



The Communications Playbook for **Healthcare**

A Five-Step Guide to Increasing
Employee Engagement





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The Current **Crisis** in Healthcare

Healthcare workers experience information overload.

Data overload is a challenge for many healthcare organizations. From new protocols to updated employee benefits, healthcare workers are bombarded with information.

Instead of facilitating informed decision-making, this overabundance of data actually impedes managers from distributing information effectively.

Consider that the average worker spends **28% of the workweek managing email** and nearly **20% in search of internal information**. And yet, **74% of employees still report feeling like they're missing out on company news**.

It's no surprise that **44% of employees want a wider adoption of internal communication tools**.





Internal comms are fragmented in the healthcare industry.

One definition of healthcare fragmentation is having multiple decision makers responsible for a set of healthcare decisions that could be better made through a **unified decision-making process.**

Lacking the required data, individual decision makers responsible for only one fragment of a set of healthcare decisions often fail to understand the big picture. Sometimes there is little coordination among the many doctors who treat individual patients. Often, these doctors might even lack access to a common set of medical records.

All these forms of fragmentation can of course lead to **bad healthcare decisions.**

This fragmentation stems at least in part from inefficient methods of communication and information sharing. **Healthcare workers reportedly waste more than 45 minutes per day as a result of inefficient communication systems.**

Burnout is real.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, industries across the board have experienced an endless cycle of uncertainty, change, and stress. **As a result, employees are rethinking their career goals and work-life balance.**

The boom in remote work gave workers an eye-opening new perspective. It emboldened employees to leverage their newfound freedom to work from anywhere, and opened up the job market to more opportunities.

If an employer is unprepared to adjust to this transformation, unsatisfied workers are more than willing to confront them and demand change — or leave the organization for better employment elsewhere. This movement, known as The Great Resignation, saw **4 million Americans quit their jobs in July 2021 alone.**

But the crisis in healthcare goes even deeper than these issues. Medical workers cited COVID-19, poor pay, and burnout as prime reasons for resignations.

Burnout is the number one challenge healthcare workers face. One of its key symptoms is depletion, which is characterized by feeling physically and emotionally drained.

Such feelings aren't surprising, given that healthcare workers face demanding work schedules and crippling shortages of staff.

According to U.S. News, **"60% to 75% of clinicians [report] symptoms of exhaustion, depression, sleep disorders, and PTSD."**

26% of healthcare workers in hospitals are angry and 29% have considered leaving the medical field.

23.8% of all new hires leave within a year, accounting for 32.0% of all healthcare turnover.

53.3% of employees who left spent less than two years at their healthcare facility.

Even before the pandemic, burnout among healthcare workers was a perennial issue. The pandemic turned it into a crisis. **Worker burnout costs the US \$4.6 billion annually.**





How Can **Internal Comms** Support Healthcare Employees?

STEP 1:

Better Understand Your Internal Audience

Specific roles need specific information.

A wide variety of professionals make up healthcare organizations. Not only do they differ in their roles, but also in their backgrounds, cultures, age groups, tech savviness, etc. Such a diverse group of employees is equally diverse in their information needs. This poses a challenge for internal communicators.

By splitting your internal audience into sub-audiences, you can meet this challenge. This is known as audience segmentation. To do this well, it's essential that you understand your internal audience.

Consider that **72% of companies saw increased productivity by prioritizing communication to their frontline workers.**

Likewise, companies have raised the productivity of knowledge workers by **20% to 25% by using social technologies.**



We've created a Masterclass on Understanding Your Internal Audience to help you out.

STEP 2:

Enable a Cooperative Care Approach

Sharing really is caring.

If healthcare professionals are working at cross purposes, the most obvious solution is **better communication**.

Healthcare providers need tools that will enable a cooperative care approach.

More efficient forms of digital communication give caregivers access to shareable information and allow them to communicate in real time. Instead of relying on email or pagers, **quick and dependable text alerts sent via a secure and easily accessible employee app bring strengthened capabilities to healthcare comms**.

A communications management platform can give caregivers crucial access to shared Electronic Patient Records (EHR) which include information about a patient's medical history, preferences, and needs.

Healthcare providers in the US can be assured that **internal communication management platforms like Staffbase meet HIPAA requirements**. This compliance means that they are safe for sharing Protected Health Information ("PHI").



Find more information in this downloadable PDF.



As for crisis communication, as any healthcare provider will tell you, every day brings new crises. But digital comms tools can **decrease the likelihood of employees feeling unprepared for the inevitable**, allowing them to act quickly and effectively.

Push notifications let you break through the noise and quickly get emergency information to your employees.

75% of respondents in a Hubspot survey reported that technology has facilitated the coordination of their organization's crisis response team.

