

Big Miss



FAR TOO MANY ORGANIZATIONS
ARE SILENT ABOUT THE ISRAELI-
PALESTINIAN CONFLICT



Silence inside organizations hurts employee confidence and engagement and has major implications for leaders when issues arise.

What's inside

The Grossman Group is dedicated to helping leaders bring more authenticity, humanity, and empathy into the workplace through its focus on leadership, internal, and change communication.

We recently conducted comprehensive research around the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which focused on three key components:

- ✓ **Employees' experiences and perceptions** of internal communications on the issue
- ✓ **118 internal and senior communication professionals' perspectives** on what makes internal communications effective when issues arise
- ✓ **Effectiveness of 68 internal statements** issued by companies on the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict



This report delves into what we learned and offers insights into the strengths and opportunities around internal communication when issues arise and ways to provide employees more of what they need when they need it most, now and in the future.

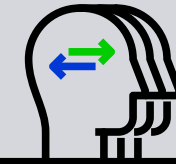
Your employees are not okay

Burnout is at an all-time high—driven by a significant change in workplace dynamics and an unprecedented stream of global issues. As a result, organizations have become more aware of the need to support and prioritize their employees' mental and physical health and work responsibilities.

In fact, what employees want and need has never been clearer: for leaders to demonstrate empathy and humanity and lead with their heart in their head.

THE PROBLEM: Companies think they're doing this well, yet employees disagree. They're not feeling heard, seen, or understood.

Too many organizations are still prioritizing productivity and profit over employee well-being, leading to high stress levels, burnout, and disengagement among employees.



You can imagine the impact...

- ❌ Employees who are distracted and don't feel supported
- ❌ Managers who aren't equipped to support them
- ❌ Work that slows down because employees aren't focused
- ❌ Business that loses momentum

...and see what's possible.

- ✅ Employees who are focused and feel supported
- ✅ Managers who are equipped to provide support
- ✅ Work continues because employees feel heard
- ✅ Business continues and even grows

IDEALLY, WE WANT EMPLOYEES TO SAY...

“*I feel at home at work. I am seen. I am heard. What’s important to me is valued and therefore I am valued.*”

