

What is a Communication Audit

A communication audit is an evaluation of the ability of an organization to transfer information. It is performed to evaluate an organization's communication capabilities, both internal and external.

A communication audit includes a comprehensive evaluation of an organization's ability to send, receive and share information with various audiences within the organization (and as organizations become flatter to allow groups within the organization to cooperate and share among themselves), as well as key constituencies outside, such as customers and investors, in the case of publicly traded companies. This type of audit can be performed to evaluate an organization's external or internal communication effectiveness. The purpose of a communication audit is to uncover the strengths and weaknesses between management, typically, and employees, customers and other groups such as investors, the news media, and regulators and legislative bodies with the objective to improve future communications by developing a strategic plan, through a series of recommendations, and to determine where gaps exist which need to be bridged.

A communications audit may be undertaken by corporate communications team or by outside consultants who are retained by management to assess the company's communications effectiveness in accordance with the business objectives, compare the company vs. competitors, and identify target audience perceptions and motivators. The resulting strategic positioning and corresponding communications plan is focused on achieving strategic communications objectives, whether they be to achieve brand recognition, modify perceptions, maximize sales, encourage community support, or establish leadership. If an outside auditor is retained, the auditor may include an evaluation of the corporate communications staff and the activities of the corporate communications department with recommendations to management designed to streamline departmental communications and intercompany communications effectiveness.