



**United Way**  
Toronto

## Memorandum

To: Senior Executive Team  
From: Communications and Public Affairs Team  
Date: October 26, 2011  
Re: Revised Internal Communications Strategy

---

## Background

The communications team develops internal communications content – whether it's all-staff meetings or our internal newsletter – with four main goals in mind:

- To improve understanding of community impact across all departments
- To improve United Way staff members' ability to tell the United Way story
- To encourage people across the organization to work together
- To engage United Way employees in the employer brand

We were not convinced we were achieving these goals with existing internal communications tools. Nor were we confident those tools were as useful as they could be to staff. So we thought it might be time to evaluate our existing internal communications model and, if needed, go in a new direction.

We wanted everyone in the organization to have the opportunity to offer honest feedback on existing internal communications tools and offer ideas on how to improve internal communications. So we met with each team to ask questions like “what’s working?” and “what kind of content do you want?”

## Summary of Results

Tool	Conclusions
<i>WayIn</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People expressed some frustration. Suggestions included:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improving the search function</li><li>- Making navigation more intuitive</li><li>- Eliminating old, out of date content</li><li>- Improving consistency of content across department pages</li><li>- Making it easier to add/edit documents in various libraries</li></ul></li></ul>



<i>News Direct</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people don't read our internal staff newsletter. If they do, they scan it or just read the staff profile</li> <li>• United Way needs a vehicle where all departments can share their work and successes.</li> <li>• Content should be more succinct and accessible</li> <li>• It should be sent out monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly</li> <li>• The format and vehicle need updating. Suggestions included:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving content to Way In</li> <li>- No more attachments. Content in body of an e-mail</li> <li>- Table of contents at the top of the newsletter</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Major all-staff announcements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After just two team meetings, it became clear that United Way needs a strategy for sharing major news and announcements across the organization</li> <li>• Many staff members aren't reading important e-mails from VPs because they aren't sure how the content affects their work</li> <li>• Suggestions included:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making important e-mails visually consistent</li> <li>- Organizing e-mail content in a clear and concise way</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Today's News</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people read or scan this tool every day</li> <li>• Generally, staff find it accessible and useful</li> <li>• Suggestions included:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More agency coverage</li> <li>- More multi-media coverage ex. broadcast clips</li> <li>- Headlines up top with hyperlinks to full content</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>On the Move</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This tool was almost universally liked</li> <li>• People appreciate its consistency, photos, length and timeliness</li> </ul>
<i>All-staff meetings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people said they liked all-staff meetings. They particularly appreciate the opportunity to connect with Susan.</li> <li>• Many find them long, notably service anniversaries</li> <li>• Some said powerpoints were too complex, others said too basic</li> <li>• Meetings are a bit top-heavy. People from different levels in the organization should be given the opportunity to share their work.</li> </ul>

### Next Steps

According to this assessment, almost every existing internal communications tool needs some work. Many – notably NewsDirect – aren't achieving their full potential.

Though most of the changes we hope to make to improve internal communications would be individual to each tool, we also feel there are some simple changes we can make across the board to encourage their use and come closer to achieving our goals:



**United Way**  
Toronto

- Creating some visual consistency across as many tools as possible
- Moving as many tools as possible to the portal to drive traffic there
- Making content shorter, more accessible, better organized and more visually appealing so that information is easier to take in.

Below, in order of priority, are our recommendations on how to make each internal communications tool better. We developed these recommendations by looking at staff feedback, consulting with the new media and IT teams about what is technologically feasible, and considering our own departmental capacity and goals.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Launch Date</b>
<i>Way In</i>	<p>While the purpose of this internal communication revitalization isn't to improve Way In, the changes we would like to make should help make our intranet more current and useful.</p> <p>Most of our internal communications content would live permanently on department pages or blogs in Way In, with photos and summaries temporarily on Way In's front page. Permanent content would be searchable. We hope that by driving people to department pages, we'll renew interest in keeping those pages up to date.</p>	Launched with the first edition of the new newsletter by end of 2011