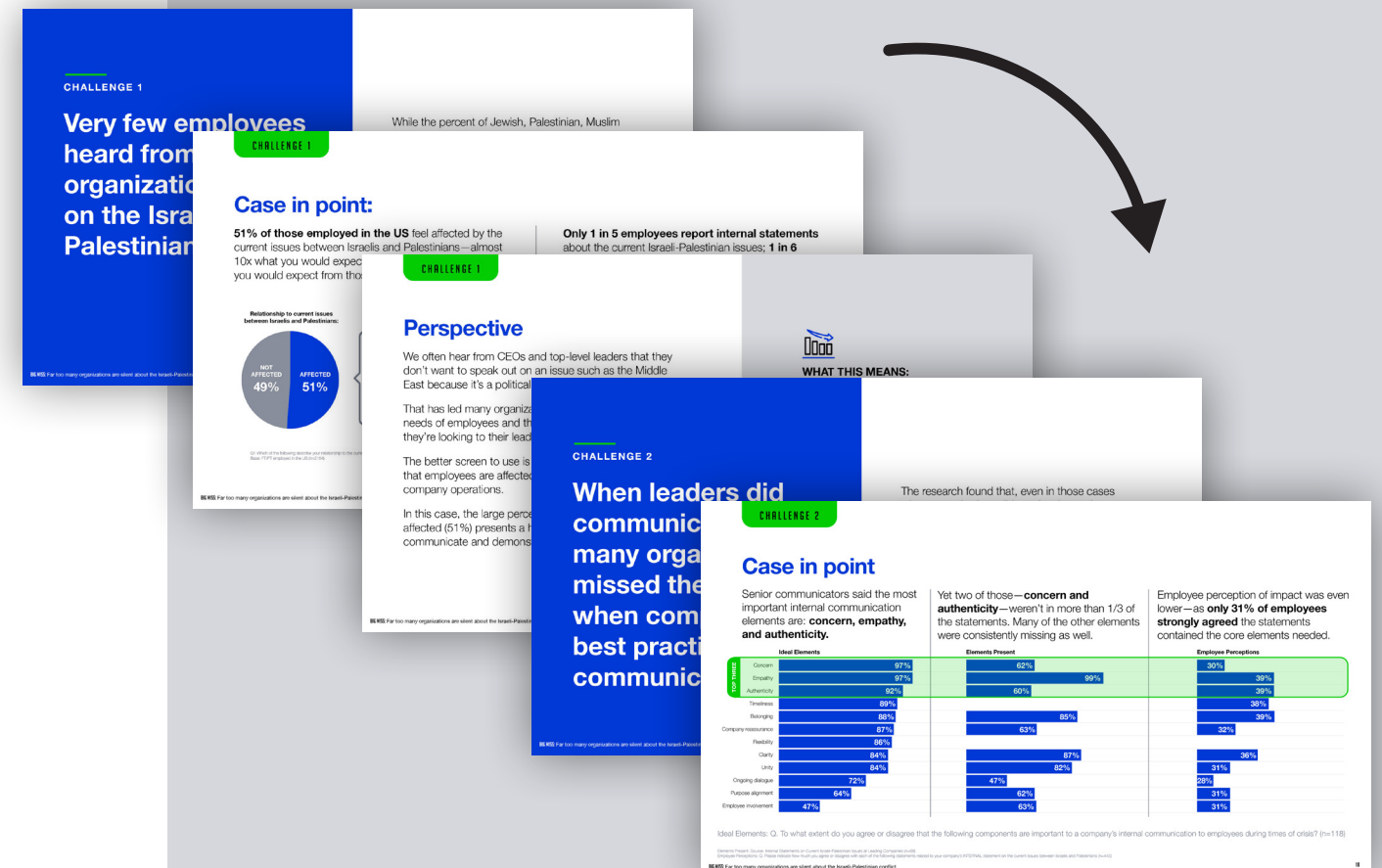
ZOOMING IN

Big miss for most; big win for a few

Broadly speaking, most organizations didn't handle communication on the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict effectively.

But a few did and it had a significant positive impact on employee confidence in leadership, culture, and engagement.

We'll explain what they did and how in the following pages.

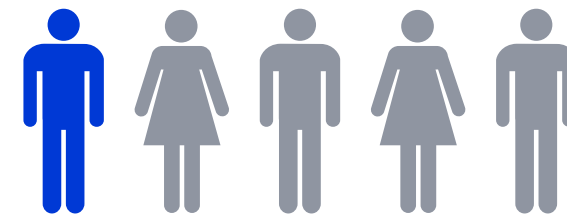


CHALLENGE 1

**Very few employees
heard from their
organizations
on the Israeli-
Palestinian conflict.**

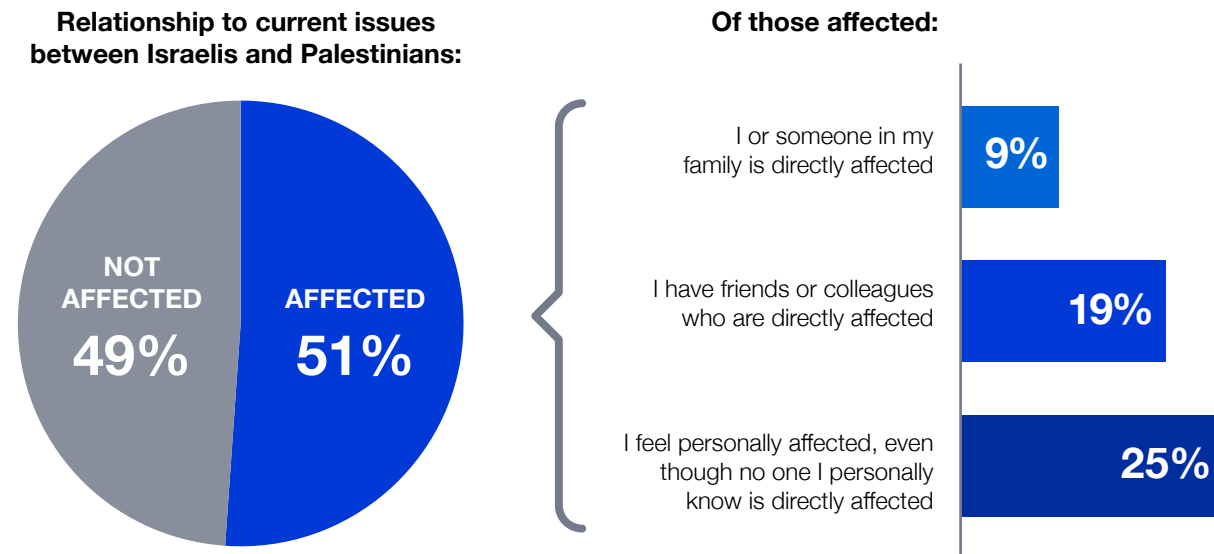
While the percent of Jewish, Palestinian, Muslim and other Middle Eastern employees is between 4 and 6 percent in the U.S., this issue affected almost **10 times more people than that**—including a large percentage who feel affected despite not having any friends, family or colleagues there.

