Sympa

A COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE FOR
SYMPA HR IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

The introduction of a new information system always brings changes to an organisation. Effective communication is vital to ensuring a quick and successful system implementation.

We recommend all our new customers to draw up a communications plan as part of the Sympa HR implementation project.

We have produced you the following guide to help your Sympa journey for a great start and to equip you with any anticipated communications issues during the Sympa HR solution implementation project.

We hope that you can find help for a successful communication planning and its implementation in the following tips and advice.

Successful, well-planned communication in an implementation project

The Communications plan for Sympa HR implementations

In every good communications plan, steps are defined according to the project's goals and the target audience. The best steps are realistic and readily achievable.

A good starting point is usually to map your needs and wished outcomes and write down a communications plan on to help you achieve the aimed targets. In its simplest form, a communications plan can be just a plain grid with the schedule, the various steps and the people involved.

The communication plan is, above all, a tool for the HR, or the people responsible for communications of the new HR solution to use for during the project. A good plan and clear documentation also makes it easier to involve other stakeholders in the project and win their commitment to it. A suitable plan also enables the project steering team to monitor the progress of the solution implementation project .

Tip:

It can be a good idea to enter the communication schedule in the company's annual plan alongside with the project of the implementation project

ELEMENTS OF GOOD COMMUNCATIONS PLAN:

Communication goals

Target groups

Different communication channels

Schedules, persons responsible, and costs

Evaluation of communication results

Why create a communication plan ?

A good communications plan not only brings together ideas but it also helps structuring, allocating and prioritising the work of the project team in right tasks.

One of the most important things in creating a communications plan is to map out your target audiences (such as management, supervisors, employees, etc.) as communications need to be tailored to the needs of each group. Each will have its own perspective and different needs for information.

Customer organisations often assign a communications responsibility to someone from each target group affected by the change. It's useful if these 'change agents' can be involved closely in planning communications for their group. In IT change and implementation projects it is essential that especially HR, IT, and communications work and connect effectively together.

Planning for project communications is an important opportunity to anticipate points of friction. Change may be seen as a threat. Some people will inevitably wonder whether they will be able to use the new tools, or whether their workload will increase. Good planning ensures that any and all concerns that can be foreseen can be answered before they arise. The communication plan should also identify and set out the resources (people, euro amount and time) both needed and available and distribute tasks to ensure that all the planned elements can be put into action.

Organisation culture and roles

What sort of organisation do you work in? Is it static, dynamic or something in-between? Who are the influencers in your organization? Is change driven by senior management with little or no input from those at the sharp end, or are front-line staff the eyes and ears of the organization?

In all communications, it's good to be clear about where the impulse for change is coming from and who it will affect. Equally important is to ensure that information flows from those driving change to those affected by it. You might want to also ensure that all change agents (typically supervisors/team leaders) you have recruited are actively involved in the process.

What? Why? When?

When people understand why they're being asked to do something, or why they are working in a particular way, it helps them engage with and commit to what they are doing.

Answering the question 'why?' about the implementation project is crucial. It justifies the change and explains why the change is necessary.

What is the goal of the change? What, exactly, will happen? Specify clearly what will change and why the changes are being made. It is good to communicate in plain terms what the common goals of implementing the new HR system are in your organisation, and what will change with regard to each person (and why). It can be useful to link the reasons and goals to the bigger picture; organisational strategy, for instance. Common goals could include efficiency, increased transparency, productivity and increased competitiveness, as an example.

People will also need to know 'when?' When will the different phases of change take place and when are they likely to affect whom?

During the project, different tone of communications will be needed. At the outset messages can be kept quite general, however as things progress a greater level of detail is likely to become necessary. The details that are relevant to include in communications will depend on which segment of the audience you are addressing.

Various communication channels

When selecting the communication channels to be used, It is good consider your audiences and the style and culture of your organisation. Certain channels are more effective with some audiences than others and at different points during the project timeline. It is a good idea to use more than one medium and also consider the number of different channels to be used at any given point.

