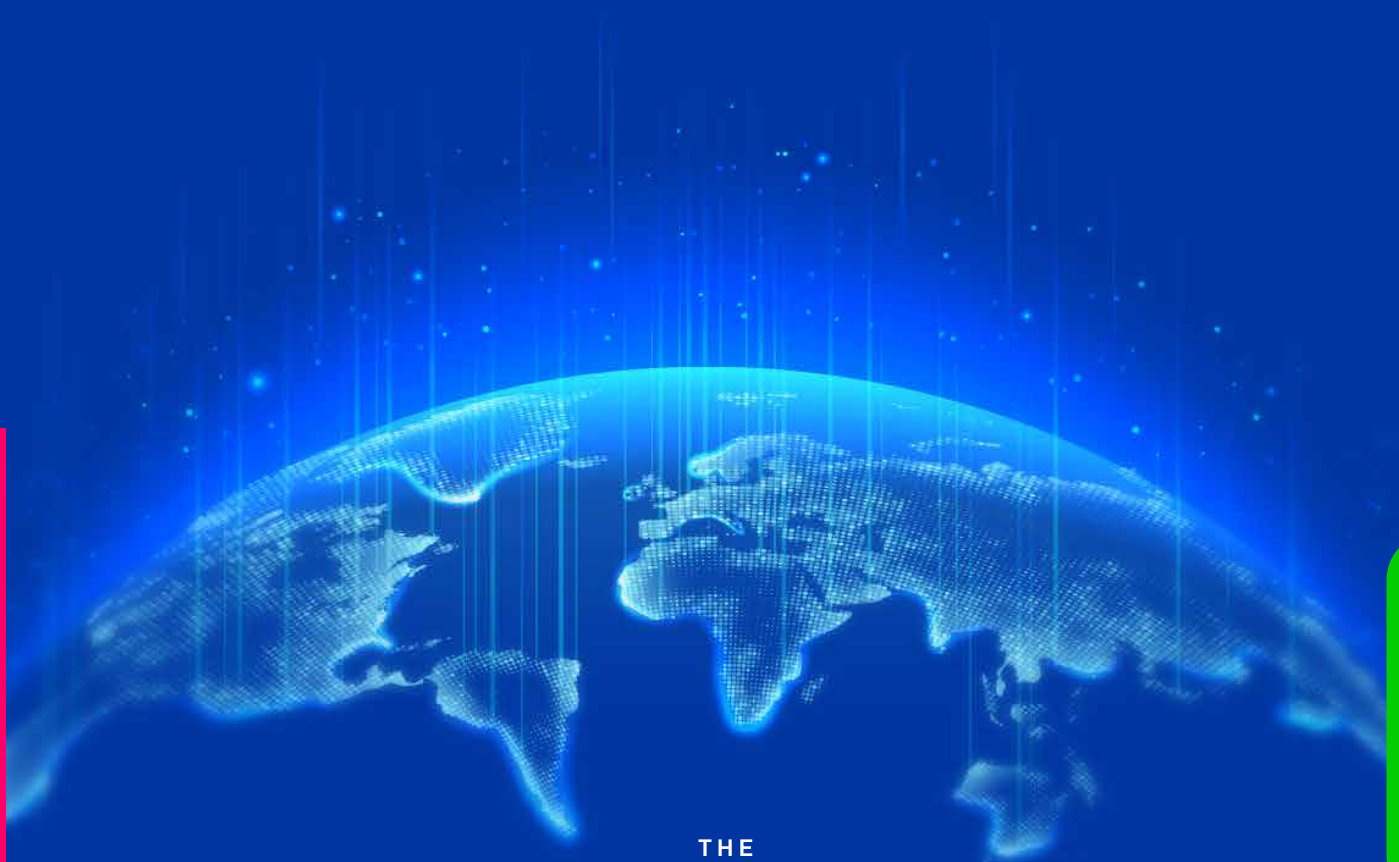


How To Overcome

COMMON CHALLENGES IN
ADVISING LEADERS ON

BIG ISSUES



THE
GROSSMAN
GROUP

QUICK GUIDE



Intro



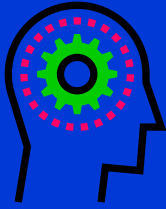
One of the most challenging parts of the communicator’s job today is how to help leaders wisely respond when issues arise. Often, leaders are cautious about communicating in difficult moments and may not understand why their employees need to hear from them.

The list of potential topics is endless—ethics scandals, layoffs, world conflicts, a pandemic, climate concerns, and more. Pivotal research—including some of our recent studies with The Harris Poll—shows that silence often backfires, leading to employee disengagement, a lack of trust in leadership, and worse, distraction and business slowdown.

Given this, it’s important to know how to strategically advise leaders on what to do, and how to do it well.

The core principle—and our central belief—is to recognize that employees need to know and experience that their leaders genuinely care about them, especially in the moments that matter most.

