

Strategic Internal Communication in Organizational Change: A Narrative Review of Practices and Barriers

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ABSTRACT: This narrative review explores the strategic role of internal communication in driving successful organizational change. The review aims to identify effective communication techniques, assess employee engagement dynamics, evaluate the integration of digital tools, and examine cross-cultural and sectoral differences. A structured review methodology was employed using literature from Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Keywords included "internal communication," "organizational change," "strategic messaging," and "employee engagement." Studies were selected based on relevance, methodological rigor, and publication within the last decade. The findings reveal that two-way communication, credible messaging, and digital platforms such as Slack and Microsoft Teams significantly enhance transparency and employee commitment. Empirical evidence highlights trust as a key mediator in fostering engagement, with participatory communication models proving most effective. Comparative analysis shows that communication strategies vary widely across cultures and sectors, influenced by organizational hierarchies and societal values. Systemic barriers such as leadership misalignment and emotional resistance remain challenges to implementation. This review concludes that effective internal communication is essential for reducing resistance and promoting sustainable transformation. Policies encouraging leader training, technological integration, and inclusive culture development are recommended. Future studies should address digital innovation and longitudinal impacts to enrich the literature and practice of change management.

Keywords: Internal Communication, Organizational Change, Strategic Messaging, Employee Engagement, Trust-Building, Digital Tools, Change Management.



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INTRODUCTION

Organizational change has become an inevitable and pervasive phenomenon in modern institutions, driven by technological advancement, globalization, regulatory shifts, and evolving market dynamics. For example, a recent survey by McKinsey (2022) reported that only 30% of

organizational change programs meet their objectives, underscoring the urgency of improving change communication. Among the myriad reasons for these failures, internal communication has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing the success or failure of change efforts. Recent research highlights the centrality of communication not merely as a conduit for disseminating information but as a mechanism through which meaning is constructed, trust is built, and alignment is achieved (Sun et al., 2021; Eisenberg et al., 2014).

There is growing academic interest in understanding the role of internal communication in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors during organizational change. The shift from traditional top-down communication models to more inclusive, dialogic forms of engagement reflects an evolving understanding of communication's strategic role. Symmetrical communication, characterized by two-way interaction and mutual feedback between management and employees, has been associated with increased trust, reduced resistance, and enhanced commitment. In contrast, asymmetrical communication—where information flows one-way from leaders to employees—often fosters misunderstanding and passive compliance rather than genuine support. However, this evolution is not without challenges, particularly in organizations where hierarchical structures and cultural norms inhibit open communication. Additionally, while transparency is generally lauded, unfiltered or inconsistent messaging can contribute to confusion and undermine trust (Koo et al., 2022).

Empirical data reinforce the significance of effective communication during transitions. Studies estimate that nearly 70% of organizational change initiatives fail, with communication breakdowns often cited as a primary cause (Harrison-Broninski, 2014; Fürst et al., 2022). Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstanding, anxiety, and disengagement among employees. Conversely, organizations that foster strong internal communication practices are better positioned to navigate transitions successfully, as they are more capable of aligning employee understanding and action with strategic goals (Will, 2015; Sun et al., 2021). These findings suggest that internal communication is not merely supportive but is integral to the change process.

Resistance to change remains a persistent barrier, with communication playing a critical mediating role. Employees often resist change due to uncertainty, fear of the unknown, or perceived threats to their roles (Mabasa & Flotman, 2022; Dee & Leišytė, 2017). Such resistance is frequently exacerbated by a lack of timely and relevant information, unclear messaging, or inadequate support from leadership (Chummun & Nleya, 2023). Moreover, cultural misalignment—where employees feel alienated from the organizational mission or disconnected from evolving norms—can further entrench resistance and complicate efforts to foster change (Komodromos et al., 2019). Organizational silos and fragmented communication across departments often intensify these challenges, creating barriers to collaboration and shared understanding during periods of transition (Neill & Bowen, 2021).