Despite the number of people affected, **only 1 in 5 employees heard from their organization**—making the low reach an even greater missed opportunity.



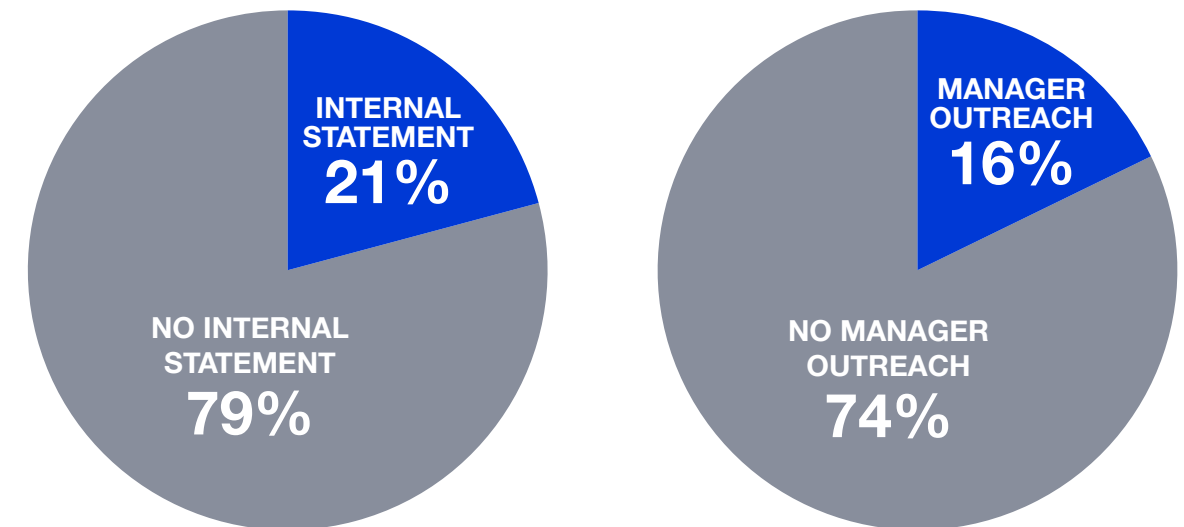
Case in point

51% of those employed in the U.S. feel affected by the current issues between Israelis and Palestinians—almost 10 times what you would expect by population and 4 to 6 times what you would expect from those who were directly impacted.



Q1. Which of the following describe your relationship to the current issues between Israelis and Palestinians. Select all that apply.
Base: FT/PT employed in the U.S. (n=2154)

Only 1 in 5 employees report internal statements about the current Israeli-Palestinian issues; **1 in 6 report manager outreach on the issues.**



Q2. Which of the following best describes how your company has responded to the current Israeli and Palestinian issues. Please select all that apply.
Base: FT/PT employed in the U.S. (n=2154)

Perspective

We often hear from CEOs and top-level leaders that they don't want to speak out on an issue such as the Middle East because it's a political issue.

That has led many organizations to be tone-deaf to the needs of employees and their well-being at a time when they're looking to their leaders to respond in some way.

The better screen to use is to understand the likelihood that employees are affected in some way beyond company operations.

