

Written By: Adrian Copley, ABC
Copley Communication - Melbourne, Australia

Samuel

- Corporate Communication Director
- National Telco in Kenya
- He has worked in marcomm, consulting and internal communication in other organizations. He has been a communication professional for ten years and holds his ABC.
- He heads up the corporate communication function, reporting to the VP for Communication. He has a team of 30 professionals.



Samuel is on the Strategic Advisor path. He is Corporate Communication Director for Kenya's major telecommunications carrier reporting to the VP of Communication. He heads the biggest technical division for the company with a team of 30 communication professionals, dealing with internal, external communication, government relations, media relations and transformation. Corporate communication is a centralized function for the company but there is also a network of communication resources doing part communication and part HR and admin roles within the company.

Samuel has made quite a rapid climb through the organization having studied marketing communication in university. He went on to a graduate marcomm position for a not-for-profit before joining a local PR agency as a consultant for a couple of years. He joined the telco six years ago, taking on a role in internal communication (IC) for the technical division and developed the first strategy for IC. Impressed with his strategic ability, he was soon asked by the VP of Communication to take on his current role. He achieved his IABC accreditation two years ago and is currently on the organization's high potential leaders list, giving him access to leadership and project management training and development. His team sees him as great manager and an excellent strategist.

He is currently working on building the brand for corporate communication and the perceived value placed on the function. Times have been tough and budgets tight which has put a strain on resources and workload.

1. Analysis – Samuel has been focusing his efforts on his leadership team and ensuring that all communication is directly linked to the organization's strategy. Business needs are identified and clear communication goals and objectives are established through proper briefs from their customers and thorough research. He has supported the team in developing their skills in measurement and developing ROI for communication activities and has sought opportunities to continually provide insight to the business.

2. Strategy – Samuel has regular catch-ups with the executive. He stays abreast of the changes within the business and external environment and is proactive in suggesting ways communication can support the changing business. He has implemented a communication briefing process so his team can have robust consultative conversations with their customers and provide them with the analysis and strategies to help support their business.

3. Context – Samuel keeps himself up to date with the industry as a whole and any changes in regulatory, political and environmental impacts within telecommunications because he works closely and regularly with HR, Sales and Finance departments. He keeps abreast of what is happening in

technology across the technical division so he is able to identify issues that might impact the various parts of the organization. He works with his peers and his team on a robust system of identifying micro and macro environment impacts, political and social impacts in addition to internal impacts. He calls the “air traffic control process” ensuring issues and opportunities are flagged with the business proactively.

4. Consistency – Even though the organization is a national organization, there is a diverse cultural background amongst employees and customers. Also, many of the communities the company serves have limited literacy skills. This is a challenge for consistency of message and mediums adopted and used. However, Samuel spends a lot of time with his team on the organization’s narrative and how to engage various communities with the organization’s story. He has worked with his team to develop very clear personas and how each persona should be communicated to its constituency. He likes to see customer and employee stories integrated with the heart of the organization, not just the product and services.

5. Engagement – Samuel uses the personas along with a very clear stakeholder engagement plan to actively involve customers and employees in the organization in a much more personal way. Finding opportunities for wider benefits within the community, he is particularly proud of his campaign to supply copper wiring from old telephone lines to help mini businesses make jewelry and ornaments resulting in a decrease in stolen copper wiring for the same use.

6. Ethics – As a communication strategist, Samuel has to protect the organization’s reputation. He guides the leadership on responding to ethical issues in the telecommunication industry - especially regarding the view that despite privatization and introduction of competition, they are one of the telecommunication organizations still dominating the market and enjoying significant advantages. The way he enabled the CEO to respond to a bribery claim recently ensured that the stock price was not affected. To create awareness about the importance of ethical communication and ethics in business, specifically in the communication business, Samuel started a blog on ethics and he was amazed to see the readership he built in a few months and the depths of the questions he receives. Based on the response, he plans to continue to writing the blog.