BACK IN MOTION / Back in Motion is a full-service rehabilitation, disability management and vocational services company in British Columbia, Canada. Back in Motion has two primary locations (in Richmond and Surrey) and several smaller sites that provide select services. The two primary sites each provide state-of-the-art gym and rehabilitation facilities, offices, physical examination and assessment rooms, work simulation facilities, and offices.

According to Ken Hemphill, one of the managing directors, the company was started by a multidisciplinary group of four health care professionals and an administrative specialist in 1993. The company’s ownership and senior executive team represent the disciplines of psychology, vocational rehabilitation, physical therapy and finance. In 2006, the company reported its size as 57 employees. Back in Motion was honored as one of the 30 “Best Workplaces” in Canada in 2005 by Great Place to Work® Institute Canada.

THE CULTURE
The organizational culture of Back in Motion is based on teamwork and achieving goals through open communication and respect for staff and clients. Staff describe it as productive and professional, fun and friendly. The staff represents a number of disciplines, including physicians, occupational therapists, psychologists, registered clinical counselors, physical therapists, kinesiologists and vocational rehabilitation counselors. This team of professionals appreciates the needs of both employers and workers as they support clients’ progress toward returning to the workforce and independence.

Communication is a vital part of the culture. In a health care environment, communication between staff and management is just as important as the communication between staff and clients. Sensitivity to the needs and expectations of the client and the business are paramount for reaching goals at all levels.
The culture of openness and respect is evidenced through the company’s use of communication to reach business goals and develop new services to grow the business. Staff are valued for their contributions to strategic planning initiatives and operations plans. Communication flows two-way as management engages staff in planning, and the staff raise issues to improve the operation of the company.

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

The management team shares the responsibility for internal or employee communication. Marketing and business development are responsible for external communication. The internal communication mix for Back in Motion includes formal and informal strategies, depending on the nature of the messages.

Human resources issues tend to be handled on a formal and planned basis. Orientations, performance evaluations and career development initiatives are a few examples. It is important that all staff are provided with uniform information in a highly regulated sector like health care. Career development opportunities are provided for staff as a means to recognize their valuable professional contributions and continue to improve the services that the firm has to offer clients. Attending to staff needs for career development also allows the firm to remain competitive and to retain employees who might otherwise leave for opportunities at other businesses.

The most important ongoing communication practice is face-to-face communication. Even with the multiple locations, Hemphill emphasizes the importance of sharing information with staff and managers in person. “When we were small, just five people, face-to-face was enough. As we have grown in size and number of locations, communication by necessity has become more formal. But we still prefer to communicate face-to-face.” This is accomplished through monthly operational meetings and less formal discussions with staff on a daily basis about company expectations, the company mission and vision, and the staff’s role in reaching company goals.

Print and electronic communications are used to supplement the face-to-face communication opportunities. Summaries from meetings are shared with staff who are unable to attend. Print publications are used more for external communication.

E-mail provides uniform messages and reaches everyone in all locations at one time. But the quality of communication in e-mail is shallow. In this fast-paced environment, e-mail can easily be overlooked.

The monthly operational business meetings held at one of the two primary sites are the best means for two-way communication when the goal is to share information with all employees at once. Of course, direct unit manager communication with staff is critical to the success of the company.

Back in Motion is committed to maintaining its well-balanced organizational culture. Orientation includes a discussion about the organizational culture. The company conducted an internal corporate
culture survey for two years; in 2005 and 2006 they chose to participate in the Great Place to Work® Institute Canada “Best Workplaces” survey. This external objective assessment of many company characteristics that define organizational culture allows the company to benchmark its progress against other companies, plan improvements, evaluate communication effectiveness and celebrate successes.

Holistic internal communication practices contribute in significant ways to the growth of the company. An open atmosphere in which people feel free to communicate and contribute to the success of the business results in high quality programs and a place where employees want to be every day.
KAHLER SLATER ARCHITECTS INC. / Kahler Slater Architects Inc. is a creative, interdisciplinary design firm with clients around the world. The firm has four locations: Milwaukee, Madison and Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Burlington, North Carolina. “We work with our clients to create a holistic experience that encompasses all realms of an organization—perception, people, products, services and place.” The company has been recognized for three years in a row (2004–2006) by the Great Place to Work Institute® as a Great Place to Work in the U.S. One hundred fifty employees comprise this creative community of architects, marketers, researchers, graphic designers, branding specialists and consultants. The firm will celebrate 100 years of business in 2008.