In this case, the large percentage of employees who are affected (51%) presents a huge opportunity for CEOs to communicate and demonstrate humanity and empathy.



What this means

There's a significant business impact to saying nothing—under-productivity, disengagement, distraction, and business slowdown—or when communication isn't handled well.

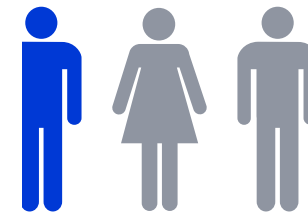
At the same time, a single communication alone won't connect in a meaningful way with employees as we'll see in the following pages.

CHALLENGE 2

**When leaders
did communicate,
far too many
missed the mark
when compared
to communication
best practices.**

The research found that, even in those cases where organizations did send an internal statement, it most often missed the mark.

In fact, the statements analyzed contained less than half of the items senior communicators said were most important. Employees were even less impressed — **with less than 1/3, on average, strongly agreeing** the necessary elements were present.

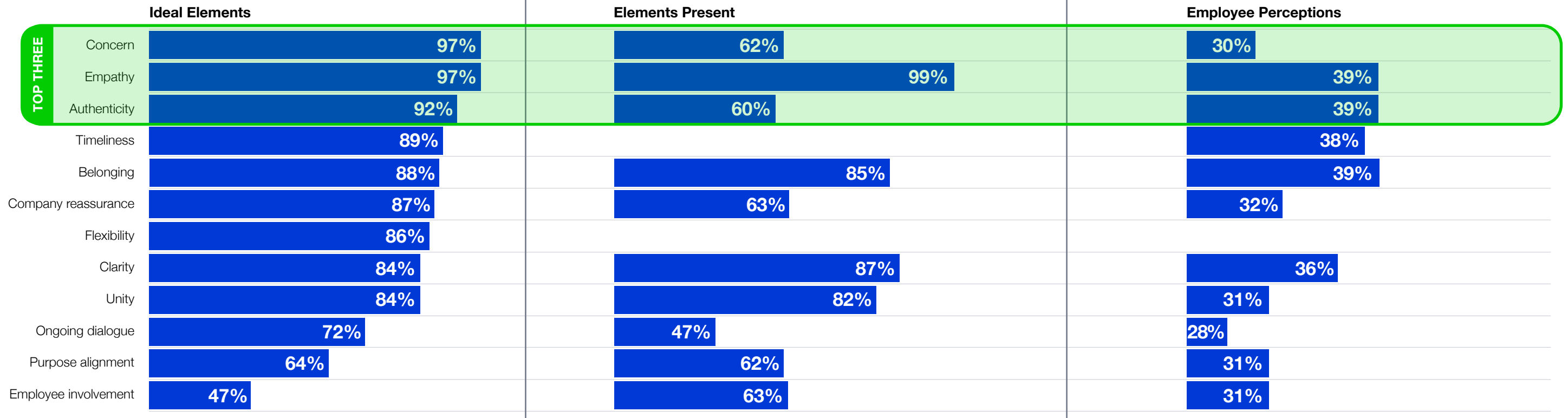


Case in point

Senior communicators said the most important internal communication elements are: **concern, empathy, and authenticity.**

Yet two of those — **concern and authenticity** — weren't in more than 1/3 of the statements. Many of the other elements were consistently missing as well.

Employee perception of impact was even lower — as **only 31% of employees strongly agreed** the statements contained the core elements needed.



Ideal Elements: Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following components are important to a company's internal communication to employees during times of crisis? (n=118)

Elements Present: Source: Internal Statements on Current Israeli-Palestinian Issues at Leading Companies (n=68)

Employee Perceptions: Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements related to your company's INTERNAL statement on the current issues between Israelis and Palestinians (n=443)

Perspective

Organizations need to be purposeful and thoughtful about their communication.

Employees show up to work each day and want to feel like they matter and that their leaders think of them as human beings—not human doings.

That's why organizations need to look at everything they say and do through a human lens—reflecting concern, empathy, and authenticity above all else.

Communication can and should lead the way.



What this means

Your organization's communication should be intentional to spotlight the values and ethos of your business, reflect what employees care about, and demonstrate the people-centric culture most organizations claim.