And access to information has all sorts of additional benefits. A study by Trade Press Services shows that **85% of employees claim to be most motivated when regularly updated about company news and information.**

STEP 3:

Promote the Mental Wellbeing of Your Healthcare Workers

Find ways to restore your employees' physical and emotional depletion.

Through a variety of approaches, healthcare leaders have the power to restore their workers' physical and emotional reserves, sense of **self-worth, and trust in their organizations**.

Being a reliable advocate and leading with kindness are two human ways to restore depleted healthcare workers' emotional well-being. But ultimately, these steps depend on robust and tangible support from employers.

This means healthcare organizations need to make an **institutional commitment** to protecting the physical safety and economic security of their staff. **Providing forums for shared best practices and actionable feedback is one way to get the ball rolling.**





While 74% of employed adults agreed that employers should offer their employees resources and access to mental health services, only 35% of employed adults felt comfortable discussing mental health with a colleague.

Digital communication platforms can broadcast mental health best practices and encourage employees to put them into play. They can help foster a corporate culture that genuinely believes in putting the mental wellbeing of its workers first.

STEP 4:

Offer a Local Feel

Make every employee feel like a big fish in a small pond.

A lack of managerial communication lends itself to an isolated and disconnected local workforce that fails to engage with company culture. Without a system in place to facilitate a local-specific culture, non-desk employees (and the business as a result) are stopping short of their true potential.

And there are significant financial repercussions. **The Ponemon Institute found that hospitals in the United States waste approximately \$12 billion annually due to poor communication among care providers.**

There are many tactics you can implement to offer more personalized, relevant comms. Listen to employees, give them the ability to easily provide feedback, involve the entire workforce in company culture, use video to humanize communication, tell stories, cheerlead successes, and provide an easy way to take care of essential tasks.





Think: We have a few easy questions to get you started when thinking about your internal audience:

- Look at the organization overall. What are the departments and locations, and how many people do they include?
- Look at their demographics. What are their genders, age-groups, languages, ethnicities, and lengths of service?
- Get to know their work patterns. Do they work in shifts? Are they frontline, field, factory, or desk workers?
- Know their channels. Which channels already exist? And how are they used?
- Understand their engagement. Can you see any patterns to their motivation and engagement?

STEP 5:

Embrace the Digital Transformation

Pagers no longer cut it.

Employee pagers continue to play a major role in many hospitals, sharing numeric messages and simple text messages. Despite their advantages in hospital settings, these simple machines have many inherent flaws — they have limited flexibility and don't allow for continuous connectivity to the information employees need to be successful.

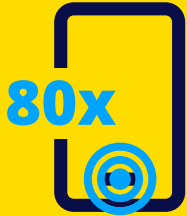
Modern forms of communication are first and foremost digital, and today “digital” means mobile. In order to successfully engage your non-desk workers, it's time to adapt to changing workplace expectations by investing in a platform that prioritizes the experience of your people.



70% of organizations have a digital transformation strategy or are working on one.

The implementation of digital technologies can help accelerate progress towards enterprise goals such as financial returns, workforce diversity, and environmental targets by 22%.

By reaching employees on a mobile device, you're able to get your message across on a preferred platform and your colleagues have access to all the information they might need in one place.



Americans check their phones **80 times** a day



10% check their phones **every 4 minutes**



More than 3/4 keep their phones within reach

CASE STUDY

How Iredell Health Uses Staffbase's Employee App to Reduce Risk and Boost Morale



For more than 68 years, residents of Iredell County, North Carolina, have trusted Iredell Health System with their healthcare. The hospital has grown into a health system — an entire organization of people, institutions, and resources — and now employs around 1,700 healthcare workers.

The Challenges

In 2016, an employee engagement survey revealed that employees were unsatisfied with the internal communication at the organization. Information wasn't getting to the right people — **company emails and sporadic announcements weren't completely accessible to everyone**. Megan Kowalski and her team knew it was time to look for a more effective way to

communicate internally. And that meant it was time to say goodbye to the dated SharePoint intranet and constant mass emails.

The Solution

With Staffbase, Iredell created I-Connect, an employee app for internal communication. It was widely adopted across the organization and marked a major improvement in Iredell Health's internal comms. Megan and her team improved their crisis communication with targeted push notifications, simplified workflows when submitting and finalizing time sensitive requests, and ultimately built an informed and engaged workplace culture. I-Connect became the communication solution tool that many wished for in 2016. **Employee morale increased because they felt seen and heard — their input made a positive impact.**

**Want to see how Staffbase can connect
your healthcare workforce with an
employee comms management platform?**

Book Your Personalized Demo



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