



Building Culture Through Communication: Engaging Your Healthcare Workforce

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Meet Your Facilitators



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Workshop Agenda

Welcome & Framing

- Intros & Objectives

Power of Engagement

- Research & Discussion

Acenda Case Study

- Educate, Engage, Repeat Strategy

Break

Bringing It to Life

- Activity & Share-outs

Leadership Alignment

- ROI & Pitch

Action & Takeaways

- Next Steps & Reflection

Internal Comms Vibe Check

- Let's kick things off!
 - Choose an emoji that best captures how you're feeling about internal communications today!



Beyond Communication: The Power of True Engagement

Why Deep Connections Are Our Greatest Asset

The impact of genuine connection extends far beyond daily interactions, directly influencing critical outcomes.

"When healthcare workers feel connected... they deliver safer care, show greater resilience, and are more likely to remain in their roles." – **AHA, 2025**

Top 25% in workforce engagement scored 38 percentile points higher in patient likelihood to recommend – **Press Ganey, 2023**

The Power of Engagement



- **Support & Connection**

- High engagement creates a motivating and supportive environment.
- Employees feel connected to their roles and the organization's mission.

- **Initiative & Collaboration**

- Engaged workers are more likely to take initiative and perform with diligence.
- Engagement enhances attentiveness and collaboration among colleagues.

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Insights from Engagement Data



Elevating Patient Satisfaction

A 10% increase in employee engagement directly correlates with a 2% rise in patient satisfaction, as reported by Press Ganey.



Enhancing Patient Safety

Employee recognition improves patient safety outcomes by 14%, according to the *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*.



Reducing Errors and Risks

Engaged healthcare staff are significantly less likely to report errors or adverse events, with studies showing higher engagement linked to stronger patient safety culture. *Source: Journal of Patient Safety*



Improving Clinical Outcomes

Hospitals with higher staff retention, which is strongly tied to engagement, see lower inpatient mortality, shorter lengths of stay, and higher patient satisfaction. *Source: Sogolytics*



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Facilitated Discussion

Where do you observe breakdowns within your organization, and what are their underlying causes?

Educate, Engage, Repeat Strategy

Strategy Overview

Educate

Equips employees with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need through clear training on organizational policies, essential technologies, and proven best practices.

Engage

Fosters a supportive, collaborative environment where employees feel valued through open communication, feedback, and recognition initiatives.

Repeat

Reinforces learning and engagement by regularly refreshing training, recognizing milestones, and reassessing employee needs, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptability.

Why This Approach Delivers Results

- **Continuous learning** ensures employees are proficient with comms tools.
- **Active participation** transforms passive information receivers into engaged contributors.
- **Long-term consistency** ingrains these practices into the company culture.
- The strategy fosters a **strong internal communication culture**, ensuring employees are informed, motivated, and confident in accessing necessary information.



Acenda Internal Comms Wins

- **Strategy & Technology:** In 2019 we revamped our internal communications strategy and introduced our intranet, ACE – Acenda Communications for Employees. It serves as a central hub for agency news, training, resources, and employee engagement.
- **Numbers Soared:** 93% of all staff are active users of the intranet, email open rates improved by 45% and employee retention rates improved.
- **Awards & Recognition:** Our internal communications and strategy have received 24 national and regional awards. In addition, since the implementation of our new strategy, Acenda has received multiple top workplace awards, some specifically addressing our engaged culture.

Meet ACE, the Acenda Comms Mascot!

Educate Phase: Establishing a Robust Foundation

- Build confidence and consistency through clear onboarding and training.
- Ensure every employee knows where to find resources and how to use them.
- Set the tone that communication is accessible, reliable, and part of daily work.
- **Key Actions:**
 - **Onboarding as Culture-Building:** Use orientations to introduce values, mission, and communication tools.
 - **Platform Familiarization:** Train staff on intranet, HR portals, collaboration tools, and how to access policies and forms.
 - **Continuous Learning:** Provide refresher sessions and micro-trainings on tools, policies, and best practices.

Educate in Practice: Building Knowledge and Confidence

- New hire orientations include guided intranet navigation, welcome videos, and step-by-step access to HR documents.
- Monthly newsletters reinforce key updates and highlight intranet features.
- Branded quick-start guides help employees feel supported from day one.