It doesn't cost extra to be human; in fact, it saves time and money with less turnover and greater motivation.

Our research clearly demonstrates that your employees will notice and appreciate this.

CHALLENGE 3

When companies fail to communicate in the right way, they miss the opportunity to drive confidence in senior leadership, culture, and engagement.

The research found that the more communication employees received, the better they felt.

Strong manager-level outreach proved to be a critical differentiator. Confidence in senior leadership, culture, and engagement **increased 4 to 6 times when employers communicated** about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict coupled with manager outreach.

Yet very few managers engaged their teams and showed the concern and human touch that employees need.

Case in point

When leadership issued solely an internal statement, **less than 1/3 of employees**, on average, strongly agreed that the communication was highly effective.

With the addition of manager outreach, **52% of employees**, on average, strongly agreed that the communication was highly effective.

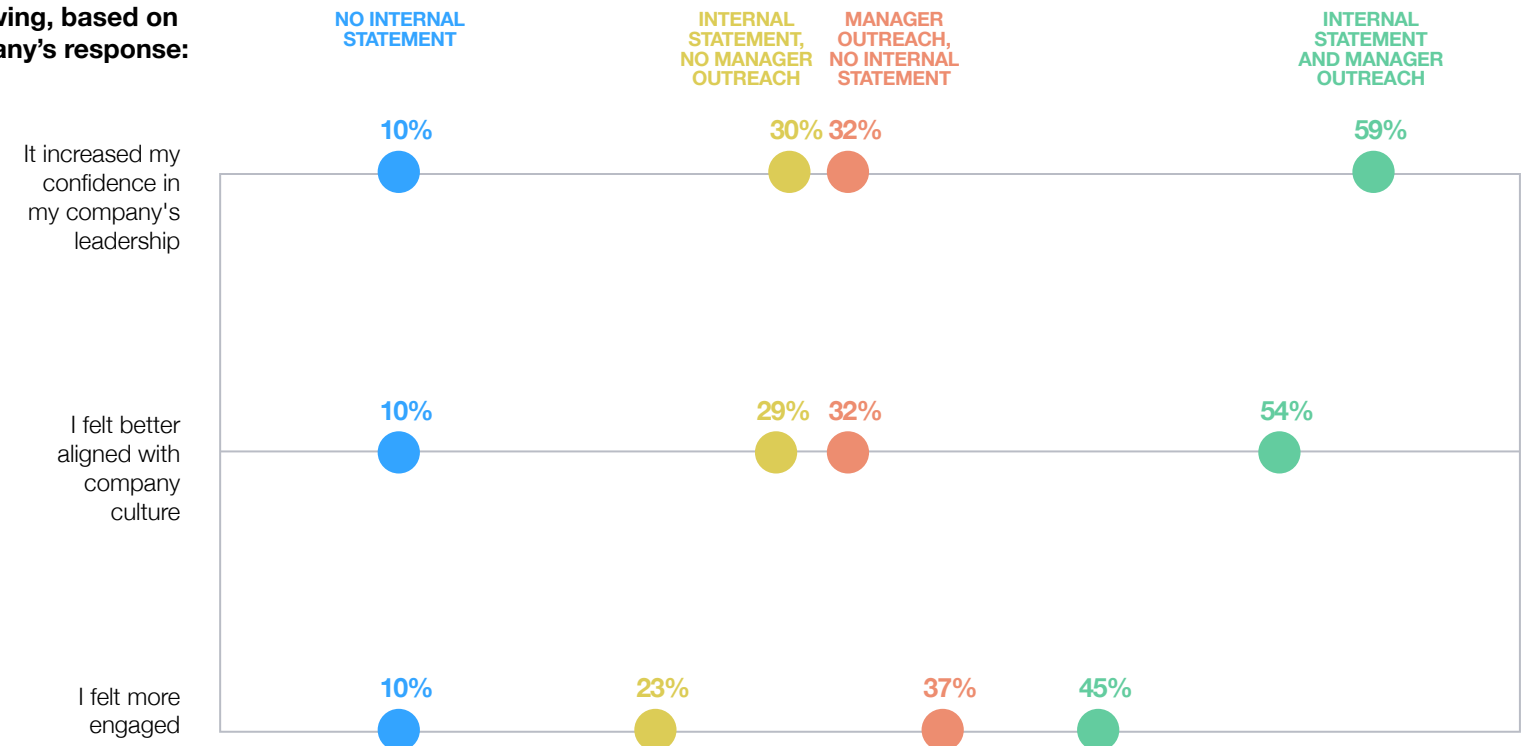
OVER 20% INCREASE WHEN THERE IS ALSO MANAGER OUTREACH:

