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Internal Communications Software Buyer's Guide: Making the Right Choice

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Introduction

With countless internal communications tools available to businesses, it can be overwhelming to cut through the chaff and find the solution that would most benefit your organization. Software providers will position themselves as being able to solve every problem a business may face, which can make it difficult to find a solution that actually addresses the issues you wish to solve.

The goal of this guide is to help you develop formal criteria for choosing an internal communication software solution. Using a standardized approach can help you keep your priorities in the forefront of your decision making. It can also help you better compare potential solutions side-by-side, so you can determine which software offers the most comprehensive approach for your organization

To help inform what criteria is best suited, we'll cover how to assess your internal communications business needs and provide an easy-to-customize template for crafting your own Buyer's Guide Checklist. This way, you can save time and effort when choosing an internal communications tool.

Assessing Your Internal Communication Needs

The aim of implementing any software solution is to make business processes more efficient and accessible (remove time-effective). Choosing an internal communications software should always be informed by your internal communication needs.

Though every business approaches internal communications differently, there are some overarching principles that can help you narrow down your prospective solutions.

Internal communication channels

Before you improve your internal communications, you have to understand how your employees communicate with each other and your business. Create an inventory of the various internal communications channels your business uses to share information and collect input from employees.

Some common internal communication channels included:

- **Email and email newsletters**
- **Instant messaging**
- **SMS text messages**
- **Intranets**
- **Telephones**
- **Video and video conferencing**
- **Digital notice boards**

Knowing which channels you plan to optimize will help you narrow which software features will actually serve your business goals. If your business utilizes a remote workforce and relies on emails for the majority of your internal communications, then software oriented to optimizing email processes will be more apt for your business.

After you've narrowed which channels you use and wish to improve, get more into detail about how those channels operate at your business. This can be conducted in various ways, depending on the channel you're assessing, but one of the most effective ways to understand the performance of a given channel is to perform an internal communications audit.

Internal communications audit

An internal communications audit quantifies the performance of your channels using data collected over time. Using this data, you can determine how often the channel is used, who is using it, and whether those using it find it effective.

You can also assess the production aspect of each channel during your audit. How long does it take to create and send communications on this channel? Are those who create these communications satisfied with the process?

To best assess channel performance, we recommend using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. If you track your emails, collect performance metrics—like email open rate or click-through rate—to determine overall popularity and the frequency with which employees access those channels. If you do not track your emails, you can perform employee surveys to determine which channels your employees use and prefer the most.

By collecting employee feedback regarding your internal communication channels, you'll learn how your employees feel about them. Not only will you get a better understanding of how these channels are actually used, but you'll likely receive useful guidance on which channels need the most attention.

Internal Communication Software Buyer's Guide Checklist

When you've properly assessed your current internal communications landscape, you're now ready to start comparing different software solutions to improve the problem areas you've identified.

Here is an example Buyer's Guide Checklist to fill in whenever you're choosing a new internal communications solution. Feel free to customize the criteria to fit your business needs.

Buyer's Guide Template:

[Your Company's] Internal Communication Software Checklist

- [ ] **Business Objectives:**
Research the vendor's reputation in the industry and customer reviews.

- [ ] **Feature Breakdown:**
List the main features of the given software solution that will help you achieve the objectives listed above.

- [ ] **Stakeholders:**
List those at your business required to give input or sign off on a new software solution.

- [ ] **Demo Schedule:**
Describe the demonstration/trial process for the software solution.

- [ ] **Questions for Vendor:**
Record questions you need to ask during the software demonstration.

- [ ] **Price:**
List the relevant price considerations for the software solution. If there are multiple plans/subscriptions that your business may utilize, include them.

- [ ] **Proposal Form:**
State whether you've received a customized proposal form and/or quote from the software vendor.

- [ ] **Setup Schedule:**
Outline the setup process as described by the vendor. This section may need to be filled out after the demo has been completed.

Example Buyer's Guide:

[Your Company's] Internal Communication Software Checklist

Business Objectives
Improving engagement on email newsletters by reducing their creation time and collecting employee feedback to inform their content. The solution needs to offer easyto-use email creation, employee feedback features, and email metric tracking. The software solution has to work with our existing email infrastructure and offer comprehensive data security.