THE CULTURE
According to Kelly Gaglione, principal, director of client services and communications strategist, Kahler Slater has a unique, creative culture that is friendly, collaborative, nonhierarchical and driven by the passions of the firm members. Referring to the company web site, the company is described as “a close-knit group that works hard and plays hard. Our work inspires us, and our play invigorates us.”

The concept of collaboration and teamwork extends well past the nature of the design work to the structure of the company itself. Three CEOs share the executive leadership of the firm. According to Gaglione, this was a deliberate decision on the part of the leadership when the firm was reorganizing. The CEOs—or “3EOs”—share the responsibility of company leadership. Each has a specific portfolio of responsibilities. Communication—internal and external—is the one facet of organizational leadership for which each of the CEOs is responsible. Communication and leadership are inseparable.

Employees embrace the company vision. Because collaboration and teamwork are keys to the success of design work and the company at large, buy-in on decisions is highly valued. Employees enjoy a great deal of autonomy in this process as evidenced by the flexible work schedules.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Communication is part of everyone’s job—from the CEOs to the principals and team leaders. In this culture, formal and informal internal communication practices are used.

To keep employees up to date on company business, a number of regular meetings are held—all-staff meetings, team meetings, and principal and owner meetings. During the monthly all-staff meeting, locations are linked by either video or audio conferencing. These meetings are expressly for celebrating success and project advancement, i.e., progress reports and news of the firm. The meeting agenda is driven by the employees and the projects of the firm; special discussion topics may be suggested by anyone in the firm. Every team holds weekly meetings to keep projects on track and people con-
nected to one another. Through the use of these face-to-face meetings, information flow is cyclical and builds a community of understanding: What is discussed in a team meeting may become the basis of a special topic discussion at a monthly meeting. The direction articulated at a principals meeting will be addressed in monthly meetings and further discussed at the team level as projects progress.

The firm holds an annual staff retreat at which the leadership delivers the “state of the firm.” This retreat provides a forum for addressing the firm’s vision and direction, special topics and employee camaraderie. “The 3EOs go all out to make the event fun and educational. Their presentation is themed: One year they came dressed as ship captains to discuss our course and direction; another year it was mountain climbers.”

Interaction between members of the firm is also encouraged through the physical design of the work space at Kahler Slater. “As architects and designers, our research and work focus on the place—workplace design that contributes to employee communication and employee satisfaction. We live that everyday.” When the firm remodeled the office space, “we turned the office inside out.” Since collaboration is key to the culture, an open office work environment was created with lower partitions between individual offices, the development of team collaboration spaces (TCS)—conference areas that invite interaction from the firm as a whole—and open areas—pin-up spaces where staff may share their work and request critiques from everyone in the office. Even the CEOs have open offices (cubes).

Electronic communication practices are an expectation for facilitating immediate, real-time information. The company intranet is used for formal communication like policies and procedures typically found in an employee manual. E-mails are an expected form of communication and are used most frequently to keep the members at the four office locations connected on a minute-by-minute basis.

Traditions have been modified in the age of electronic communication. According to Gaglione, the firm has a tradition of announcing new commissions by the ringing of a large antique ship's bell that is located in the Milwaukee office. To share this protocol with the other three offices, an e-mail titled “the ringing of the bell” is sent concurrently with the traditional announcement. A teleconference call may also be set up so that the members across the firm’s four locations can share in the celebration and hear the bell.

Print communication is used on a limited basis for official information like OSHA regulations and confidential information like compensation reviews.

Informal social gatherings are also encouraged on an irregular basis. These events are sponsored and organized by staff. Dubbed “Fridays at Four,” these social gatherings offer an opportunity to network with other employees and share creative ideas, snacks and refreshments. Held on-site in a creative café room with white boards and comfortable furniture, these gatherings are a chance for staff to brainstorm and unwind.
The success of internal communication for Kahler Slater is a combination of these methods. Daily formal communication is facilitated by e-mail, but face-to-face meetings and interactions are best for developing greater understanding and managing two-way universal responses. Face-to-face communication is an expectation in a small firm. It is unavoidable in close spaces and in an environment where offices share projects and corporate strategy. It is the best way to share and develop understanding of everything from team projects to the corporate vision.

