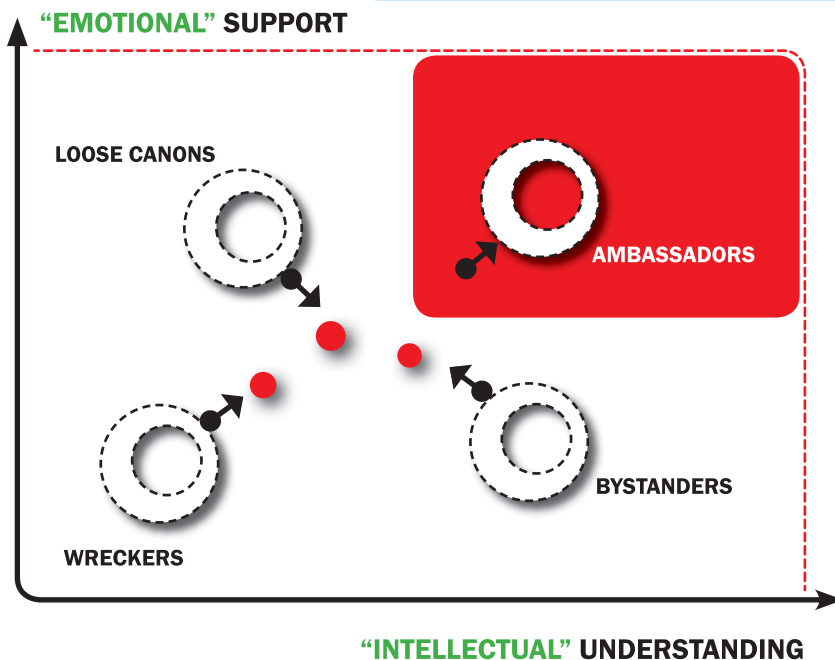
research methodology. The model sets a benchmark for and tracks employee AUO on a relatively regular basis. Pioneered in British Gas, organisations such as BP, BAA, Rolls-Royce, and Wolseley plc have now benefited from PulseCheck.

The critical elements underpinning the PulseCheck system is the ability to define the right narrative and questions that enable the survey to provide valuable, action-focused answers.

HOW DOES PulseCheck WORK?

- **Representative** samples of employees are surveyed by telephone at regular intervals (no less than quarterly)
- **Questions** provide both useful quantitative and qualitative data on which to act
- **Survey content** is focused on ongoing business issues together with ad-hoc, project-focused questions (relating, for example, to business change activity)

- **PulseCheck** uses bespoke Karian and Box online research technology, giving clients up-to-the-minute reports on research progress
- **Survey findings** are provided to senior managers – with a summary of the key issues arising from that survey and recommended follow-up action
- **Data** can also be interpreted visually to give leaders a quick understanding of where employee groups are on the key business issues and priorities - and how intellectually and emotionally engaged they are (see example graph below).



CASE STUDIES - ROLLS-ROYCE AND BP



TESTING THE OPINION OF LEADERS - BP

With changes taking place across BP's Refining & Marketing global business, the leadership needed to measure and track the understanding and opinions of 2,000 senior managers within the business segment. This would help shape future communications activity for the management audience and for the wider workforce.

Given the challenges facing the business, Karian and Box tailored their PulseCheck system to reflect specific business changes - testing leadership thinking and behaviour on a quarterly basis, by:

- Advising on the development of research focus and questions to measure message cut-through and communications effectiveness
- Conducting telephone research of representative samples from across the 2,000 management population globally
- Developing a bespoke online survey system which allows for data capture and automatic results reporting
- Developing research reports in partnership with the client, providing recommendations for each survey with analysis by region / business unit.

The results of the surveys conducted in 2006 have been very positively viewed as value-add internal research - demonstrating where communications have had an impact on employee thinking and behaviour. Critically, the PulseCheck has also helped identify where communications needed to change to have the desired impact on employee opinion and action.



Rolls-Royce

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CHANGE - ROLLS-ROYCE

The marine division of Rolls-Royce plc has undertaken a number of organisational and cultural change programmes, aimed at improving customer service and business performance. Employee support for and involvement in delivering those changes was critical.

A communications and engagement programme, developed and delivered by Karian and Box, was complemented by ongoing PulseCheck research to test employee awareness, understanding and behaviour. The results of each PulseCheck helped inform future communications activity and management action.

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For more information on PulseCheck or help on measuring the impact of your communications on employee awareness, understanding and engagement, get in touch with Karian and Box

Via email ghassan@karianandbox.com or call **0207 580 1323**



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