One of the central issues in the communication-change nexus is the role of leadership. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the leader's role as a communicator of vision and motivator of change (Komodromos et al., 2019). Leaders who engage authentically with employees, solicit feedback, and tailor messages to address concerns are more likely to inspire commitment and trust. Nevertheless, many organizations still grapple with outdated leadership practices that prioritize directive communication over dialogue, limiting the effectiveness of their

change management strategies. These challenges highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of how communication strategies are crafted and received within diverse organizational contexts.

Further complicating the landscape are systemic challenges such as organizational inertia, bureaucratic rigidity, and technological limitations. These factors can stymie the flow of information and hinder feedback loops that are essential for adaptive change (Dee & Leišytė, 2017). Additionally, employee overload with constant streams of information can lead to message fatigue, reducing attentiveness and diminishing the impact of strategic messaging (Koo et al., 2022). Navigating these complexities requires organizations to develop agile communication strategies that are responsive to the evolving needs and sentiments of their workforce.

Despite substantial progress in the literature, several critical gaps remain. While the benefits of two-way communication are widely acknowledged, limited empirical research has explored the nuanced impacts of different messaging styles, formats, and channels across varying organizational settings (Neill & Bowen, 2021). Moreover, the role of feedback in shaping and recalibrating communication strategies remains under-investigated. This oversight is significant, as feedback mechanisms are essential for ensuring that communication efforts remain relevant, responsive, and effective (Sun et al., 2021). Finally, there is a scarcity of studies examining how internal communication intersects with other organizational processes such as performance management, learning, and innovation during times of change.

The present review seeks to address these gaps by offering a comprehensive synthesis of literature on the role of internal communication in organizational change. Specifically, it aims to examine the mechanisms through which communication strategies influence employee engagement, resistance, trust, and alignment during change initiatives. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as sensemaking, social constructionism, and transformational leadership, this review interrogates how communication is practiced, experienced, and interpreted in organizations undergoing transformation. In doing so, it contributes to both academic understanding and practical insights for improving communication strategies in dynamic environments.

The scope of this review is intentionally broad, encompassing diverse geographical, cultural, and sectoral contexts. Particular attention is given to how communication strategies are tailored to specific organizational cultures and regulatory environments. For instance, comparative insights are drawn between collectivist and individualist cultural settings, as well as between industries with high versus low degrees of regulation and change volatility. Such contextual sensitivity is essential for identifying best practices and avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions. Moreover, the review includes both empirical studies and theoretical contributions, offering a balanced perspective on what is known and what remains to be explored regarding internal communication in organizational change.

In sum, the need for effective internal communication has never been more urgent. As organizations continue to face unprecedented challenges in the form of digital disruption, global crises, and evolving workforce expectations, the ability to communicate clearly, consistently, and empathetically will be a defining feature of successful change leadership. This review advances the discourse by highlighting the multifaceted role of communication in enabling or constraining

organizational transformation. It identifies persistent gaps in knowledge, proposes directions for future research, and underscores the imperative for more strategic and inclusive communication practices in the face of ongoing change.

METHOD

This narrative literature review employs a structured and methodical approach to explore the role of communication in facilitating or obstructing organizational change. The review is grounded in the methodological best practices recommended in scholarly works addressing organizational communication and change management (Mabasa & Flotman, 2022; Dee & Leišytė, 2017). The process of conducting this review was guided by the need to clearly define the scope of investigation, identify relevant and high-quality sources, and synthesize thematic insights that reflect the complexity of internal communication strategies during periods of organizational transformation.

The initial stage of this review involved defining a focused and coherent objective to guide the entire literature search. The primary aim was to investigate how internal communication strategies, particularly those involving strategic messaging, affect employee engagement, resistance, and overall change outcomes. By narrowing the research focus to this question, the review maintains thematic consistency and ensures that the selected literature aligns with the central investigative lens (Mabasa & Flotman, 2022). This clarity of purpose also enabled a structured formulation of search terms and criteria for the selection and evaluation of studies.

