



## Ask the Expert

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**Q: We are in the middle of an HR review and have a new Organizational Development Manager who believes that manager and leadership communication is a function of OD. As internal communication professionals we firmly believe this function sits with our team.**

**Do you have any articles/evidence to help us outline to our General Manager that leadership and management communication is a function of internal communications and not organizational development?**

**A:** I'm sure this isn't the answer you want to hear, but I believe manager and leadership communication needs to be a joint effort between internal communications and OD. Neither group is the rightful "owner" of the process, as neither is equipped to manage it alone. Here's why.

OD is charged with developing people, processes and structures to improve organizational performance. Their purview might include providing resources to help managers succeed and removing barriers that can hinder results.

### **A shared focus on communication**

Improving communication is often key to OD efforts, resulting in the internal communication function and OD sharing the same goals. With respect to manager and leadership communication, for instance, both groups might focus on the messages senior leaders send in their words and actions, facts managers need to know about the business, information managers need to convey to their teams, and the causes of communication breakdowns across divisions.

### **Creating alignment**

When a company's communication and people-management processes, as shown in Figure 1, are aligned through the efforts of OD and internal communication, managers are equipped and motivated to be effective communicators. When there's a gap in any of the areas that influence communication, you run into problems.

For instance, a manager might have the tools and ability to share information freely but not the motivation, because nothing suggests that doing so is in his or her best interest. Or another manager may want to do the right thing and communicate effectively, but lack the required knowledge, skills and ability. To get it right, both groups – OD and internal communication – need to integrate their efforts. Who sits where is largely irrelevant. The outcome in terms of managerial effectiveness is what matters.

Figure One: What influences manager communication