Measurable Impact & Benefits

- Staff feel empowered, not overwhelmed, during their first weeks.
- Knowledge gaps are reduced, leading to fewer errors and more confidence.
- Employees see communications as a resource, not a burden.

Educate Examples from Acenda

Hello!

We hope you enjoyed your first week at Acenda.

On behalf of the entire agency, we welcome you to #TeamAcenda! At Acenda, we are dedicated to world-class prevention, treatment, and wellness services, compassionately delivered to ensure that every individual, family, and community achieves their greatest potential. We are excited to have you as part of the team to move lives forward.

Meet the Team

Acenda is led by an exceptional leadership team consisting of both executive and senior leadership members that drive innovation and fosters a diverse culture of excellence.

Meet the Team



What is ACE?

You should have received an email to set up your ACE account. ACE is our intranet and is where you will learn and connect with all things Acenda. You will find important documents, resources, and agency updates, as well as staff highlights, celebrations, inspirations, and contests. If you did not receive an email to set up your ACE account, please email communications@acendahealth.org.



How do I set up my profile?

With over 500 staff spread across many locations, it's important to complete your ACE profile with your headshot, position, department, location, and contact information to make it easier to locate and engage with coworkers. If you need help setting up your account, visit [How to Set Up Your Ace Profile](#).

Click the button below to access the Staff Directory and get some insight into what your profile should look like.

Staff Directory



One last thing.

You're going to want to set up your Email Signature as soon as possible. You can access the instructions by clicking the button below.

Email Signature

See you soon.

In the upcoming weeks, you will be receiving two more communications from our team. The first one will be a deeper dive into ACE with more information and tips. The second email will provide further instructions on marketing requests.

Again, welcome to Acenda and we look forward to working with you.

~ The Marketing, Development, and Communications Team

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#TEAMACENDA News & Updates



Family Wellbeing

"There is no such thing as a perfect parent. So just be a real one."
~Sue Atkins

What's New?

Aetna's Summary of Benefits and Coverage 2025
Aetna's Summary of Benefits and Coverage are now available. [Visit ACE](#) to learn more about them in the HR Hub.



Shaping Policy & Advocating Change Upcoming Policy Roundtables

Upcoming Policy Roundtables
Acenda's Chief Business and Government Relations Officer, Jim Curtin, will be holding a roundtable on October 15th to discuss and answer questions about policy and advocacy. Read more [on ACE](#).

2024 Flu Vaccine Clinics
You can still sign up to attend our October 30th flu clinic at our Crest Haven location. [Visit ACE](#) to sign up and learn more about the clinic.



Fall Movie Chat & Chew

DEI&B is holding a fall movie Chat & Chew! The event will be on November 13th in the Acenda Headquarters Training room A & B. For more details, [visit ACE](#).

#ICYMI: What's Trending?



Reduce Stress by Organizing Your Family's Busy Schedule

Now is the perfect time to simplify your organization to reduce stress and help your family stay on top of all their fall to-dos. This blog includes tips on managing work, school, extracurricular activities, and anything else that comes up along the way. [Read more here](#).



Baby Safety Month: Expert Tips for Ensuring Your Baby's Safety

Whether you are a first-time parent, or you have other children, bringing your baby home can be a stressful time. Check out these tips to learn more about the things you can do to ensure your little bundle of joy is safe and cared for. To read more, [click here](#).

Acenda Academy

Shaping Policy & Advocating Change

October 2024



Shaping Policy & Advocating Change in October

As we move into the fall and the beginning of New Jersey's budget season, advocacy is more critical than ever. It's vital that we speak up on behalf of the individuals and families who rely on our services, ensuring that their voices are heard through strong, collective advocacy. Check out this [policy and advocacy quiz on ACE](#), and join us for the Policy Roundtable on October 15th to learn more.

Visit [ACE](#) for daily updates and motivation!

Need access to ACE? Email communications@acendahealth.org



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Interactive Prompt: Educate



- What's one thing you could add/refresh in onboarding comms?