Literature was collected through an extensive search using major academic databases that are commonly employed in organizational and communication studies. These databases included Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. These platforms were chosen for their comprehensive indexing of peer-reviewed literature across relevant disciplines such as management, communication, organizational behavior, and leadership. Each database offers advanced search features and citation tracking capabilities, enabling the identification of both foundational and recent studies pertinent to the topic (Sun et al., 2021).

To ensure that the search captured a wide yet relevant range of studies, both broad and specific keywords were used. Key search terms included "internal communication," "organizational change," "strategic messaging," "employee engagement," "communication effectiveness," "change resistance," and "transformational leadership." These keywords were used individually and in Boolean combinations (e.g., "internal communication AND organizational change") to increase the sensitivity and specificity of the search. Additionally, synonymous and discipline-specific variations were incorporated to capture literature from adjacent fields, such as public administration and human resource management (Eisenberg et al., 2014; Koo et al., 2022).

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were systematically applied to ensure the selection of high-quality and relevant literature. Only peer-reviewed articles published in reputable journals within the last ten years were considered, aligning with the need to reflect current theoretical and empirical developments in the field (Fürst et al., 2022). Studies were included if they examined internal communication strategies in the context of organizational change and provided empirical or

theoretical insights into their impact on organizational outcomes. Conversely, articles that did not directly address internal communication or were conceptual without methodological grounding were excluded. Also excluded were opinion pieces, book reviews, editorials, and grey literature, in order to maintain academic rigor.

A range of study types was considered in this review to capture the multifaceted nature of the subject. Included studies comprised qualitative case studies, quantitative surveys, mixed-methods research, and theoretical analyses. This diverse range of methodologies enabled a richer understanding of how communication functions in different organizational contexts and allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and emergent themes (Chummun & Nleya, 2023). The methodological quality of each study was critically assessed, with particular attention to sample size, analytical approach, and the transparency of the study design. Where necessary, limitations and potential biases in the included studies were noted and taken into account in the synthesis process (Komodromos et al., 2019).

The process of literature screening and evaluation involved several stages. First, titles and abstracts were screened for relevance based on the inclusion criteria. Articles that passed this initial screening were then retrieved in full and subjected to a second round of review, focusing on methodological quality and thematic relevance. Citation analysis was also employed to identify seminal works and frequently cited studies within the field. This helped ensure the inclusion of both foundational literature and emerging research contributions (Neill & Bowen, 2021). Reference lists of included articles were further scanned to identify additional studies not captured in the original database searches, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the review.

The synthesis of literature was carried out through thematic analysis. This involved reading and re-reading the selected articles to identify key themes, patterns, and contradictions in how internal communication is conceptualized and applied during organizational change. The identified themes were then categorized under broader analytical categories, such as communication style and tone, employee trust and engagement, leadership communication, and cultural or contextual factors affecting communication practices. These thematic groupings provided the basis for the structured presentation of findings in the results and discussion sections.

Throughout the review process, a critical perspective was maintained to assess not only the findings but also the limitations and contexts of each study. This was crucial for understanding the applicability and generalizability of the findings across different organizational environments. For example, findings from studies conducted in highly regulated industries such as healthcare were interpreted with regard to their specific institutional constraints, while findings from tech companies were considered in light of their dynamic and innovation-driven cultures (Harrison-Broninski, 2014).

Furthermore, interdisciplinary perspectives were incorporated to broaden the analytical lens. While the primary focus remained on organizational communication, insights from leadership studies, organizational psychology, and change management theory were integrated into the synthesis. This interdisciplinary approach allowed for a more holistic understanding of how internal communication operates within complex systems and how it intersects with leadership behaviors, organizational culture, and employee dynamics.

In conclusion, this methodology was designed to ensure that the review is both systematic and reflective of the complex interplay between communication and organizational change. By employing comprehensive search strategies, clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and rigorous evaluation procedures, the review aims to provide a robust and credible synthesis of current knowledge. The critical and thematic approach adopted in the synthesis not only highlights what is known but also illuminates gaps in the literature, thereby setting the stage for future research and practical interventions in organizational communication strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The narrative review of literature concerning the role of communication in organizational change yielded a series of recurring themes that illuminate best practices, theoretical insights, and context-dependent variations. Findings were organized into four principal thematic subsections: strategic messaging techniques, employee engagement and commitment, technological and digital communication platforms, and cross-cultural and sectoral comparisons. Each theme reveals critical insights into how internal communication functions as both a driver and determinant of change outcomes across various contexts.