Feature Breakdown
ContactMonkey provides:

- Drag-and-drop email builder that creates HTML emails
- Employee feedback collection via our internal emails
- ChatGPT integration for faster content creation
- Email tracking features such as open-rate, click-through rate, read time, and click maps
- Integration with Outlook and Gmail, usable with existing distribution lists
- Event management and RSVP tracking
- SMS text message sending capabilities
- Email metric analytics tools like segmented reporting

Stakeholders
Joanne Smythe - IT Security Manager
Julia Lee - Head of IT
Don Simmons - Procurement Leader
John Smith - Head of Internal Communications

Demo Schedule
The demo is to be conducted on July 5th. We will need Don Simmons and John Smith to attend. The demonstration is set to last 45 minutes. The software trial period is 2 weeks.

Questions for Vendor

- How does your software handle employee feedback?
- Will the email newsletters we send with your software work on our employees' devices?
- Does your software solution integrate with our current internal comms infrastructure?
- What is the timeline for the setup process?
- Are our emails sent through external servers?

Price
2 users sending to 1000 employees = $14,000 per annum + $3,000 onboarding for 1 year plus plan.

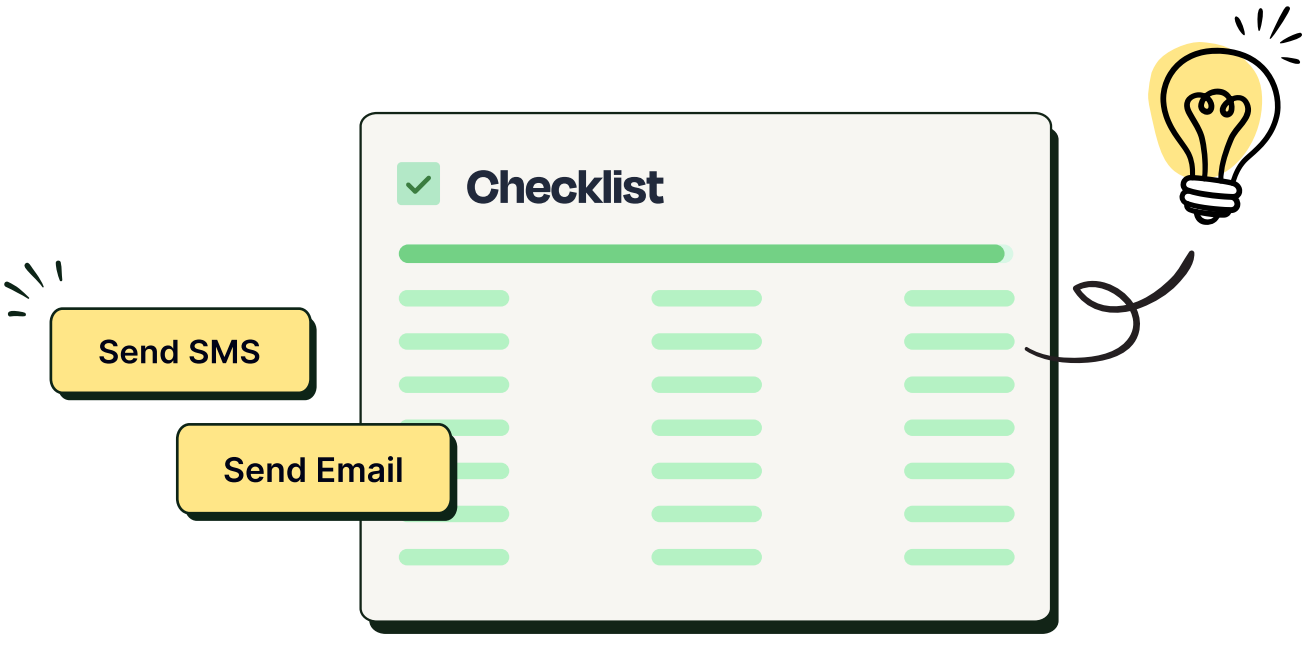
Proposal Form
Proposal Form and quote has been received.

Setup Schedule
Demo process - [Date]
Trial process - [Date or duration]
Setup date - [Date and relevant stakeholders]
Full adoption - [Date]

Make The Right Choice

Our Buyer's Guide checklist template is a great place to start when considering new software solutions for your business. Every business will have a different approach for deciding which solution will work best for their employees, but having a formalized process will help you keep track of details easily. It will also help you approach demos in a consistent manner to ensure you learn what you need from each vendor.

ContactMonkey's all-in-one internal communications software is used by industry leading companies to create better internal emails and newsletters and to drive and measure employee engagement. If you're looking to improve productivity and boost growth at your organization via better internal communications, you can book a free demo to see how ContactMonkey can help you achieve your goals.



ContactMonkey is the leading internal email software that elevates the design, data, and deployment of internal communications for growing businesses by integrating with Outlook or Gmail.

Book a demo

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