Engage Phase: Creating Participation and Connection

- Build a workplace where communication is two-way, not top-down.
- Strengthen trust, collaboration, and belonging through active involvement.
- Ensure employees feel seen, valued, and part of the organizational voice.

Key Actions:

- **Interactive Activities:** Use challenges, quizzes, and campaigns to make communications fun and memorable.
- **Recognition Programs:** Celebrate both individual and team contributions through shoutouts, awards, and branded incentives.
- **Feedback Loops:** Create easy ways for staff to share ideas, ask questions, and provide input through surveys, forums, or open meetings.

Putting Engagement into Action

- Monthly themed engagement contests, offering branded incentives to foster team spirit and enjoyment.
- Integrating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) initiatives and wellness programs, directly aligning with core organizational values.
- Curated internal communications, such as "Fri-Yays" and "Monday Motivation" posts, to stimulate dialogue and strengthen interpersonal connections.

Measurable Impact & Benefits

- Transforms employees from passive recipients to active contributors, fostering a culture of ownership and initiative.
- Cultivates profound trust in leadership through responsive feedback mechanisms and demonstrated action.
- Builds a robust sense of community, directly enhancing employee retention, boosting morale, and accelerating cross-functional collaboration.

Engage Examples from Acenda

#TEAMACENDA

Hello <<First Name>>! 🎉

Please click on the links or the pictures to view more about these great celebrations on ACE!

Welcome to the Team

We are proud to announce **23 new teammates** to #TeamAcenda! We're so excited for these passionate individuals to join the Acenda family and help further our mission to move lives forward! 🎉 Be sure to say hello on ACE. 📺

Elizabeth Schopher
Kimberly English
Eva Perez
Robert Salvatore
Sheila Rodriguez
Stefany Castillo
Nakeisha Scarbrough
Tashana Blount
Tracy Burgess
Alexis Freeman
Sierra Young
Tyonna Gunter

Robert Sims
Ti'Gena Rodgers
Joyce Reaves
Janet Gonzalez
Niah Armstead
Marilyn Gil
Paul Lindsey
Jianna Wayns
Nicole Messenger
Denise McCallum
Thomas Napoli

Acendaversaries

We're also thrilled to be celebrating **79 Acendaversaries** throughout August! 🎉 #AcendaProud

[View Monthly Anniversaries](#)

Community Champions



The members of the Communications Team are Acenda Community Champions! They struck gold at the 2024 dotComm Awards for their internal campaign strategy submission! dotCOMM Awards is an international competition honoring excellence in web creativity and digital communication. We are #AcendaProud.

[View More Community Champion Moments Here](#)

Be sure to submit any awards, recognitions, or presentations that you receive or take part in so we can showcase your accomplishments. [Submit them using this form.](#)

Acenda All-Stars

Jennifer Wysocki is an Acenda All-Star!

"Jennifer is an All-Star! She has been an integral part of training new staff! I'm not sure what I would do without her! Thank you, Jen, for all that you do!"

~Kyrsten Lee

Amy Baum is an Acenda All-Star!

"Amy is an All-Star for volunteering to accompany our Housing Resource Specialist to a house viewing with a family. Thank you!!"

~Rachel Murphy

Gladys Ruiz is an Acenda All-Star!

"Gladys is an All-Star for filling in for an opening. Thank you!"

~Rachel Murphy

[View More Acenda All Stars Here](#)

In the Spotlight



Acenda's Wellness Committee put together a short video showcasing how some of our staff members practice self-care. Check it out by clicking the button found on [the ACE post](#).

And don't forget about our Employee Assistance Programs. All links can be found on ACE.

Reminders



Acenda United's Cookout is tomorrow! Check out the exciting clip from [#TeamAcenda staff](#), Chiyonte Warren and Orlando Munoz on ACE.

For more information and to see the agenda for the day, click the button found on the post!



Interactive Prompt: Engage



- What's the most creative way you could make comms interactive?

Repeat Phase: Consistency That Builds Culture

- Ensure learning and connection are not one-time events.
- Reinforce knowledge and culture so practices become habits.
- Keep communications fresh and relevant for both new and long-tenured employees.