Like many small businesses, Kahler Slater does not formally evaluate its internal communication programs. But as Gaglione notes, internal communication gets evaluated through the Great Place to Work Institute® employee survey each year. Communication is the basis for developing a culture in which employees want to work and play…a place to develop their passions.
JOHN G. HOFLAND LTD. / John G. Hofland Ltd., a family-owned floral business located in Mississauga, Ontario, has been in operation since 1956. Over the years, Hofland has evolved into one of Canada's largest full-service floral wholesalers. They maintain two warehouse facilities, a retail store and office, and a fleet of 15 delivery vehicles. The company has two physical locations. Five employees work from the remote warehouse, about 6 kilometers from the main location where approximately 115 employees work.

As a full-service floral wholesaler, John G. Hofland operates across North America, offering a wide selection of unique flowers and greens imported from around the world. Hofland also carries a selection of complimentary giftware.

“Providing World Class selection of the highest quality products backed by unmatched service” is Hofland's driving business philosophy. They attribute their loyal customer base to their pursuit of this philosophy, which also drives company operations.

In 2006, John G. Hofland Ltd. was recognized by the Great Place to Work Institute® as one of the Best Places to Work in Canada.

THE CULTURE
According to Debbie Montanera-Bojda, human resources manager at John G. Hofland Ltd., the culture at Hofland is casual, fast-paced and team-spirited. “Employees are willing to help one another. We are a seasonal business, which means we have weeks throughout the year that are extremely busy and extremely fast-paced.”

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
The president of the company is responsible for internal communication and for the corporate updates and smaller brainstorming sessions the company uses to engage employees in planning and problem-solving. The president encourages open communication.

Hofland relies on a mix of formal, planned employee communications and informal employee communication practices. Informal communication is more frequently used and is characterized by an “open door policy” where employees are encouraged to speak freely and voice opinions or concerns to company management.

According to Montanera-Bojda, the best way to learn about problems or inefficiencies is to speak to the employees. They know what will work best in their jobs and may have suggestions for improvement. At Hofland, major business decisions are discussed with employees. Decisions are first discussed at quarterly corporate update meetings where the president discusses business results or strategic plans. Later, smaller discussion groups are formed to brainstorm ideas, discuss concerns or offer suggestions. An
example of an issue that was addressed through brainstorming sessions included streamlining procedures to improve productivity. Also, when the company was feeling the stress of “outgrowing their current warehouse,” brainstorming sessions were held to discuss the implications of moving to a new location or splitting the business and the impact these issues would have on the cash-and-carry customers.

Face-to-face communication is encouraged because questions can be thoroughly answered and additional questions can be fielded in a dialog. Other forms of communication the company uses to keep employees informed and engaged in the operation of the business include monthly printed newsletters, the quarterly corporate update meetings, meetings with supervisors/managers, postings throughout the facility, e-mail and attachments to pay slips.

These more formal communication strategies are used to make announcements and provide business results; news of upcoming events; changes to benefits, health and safety news; and other information that affects everyone in the company.

Supervisor and manager meetings, coupled with the president’s message in the corporate address, encourage two-way communication. According to Montanera-Bojda, “We encourage employee feedback, suggestions and opinions. It is what keeps our employees engaged.”

Communication practices may change depending on the situation at hand, the immediacy of the information, and the impact it has on the business and employees. For example, a reminder about benefits coverage can be communicated through the newsletter and postings because this information is straightforward and does not require a reply from the employees. Situations in which feedback is requested from employees will require more face-to-face communications.

Communication practices contribute to knowledgeable and engaged employees. “When employees feel like they matter to the company and that their job is important to the company’s success, then they will work harder, as a team, for a common goal.”

Hofland does not formally evaluate its employee communication practices at this time. Participation in the Great Places to Work® employee survey provides information that can be used to assess communication as one of many business components that contribute to a successful company.
BADGER MINING CORPORATION / Badger Mining Corporation, headquartered in Berlin, Wisconsin, is a privately held, family-owned international corporation that produces silica sand for industrial use. Plant operations are located in Fairwater and Taylor, Wisconsin; Pahrump, Nevada; and Poland. The C.A. Chier Resource Center is located in Berlin, Wisconsin. Badger Mining Corporation employs 183 associates, including advisory associates, leaders, coaches and associates.