Average Increase, Agreement on all Internal Communications Elements

Manager outreach	No manager outreach	Increase
52%	31%	+21%

When measured against the three key drivers of confidence in leadership, culture, and engagement, **impact was 4 to 6 times greater** when an internal statement was followed by manager outreach.

Strongly agree with following, based on company's response:



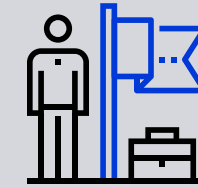
Q4. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements based on your company's response, or lack of a response, around the current issues between Israelis and Palestinians. Base: No internal statement (n=1288), Manager outreach, no internal statement (n=264), Internal statement, no manager outreach (n=374), Internal statement and manager outreach (n=69*)

Perspective

When managers communicate, they make a big difference, yet many are not doing so. That's a missed opportunity to communicate with employees at an exceedingly difficult time for them and the world. It also tells us—loudly and clearly—**that simply issuing a statement doesn't impact employees nearly as much as a statement coupled with manager outreach.**

Listening and showing that you care is not political. Further, it can make a huge difference in trust in leadership, culture, and engagement—critical elements for overall business success.

This isn't about taking a stand for one side or the other. It's about taking a stand for employees.



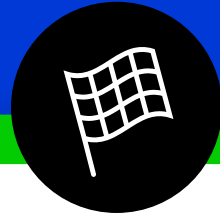
What this means

As you think through your organizational communication, manager outreach is a critical component. That's because managers are meaning-makers and support-givers. They help employees feel seen, heard, and understood.

This important face-to-face outreach should be part of the core communication plan any time an issue arises. And not just for those employees who are directly impacted but all those who are affected as well.

What's Next...

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT ISSUES



To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace.

Make employee concern as well as company values a top consideration when thinking about communicating effectively. When you take care of employees, they'll take care of the business.

1



Missed communications are a missed opportunity.

Effective internal communication when issues arise leads to a 4 to 6 times increase in critical business drivers: Confidence in leadership, alignment around culture, and employee engagement.

2



Saying nothing says everything.

The only “side” to take is that of your employees—especially given its impact on their well-being. Employees who said their company did not make a statement reported just 10 percent confidence in company leadership.

3

What's Next...

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT ISSUES



CONTINUED...



Don't assume employee silence means employees are okay.

Know what your employees think about and the issues, topics, and concerns that impact them. A greater percentage of employees' well-being may be affected significantly by issues than senior leaders might expect.

4



Craft your communications with what matters most to employees.

We know the 12 essential elements of effective internal communications led by what we call ACE: Authenticity, Concern, and Empathy. Be intentional about how you address and reflect these because even when you think you're using the right words, employees don't often see it the same way.

5



Remember, it's not one- and-done.

Bundle a global message with manager outreach. Communicating an internal statement isn't enough to impact well-being. The impact comes when there's effective internal communication coupled with manager outreach.

6

What's Next...

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT ISSUES



CONTINUED...



Managers hold the key, and we must support and hold them accountable.

The lack of manager conversations reflects the need for greater accountability, development, and tools to help them. Managers don't need to solve an issue or have all the answers. Instead, we need to help prepare them to empathize and demonstrate support.

7



Update the playbook.

If you have a playbook or guidelines on issues communication to decide if and when to comment, rethink how you approach communications through the lens of what matters to employees.

8

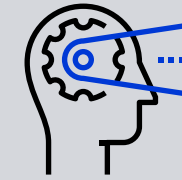


The time is NOW to show you care.