Key Actions:

- **Refresher Sessions:** Host regular workshops, awareness weeks, and policy roundtables to reintroduce tools and priorities.
- **Visual Reminders:** Use posters, infographics, and branded swag as daily cues that keep messages top-of-mind.
- **Ongoing Recognition:** Celebrate milestones, anniversaries, and team achievements to show consistent value over time.

Repeat in Practice: Sustaining Engagement Over Time

- ACE Lounge conversations and Innovation Chats keep staff engaged in continuous improvement.
- Department awareness weeks reinforce program knowledge and collaboration.
- Intranet reminders and flowcharts help staff quickly access what they need.

Measurable Impact & Benefits

- Reinforcement builds consistency and trust in organizational communications.
- Employees remain confident, informed, and connected regardless of tenure.
- Engagement is sustained long-term, preventing backsliding into old habits

Repeat Examples from Acenda

ACE Lounge

Visit ACE Lounge to learn about our new agency intranet, setup your profile, and navigate other helpful tips and agency resources.



HAVE YOU CHECKED ACE TODAY?

ACE is Acenda's internal, interactive communications platform that we use to keep all staff updated on important news and trainings, as well as celebratory moments, special events, and fun contests. It is also a great resource to get access to agency documents, the staff directory, forms for marketing materials, and more!



ace.acendahealth.org

Now available for download on the
App Store or Google Play Store



Interactive Prompt: Repeat

- How do you keep comms fresh over time?



Break (10 min)

See you back shortly!



