2020 Gartner Communications Awards
Category Guide

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Category: Excellence in Leadership & Manager Communications

Overview
Leaders and managers are crucial sources of information and guidance for employees. The most successful leaders and managers can shape employee behaviors, unleash the potential of their people and drive powerful improvements in business performance.

Do you understand what drives strong executive communications, and have you removed obstacles to it? Have you successfully encouraged leaders and managers to practice and enable dialogue throughout the company? Have you engaged highly influential executives as communication advocates? Or efficiently supported them across a dispersed business — with limited internal communications resources?

Winning entries will demonstrate the process and success of examples such as these and others, including:

- Assessing manager communication and providing tailored support
- Deploying systems, processes and tools to support powerful leader and manager communication
- Using peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and learning to improve managers’ communication capabilities across diverse audiences
- Evaluating leader and manager effectiveness and identifying coaching opportunities

Entry deadline: 20 March 2020

Learn More
[gartner.com/en/about/awards/communications](gartner.com/en/about/awards/communications)
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Entry criteria

1. Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your project initiative helped to solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. Full entry description (500 words max.)
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   - Your strategic approach to tackling this business challenge
   - The specific activities used to carry out your strategy
   - Evidence of communications’ role in improving leader and manager communication

3. Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on employee attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Overview

The only thing that’s constant is change — a cliché, yet true nonetheless. Dynamic market events, fierce business expectations and evolving technology are just some of the reasons organizations are undergoing massive amounts of change. Consequently, communicators find themselves on the front lines, providing communication support to leaders while ensuring that employees understand the change and feel committed and capable of taking action.

Sound familiar? Has your team persevered through difficult organizational change such as merger and acquisition, restructuring or a strategy overhaul? If so, we are looking for teams that have:

• Partnered effectively with leaders to help them align to a clear vision for the change and its implications for employee activities and culture
• Demonstrated an ability to recognize emerging risks and course-correct communication plans
• Supported leaders and managers in creating clear and compelling change communication
• Sensitively handled existing employee change fatigue and information overload
• Helped drive employee understanding of the change and capability in taking supportive action

Entry criteria

1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your work helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   • Your strategic approach to communicating the change — especially regarding partnering with leaders and managers, building employee capability for change and tracking change adoption/course-correcting as needed
   • The specific activities used to carry out your strategy
   • Roadblocks that you encountered and how you overcame them
   • Alternative approaches and/or activities considered and dismissed

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on employee attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Entry criteria

1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   Summarize the business and/or behavioral change you were trying to effect and how your measurement efforts were uniquely tailored to support that.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   - Provide context for the business/behavioral problem you were trying to solve.
   - Give an outline of the proposed solution.
   - Explain the measurement plan devised:
     - What metrics did you use and how did you come up with them?
     - What measurement methods did you use and how did you decide on them?
     - How did you track metrics and use the data gathered?

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Focus here more on the impact of your measurement than on the success of your communications activities themselves. If your measurement told you early on that a tactic was failing, and that enabled you to redirect resources or change tactics for even moderately better outcomes, that’s successful measurement — even if you wish the project itself had been more impressive.
Category

**Excellence in Digital, Social & Mobile Communications**

**Overview**

Innovative digital communications are often essential to an integrated and creative campaign strategy, whether aimed at internal or external audiences. But effectively harnessing these tools requires deep audience understanding and expertise in a wide range of channel options.

We’re looking for entries that demonstrate these attributes, together with:

- Deep understanding of audience channel preferences and habits
- A test-and-learn approach to digital channel investment
- Examples of strong content strategies and successful execution of user-centric solutions
- Strong, proven collaboration with cross-functional partners (e.g., IT, senior leaders and broader business stakeholders)
- Creative approaches to encouraging digital engagement, such as use of internal champions, external influencers and community building
- A powerful business case for continued investment that clearly demonstrates long-term business value derived from digital, social and/or mobile communications

**Entry criteria**

1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your work helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   - Your strategic approach to tackling this business challenge — especially regarding audience listening, cross-functional collaboration and tactics for encouraging digital adoption
   - The specific activities used to carry out your communication strategy
   - Why digital, social and/or mobile communications were essential to your approach

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Overview
Sometimes big things come from humble beginnings. Small tweaks, improvements and innovations can translate into major impact on internal and external audiences. Did you or your team have a “small idea, big impact” moment last year? Did your organization reap outsize rewards from a small change?

This award recognizes the impact of teams, big and small, who have seen and felt the power of small but savvy ideas. Winning entries will demonstrate the following:

- **Small idea.** Changes and initiatives of modest resource commitment and outlay.

- **Big impact.** Demonstrated impact on audience attitudes and behaviors, as well as organizational outcomes.

Entry criteria

1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your work helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   - The genesis of the “small idea” and how it was implemented
   - Any roadblocks or obstacles encountered and how you overcame them
   - The impact it has had on stakeholders and the organization’s success more broadly

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors, and organizational outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Overview
Have you unleashed collaboration — and improved your organization’s performance goals — with a smart communication strategy? Improved employee engagement by aligning your company values with a greater good? Redefined your internal brand and seen your culture, employee commitment and ability to meet customer needs become stronger and more competitive?

