

Diagnosing global-local pain points

Areas for improvement across global business can be highlighted and made better through local measurement, mentoring and smart KPIs.

Managing a Communication function involves knowing what's working well and what's not, and then improving the weak areas. Measuring current baselines is a process that's often best managed at the global level. However, most employees work within local geographies or business units, where the communication experiences are often quite different from the companywide averages.

Table One shows results from one global client's survey questions about supervisor communication. The table shows the overall company averages in the first column. Numbers for each of the countries are shown only if they are statistically better (in blue) or worse (in red) than the company average. These differences are calculated by a survey analysis program called SPSS, which determines how different a number needs to be based on the size of the subgroup. For example, a 25-percentage point difference might be very meaningful for a group of 300 people, but not meaningful for a subgroup of four people, where that difference can be generated by just one person's response.

For the Corporate Communication function to be able to deliver better numbers on some of these survey questions in the future, improvements will need to occur at the local level – where supervisor communication actually happens. One of the best ways to improve those numbers is to focus on local operations with the lowest scores and try to adapt best practices from other operations with higher-than-average scores on those same metrics.

Aligning global and local KPIs

Box One shows some possible key performance indicators (KPIs) that could be set at both the global and local level based on the results in Table One.

In Japan, where two supervisor metrics are lower than the company

average, they could have KPIs set to improve those two numbers.

In Germany, they would want to maintain their currently high numbers, but also could be expected to provide one-on-one counseling for their colleagues in France, Japan and Mexico to help improve their lower-than-average scores. The German communicators could even be rewarded if their counseling results in higher scores in those countries.

Ensuring local scores' integrity

However, in order to obtain reliable data at a regional level, survey administration needs to fulfill a number of requirements:

- The surveys need to be translated into local languages and made available on paper for those without good online access to ensure all employees have an equal opportunity to participate in the survey.
- Enough employees at each site need to be invited to participate so that enough people respond to achieve a relatively small margin of error for the data.

Global support for local KPIs

Even though global communicators may care about only global issues, they also have an opportunity to provide local communicators with localized survey results on issues or channels only they care about. Providing

opportunities to localize the survey content will also help to engage communicators in supporting the survey administration.

Providing this localization doesn't need to be onerous either. It's fairly easy to add topics like "My unit's goals and plans" and "My unit's intranet" to a survey. Although these topics would be the same in surveys around the world, breaking results down by business unit and by country would provide numbers on the unique goals and performance of each different group listed in the demographics questions.

TABLE ONE: PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES WHO SAY THEIR SUPERVISOR FREQUENTLY EXHIBITS THESE BEHAVIORS

	Total	Australia	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	Mexico	Spain	UK	USA
Immediate Supervisor										
Clearly explains the direction the company is heading	55%			68%						
Provides clear direction and priorities	66%			78%						
Communicates what I can do to achieve goals	51%			68%						
Really listens	70%			81%				78%		
Is truthful	77%		65%	86%		68%	59%		86%	
Provides information in a timely manner	64%			76%						
Explains reasons behind decisions	61%			75%		50%				

ALIGNED KPIS AT GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

CORPORATE: By end of this quarter, identify best practices for supervisor communication in Germany and share with all eight other countries

Germany: (1) By end of next quarter, provide consulting advice to three countries with below-average scores on supervisor communication (2) By end of year when survey is repeated, maintain high scores on seven aspects of supervisor communication

Japan: By end of year, (1) Improve supervisor truthfulness score from 68% to 77% (2) Improve supervisor score for explaining reasons behind decisions from 50% to 61%



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