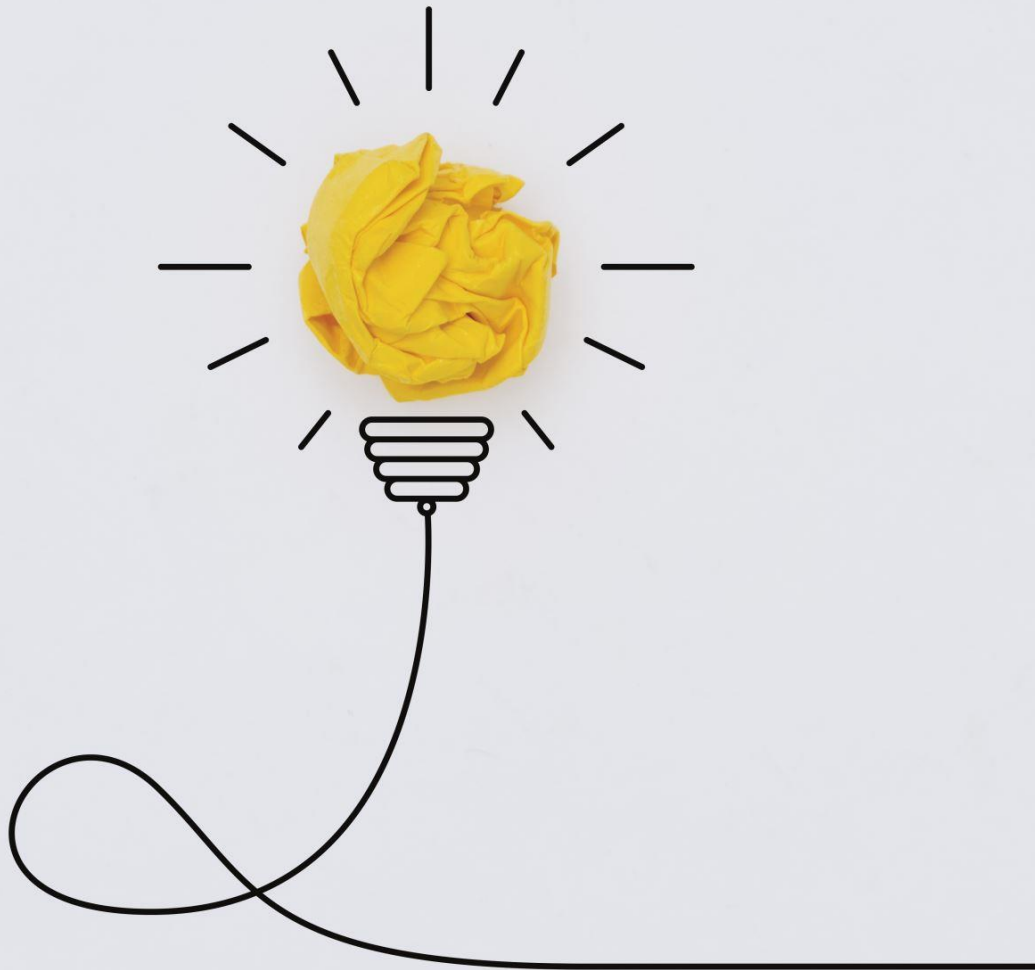
Rapid-Fire Rewrite Exercise



- Educate
 - How would you introduce/refresh it?
 - What is the best channel?
 - When should it be introduced?
- Engage
 - How can you make the messaging more interactive?
 - What incentives are you offering?
- Repeat
 - What is your reinforcement plan?

Debrief

- What's one creative idea that stood out?



Elevating Performance: The Power of Leadership Alignment

Why It Matters

- Engaged employees drive retention, reduce burnout, and improve patient experience.
- Internal communications is a strategic lever that links directly to organizational goals and culture.

Leadership Alignment Checklist

- Show ROI: Link engagement to retention, patient safety, and satisfaction.
- Unify the Message: Ensure leaders speak with one clear voice.
- Make It Easy: Equip leaders with talking points, data, and ready-made tools.
- Connect to Priorities: Tie communications directly to organizational goals.
- Share Data: Use benchmarks and success stories to demonstrate impact.



Interactive Prompt: Pitch to Leaders

- Write a 2-3 sentence pitch for why internal comms matters

Turning Today Into Tomorrow's Success

Rebrand or Upgrade Your Employee Intranet

- **Action:** Rebranding or upgrading your organizational intranet is crucial for maintaining a dynamic and engaging internal communication platform. Your intranet should reinforce your brand identity, enhance collaboration, and improve access to critical resources and information.



Turning Today Into Tomorrow's Success

Create a User-Friendly Employee Portal

- **Action:** Create a designated space where employees can submit various types of information, requests, or feedback directly to the organization. This portal serves as a centralized, digital form submission system that allows employees to easily and securely input their submissions for specific processes or initiatives.



Turning Today Into Tomorrow's Success

Seizing Every Chance to Boost Engagement

- **Action:** Mundane organizational events can be transformed into powerful engagement opportunities by infusing them with creativity, fun, and collaboration. Always use an opportunity like an organizational Town Hall to create engagement with a dynamic campaign and engagement activities like team watch parties.



Three Key Takeaways



Internal comms = connection



Educate, Engage, Repeat sustains culture



Culture is built one reinforcement at a time





Closing Reflection

- Prompt: What's one action you'll take back to your org.



Questions?

Please be sure to complete the session evaluation on the mobile app!



Speaker Bio

- Mari Considine, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Acenda Integrated Health, mconsidine@acendahealth.org
- Mari Considine is a senior marketing and communications executive with nearly 30 years of experience driving brand strategy, audience engagement, and enterprise visibility. As Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at Acenda Integrated Health, she leads strategic initiatives spanning brand, referral outreach, and omnichannel marketing across more than 50 service locations. Mari also teaches graduate-level courses in marketing, leadership, and project management as an adjunct professor at St. Francis College. Her current research focuses on the effectiveness of multi-generational marketing in mental health. A frequent national speaker and panelist, she brings practical insights into branding, communications strategy, and audience connection.

Speaker Bio

- Cari Burke, AVP, Marketing & Communications
Acenda Integrated Health, cburke@acendahealth.org
- Cari Burke is the Associate Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Development, bringing over 20 years of experience in client care and administrative leadership. With 10 years of direct service and more than a decade in strategic leadership roles, she offers a unique blend of frontline insight and executive perspective. Cari is deeply committed to helping leaders build strong, purpose-driven teams through intentional culture-building, collaboration, and impactful communication. Her expertise lies in connecting people through meaningful storytelling and values-based strategy to foster relationships, amplify mission-driven work, and drive sustainable growth. She is passionate about empowering others to lead with authenticity, purpose, and empathy.

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