We’re looking for entries that demonstrate employee engagement at its most effective, creative and tangible. Consider examples of powerful CSR communication, fresh thinking around employee engagement and employee experience, and increased organizational performance and productivity. Include measurement methods, results — such as internal communication KPIs, employee engagement or performance data — along with ROI outcomes, in your entry.

You should include:
• Measurement methods, results — such as internal communication KPIs, employee engagement or performance data — along with ROI outcomes.
• Clear links to business benefits and associated value.
• The role and influence of internal communication — specifically, in improving the employee experience.

Entry criteria

1. Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)
In this section, please summarize the business problem that your project/initiative helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. Full entry description (500 words max.)
Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
• Your strategic approach to tackling this business challenge
• A clear overview of how you and your organization defined desired culture, engagement, and/or performance goals.
• How you enhanced employee understanding of, and alignment to, culture, engagement and/or performance goals

3. Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)
Use this section to add evidence of your impact on employee attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Entry criteria

1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your project/initiative helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   • Your strategic approach to tackling this business challenge
   • A clear overview of how you and your organization defined the corporate brand
   • How you enhanced stakeholder understanding of, and connection to, the brand

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.

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Category

Excellence in Reputation & Thought Leadership

Overview
Enhancing and protecting an organization’s reputation are key objectives for any communications team. A strong reputation contributes to positive outcomes, from employee recruitment and retention to customer loyalty and stakeholder advocacy.

Have you turned around your company’s reputation and changed key audience perceptions? Did you successfully establish your organization as a thought leader in your market or industry?

We’re looking for examples of how your work:

• Identified key reputation drivers for your most important audience segments
• Explored new and creative uses of PR and social media
• Leveraged internal and external partnerships to build stakeholder engagement
• Demonstrated the value of reputation to business outcomes

Entry criteria

1. Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)
   In this section, summarize the business problem that your project/initiative helped solve. Include a brief description of the organizational objectives that you supported with this work.

2. Full entry description (500 words max.)
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   • Your strategic approach to tackling this business challenge
   • The specific perception(s) you identified as important to your organization’s reputation
   • How you prepared for, accomplished and measured the impact of your communications activities

3. Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)
   Use this section to add evidence of your impact on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Category

Lean Team of the Year

Overview

Whether large or small, the best communications teams today are strategic partners and organizational connectors. Despite limited resources, lean teams achieve and sustain impact on business processes, employee performance, stakeholder preference, customer satisfaction and financial results.

We’re looking for a team that has:

• Achieved business impact despite limited resources through creativity, prioritization and partnership
• Supplemented your core team by collaborating with other functions, employee groups or partners
• Exceeded organizational expectations for managing complex business dynamics and demands, and audiences’ evolving needs
• Bridged the gap between key stakeholders and the C-suite and achieved exceptional outcomes in challenging circumstances

This category is open to teams of 10 or fewer employees.

Entry criteria

1. Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)
   In this section, state clearly how your work meets the category criteria.

2. Full entry description (500 words max.)
   Provide full details of your entry, including information on:
   • How your team created and executed its strategy with limited resources
   • How your team collaborated with organizational partners
   • How your team prioritized resources on the highest-value projects
   • Evidence of agility, flexibility and creativity in resource allocation
   • Overall team performance

3. Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)
   In this section, add evidence of your impact on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors, and business outcomes. Evidence can include results data and/or testimonials and feedback from internal customers.
Overview
Training and developing a communications team is no easy task: From digital dexterity to business partner coaching, written messaging to measurement, people management to business acumen, the field of communications covers a vast range of skills. Meeting this ongoing upskilling challenge is critically important both to keeping up with constantly changing channel options and audience expectations, and to ensuring our team members are challenged, engaged, and productive.

If your function has found particularly innovative, effective, or budget-friendly ways to keep up with the demand for skills training, we’d love to hear your story. Entries may include (but are not limited to):

- Training curricula that fit seamlessly into communications’ workflows, minimizing training expenditure and/or maximizing learning
- Training materials (lessons, modules, etc.) that have proven particularly effective
- Development programs (mentoring, coaching, etc.) that have improved engagement, performance, satisfaction, retention, etc.

Entry criteria
1. **Synopsis of business-related outcomes (200 words max.)**
   Summarize the skill/development problem you were trying to solve, how it was negatively impacting business outcomes, and how your solution improved outcomes.

2. **Full entry description (500 words max.)**
   - Provide context for the skill/development problem you were trying to solve.
   - Explain how you came up with the training/development solution you devised.
   - Describe in detail the training plan/development program:
     - How did you ensure it fits into communications’ schedule, work processes, etc.?
     - How did you measure and track outcomes (learning, performance, business, etc.)?
     - What challenges did you encounter along the way and how did you overcome them?

3. **Demonstration of the impact of your efforts (400 words max.)**
   Focus here on the impact your training/development solution had on important function and business outcomes: performance, engagement, retention, employee satisfaction, productivity, project delivery times, etc. Quantitative measures of impact are ideal, but qualitative data is welcome as a supplement.