



What your business says vs what it signals

A toolkit for aligning words,
behaviour, and reality

Business Body Language Toolkit

How to align what your organisation says, signals and actually does

Your organisation is always communicating, even when it's not speaking

> The problem

Most organisations focus on what they say. Policies. Emails. Strategy decks. But just like human communication, the real message is shaped by three things: what you write down; what people say, how those messages are interpreted, and what your organisation actually does.

> Why it matters

When these don't align, trust breaks down. Your organisation is always communicating, even when it's not speaking.

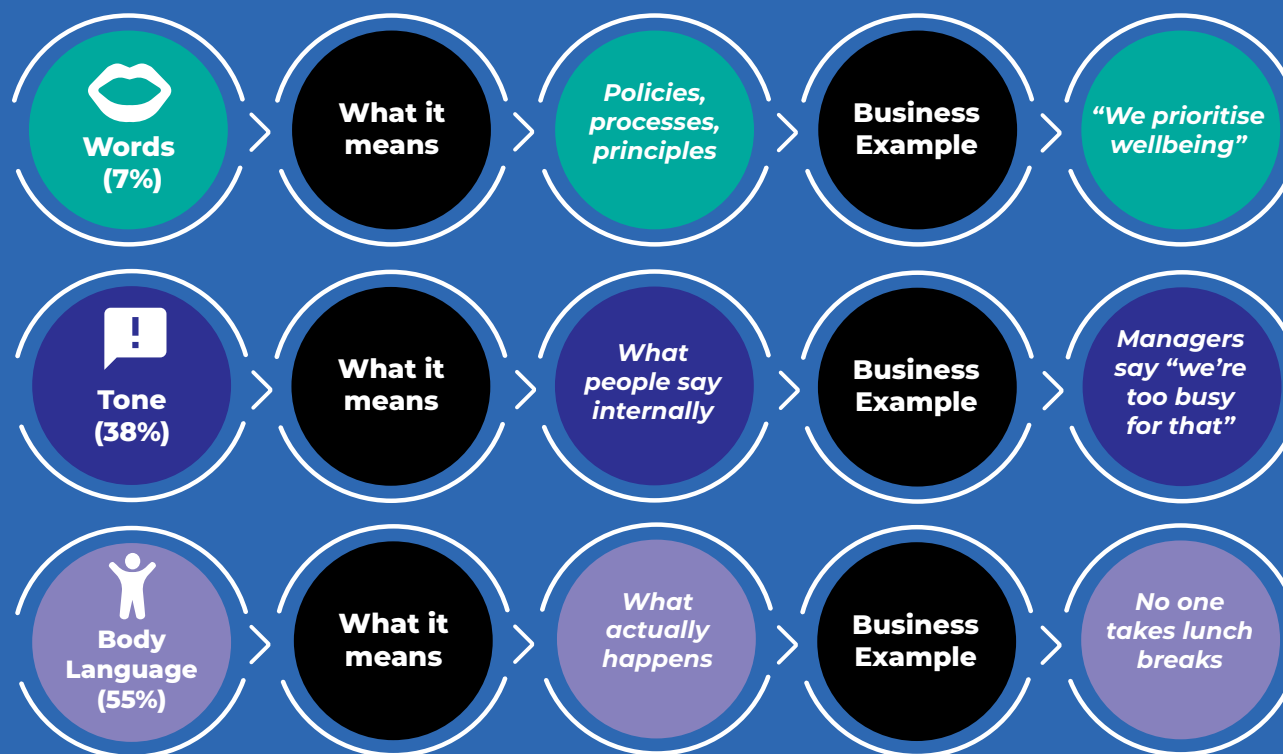
> What this toolkit does

Via case studies and behavioural methods, this toolkit aims to help you understand the messaging you are putting out – and how that is interpreted by your people, your stakeholders, and externally to business prospects and potential hires.

We hope that it is useful in developing your communications strategy and whether you are **delivering** what you **think** you are saying.

The Model

Organisational Communication = **3 Layers**



Mini Case Study 1: Uber (culture misalignment)

Uber's well documented cultural crisis wasn't driven by a lack of values, but by a failure to live them.