**United Way**  
Toronto

<p><i>News Direct</i></p>	<p>Header: My United Way (formally NewsDirect)          Tagline: Keeping United Way Toronto Staff Connected          Frequency: Bi-monthly          Vehicle: In the body of an all-staff e-mail and on WayIn</p> <p>The newsletter would include a hyperlinked table of contents up top. Sections would include:</p> <p><i>Message from Susan:</i> Focus would be community impact. Would include a photo of Susan, preferably doing something in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content would exist in full in the e-mail, be summarized on Way In's front page and exist in full on the President's Way In page</li> <li>• Number of words: 250 or less</li> </ul> <p><i>United Way Highlights:</i> Recent big projects and successes at UWT – ex. CN Tower Climb, launch of new Community Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content would be summarized in the e-mail, represented by a large photo on the front page of Way In, and click through to the full story on the page of the department leading the project.</li> <li>• Number of words: 250 or less</li> </ul> <p><i>Department Updates:</i> Would be submitted to the communications department a few weeks before publishing date. Would be optional. We'd encourage use of photos. Communications would vet the content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content would be summarized in the e-mail. Link on front page of Way In. Full content on the department's Way In page</li> <li>• Number of words: 50-100 words</li> </ul> <p><i>Staff Profile:</i> Profile of a staff member that embodies one of our brand Values. Communications would select the employees (systematically to ensure fair distribution), conduct interviews and write the piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content would be summarized in e-mail and on the front page of Way In, with full content on the employee's department page.</li> <li>• Number of words: 250 words or less</li> </ul> <p><i>Working at United Way:</i> This would encompass things like HR updates, Knowledge Series, Diversity and Inclusion, and wellness committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content would be summarized in the e-mail and on the front page of Way In, with full content on the Working at United Way page</li> <li>• Number of words: 200 or less</li> </ul>	<p>First edition to go out by end of 2011, at the same times as changes to Way In</p>
---------------------------	---	---



**United Way**  
Toronto

<p><i>Major all-staff announcements</i></p>	<p>Header: Breaking News            Tagline: Important all-staff announcement            Frequency: As needed            Vehicle: All-staff alerts connected to background content on the Way In. Summary and photo on the front page of the Way In. Vetted by communications for consistency.</p> <p>Template for people who send out major all-staff announcements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: one brief phrase</li> <li>• What you need to know: two sentences</li> <li>• Next steps: what's next and what actions need to be taken</li> <li>• Background: a brief paragraph with a link to more information that would live on the front page of Way In and on department pages</li> </ul>	<p>End of November 2011</p>
<p><i>Today's News</i></p>	<p>Header: Today's News            Tagline: Keeping you informed of what's happening in the community            Frequency: Daily, ASAP            Vehicle: All-staff alerts connected to the "Today's news and more" blog, which is to be separated from the "On the Move" blog on Way In</p> <p>The content and vehicle for today's news would remain largely the same with minor changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would include almost all agency mentions</li> <li>• We would put hyperlinked headlines at the top</li> <li>• We would also keep in mind that people want more multi-media</li> </ul>	<p>All changes, except the new header and tagline, have been implemented.</p> <p>New header and tagline launched by end of November 2011.</p>
<p><i>On the Move</i></p>	<p>Header: On the Move            Tagline: Announcing United Way Toronto staff updates            Frequency: As needed or, if churn is high, weekly            Vehicle: All-staff alerts connected to a new "on the move" blog separate from the "today's news and more" blog.</p> <p>The content for these would remain the same.</p>	<p>New header and tagline for end of November, 2011</p>



**United Way**  
Toronto

<i>All-staff meetings</i>	Frequency: Four times a year (September, December, February, May)  All-staff meetings would remain the same. We have taken measures to ensure that content is relevant, not too long or complicated. We vet presentations and we keep people to a time limit during the meeting.	No changes. Next all-staff meeting is December 13, 2011
---------------------------	--	---

### **Evaluation**

Eight months after the launch of the new internal communications strategy, we would pause to take stock of its strengths and weaknesses.

At that time, the communications and public affairs team would reach out to colleagues across the organization to ask for feedback and gauge the success of newly revamped communications tools.

We'll ask whether this new strategy in any way improved use and content of Way In. If it hasn't, we'll look into whether we can try to address some of the broader issues facing our staff intranet.

Way In and My United Way, the tools that would see most significant transformations, would both have feedback buttons built in. These would be connected to surveys. Results would be sent to the Communications and Public Affairs team in real time.

### **Key Considerations for SET**

We are looking to SET to consider the above plan, make suggestions and, when it's ready, approve it. Things to consider:

- Will these refreshed internal communications tools bring us closer to achieving our communications goals?
- Will these refreshed tools help UWT staff do their jobs better?

### **Contact:**

Pedro Barata  
Acting VP, Communications & Public Affairs  
416-777-1444 x651  
[pbarata@uwgt.org](mailto:pbarata@uwgt.org)