The following solutions to common challenges will help communication pros build the knowledge to confidently advise their leaders with proven best practices in our field today. ✓

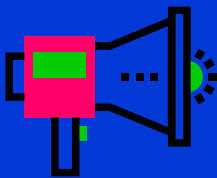
CHALLENGE

Leaders are afraid to take a stance on a hot topic out of concern that it will offend some employees or cause backlash.

✓ Solution:

Remind the leader that silence is a form of communication and may signal to employees that leadership is unconcerned or indifferent. Share with leaders the perspective that often, when big issues surface, employees look to their leaders to step up and provide empathy and support versus taking a side, as was the case recently with the conflict in the Middle East.

Other times, true leadership is about having a point of view, which might cause some angst. In either case, leaders need to acknowledge that there are feelings on both sides of an issue and address that with employees while also showing concern and support. Backlash sometimes is the cost of true courageous leadership.

CHALLENGE

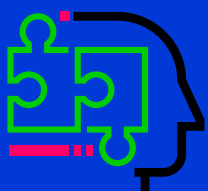
Top leaders argue that communication is an added responsibility for managers, and they don't have time to do this.

✓ Solution:

Explain to leaders that ample research shows manager communication is the key to even stronger confidence in leadership, culture, and engagement. It's important to

note that managers don't need to solve an issue or have all the answers. Instead, leaders need to prepare them to empathize and demonstrate support.

CHALLENGE



Leaders speculate that employees aren't concerned about the issue because they've been quiet.

✓ Solution:

Communicators must keep a pulse on employee sentiments, and help leaders realize that many more employees may be impacted than they think. Various tools exist to get that perspective (e.g., informal surveys, employee discussions, social media monitoring). Communicators should encourage leadership to use active listening skills—

ask your employees questions to get the conversation going, watch for body language/non-verbal cues, and follow up one-on-one with those who seem to be struggling.

AND: if it's clear that employees are impacted somehow, then communicators need to advocate for saying something.

CHALLENGE



Leaders don't know what to say.

✓ Solution:

Communicators can be a big help in guiding leaders on the kind of message to deliver. Our research shows us 12 essential elements of effective internal communication (**see page 6**), which is led by what we call ACE (authenticity, concern, and empathy). Helping leaders be intentional about their communication and

ensure there's real meaning behind their message goes a long way in elevating their impact. Often, when leaders think they're using the right words, employees don't see it in the same way. Remember to share with your leaders that the primary goal is to show employees you care about their well-being and will be a source of support.

CHALLENGE



Leaders assume showing empathy means they're weak.

 **Solution:**

Help leaders understand just how important empathy is to employees. Many studies have shown that employers who demonstrate empathy and a sincere concern for employees **build a more engaged workforce with higher confidence and trust in leadership:**

86%

of employees reported being better able to navigate the demands of work when leaders were empathetic¹

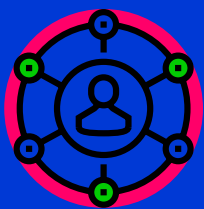
90%

of employees believe empathetic leadership leads to high job satisfaction²

Empathy

is considered one of the **top** critical components of effective leadership communication³

CHALLENGE



Leaders don't want to communicate because of external "culture wars" impacting businesses.

 **Solution:**

Remind leaders that when you take care of employees, you take care of the business. Ignoring issues will ultimately have a

downstream impact on the business due to lower engagement, distraction, and ultimate business performance.

A FINAL THOUGHT

As the old saying goes, challenges can become opportunities when handled well. The best practices outlined here can help communicators make their case to leaders that no matter what's happening in the world and the business, leaders need to demonstrate that they care deeply about their most important asset—their employees. How can you be even more strategic at advising leaders when challenges arise?

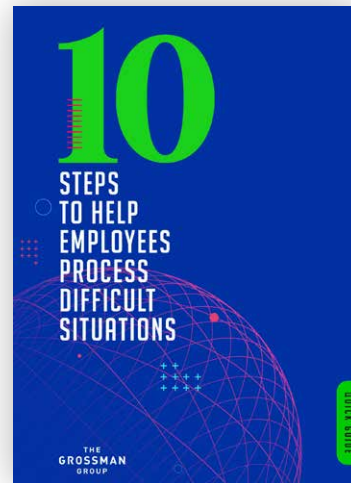
WHITE PAPER

Big Miss: Far Too Many Organizations Are Silent About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



QUICK GUIDE

10 Steps to Help Employees Process Difficult Situations



QUICK GUIDE

Critical Components of Internal Communications When Issues Arise



KEY FINDINGS

Study on Internal Communications About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM OUR RESEARCH



ABOUT US

The Grossman Group is an award-winning communications consulting firm that specializes in internal, leadership, culture, and change communications. Led by founder and CEO David Grossman, The Grossman Group is celebrating more than 20 years of engaging employees and helping leaders lead with heart to drive performance.

Its team of senior **thoughtpartner**[™] consultants work with companies of diverse sizes and industries to accelerate business through employee engagement and internal and leadership communication. The Grossman Group is a Certified Diverse Supplier through the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce since 2008.

**See what sets
The Grossman Group
apart from other
communications agencies.**

THE GROSSMAN GROUP DIFFERENCE

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