



The Healthcare Internal Communications Report

2026



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Table of Contents

1. Your Starting Point for a Real Healthcare Comms Strategy	3
2. Where Healthcare Stands Today	4
3. The Challenges Healthcare Comms Teams Keep Running into	6
4. Building Employee Recognition into Your Comms Calendar	9
5. Built for a Workforce That Isn't Sitting at a Desk	14

Your Starting Point for a Real Healthcare Comms Strategy

If you work in internal comms at a hospital, health system, or clinic, you already know the job looks nothing like the version most comms advice is written for. Your audience isn't sitting at a desk. A huge chunk of them are on a unit floor, in a clinic room, or between patients, and the newsletter you spent hours building might not get opened until the end of a 12 hour shift, if it gets opened at all.

We talk to healthcare comms professionals regularly, and the same frustrations come up again and again. No way to tell who's actually reading anything. Tools that were never built for a workforce this spread out. Manual processes that eat a whole afternoon for one update. Compliance and procurement that slows down even the things your team already knows it needs.

That's exactly why a real strategy matters more here than almost anywhere else. When your workforce spans shifts, units, licensing categories, and locations, "just send an email" stops being a plan, and "we sent a lot of newsletters" isn't much of an answer when leadership asks what your internal comms program is actually doing.

The good news is that a strong strategy in healthcare starts with understanding the landscape, what's normal for this industry, where other healthcare comms teams get stuck, what's actually worked.

That's what this report is here for. Think of it as your go-to resource for understanding healthcare internal comms specifically. Inside, you'll find benchmark data specific to the industry, a closer look at the challenges we hear about most from healthcare comms teams, and some practical ideas for tackling them, drawn from what's actually worked for hospitals and health systems using ContactMonkey today.

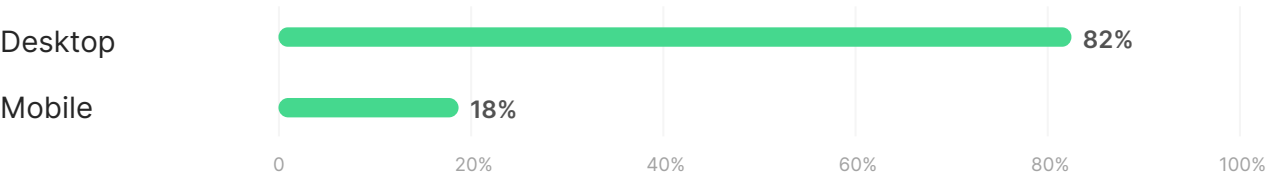
HEALTHCARE BENCHMARKS

Where Healthcare Stands Today

Drawing from ContactMonkey’s 2026 Internal Email Benchmark Report (255,000+ campaigns analyzed):

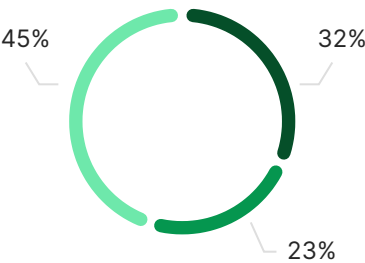
- **72%** average open rate for healthcare internal email
- **9%** average click rate
- **9%** average click to open rate
- **Friday at 10 AM** is the best time to reach healthcare employees

Device Breakdown



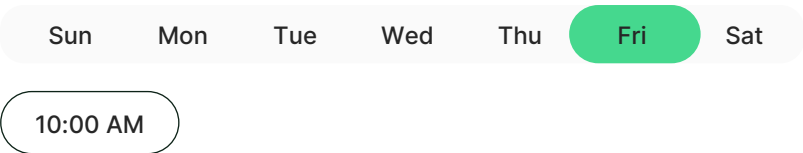
Average Read Times

- Glanced (1–3 Seconds)
- Skimmed (>3–9 Seconds)
- Read (>9 Seconds)



Healthcare falls into what the report calls the Friday morning cluster, a group of operationally structured industries that tend to send end of week updates employees can absorb before the weekend.

Best time to send internal emails:



The Workforce Behind the Numbers

A 72% open rate looks modest next to the 76% average across all industries. That's not underperformance, it's the audience. Gallagher's 2026 State of the Sector Report, which groups healthcare with public sector and NGO respondents, found this segment has the most balanced workforce in the study, with 42% working frontline roles. A workforce that's split doesn't behave like a fully desk-based one, and most comms benchmarks were built around desk-based assumptions.

