

A top-down view of a rustic wooden table. In the upper right, a small metal bowl is filled with fresh blueberries, with a few more scattered on the table. Next to it are several cinnamon sticks. A silver fork and a knife are placed on a piece of burlap fabric. In the lower right, a glass pie dish contains a blueberry pie with a golden-brown lattice crust. The text 'Starting your internal communication audit is easy as pie' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Starting your internal communication audit is easy as pie

Use this simple recipe

An employee communication audit is a useful tool to get a **high-level measure** of how communication is performing.

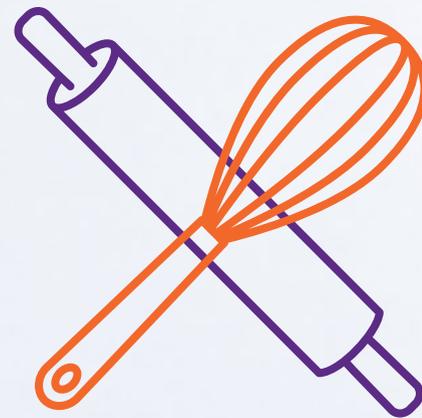


The idea of conducting an “audit” can be intimidating—**like trying to follow a complicated recipe.**

But getting started is **easy as pie.** Just follow this two-step process.



Step 1:
Do the prep work





Step 1: Do the prep work

Do some upfront thinking

A skilled baker **considers which tools** are needed to achieve the desired results and **assembles them in advance**.

Likewise, several factors **influence the mix** of research methods that will be right for your audit.





Step 1: Do the prep work

Set your objectives

A **key part** of setting audit objectives is **your thesis**.

What is the main idea you want to explore?

Objectives should also reflect **how you plan to use the audit results**.

Do you need to influence an extended team that doesn't report to you or do you want to make changes to communication channels you manage?

Once you understand where you'll focus and how you'll use the data, **you're ready to draft objectives**.

Two or three are all you need. And remember to keep them specific and realistic.





Step 1: Do the prep work

How many research methods do you need?

Use this decision tool to determine the scope: from a **simple study** (using a couple of research methods) to a **comprehensive assessment** (three or more research methods).



Scope decisions

Answer each question by placing an X on the corresponding scale. If most of your Xs fall to the left, use one to two research methods. But if most are to the right, use three or more.



Fewer research methods

More research methods

Speed

How quickly do you need to complete the audit?

Hint: More research methods = more time.



I have a short window.

I can take the time I need.

Budget/resources

Will you have budget and/or resources?



I'll do everything on my own.

I can hire resources and/or ask colleagues to help.

Participation

Is there appetite to provide time for employees to participate in a survey or focus group?



I can only get a bit of employee time.

Asking employees to participate is not a problem.

Recommendations

How will you use the results?



I'm the only one who will use the results.

I need to influence senior leaders and/or a group of stakeholders.

Step 2:
**Select the best
ingredients**





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

Here's an overview of research methods

In baking, every ingredient serves a particular function. Similarly, each research method has specific attributes. The details on the following pages will help you **select the best ingredients** to achieve your goals.



Surveys



E-metrics



Focus groups/interviews



Channel assessments



Observations



Benchmark studies





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

Surveys come in many shapes and sizes



Surveys can range from comprehensive (30 to 40 questions) to pulse or spot (five to seven questions).

Use surveys when you want to **understand high-level successes and opportunities**. Ask employees to evaluate their communication experience, including satisfaction with channels, knowledge of key topics and their attitudes about important issues.

Spot or pulse surveys are useful to **check the progress of communication**, such as knowledge or the performance of a channel.



Pros

- Easy to deploy
- Provide quantitative data you may need to influence leaders

Cons

- Drafting questions is tough!
- You won't get the why behind the data



Step 2: Select the best ingredients

E-metrics provide a wealth of data



Digital communication tools **generate lots of quantitative data:** unique visitors, average visit duration, total page views, etc.

E-metrics are a useful way to **understand employee behavior and content preferences.** They can also augment qualitative data.