Strategic Messaging Techniques

Recent literature has emphasized the centrality of specific internal communication techniques in shaping the effectiveness of organizational change initiatives. One prominent distinction is made between one-way and two-way communication processes. Two-way communication, which actively solicits employee feedback and fosters dialogue, has been associated with greater employee engagement, reduced resistance, and more favorable change outcomes (Duhamel & Niess, 2024; Sarros et al., 2014). This mode of interaction reflects the principles of symmetrical communication, encouraging transparency and psychological safety within the organizational environment.

Complementing this, studies have shown that two-sided messages—those presenting both the benefits and the challenges of change—are particularly effective in building credibility and authenticity. Ravazzani et al. (2025) demonstrated that two-sided communication can increase employees' perception of fairness and honesty, which in turn promotes openness to organizational transformation. Puente et al. (2016) further found that when employees are empowered to engage in dialogue around change and share their perspectives, it fosters a sense of agency and personal investment. These findings underscore the importance of message framing and participatory communication in generating commitment.

Organizations that adopt a hybrid approach combining various techniques—including formal presentations, written updates, dialogue forums, and digital feedback tools—report higher levels of change readiness and implementation success (Doherty et al., 2021). This evidence reinforces the need for flexible communication strategies that adapt to different phases of the change process and accommodate the preferences of diverse employee groups.

In evaluating the credibility and legitimacy of strategic messages, studies emphasize the central role of perceived trustworthiness and competence of the message sender. Employees are more likely to accept and internalize change-related communications when they view leaders as transparent, consistent, and aligned with organizational values (Mabasa & Flotman, 2022). Sánchez and Batista (2023) argue that message credibility is enhanced when leaders communicate with clarity, demonstrate expertise, and remain consistent in tone and content across channels. Rahimnia and Molavi (2020) provide empirical support for the claim that employees' assessments of message legitimacy are strongly influenced by perceptions of authenticity and shared values.

Moreover, credibility assessments are often linked to broader organizational culture and leadership behaviors. Organizations where senior management models desired behaviors and openly addresses challenges tend to elicit greater trust and receptivity from staff (Komodromos et al., 2019). Thus, communication strategies that integrate both logical and emotional appeals while remaining anchored in organizational identity are more likely to be perceived as legitimate and persuasive.

Employee Engagement and Commitment

Employee commitment to change has consistently emerged as a function of how well communication facilitates clarity, trust, and involvement. Ravazzani et al. (2025) observed that when employees are well-informed about the rationale, benefits, and timeline of changes, they are significantly more likely to support implementation efforts. Communication clarity, especially in relation to individual roles and the expected impact of change, helps reduce ambiguity and build psychological safety.

Similarly, Puente et al. (2016) found that employees are more receptive to change when their feedback is solicited and visibly integrated into decision-making. These dynamics suggest that commitment is not merely the product of information delivery but rather of active relationship-building and reciprocal communication. Doherty et al. (2021) added that organizational cultures prioritizing inclusivity and open dialogue demonstrate markedly higher engagement levels during periods of change.

Trust has been increasingly recognized as a mediating factor that enhances communication effectiveness and deepens employee engagement. Research by Eisenhauer et al. (2022) underscores that high-trust environments facilitate more open and honest exchanges, enabling employees to express concerns without fear of reprisal. Williams et al. (2018) support this view, showing that trust in leadership significantly correlates with willingness to embrace new organizational directions.

Zeid et al. (2023) reported that trust functions as a reinforcing loop: effective communication fosters trust, which in turn increases receptivity to future communications. In practice, this implies that organizations should treat trust-building not as a byproduct of communication but as a central goal of their messaging strategy. Transparency, consistency, and empathy are key communicative behaviors that help cultivate such trust.

