

Mind the ‘Communication’ Gap: Aligning Stakeholder Engagement with Governance Policy in Higher Education

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The strength of governance in higher education depends heavily on how well institutions engage their internal stakeholders. Insights from the 2024 UWI St. Augustine Staff Communications Survey highlight a communication paradox: while email remains the most used internal channel, with 94% reach, informal communication networks—particularly word-of-mouth, which engages 83% of staff—continue to play a significant role in shaping awareness and understanding of governance matters. The data also reveal varied communication preferences among academic, administrative and support staff, underscoring the need for more tailored approaches to institutional communication.

The lessons from The UWI’s communications study offer valuable insights in terms of communications, sustainability and technological integration and is beneficial for regional institutions seeking to:

- Improve communication governance by ensuring updates and strategic decisions reach every category of staff.
- Refine multi-channel strategies using both technology and human interaction.
- Break down silos and improve collaboration across academic, administrative and support roles.
- Build trust in leadership through clear, purposeful and inclusive communication.
- Ensure non-desk and mobile staff are reached through communication channels that fit the realities of their roles.
- Invest in scalable digital platforms such as mobile-friendly intranets and apps, enabling wider access, especially for non-desk staff.
- Reduce dependency on printed materials and fragmented message formats, contributing to environmental sustainability and information coherence.
- Leverage analytics and real-time feedback to track engagement, effectiveness and promote efficient content delivery.

This presentation is a case study using survey research, drawing on The UWI St. Augustine Staff Communications Survey (2024) to examine communication trends and stakeholder engagement strategies.