While the company publicly positioned itself as progressive and principled, its actions told a very different story; from bypassing regulators to tolerating toxic internal behaviours.

Employees, leaders and systems all reinforced a disconnect between what was written, what was said, and what actually happened.

“ People don't believe what organisations say. They believe what they consistently experience – and how they interpret it ”

This misalignment eroded trust internally and externally, ultimately damaging reputation and forcing leadership change.

Uber's experience highlights a critical lesson for organisations: values alone are not enough; they must be clearly defined, consistently communicated, and visibly demonstrated in everyday behaviour.



> What they said:

“We're building a high-performance, inclusive culture”

> What people experienced:

Reports of toxic leadership, internal complaints, and lack of accountability

> What happened:

Public backlash, leadership changes, reputational damage

Your culture is your business body language

What does **“Body Language”** look like in business? Rather than gestures, it's behaviour

This is what employees and candidates really notice



Decisions

How leaders make decisions



Feedback

How input is handled



Rewards

What gets recognised



What's ignored

What gets overlooked

Mini Case Study 2: Patagonia (aligned communication)

Patagonia is a clear example of what aligned communication looks like in practice.

The company's purpose - to protect the planet - is consistently reflected not just in its messaging, but in its decisions and behaviours.

From donating profits to environmental causes to actively discouraging overconsumption, Patagonia reinforces its values through action.

Crucially, employees and customers echo the same message, creating a unified narrative across the brand.

This alignment between what is **said**, what is **believed**, and what is **done** builds credibility, strengthens trust, and turns customers into advocates - demonstrating the commercial and cultural power of consistency.



- > **What they say:**
"We exist to protect the planet."
- > **What they do:**
 - ▶ Donate profits to environmental causes
 - ▶ Encourages reduced consumption
 - ▶ Activism built into brand identity
- > **What people say:**
Employees and customers repeat the same message
- > **Takeaway:**
Alignment builds trust, loyalty and advocacy

Mini Case Study 3: Amazon (efficiency vs experience)

Amazon shows that strong communication alignment isn't always comfortable - but it is clear.

Its commitment to customer obsession is visible in a culture defined by performance, metrics and pace.

Internally, employees often describe a demanding, high-pressure environment - and that reflects exactly how the business operates.

There's no contradiction between message and reality. While the intensity may divide opinion, the alignment is undeniable.

Amazon proves that when organisations are honest about what they prioritise and consistently act on it communication becomes credible, expectations are clear, and culture is unmistakable.



“ Misalignment doesn't just confuse people - it erodes trust at speed ”

- > **What they say:**
"Customer obsession"
- > **What's often said internally:**
High-pressure environment, performance-driven culture
- > **What happens:**
Relentless focus on metrics and output
- > **Takeaway:**
Alignment can still be strong - even if it's intense - but it must be honest and consistent

The 5-Minute Communication Alignment Check

STEP 1

Words (Policies & Messaging)

Ask:

What do we say we stand for?

Are our policies clear and usable?

STEP 2

Tone (What people say)

Ask:

What do managers say about our policies?

What would employees say - and how are they interpreting our messages - in a private conversation? Is there consistency across levels?

STEP 3

Body Language (Actions)

Ask:

What actually happens day-to-day?

What behaviours are rewarded?

What behaviours are tolerated?



Comms resource: HR Buzz Live

Listen to comms experts Jo Coxhill and Tara Birch discussing how they have dealt with workplace communications within small and large organisations.

 [CLICK TO LISTEN](#)



The Alignment Test

If these answers don't match, your communication is breaking down.

There are helpful ways to fix this using this simple framework - in most instances, adjustments can make a huge difference.

If **Words** don't match your **Tone** then you need to improve manager communication and clarity.

If **Tone** is not matching the **Actions** of a business, it is time to address leadership behaviour and accountability.

If **Words** are not matching the **Actions**, it is time to review policy credibility.

Great organisations don't just communicate clearly, they communicate consistently.

Find out more about how **My Staff Shop** can help you improve your organisation's culture, engagement and employee experience...

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