Technological and Digital Communication Channels

With the rise of remote and hybrid work environments, digital communication tools have become indispensable for managing organizational change. Platforms such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and bespoke intranet systems are commonly used to facilitate both formal updates and informal interactions (Sun et al., 2021; Treacy, 2022). These platforms provide synchronous and asynchronous channels that accommodate diverse work styles and time zones, contributing to a more inclusive communication environment.

Sun et al. (2021) found that digital tools enhance accessibility and engagement when supported by adequate training and institutional support. Hassard and Morris (2021) echoed these findings, noting that technology can democratize communication by enabling feedback from previously marginalized or geographically dispersed employees. However, the benefits of digital tools are not guaranteed. Poorly structured communication and excessive messaging can lead to information overload, diminishing attention and retention (Sun et al., 2021).

When comparing face-to-face communication to digital environments, significant differences in outcomes emerge. Will (2015) emphasized that face-to-face interactions offer richer emotional cues and immediate feedback, fostering interpersonal trust and a stronger sense of connection. Abdelmutti et al. (2019) observed that the absence of nonverbal cues in digital communication can lead to misinterpretations unless deliberate efforts are made to clarify intent and meaning.

Moreover, Komodromos et al. (2019) indicated that relationship-building is more challenging in remote settings, particularly for new employees or during high-stakes change initiatives. This highlights the need for strategic planning in digital communication, such as the incorporation of video messages, virtual town halls, and one-on-one check-ins to compensate for the lack of physical presence. Ultimately, while digital tools offer scalability and convenience, their effectiveness depends heavily on the intentionality and structure behind their use.

Cross-Cultural and Sectoral Comparisons

Cross-cultural analyses of communication during organizational change reveal marked differences in approaches and employee responses. Fecher et al. (2022) noted that in high power-distance cultures such as China or India, hierarchical structures often dictate a top-down communication style. Employees in such contexts may be less likely to question leadership directives and more inclined to accept change as a directive rather than a collaborative process.

In contrast, low power-distance cultures such as those in Nordic countries tend to embrace participative communication strategies. Thite and Sandhu (2014) found that these cultures prioritize consensus and inclusivity, which translates into more deliberative and dialogue-based change communication. The cultural orientation towards collectivism or individualism also plays a role, with collectivist cultures emphasizing group harmony and potentially resisting messages perceived as disruptive to social cohesion.

These insights underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity in designing communication strategies. A one-size-fits-all approach may be ineffective or counterproductive, particularly in

multinational organizations where internal communication must bridge diverse norms and expectations. Tailoring messaging styles, formats, and timing to cultural contexts is therefore a best practice that enhances both comprehension and receptivity.

Sectoral variations in communication practices during change also emerged as a salient theme. In the healthcare sector, communication is often characterized by urgency, precision, and clarity due to the high stakes involved in patient care. Doherty et al. (2021) emphasized the need for layered communication channels that ensure consistent messaging across clinical, administrative, and operational staff.

Educational institutions, by contrast, often employ more collaborative communication approaches, reflecting the participatory ethos of academic environments. Faculty governance structures and student engagement forums serve as key channels through which change-related information is disseminated and discussed. In the public sector, particularly within governmental agencies, communication is typically formalized and compliance-driven. Naamati-Schneider (2023) noted that public accountability necessitates transparency and detailed documentation, which can slow the communication process but increase its legitimacy.

Private sector organizations, especially those in competitive industries such as technology or finance, are more likely to adopt agile communication strategies. These prioritize speed, adaptability, and employee feedback, aligning closely with market demands and innovation cycles (Will, 2015; Shen et al., 2017). Across all sectors, the common thread remains the strategic importance of communication in aligning stakeholders and facilitating successful change implementation.

Taken together, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of internal communication during organizational change. They highlight the importance of context-sensitive, trust-building, and technologically integrated communication strategies that not only convey information but also shape perceptions, relationships, and readiness for change.