A few things that shift when frontline share is this high:

- In frontline-heavy organizations, culture and belonging becomes the top communications priority for 41% of respondents, overtaking strategic alignment
- In-person town halls are rated the single most effective channel for frontline-heavy organizations, dropping 18 points in effectiveness once moved online
- Frontline-heavy organizations are 1.3 times as likely to see higher risk to their communication goals overall

Why Open Rates Alone Don't Tell the Full Story

- **Organization size matters more than industry.** Open rates fall as employee count rises, from 89% at organizations under 50 employees to 73% at 10,000 plus. A large health system's baseline is naturally lower than a small clinic's, that's math, not a performance gap.
- **Desktop still leads, but not everywhere equally.** 84% of internal email engagement happens on desktop overall. Industries with more field-based workforces see meaningfully higher mobile engagement, worth checking your own device mix if a large share of your staff is deskless.
- **The workforce itself is under real strain.** Nurse turnover reached 17.6% nationally in 2025, up from the year before. Burnout has ticked down slightly in recent years, but 53% of nurses still report experiencing it in the past two years. None of that shows up in an open rate, but it shapes whether your comms land, and how.

None of this makes 72% a ceiling. It just means the real story is in what's actually getting in the way, which is exactly what we heard when we talked to healthcare comms teams directly.

The Challenges Healthcare Comms Teams Keep Running into

Challenge 1

No way to measure who's reading

What we hear from healthcare comms teams

Teams consistently say they have no reliable way to know who's actually seeing a message versus who's missing it, and no way to adjust their approach without that visibility.

Why it's so common in this industry

Distributed clinical staff make blanket sends the default, and without analytics, a "low" open rate and a missed message look identical.

How ContactMonkey helps

Analytics break employee engagement down by the segments you've set up, shift, unit, role, so you can see exactly who's missing what.

Challenge 2

Platforms that exclude frontline staff

What we hear from healthcare comms teams

Tools built for a desk-based workforce, requiring a company laptop, a synced inbox, a desktop app, routinely leave clinical and frontline staff out entirely.

Why it's so common in this industry

A large share of frontline healthcare workers have no corporate email address at all, so email-only strategies structurally can't reach them.

How ContactMonkey helps

SMS and Pages extend reach beyond the inbox, letting staff without regular email access scan a QR code and pull up the full message right on their phone.

Challenge 3**Manual, outdated processes that don't scale****What we hear from healthcare comms teams**

Comms built in Word documents, pasted into Outlook, formatted by hand, with no repeatable system behind them.

Why it's so common in this industry

Small comms teams supporting large, shift-based workforces default to whatever's already open, even once it stops being enough.

How ContactMonkey helps

An intuitive drag-and-drop email template builder creates on-brand emails in minutes, replacing the manual build from a blank document.

Challenge 4**Departmental silos****What we hear from healthcare comms teams**

Different departments running their own version of internal comms, with no shared calendar, tools, or message discipline

Why it's so common in this industry

Cross-department silos are one of the most cited barriers in healthcare operations generally, and the same fragmentation that slows patient care shows up in internal comms too

How ContactMonkey helps

Every department sends from one platform, with a shared calendar and template library, keeping internal communications consistent org-wide

Challenge 5**Messages that don't reach people in time****What we hear from healthcare comms teams**

Urgent updates competing with routine ones in the same inbox, with no way to flag what actually needs immediate attention.

Why it's so common in this industry

Communication breakdowns are linked to a large share of serious safety incidents in healthcare settings, making timely, clear delivery a higher-stakes problem here than in most industries.

How ContactMonkey helps

SMS delivers time-sensitive updates directly to staff, cutting through a crowded inbox so urgent messages get seen when it actually matters.

Challenge 6**Compliance and procurement friction****What we hear from healthcare comms teams**

Even a clearly needed tool has to clear security review, IT assessment, and legal sign-off before anything moves forward.

Why it's so common in this industry

Healthcare's regulatory load adds hurdles most other industries don't face at the same intensity.

How ContactMonkey helps

Native Outlook integration means less new infrastructure for IT and security to review, since it's already part of your existing workflow.

Challenge 7**Budget competing with clinical priorities****What we hear from healthcare comms teams**

Comms tooling budget is real, but it's rarely the priority when it's weighed against clinical or operational spending.

Why it's so common in this industry

Margins are tight across the sector, and comms is easy to deprioritize when it's not seen as directly tied to patient care.

