

# From Message Fatigue to Memorable Moments

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## **Slide 1:**

Phil is General Manager from SnapComms, a global provider of digital internal communication tools.

Stu is Director of Technology Operations and Client Services from BCEHS, a leading Canadian health services provider.

We're here to talk you through an internal comms masterclass on going from message fatigue to memorable moments.

## **Slide 2:**

The importance of effectively engaging staff has never been greater – yet the challenge of actually getting employee attention has become more difficult.

Summary of what we'll cover:

Overcoming the universal workplace condition of 'message fatigue'.

Discovering the 'secret sauce' to producing memorable content – whatever your communication goals, subject matter or business environment.

## **Slide 3:**

Whatever you call it, information-overload is a very real threat in today's workplaces. It reduces engagement, productivity and performance. And it results in message fatigue amongst employees.

Corporate messages, peer-to-peer collaboration and personal smartphone notifications all compete for employee attention.

Email and instant messaging are two of the biggest culprits. On average, how many emails does each employee receive every day? How many Slack messages are sent?

## **Slide 4:**

That means an average of 15 emails per hour. And 1 email every 4 minutes.

Some "power users" of Slack are sending out more than 1,000 messages per day!

That's a lot of distraction.

## Slide 5:

The impact of staff being overloaded with information is that every piece of communication is competing for employee attention. So the effectiveness of each message is reduced, and performance will suffer.

As people, we all have a finite capacity for message processing – most messages don't make it past our selective attention.

That means a huge amount of messaging remains unread – which is a waste of time and effort for communicators, and a lost opportunity to engage.

## Slide 6:

Memorability comes from a combination of:

1. initial impact – attraction when the message is first received,
2. recognition – awareness of what a message will be about before reading it (based on visual cues),
3. and recall – remembering message content unprompted afterwards.

Consider the marketing 'rule of 7' – people need to be exposed to a message 7 times to truly take it in and act upon it.

## Slide 7:

There are both visible and invisible aspects of any business environment. To communicate effectively, you need to do more than scratch the surface.

It's like an iceberg. Most of the culture, attitudes and beliefs of companies and employees are the submerged part. They're often ingrained and not as obvious to see.

Above the water are the behaviors and outcomes displayed by companies and employees, based on everything below the waterline. They're easy to see (if you're looking!).

Creating truly memorable moments through internal communications means inspiring changes at the beliefs level (under the water). Therein lies the challenge.

## Slide 8:

But before jumping into which tools to use, it's important to think through your approach first.

Think of this as your comms blueprint – the considerations and creative mindset that will underpin everything else you do.

1. Who are you speaking to? All staff, only certain teams, only those in a particular location, specific individuals etc?
2. Why does what you're saying matter to them? What's the relevance to their everyday jobs?

3. How can you best reach them when they're most receptive? On specific days, times, beginning of shifts etc?
4. How will you know you've successfully reached them? What difference in behaviour or actions do you expect to see?

## Slide 9:

A good way to adopt the right mindset is to think of yourself not as an internal comms manager, but as a storyteller.

You're bringing a story alive through your messages and the way you communicate them.

Even if the subject is something dry, like updated company ethics and compliance policies, there's still a story to be told... it just means that telling stories like this requires you to channel your inner Arthur Conan Doyle a little harder.

Every good story needs 4 things – characters, situations, a dramatic hook and a resolution.

For us as internal comms storytellers:

- Characters are the people involved – whether part of the story or the staff receiving the message,
- Situations are the business environment – what's happening in the wider company and how it affects communications,
- A dramatic hook is the initiative or event which has inspired the communications – and what it is about this that's important for staff to know,
- The resolution is what the outcome will be – what changes affect the people in the story, and what staff receiving the message are expected to do as a result.

## Slide 10:

So, why does this matter? It matters because:

- Employees aren't robots – they need to be engaged emotionally. Sending continuous 'all staff' emails won't make them feel like individuals, or that the message is really 'for' them.
- One size doesn't fit all – using inappropriate tones or message formats could be insensitive. For example, a company undergoing a major restructure will have a very different environment to one which is experiencing rapid growth.
- Boring comms equal snoring staff (or at best, ignoring) – something in the message content needs to grip us for it to be effective.
- The story needs to go somewhere – if there's not a clear action or next step, it's pointless.

By considering these up front, before building any tactical comms plan, you'll be in the best mindset to ensure that when you send your messages they are truly memorable – not missed.

## Slide 11:

At SnapComms we provide the software and advice to help organizations overcome their internal communication challenges. We work with hundreds of companies and millions of employees around the world. One of the industries we work with most is healthcare...

## Slide 12:

For a perspective on comms in one of the most pressured working environments, I'd like to hand over to Stu Frampton.

Stu is Director of Technology Operations and Client Services from health services provider, BCEHS. As part of his role in overseeing the organization's technology infrastructure, Stu had identified some potentially serious weaknesses in the way staff were being communicated with.

That led him to explore options for more effective internal communications tools. 2 years later, BCEHS still use the SnapComms platform. Stu will share the challenges and learnings from his experiences.

## Slide 27:

One of the threads running through Stu's presentation is the importance of aligning the content, format and delivery of your message. For the creation of memorable moments, it means:

1. A clever use of the right tool for the job.
2. Don't add to message fatigue – deliver your message in a channel appropriate for your objectives.
3. Don't get lost in the noise – condition employees to connect visuals with messages, building memorability through recognition.

## Slide 28:

Consider the communication spectrum chart. The nature of your activity, from top down to collaborative, and from passive to intrusive, will help define the best comms tools to use.

A multi-channel approach, which uses the right tools for the right job at the right time, is the most effective way to communicate.

This could include a mix of high-visibility and intrusive channels, plus passive and slow-burn formats.

## Slide 29:

To be a great internal communications manager, you need a complete view of the whole employee engagement process – from beginning to end. That's a 360-degree approach.

Consider what staff need to know or feel at each stage – what knowledge they need to have, behavior they should adopt, or specific action they need to take.

When you know this, you can then align your messaging to target each stage and drive the outcome you need.

Focus on the “long-game” (ie. What’s your key objective) but maximize every opportunity you have to connect with staff in an engaging way. Those are the memorable moments.

## **Slide 30:**

The combination of message storytelling and channel selection is what makes the internal comms secret sauce for memorable moments.

This can then be applied in every different comms situation – creating moments that generate excitement, encourage learning or drive action.

This recipe holds true whether:

- Your objective is time-critical notification or longer-term behavioral change,
- Your messaging is proactive to inspire staff, or reactive to alert them,
- And your business function is compliance, information security, health & wellness or anything else.

## **Slide 36:**

This is a free guide to help internal communicators build advocacy in their workplace.

It includes a wealth of tips, stats, downloadable assets (including a business case template) and other useful information to help get your internal comms programme across the line.

Get the guide by downloading it from this link. You can download either the whole guide or just the sections you need.