We're in a permacrisis, or feeling of tremendous permanent uncertainty, as Adam Grant recently called it. Issues will continue to increase in a compounding fashion. ACE (Authenticity, Concern, and Empathy) applies here, too. We must help leaders to lead with their heart in their head. By combining heart and head in leadership, leaders can create a more holistic and balanced approach that is focused on both the well-being of individuals and the success of the organization.

9

- 1 Listen to understand** what issues employees care about.
- 2 Quickly ascertain** how many employees might be affected by an issue.
- 3 Be deeply intentional** about your desired outcomes and communication approach.
- 4 Ensure managers are trained and equipped** to have these important conversations. They're not being asked to solve an issue, but should be ready to acknowledge, empathize, and show concern as well as provide support and remind employees about support resources.



Our final thought

Issues aren't going away, and the number of employees impacted by any single issue will continue to increase in a compounding fashion. Or, as renowned author Adam Grant recently said, employees are in a ***permacrisis***, or a feeling of tremendous, permanent uncertainty.

When employees are impacted, the cost of distraction is high.

As communicators, we must help leaders bring empathy and humanity back to the workplace.

Nothing has ever been as important.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: Issues Resource Hub



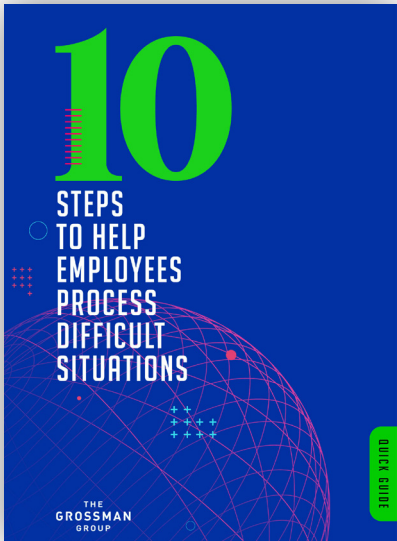
WHITE PAPER

Big Miss: Far Too Many Organizations Are Silent About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



QUICK GUIDE

10 Steps to Help Employees Process Difficult Situations



KEY FINDINGS

Study on Internal Communications About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



QUICK GUIDE

Critical Components of Internal Communications When Issues Arise



METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This research is based on three components

1. EMPLOYEE RESEARCH

- The objective of this research was to gauge how affected employees feel by the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, how their company has responded through internal communication, and how that communication has made an impact on employee engagement, alignment around culture, and confidence in leadership.
- **n=2,154 Employed Americans**
 - Fielded by Harris Poll over two waves
 - October 24-26, 2023
 - October 31-November 2, 2023
 - All data weighted to US Census
 - Analyzed and synthesized into this study by The Harris Poll

2. INTERNAL AND SENIOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH

- The objective of this research was to gauge the most important elements of internal communication during a time of crisis.
- **n=118 Internal and Senior Communication Professionals**
 - Fielded by The Grossman Group, October 23-November 3, 2023
 - Audience represented a broad spectrum of industries, sizes, and types of organizations
 - Analyzed and synthesized into this study by The Harris Poll

3. INTERNAL STATEMENTS ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUES RESEARCH

- The objective of this content analysis was to evaluate the degree to which the key elements of internal communication were present in internal statements on the Israeli-Palestinian Issues.
- **n=68 Internal Statements on Israeli-Palestinian Issues from Leading Companies**
 - Collected by The Grossman Group, October 23-November 3, 2023
 - Analyzed and synthesized into this study by The Harris Poll

About us

The Grossman Group is an award-winning communications consulting firm that specializes in internal, leadership, culture, and change communications. Led by founder and CEO David Grossman, The Grossman Group is celebrating more than 20 years of engaging employees and helping leaders lead with heart to drive performance.

Its team of senior **thought**partner™ consultants work with companies of diverse sizes and industries to accelerate business through employee engagement and internal and leadership communication. The Grossman Group is a Certified Diverse Supplier through the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce since 2008.

See what sets
The Grossman Group
apart from other
communications agencies.

THE GROSSMAN GROUP DIFFERENCE

CONTACT US

THE GROSSMAN GROUP

CELEBRATING
20⁺
YEARS
OF ENGAGING EMPLOYEES
AND HELPING LEADERS
LEAD WITH HEART