How ContactMonkey helps

Start scoped to one department or use case, and use early analytics to build the case for expanding.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Building Employee Recognition into Your Comms Calendar

Recognition is one of the highest goodwill opportunities on a healthcare comms calendar, and one of the easiest to under-invest in. A single “thank you a nurse” email once a year doesn’t do it justice. Below is a full planning approach for the biggest moment on the calendar, Nurses Week, plus a shorter list of other healthcare recognition moments worth planning around.

What is an IC Impact Brief?

Before you plan any internal communications campaign, it helps to start with a strategic brief rather than jumping straight into content. An IC Impact Brief captures the purpose, audience, and desired outcomes of a communication before any writing begins, and doubles as a measurement tool once the send goes out. Teams that skip this step tend to stay reactive, spending most of their time on execution rather than strategy. We’re using this framework to plan Nurses Week below.

Read the full breakdown on [what an IC Impact Brief is and why every IC team needs](#)

The IC Impact Brief Template

Section	Fill in
Communication objective	A clear, specific statement outlining what you want this communication to accomplish and why it matters to the organization right now. Tie it to a business objective for maximum impact.
Target audience	A precise definition of who this communication is for, including any nuances in role, geography, or language that will shape how you deliver the message.
Core message	The essential ideas your audience needs to walk away with, distilled to three to five key points maximum, only what is necessary and nothing more.
Desired employee outcomes	A description of what you want employees to think, feel, or do differently as a direct result of receiving this communication.
Channels and formats	The specific channels (internal email, newsletter, team meetings, town hall) and content formats (written copy, video, digital signage) you'll use to reach your audience where they are, in the way they're most likely to engage.
Schedule and key milestones	The timeline that anchors the effort, including critical dates, dependencies, and any events or deadlines the messaging must align with. Be thorough here if you won't be creating a full project plan.
Roles and responsibilities	A clear record of who owns what, drafting, reviewing, approving, sending, so nothing falls through the cracks.
Success metrics and measurement	The specific indicators you'll use to evaluate whether the communication achieved its intended impact, defined before the work begins.
Related communications and messages	A note on any other messages, campaigns, or announcements that intersect with this effort, so the broader narrative stays consistent and coordinated.

Example: Nurses Week IC Campaign

Section	Example
Communication objective	Make clinical staff feel genuinely recognized, supporting the organization's broader retention goals.
Target audience	All clinical staff, segmented by unit and shift, with particular attention to night and weekend shifts who often miss daytime recognition events.
Core message	Every unit's work is seen, recognition doesn't stop at one week a year, here's how to nominate a colleague.
Desired employee outcomes	Staff feel appreciated and see recognition as ongoing, not a once a year checkbox, participation in the nomination process increases.
Channels and formats	Weekly email featuring one staff story, break room signage with printed quote cards, SMS for off shift staff.
Schedule and key milestones	Four week campaign aligned to Nurses Week (May 6 to 12), one story per week, recap send in week five.
Roles and responsibilities	Comms team drafts and sends, unit managers submit nominations and quotes, leadership provides a closing message.
Success metrics and measurement	Open rate compared to average newsletter, nominations submitted, SMS response rate.
Related communications and messages	Coordinate with HR's recognition program and any unit level celebrations already planned.

Example: Nurses Week Employee Newsletter Template

Section	Content
Subject line	Something specific over generic. “This week, we’re celebrating [Unit Name]” beats “Happy Nurses Week”.
Opening line	A short, direct thank you from leadership, one or two sentences.
Featured story	One nurse or team, told in their own words where possible.
By the numbers	A few numbers that make the moment concrete, years of service represented, patients cared for, shifts covered.
Recognition callout	How staff can nominate a colleague, or a link to view nominees.
Pulse check	A quick embedded survey question, something like “how appreciated do you feel at work right now,” scored on a simple scale, to gauge sentiment during the campaign itself.
Open ended prompt	One open text field inviting staff to share their own story or shoutout for a future issue, keeping the story pipeline going past this one send.
Leadership message	A short note from a CNO or unit leader, kept brief.
Closing CTA	Where to go next, a recognition wall page, an event sign up, or the nomination form.

Before you send, collect the stories: The strongest Nurses Week content comes from staff. Before drafting anything, send a short survey to unit managers or directly to staff asking about a proud moment, a meaningful patient interaction, or what keeps them coming back to the work. A couple of open-ended questions is usually enough, and the responses become your featured stories, quotes, and by the numbers content for the campaign.

