

PollStream at HP: A Flexible Tool that Engages Employees

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Priya Bates
Corporate Communications Manager
HP Canada

When Priya Bates took the position of Corporate Communications Manager at HP Canada, one of her primary tasks was to encourage a deeper sense of community among employees and their managers. Priya knew that HP Canada's corporate Intranet was the most likely meeting space for nearly 4,000 employees housed in different locations. The Intranet was the most effective channel for company news, education, corporate culture and human-interest stories. The Intranet also served as the backbone of a communications program that included face-to-face meetings, satellite broadcasting, webcasting, as well as audio and video conferencing. The challenge was to find a way to make employees a part of an ongoing conversation.

Priya decided to add interactivity to the site using PollStream, a communications platform that uses multi-question branching polls at its core. The first thing that attracted her to PollStream was ease-of-use. A few lines of JavaScript code was all it took for Priya to add a new poll and manage the results. She didn't have to involve IT personnel in the setup or ongoing implementation of the application.

The PollStream polls were an immediate hit with employees. “When you have 14% to 15% of the company participating every week, that's big,” Priya says about the overall response. “It's been as high as 23% when we've had a prize or incentive.”

Branching Questions Keep the Focus on Conversation

“Involvement is a two way street,” Priya says about HP Canada's approach to internal communications. “Not only do employees want to give to the company but they want to know that the company cares for them.”

PollStream keeps participants involved by ensuring that questions are always relevant. Thanks to a multi-question branching structure, participants are automatically segmented into interest groups.

For instance, if the topic is health care and an employee answers “Yes, I am interested in health insurance for my dependents,” the rest of the session is directed around family health issues. A single employee with no dependents can take the same poll and concentrate on personal health issues. Each participant feels that his or her particular concerns were addressed.

“It helps us get information from employees,” Priya says. “It helps us get information to them as well, in a quick-bite, entertaining format.”

Visual Feedback Helps Build Community

PollStream helps build a sense of community through the use of graphical feedback. The application tallies responses and returns a diagram that shows how other participants answered the same question. Employees see instantly that their responses make a difference. It also helps participants see that they are part of a larger whole. Priya notes that PollStream's instant feedback helps people know what their teammates are thinking. “It's almost as if they get a little opportunity to peer into other people's minds.”

Instant Reporting Means Actionable Intelligence

Built-in reporting means that PollStream results are easy to access and understand. At HP this information is used to make the full range of corporate communications more responsive to the needs of employees. The leadership team at HP Canada made employee engagement one of their top goals for the year. Using PollStream's free-form input feature, Priya is able to provide the Canadian Leadership with feedback by employees in their own words. This helps to shape the direction of face-to-face communications. When corporate communications are responsive and relevant at the very highest levels, employees know that the company is listening.

Other divisions within HP find high value in the data collected using PollStream. This collaboration helps build team spirit among management groups. During the past year:

1. Compensation and Benefits used PollStream to discover the types of investments information employees wanted to receive,
2. Human Resources used PollStream to learn how employees balance work and life issues, and to evaluate healthcare options,
3. Marketing used PollStream to evaluate message penetration within the company concerning HP's new digital entertainment strategy.

“Because it's a branching poll we only give them questions that are relevant. They get the results immediately – instant feedback into what others are thinking. It's almost as if they get a little opportunity to peer into other people's minds.”

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PollStream Engagement Levels Remain Consistently High

“We give employees an opportunity to provide their opinion. But we also try to have some fun,” Priya says. Using a creative approach combined with PollStream's flexibility and powerful multi-branching structure, Priya keeps the dialogue fresh, lively and engaging week after week. Her policy is to have an “issues poll” one week followed by questions “just for fun” on the following week. On any given week, 14% to 23% of HP employees engage with a PollStream poll. This is a rate five to eight times higher than a typical direct marketing or survey research effort.

Consistently high response rates demonstrate PollStream's ability to reward and engage participants. Equally impressive are the high completion rates. Over 80% of the employees who start a PollStream poll will follow it through to completion.

Special incentives can boost response and completion rates even higher. PollStream is designed to let managers deliver special rewards and incentives at the end of the poll. On weeks when employee input is especially critical, Priya uses PollStream to enter participants in drawings for such prizes as an HP digital camera, printer or Apple iPod from HP.

Licensing Structure Holds Down Costs

PollStream is designed with a flat-fee licensing structure that means no unexpected costs with increased use. PollStream's ease-of-use, built-in reporting and low technological “overhead,” helps boost productivity by reducing the number of employee hours spent in data collection.

“Before PollStream, my tech support person had to reinvent the wheel every time we wanted to include one of these questionnaires,” Priya says about her decision to use PollStream to add interactivity to the corporate Intranet. “It was a custom setup once a quarter, the database had to be programmed to get the results and to provide me with data.” Compared to this process, Priya found that PollStream was a huge time-saver. Now her IT people have the time to focus on technical projects.

PollStream Offers New Ways to Use Communications Channels

PollStream has the flexibility to meet new challenges and goals for corporate communications. HP recently began using PollStream's Poll-In-Email option in combination with their "eGram" employee email newsletter. PollStream can be used to set meeting dates or times, register people for events, get pre-session input and post-session feedback - any time there is a need to gather and manage input from large or small groups within the organization.

Priya Bates is thrilled by the success she is having with PollStream. As a key component of a broad communications campaign, PollStream engages employees and delivers results. Top executives get essential feedback to help them focus on critical issues. Managers in other divisions are rolling out programs with greater confidence thanks to the intelligence they've gathered using PollStream. Employees continue to participate with the online polls in large numbers. By acting as a dynamic channel for two-way dialogue, PollStream helps to keep HP's growing community fully engaged.

Contact us today to get a personal introduction to PollStream.

PollStream

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“Employees aren't looking for something flashy. They are looking for something that's relevant to them, something that's meaningful.”

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