The company traces its history to the early 1900s. In recent years, their work within the industry and as a company has been recognized with numerous awards. In 1997 and 1999, BMC was awarded the Business Friend of the Environment Award from the Wisconsin Environmental Working Group. In 1999, the company was also awarded the John Brogan Award for Outstanding Environmental Achievement. In 2006, BMC received two national safety awards: the Sentinels of Safety Program Safety Trophy for its outstanding safety records by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the National Mining Association, and the Safety Achievement Award from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Industrial Minerals Association—North America. In 2006, Badger Mining Company was honored nationally as the number one “Best Small Company to Work for in America” by the Great Place to Work® Institute.

THE CULTURE
High-quality communication practices are part and parcel of BMC’s mission “to become the quality leader in the industrial minerals industry with a team of people committed to excellence and a passion for satisfying [their] customers.” Company growth is steady and driven by the highest quality standards.

According to Mellisa Stafford, training and staffing associate, BMC’s culture is one of employee empowerment fostered by organizational trust. This is exemplified by the use of self-directed work teams that identify, evaluate and develop opportunities for the company. BMC is committed to environmental responsibility, safety, health and integrity, while providing a rewarding and enjoyable place to work. Employees share in the success of the company through a 20 percent profit sharing program.

BMC uses a flat organizational structure, which fosters greater connections between leadership and associates. According to Stafford, employee empowerment and trust are the results of open communication and caring within the organization. Leadership cares about employee opinions and encourages employees to contribute to problem solving. Leadership gives associates the power to do their work and trusts that associates will use their best judgment and practices. Consequently, associates know they are valued, and they are passionate about the work they do.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Communication is key at Badger Mining Corporation. Stafford credits employee communication that begins with orientation and progresses with associates throughout their careers as one of many
practices that connect associates in a meaningful way to the operations of the company. Along with typical orientation programming that introduces associates to company policies and procedures, BMC engages associates in numerous evaluation and feedback opportunities, at which time associates provide feedback about how the company is doing. Within the first 30 days of employment, associates participate in a progress assessment, which is just the first of many times that associates will have the opportunity to be evaluated and—more important—will have the opportunity to evaluate the company. According to Stafford, the company makes a point of acting on the suggestions of associates, because they have insights into the daily operation of the company.

Internal communication is a shared process depending on the information being delivered. Communication within the company is responsibility-driven. For example, benefits information is communicated by human resources; a team of customer relations and public relations associates are responsible for the quarterly company newsletter, “Badger Banner”; the safety team is responsible for communicating safety issues; and the executive leadership is responsible for sharing financial information and strategic direction.

Face-to-face communication opportunities are critical to internal communication success. Team meetings are held twice a year, and every associate attends. These meetings cover everything from benefits to safety information to financial summaries to the strategic direction of the company.

As a mining company, safety is very important. Monthly safety meetings are held at each location, coupled with the annual companywide, day-long safety refresher meeting. Safety teams keep safety in the forefront at each location as well.

The company uses a number of print and electronic practices to reinforce the face-to-face practices. The newsletter is distributed to associates at all U.S. locations. Some information regarding benefits and HR issues is still sent to employees’ homes because this is where the decision making about benefits takes place. Announcements are posted in the company plants to alert associates to opportunities. Through the company intranet, associates can access information about each plant facility as well as the employee manual. Company e-mails are used to broadcast information to all employees.

The company also uses an open book management approach; complete financial information (income statements, balance sheets, etc.) is shared with all employees monthly so they are always aware of the financial status of the company. “The associates truly work with a common goal because they understand the mission and values of the company. They know that the success they have in their job translates to the success of the company.”

While Badger Mining Corporation is only beginning to measure the impact of its internal communication practices, they know from anecdotal qualitative data that employee satisfaction is high. In the past, the company conducted occasional culture surveys that supported the anecdotal data. In 2006, the company began participating in the Great Place to Work® Institute survey and plans to continue to use the results of this survey to evaluate employee communications and other strategic business practices.
According to Stafford, communication is something that is embedded in the culture of Badger Mining Corporation. It is impossible to separate it from the organization and the people who care about the place like a family.
VIACK* / VIACK is the company behind the VIA3 Assured Collaboration Service, a fully secure online collaboration solution. VIA3 enables business and government professionals to meet with colleagues and clients anywhere, working together and sharing information as easily and effectively as if they were in the same conference room. The advantages of the software for clients are savings in downtime, travel and administrative expenses; enhanced productivity; and more responsive service. VIACK Corporation was founded in 1999 and has offices located in Washington, D.C., Arizona and Washington state.