The findings of this narrative review align with several core theories in the field of organizational communication and change, while also offering insights that challenge conventional paradigms. Specifically, this review reinforces the importance of symmetrical communication and feedback mechanisms, aligning closely with Organizational Support Theory, which posits that organizations which prioritize employee inclusion and two-way communication cultivate higher engagement and identification (Sun et al., 2021). The evidence gathered across studies clearly underscores that participatory and dialogic models of internal communication foster not only better informational clarity but also emotional and psychological alignment with the goals of organizational change. These findings corroborate assertions from earlier studies that suggest inclusive communication is a driver of employee trust and involvement during transitional periods (Sarros et al., 2014; Puente et al., 2016).

Yet, the review also calls into question the continued reliance on traditional hierarchical communication models prevalent in many organizational change frameworks. These models, often rooted in the Attention-Based View (ABV), tend to prioritize top-down strategic messaging and unidirectional communication, thereby limiting opportunities for mutual dialogue and trust-building (Ocasio et al., 2017). In contrast, the findings in this review reflect an evolving

understanding of communication as an interactive and participatory process, suggesting that change communication must move beyond a mere transmission of information to become a dynamic and iterative exchange (Duhamel & Niess, 2024). This perspective aligns with more recent shifts in organizational theory that conceptualize communication as a system of meaning-making rather than a conduit for commands.

Technological advancements further amplify the need for reevaluating organizational communication frameworks. The review reveals that platforms such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom have been adopted across organizations to maintain connectivity during organizational transitions, offering new modalities for engagement (Sun et al., 2021; Treacy, 2022). This shift necessitates theoretical adaptations to account for how digital tools mediate trust, engagement, and transparency. While digital communication expands access and flexibility, it also presents new challenges, such as information overload and the loss of non-verbal cues (Abdelmutti et al., 2019). The dichotomy between digital and face-to-face interactions emphasizes the need for hybrid strategies that leverage the benefits of both mediums while mitigating their respective limitations. Hence, communication theory must evolve to incorporate digital affordances and constraints in shaping employee experiences.

Moreover, the results underscore the critical role of cultural context in shaping the effectiveness of internal communication strategies. In high power distance cultures, such as those found in many Asian countries, communication during change tends to be top-down and formal, reinforcing authority structures (Fecher et al., 2022). Conversely, Scandinavian countries, characterized by lower power distance and higher individualism, typically prefer collaborative and egalitarian communication styles (Thite & Sandhu, 2014). These cultural distinctions significantly influence how change messages are received, interpreted, and acted upon. Theories of organizational communication must, therefore, adopt a more nuanced lens that accounts for such variations and avoids the imposition of one-size-fits-all solutions.

Systemic Barriers to Effective Communication During Change

Despite the clear evidence supporting participatory and transparent communication models, the implementation of these strategies is frequently impeded by systemic barriers. One significant impediment is leadership resistance, where senior executives or middle managers may exhibit reluctance to relinquish control or fully commit to the communication processes required for successful change (Clavijo-Chamorro et al., 2021). Such resistance often stems from entrenched power dynamics and a fear of losing influence, which can result in mixed messaging or inadequate information sharing. This leads to a breakdown in employee trust and heightens resistance to change (Ellen et al., 2014).

Structural inertia presents another formidable barrier. Many organizations operate within rigid hierarchies and bureaucratic systems that resist the agile communication processes required during transitions. When change communication is filtered through multiple layers of authority, the messages can become diluted, inconsistent, or delayed, thereby exacerbating uncertainty and skepticism among employees (Bulushi et al., 2023). Addressing this requires a reconfiguration of organizational structures to facilitate more direct and responsive communication flows.

In addition to structural and leadership-related barriers, emotional and psychological factors also play a significant role. Employee anxiety, fear, and skepticism regarding change initiatives can impair their receptivity to even well-crafted communication strategies (Fields & Spence, 2024). Emotional dissonance often arises when employees perceive a disconnect between communicated messages and actual organizational practices. Thus, a key systemic issue lies in the failure to integrate emotional intelligence into communication planning. Overcoming this necessitates empathetic leadership and communication strategies that acknowledge and address emotional concerns.

