The Changing Role of Employee Communication

Towards Engagement

A"

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School of Business

Organizational Communication

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Agenda

- Explaining the changing role of employee (or internal) communication

- The concept of employee engagement and its importance

- Discussing the communicational activities and practices that can be used for driving employee engagement

Reasons for new type of employee communication – HR perspective

- Increased need for meaning-making
    - Not enough to just do what you are told to do

- Increased need for participation in decision-making
    - Need to be involved, not just informed

- "War of talent": not enough talent in labor market
    - Need to retain the talent already working and attract new talents
    - Also, employee turnover very expensive for organizations

The changing role of communication in organizations in a nutshell

From informing to engaging employees (facilitating dialogue, creating possibilities for dialogue)

Engaging employees = "**the expanded**" role of (internal) communication (Mishra et al., 2014)
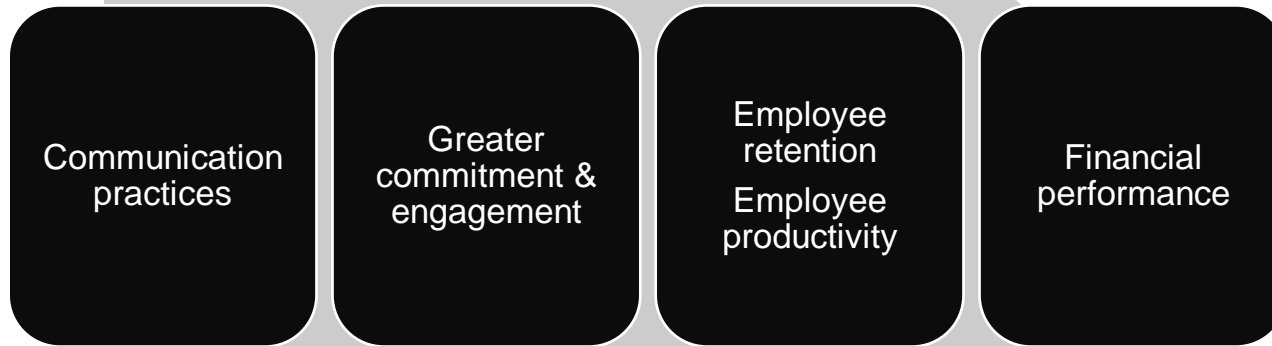
Concept of (employee) engagement

- Employee engagement is an *approach* resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organization to give of their best each day, committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well-being.

- The *ability to harness* an employee's personal enthusiasm in their work roles (Kahn, 1990)

- Engagement is the employees' **emotional attachment** to their job, colleagues, and organizations

How would you estimate your personal engagement at your work?

Low - **High**

Why?

Why focus on employee engagement in general and on communication driving it in particular?

Communication practices → Greater commitment & engagement → Employee retention / Employee productivity → Financial performance
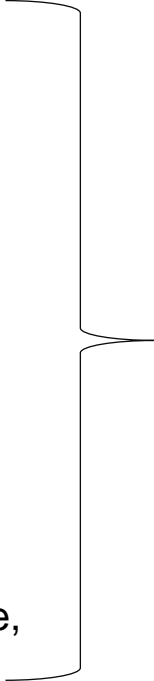
Generating engagement: traditional idea

- **Career progression possibilities, training & development, pay & rewards, social responsibility of the company, quality of products or services**

- **Leaders' actions and management practices**
  - The leader motivates and inspires, generates engagement through communication

- **Perhaps not enough for creating engagement?**

The generation of engagement requires employees' active participation in engagement activities, of which communication is the "main vehicle" (Reissner & Pagan, 2013)

Employee engagement: focal areas and issues to address

- Leadership models and leadership culture
    - Sharing leadership as a key?

- Trust
    - Interaction and norms of communication (and predictability) as a key?

- Diversity and inclusion
    - Common language practices and cultural understanding as a key?

- Knowledge (e.g. sharing knowledge, generating knowledge)
    - Managing information flow, making information available, providing arenas for generating knowledge as a key?

All these seen as important components of and/or positively related to employee engagement

MANAGING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MEANS MANAGING THESE COMPONENTS…

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So, how would you manage the afore-mentioned components <u>as communicational activities</u> (in order to ensure and enhance employee engagement)?

GROUPWORK:

1. Managing leadership (culture and models)
    -   What communication practices would be needed?/What is needed from communication?

2. Managing trust
    -   What communication practices would be needed?/What is needed from communication?

3. Managing diversity and inclusion
    -   What communication practices would be needed?/What is needed from communication?

4. Managing knowledge
    -   What communication practices would be needed?/What is needed from communication?

Approx. 15 mins. group discussion after which each group sums up their ideas
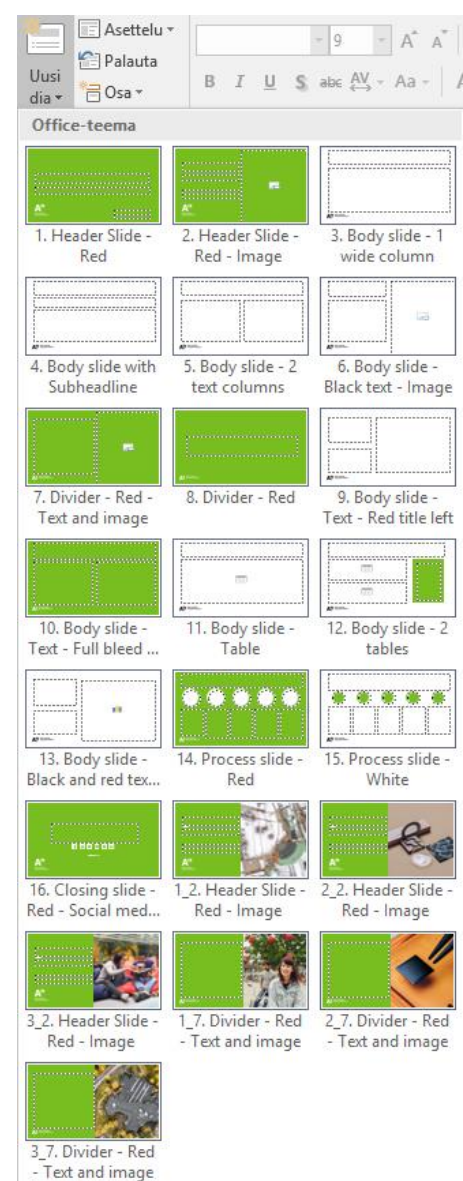
Managing leadership

