



Identifying internal communication trends around the world

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GLOBAL VARIATIONS IN COMMS PRACTICES

Angela Sinickas has mined her survey database to answer a question posed on Melcrum's CommsNetwork: "Are there global differences in how internal communication works?" In this first part of a two-part special, Sinickas looks at how satisfied employees are with communication and how they rate management's communication skills.

Identifying variations in how internal communication works around the world is useful, but tricky to identify. While a survey can show a single organization its own geographical variations, generalizing trends for multiple companies is fraught with potential errors.

For example, the location of a company's headquarters influences its approach to communication – and how effective that approach is "at home" vs. on the other side of the globe. Some companies have better or worse communication programs to begin with,

which can skew the numbers for geographies represented heavily in their data. Finally, each organization defines its geographies differently and has various types of employees around the world.

To try to correct for these variations I've pooled data from eight, very large, global organizations, three headquartered in Europe and the rest in the US. Instead of looking at absolute numbers from each survey, I've captured the percentage of variation in each geography from its own company-wide averages. This neutralizes the impact of

some companies having more effective or less effective programs.

North Americans are most satisfied

Figure One shows that Canadian and American employees are 13 percentage points more satisfied overall with communication than the averages for their global companies – especially the Canadians. Though Asia Pacific is least satisfied overall (especially Japan), Indians are as satisfied as North Americans. Even within EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) there are variations, with UK/Ireland employees 15 percentage points below average and German-speaking countries 13 points above.

Management skills vary as well

Figure Two shows employees in Latin America rate their supervisors and senior leaders more highly for their communication skills than other employees in their companies. EMEA came in lowest, though again the German-speaking countries ranked midway between Latin America and North America. The weakest communication skills for Asia Pacific showed up in Japan and the highest in China/SE Asia. (The skills surveyed included communicating strategy and department priorities, connecting employees' roles to the strategy, listening and being credible/truthful.)

In the second and concluding part, the focus will be on global variations in interest and information levels in business topics, as well as preferred sources.

Figure One: Overall satisfaction with internal communication

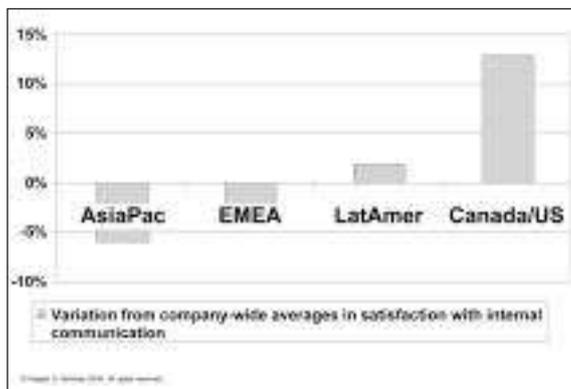
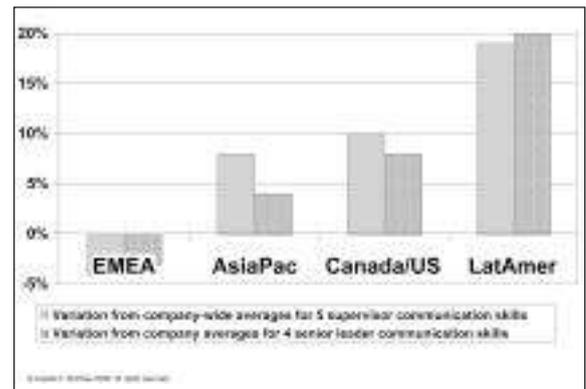


Figure Two: How supervisor and senior leader communication skills vary



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