Evidence-Based Communication Strategies

To mitigate these systemic challenges, organizations must adopt evidence-based communication strategies that promote sustainable transformation. Central to this is the role of leadership communication. Leaders who actively engage with employees, transparently articulate the rationale behind change, and model supportive behavior can significantly enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of change initiatives (Lamm, 2023; Sánchez & Batista, 2023). Importantly, the incorporation of motivational and empathetic language helps to bridge cognitive and emotional gaps, reducing fear and fostering a sense of purpose among employees.

Equally important is the adoption of symmetrical communication models that prioritize two-way dialogue. Feedback loops—established through regular check-ins, anonymous surveys, or town-hall meetings—allow employees to express concerns, offer suggestions, and feel that their voices matter (Sun et al., 2021; Payán et al., 2022). Such engagement fosters psychological safety, which is essential for cultivating trust and promoting change readiness. Feedback also serves as a diagnostic tool, enabling leaders to adjust communication strategies in real time based on evolving employee sentiments and contextual shifts.

Investing in targeted training programs represents another strategic lever. These programs should address both the functional aspects of the change (e.g., new technologies or procedures) and the soft skills necessary for effective communication and collaboration. When employees perceive that the organization is investing in their development, their commitment and adaptability tend to increase (Maheshwari & Vohra, 2015; Zeid et al., 2023). Training thus serves not only to equip employees with tools for change but also to reinforce a culture of learning and resilience.

Moreover, fostering a supportive organizational culture is vital for embedding communication strategies into the fabric of daily operations. Such a culture should prioritize transparency, mutual respect, and accountability. Leaders must be attuned to the emotional climate of the organization and provide spaces for open dialogue about change-related challenges (Neill & Bowen, 2021; Gomaa, 2025). This cultural orientation not only reduces resistance but also encourages proactive participation, enhancing the overall efficacy of communication during transitions.

Despite these promising strategies, several limitations in the existing literature warrant attention. Many studies rely heavily on case-based methodologies or self-reported data, which may introduce bias or limit generalizability. Additionally, while the importance of digital communication is widely acknowledged, there is a lack of longitudinal studies examining its long-term impact on employee

engagement and trust during change. Similarly, cultural analyses often remain at a surface level, with limited exploration of intra-cultural variation or hybrid communication models in multicultural organizations. Future research should aim to address these gaps through comparative studies, mixed-method approaches, and deeper cultural analyses that can inform more adaptive and inclusive communication frameworks.

Furthermore, while the theoretical focus has shifted toward participatory and adaptive models, there remains a gap in integrating these perspectives into practical toolkits for change managers. Bridging this theory-practice divide requires translational research that converts conceptual insights into actionable strategies. This would enhance the applicability of findings and support practitioners in navigating the complex realities of organizational change.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review examined the role of strategic internal communication in facilitating organizational change. Synthesizing findings from empirical literature, the study emphasizes that two-way communication, credible messaging, and the use of digital tools significantly enhance employee engagement and trust during transitional periods. It was found that when communication is transparent, inclusive, and reinforced by participatory leadership, organizations experience less resistance and greater commitment from employees.

The urgency of improving communication strategies in change management is underscored by systemic barriers, including leadership misalignment, structural inertia, and emotional resistance from employees. Overcoming these obstacles requires the implementation of evidence-based communication approaches, such as symmetrical models that prioritize dialogue, leader-driven motivational messaging, training programs, and a supportive organizational culture.

Policy interventions should aim at integrating digital communication infrastructures, training leaders in empathetic and adaptive communication, and institutionalizing feedback mechanisms that promote inclusiveness. Furthermore, cross-sectoral and cross-cultural differences call for flexible strategies tailored to specific organizational and societal contexts.

Future research should explore longitudinal effects of communication strategies, the role of emerging technologies such as AI in internal messaging, and comparative analyses across various institutional environments. Emphasizing open communication, employee empowerment, and trust-building as core pillars is vital to navigating the complexities of organizational change in today's evolving landscape.

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