THE CULTURE
VIACK is both functionally and geographically divided. The offices are located in different places due to the location of the talent and the client base. For example, because the engineering talent is located in Redmond, Washington, much of the R&D staff is located there. Because VIACK is a supplier to the government sector, they have a sales office in Washington, D.C. In addition, their corporate office is located in Scottsdale, Arizona. Amazingly, even with the different locations, VIACK still feels like a small, family-owned business with a very open culture.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
VIACK credits the company culture to their own software. They use their online collaborative tool, which they market, for communicating within the company. Rather than a telephone, employees use the collaboration tool with a webcam and a headset. The collaboration tool enables staff to see 14 people on the screen with audio and instant messaging capabilities. Typically, employees gather in a main area, and they can communicate with staff in all of the different locations.

In addition to technology, there is a real openness in the attitude of top management. Management frequently stops in and sees employees at the different locations. Face-to-face communication is still used a great deal at VIACK. Especially during challenging times, management ensures that they are accessible. For example, the CEO will go to the engineering facility when there are difficulties getting new products out. These face-to-face communication strategies make sure the staff feels valued and supported. This also encourages staff to express opinions to management.

Overall, VIACK is a flat organization without a lot of structure. Using an open door policy and delegating broad areas of responsibilities, the staff works together in an environment of mutual respect. VIACK used to have an anonymous suggestion system, but it is no longer used because people now feel comfortable asking the CEO hard questions.

*This case study was contributed by Insightrix.
BONFIRE COMMUNICATIONS* / Bonfire Communications is located in San Francisco and was founded in 2001. By combining strategic and organizational consulting with interactive design, branding and marketing, Bonfire created what they call the “Bonfire Magic”—a communication approach that is greater than the sum of its parts. The initiative is unique and successful. Using multidisciplinary teams, the company has worked on implementing supply chain processes, large enterprise technologies, branding initiatives, reorganizations and mergers for companies around the world. It has created new ways of bringing new visions to life, building programs that inspire participation and action from employees, customers and the marketplace.

THE CULTURE
The culture can best be described through Bonfire’s philosophy—results-oriented but fun. The 27 employees are an energetic, business-savvy and passionate team of professionals committed to making a positive impact in the world. With a fast and efficient working style, the staff collaborates with clients and teammates to develop straightforward, creative solutions to complex business challenges. All the while, their work is infused with an appreciation for everyday life and laughter. In addition, Bonfire can be described as a learning organization. The collaborative working style lets everyone know what everyone else is working on. The key is to leverage skills.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
The company is in growth mode; therefore, management must make sure that employees are connected daily in terms of operational procedures and culture. Understanding business processes as the company grows has been an issue, and making sure the staff has the appropriate forms and required training has been challenging. During the past few years of growth, Bonfire has documented new and emerging business processes within the firm and shared them with staff to assist in keeping them connected. Bonfire developed an employee/operations manual and is working on a company manifesto for a cultural orientation. The manifesto defines the company for contractors and clients.

As the company has grown, it has developed more tools to support internal dialog, including the intranet and the internal employee blog. Bonfire also uses an open floor layout. The directors have offices with walls and doors but no ceilings. This allows directors to have enclosed space for writing and making calls with clients, without being cut off from the rest of the staff. The managers are located next to creative services, which facilitates the creative process. The managers are also close to the directors to offer them support. This arrangement has contributed to improved communication.

Bonfire uses open book management. The business is driven by targets. Overall, employees understand targeted company revenue, profit and project profitability. Bonfire also uses a combined bonus pool. If revenue and profit goals are reached for the year, every person gets a bonus that is 10 percent of their salary.

*This case study was contributed by Insightrix.
TRI OCEAN ENGINEERING LTD.* / Tri Ocean Engineering Ltd. is a consulting engineering firm that provides comprehensive engineering, procurement and project management services to the production, drilling and processing sectors of the petroleum industry worldwide. The company has expertise in fit-for-purpose designs for onshore, arctic and offshore facilities. Tri Ocean was established in Calgary, Alberta, as an employee-owned, fully Canadian company. The senior technical personnel have extensive onshore and offshore production and drilling experience. Tri Ocean’s services include the preparation of feasibility studies, preliminary designs and cost estimates; design criteria; detailed drawings and specifications; equipment specifications; and operating manuals. These design services are complemented by providing procurement, construction supervision, start-up assistance, and project operation and management. In total, there are approximately 400 employees at Tri Ocean. The parent company of Tri Ocean is ASRC Energy Services.