Other Healthcare Recognition Moments to Plan Around

When	Observance	Who it recognizes
March 19	Certified Nurses Day	Board certified nurses across specialties
March 30	National Doctors' Day	Physicians
April (first full week)	Patient Access Week	Registration, scheduling, and access staff
April (last full week)	Medical Laboratory Professionals Week	Lab technicians and clinical lab staff
April (third week)	National Healthcare Volunteer Week	Hospital and health system volunteers
May 6 to 12	National Nurses Week	RNs and LPNs across all specialties
May 10 to 16	National Hospital Week	The full care team, reinforcing interdisciplinary work
October (third week)	Healthcare Quality Week	Quality, safety, and risk management teams
October 11 to 17	Emergency Nurses Week	ED nursing staff
November (second week)	Case Management Week	Case managers and care coordinators

Note: These dates may shift slightly year to year, so confirm the current year's dates before locking in your calendar.

Built for a Workforce That Isn't Sitting at a Desk

Everything in this report, the benchmarks, the challenges, the campaign planning, comes back to one thing. Healthcare comms works differently, and the tools behind it need to work differently too.

ContactMonkey was built around the reality that most internal comms platforms ignore, that a meaningful share of your workforce isn't sitting at a desk, checking email, or logged into a company laptop. A few features do most of the work here:

Audience segmentation and dynamic content

Healthcare has one of the most complex audience landscapes of any industry, and department alone doesn't capture it. Shift, care setting, licensed versus non-licensed status, and union status all shape how and when someone can actually receive a message. Dynamic content lets you build one send that adjusts automatically based on who's opening it, instead of building five separate emails to reach five different groups.

- A unit specific update surfaced within an organization-wide newsletter
- A shift specific deadline shown only to the staff it applies to
- A different tone and level of detail for clinical versus administrative audiences in the same send

Pages

Bedside nurses, CNAs, and other clinical staff are rarely at a computer during a shift, so physical channels, break room boards, posters near a nursing station, badge buddies, often do more work than an inbox. Pages gives those moments somewhere real to send people, a QR code that links to the full detail an email blurb or an intranet post can't hold on its own.

- Benefits and HR resource hubs staff can revisit as questions come up
- Training and onboarding guides new hires can work through at their own pace, especially useful for clinical roles that often start with less structured comms support
- Change communications that need to stay current as details evolve
- Internal FAQs staff can check in the moment a question comes up

SMS

For staff who never touch a company inbox, SMS is often the only channel that reliably lands, no login, no app, just a message that shows up wherever someone already is.

- A last minute shift change or callout notice
- A facility closure or urgent safety alert
- A short recognition shoutout during a campaign like Nurses Week

Analytics

Not knowing who's actually reading a message is one of the most common pain points healthcare comms teams raise, and it's easy to see why. An open rate alone doesn't tell you much in an environment this distributed. ContactMonkey's detailed analytics break engagement down by the employee segments you've already set up, shift, unit, role, so you can see exactly what's landing and where.

- Which units or shifts are consistently missing key updates
- Whether a campaign hit the goals set in its IC Impact Brief
- Real engagement data to build the case for comms investment, instead of relying on assumptions

"We have been better able to streamline department communication into one hub. This has increased our ability to communicate strategic changes, staffing changes, and major announcements that affect our organization."

Christina Smith

Employee Experience Specialist, Neighborhood Healthcare

Now It's Your Turn

If you work in healthcare internal comms, none of this needs spelling out for you. You already know this isn't a desk job with a predictable inbox and a nine-to-five audience. You're communicating through shift changes and short-staffed units, across licensing categories and union agreements, to people doing some of the most demanding, meaningful work there is.

What this report gives you is a starting point, real benchmarks to measure against, the challenges other healthcare comms teams are running into, and a few practical ways to plan around them, not a finished playbook, but somewhere honest to begin.

The details will look different at every organization. What tends to hold true everywhere is this: the teams that reach their whole workforce are the ones willing to rethink the channel, not just rewrite the message. Keep an eye on what your data is telling you, keep adjusting as your workforce changes, and don't be afraid to make the case for the resources this work actually needs.



When you're ready to see this in action, [take a tour of ContactMonkey](#) to explore the platform at your own pace, or [book a demo](#) with our team to see how ContactMonkey fits into your healthcare comms strategy.

Need to make the case internally?

If getting buy-in for internal communications software is part of what's standing between you and this framework, ContactMonkey's Business Case Builder can help you put a number to it, turning engagement data and time savings into something you can bring to leadership.

Get started now



**Internal communications software that
connects every employee.**

Deliver consistent, measurable communications
through Outlook, SMS, Teams, and SharePoint.

Product Tour

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