- **How to manage leadership idea 1**
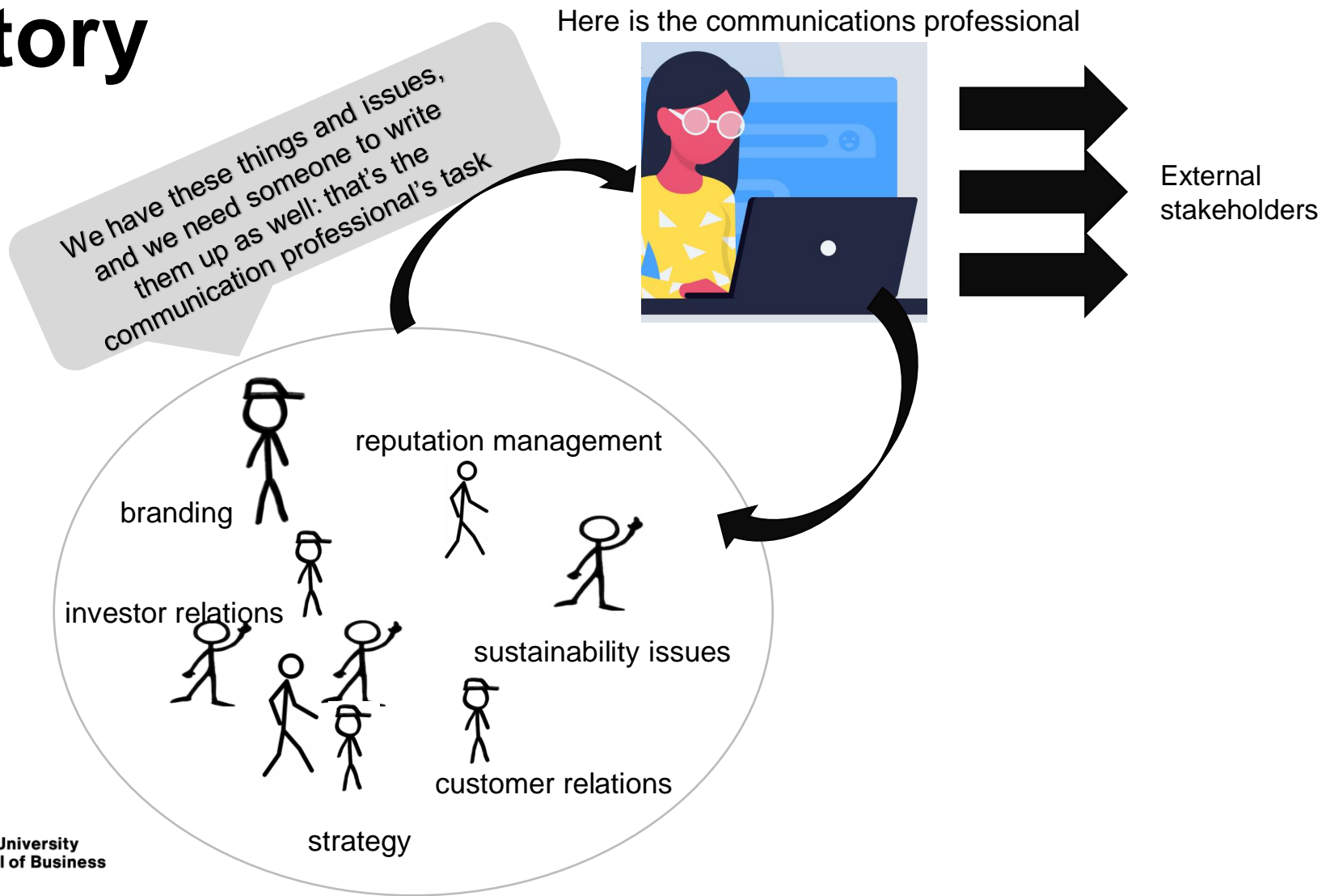- **Idea 2…**

How to create a new page

Choose "Home / New slide"
to open a menu of the theme layouts.

Once the new slide has been added,
you can change the layout by choosing
"Home / Layout".

For Finnish and more instructions,
see the notes to this slide.

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History

We have these things and issues, and we need someone to write them up as well: that's the communication professional's task

Here is the communications professional

External stakeholders

reputation management

branding

investor relations

sustainability issues

customer relations

strategy

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A question to you

- If/or not experiencing engagement in your work – why?

- Share your thoughts in break out rooms

Practical change in communication professionals' work in organizations

- From just communicating things to doing things

- Knowledge needed:
  - Understanding the business environment
  - Understanding and managing change
  - Understanding and managing strategy
  - Understanding and managing sustainability
  - Understanding and managing the digital context of working and doing business