THE CULTURE
Tri Ocean Engineering is a project team-based organization. The culture is one of measuring results, collaboration and working toward a common goal.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Communication between the two companies, ASRC and Tri Ocean, is currently conducted by intranet, telephone and e-mail. The challenge is having both organizations get the same message out to their staff.

Internally, Tri Ocean has a newsletter—with an electronic and a print version, each of which has slightly different content. The online newsletter comes from management and deals with new work the company has coming in, jobs landed through the bidding process and other stories of interest. The print newsletter, following IABC recommendations, is circulated quarterly and distributed to all employees.

Tri Ocean utilizes face-to-face communications quite a bit. The president coordinates messages to the staff through town hall meetings. These meetings are opportunities for the president to communicate directly with the staff, and they occur toward the end of the workday. Employees can socialize with management after the town hall meeting. These meetings happen every second month. In addition, managers meet with their staff every week.

*This case study was contributed by Insightrix.
ENCORE CAPITAL GROUP INC.* / Encore Capital Group Inc. used to be a company of less than 500 employees. As a result of a joint venture, the organization quickly expanded to just over 1,000 employees. This case study illustrates the changes and challenges a small business goes through when it expands to the next level. The company has three sites that offer many communication challenges.

THE CULTURE
Prior to the expansion, Encore Capital Group had a family feel. To some degree, this feeling still remains. However, due to the larger organizational structure, the organization has had to become more formal. Encore is trying to keep a small company feeling in a bigger organization. Employees still need to make decisions quickly using a small organization approach.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Face-to-face communication is key to Encore. The CEO frequently goes on road shows. At these road shows, the CEO talks about success stories. After the road show, follow-up communications, such as e-mails and newsletters, reinforce the message. Encore also holds monthly town hall meetings at which employees can ask questions of senior management. Management by walking around is also conducted.

Encore has skip level meetings in which employees can bypass their managers and go to different levels to get answers to their questions. This opens the eyes of management to employee issues. These meetings are held on an ad hoc basis and when red flag issues arise.

Encore uses an open floor plan. The offices are in an open cubicle format. The key is collaboration at Encore, and the open floor plan supports this. Sometimes it can be noisy, but the benefit is that it breaks down barriers between staff. One thing that can be a struggle is the desire for more structure from some of the new employees. But the open floor plan can also be appealing. People need to fit the organization, and the people Encore is looking for (team-oriented and collaborative) like the open floor plans.

Encore had a newsletter but stopped using it a few years ago. It was a burden to put the information together when the company was smaller (prior to the acquisition). However, Encore is now considering bringing the newsletter back.

Today, Encore relies more on the Internet. The electronic newsletter, which is still utilized at Encore, is used as a follow-up to the town hall meeting to apprise those who missed the meeting of the highlights. The company intranet is being enhanced. It was easier to manage when Encore was smaller, but now that the company is bigger, everyone wants to put something on it. Currently, there are too many entry points, and a logical structure is lacking. The intranet is being simplified to become a two-way vehicle, rather than an archive of information.
Encore uses open book management. The staff at Encore is results-oriented so they need to know where they are in financial terms at any time. One lesson the company has learned is that goals must be tangible and achievable. Encore uses dashboards to release the results on a regular basis. All business units have a dashboard that they monitor, which includes their targets and their results. The targets are based on company targets and then broken down into the different divisions.

Encore conducts employee engagement surveys, from which management learns a great deal about the organization. Management relies on these surveys to determine annual benchmarks. The survey drives communication and includes benchmarks from the Great Place to Work Institute. These electronic surveys are used to identify gaps between Encore and other companies. The response rate from the survey is between 80 percent and the low 90s. Encore schedules times during the weekday when people can complete the survey.

Although Encore does not have a formal suggestion system, employees are expected to come up with ideas.

Communication strategies have changed as the size of the organization has changed. Encore must determine the messages it wants to communicate and the key objectives that employees should meet through internal communication practices. The CEO road shows, town halls, e-mails to the workforce and round tables (monthly meetings that include a group of nominated employees) have been key. The emphasis is on bottom-up communication.

*This case study was contributed by Insightrix.