Some options for useful internal communication channels:

- Email

- Any mobile channels in use, internally

- Training events, workshops, webinars

- Personal 1-2-1 chats

- Instructions (the most memorable instructions are often delivered in an unusual way, e.g. a video or animation)

- Intranet (a good option for using video content as well, such as a series of weekly videos about the project steps)

- Any other internal forums within your organisation (monthly/ weekly check-ups…)

- Posters, flyers or other printed communications on the premises

Communication style and tactics

When communicating any change, especially one that will directly affect several people,
it might be useful to return in mind a few key tips for successful communications:

OPEN	Any questions should be answered immediately and in open forums
CONTINUOUS	Begin early and continue until the system is in use
INTERACTIVE	Sometimes a short video or a few pictures might be better than the best of reports
REACTIVE	Ensure the possibility for 2-way communication, and react to any questions coming from your employees
CONSISTENT	Consistent with regard to content
MOTIVATING	Remember to share successes as they're chalked up; even small things count!
SNACKABLE	Deliver your information in ways that are simple to digest.
IN TIME	Make sure that you're ahead of the curve. Answer likely questions before they arise but not so early that your colleagues are swamped with information

Assessing your communications

Measuring the success of your communication efforts is important but often challenging (it's not something that delivers the most easily measurable outputs).

You can establish indicators at the outset against which to measure your success. If the goal of the process is uptake of the new HR system, ultimately your communications have been successful if uptake is swift and universal across the organisation, i.e. you can measure logins at various points during the process.

If you're sending out newsletters, you can record the open and/or click rate. Another idea is to survey colleagues to ask them if they've found the materials you have provided clear and useful.

Communications don't need to stop with full roll out. You can continue sharing tips and tricks and ensure you have the training materials about the solution ready for any new for future new users.

Sympa HR

A Case example of successful project communications

Communication plan

Planning for a communications campaign began shortly after the customer selected Sympa HR as their new HR solution. The Sympa HR solution was given a name within the organisation, and that name was used as the theme for subsequent communications. It also played a part when colleagues leading the implementation brainstormed the process.

Launch and training

Considerable thought and care went into identifying the different target groups. It was decided that the first step should be to provide all supervisors with training, due the fact that supervisors and team leaders were identified as the primary agents in the change management. Training at an early stage gave them the tools and understanding that was crucial in leading their teams through the change process. Flyers were handed out to increase interest and awareness. The intranet was chosen as the primary channel for all official communications. All staff members were allocated usernames and passwords for the Sympa HR solution at the same time and they were efficiently informed.

Measuring communication

The communications team organised a small competition with prizes as an incentive for staff to familiarise themselves with the new HR system. The reporting tools in Sympa HR were used to measure and assess the use volumes. HR processes were methodically transferred to the system, which encouraged users to log into the new system daily. Actual benefits emerged as a result of measuring, such as less time consumed in certain HR processes or reporting and shorter cycles to complete the necessary approval rounds.

Example charts

EXAMPLE 1
Communication target group

	GOAL AND INDICATOR	SPECIAL THEME BASIC MESSAGE	HAZARD DISRUPTION FACTORS	COMMUNICATION CHANNELS
INTERNAL TARGET GROUPS	Write here			
MANAGEMENT TEAM				
BUSINESS AREA MANAGERS				
SUPERVISORS				
EMPLOYEES				
EXTERNAL TARGET GROUPS				
PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION				
CONTACT PEOPLE FOR THE SYSTEMS TO BE INTEGRATED				

Etc

EXAMPLE 2
Communication task (enter carefully, with stages)

	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TARGET GROUP	WEEK x	x	x	x	x
INFORMATION MEETING	N.N	Entire staff					
TRAINING EVENT	A.P	Management					
INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO ON THE INTRANET	Supervisors and team leaders	Supervisors and team leaders					
EMAIL	Employees						

Etc…