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

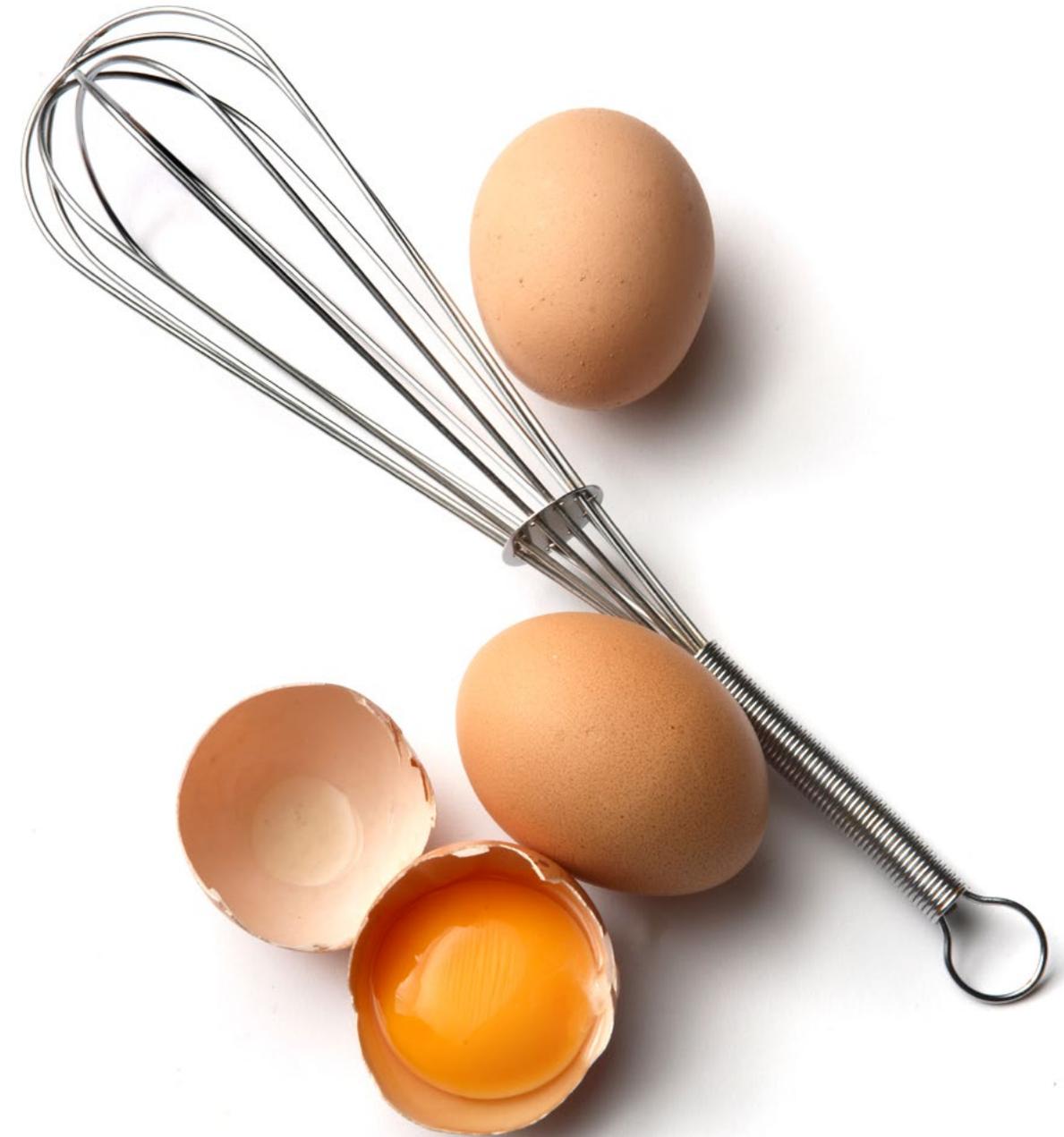
When do you need focus groups and/or interviews?



If you find yourself including many open-ended questions in a survey, it's time for qualitative research.

Focus groups and/or interviews will **help you explore an issue in depth and gather ideas.**

Use qualitative research when you want to understand employees' needs and preferences, how they use communication and their ideas for improvement.





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

Determine how your channels stack up



How do your channels compare with leading practices, such as grade level of writing, focus on employees, transparency and length?

Run a channel assessment **if it's time to refresh your core channels or take them to the next level.**





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

Take note of what employees do



It's one thing to ask employees what they do, but it's another to **watch them in action.**

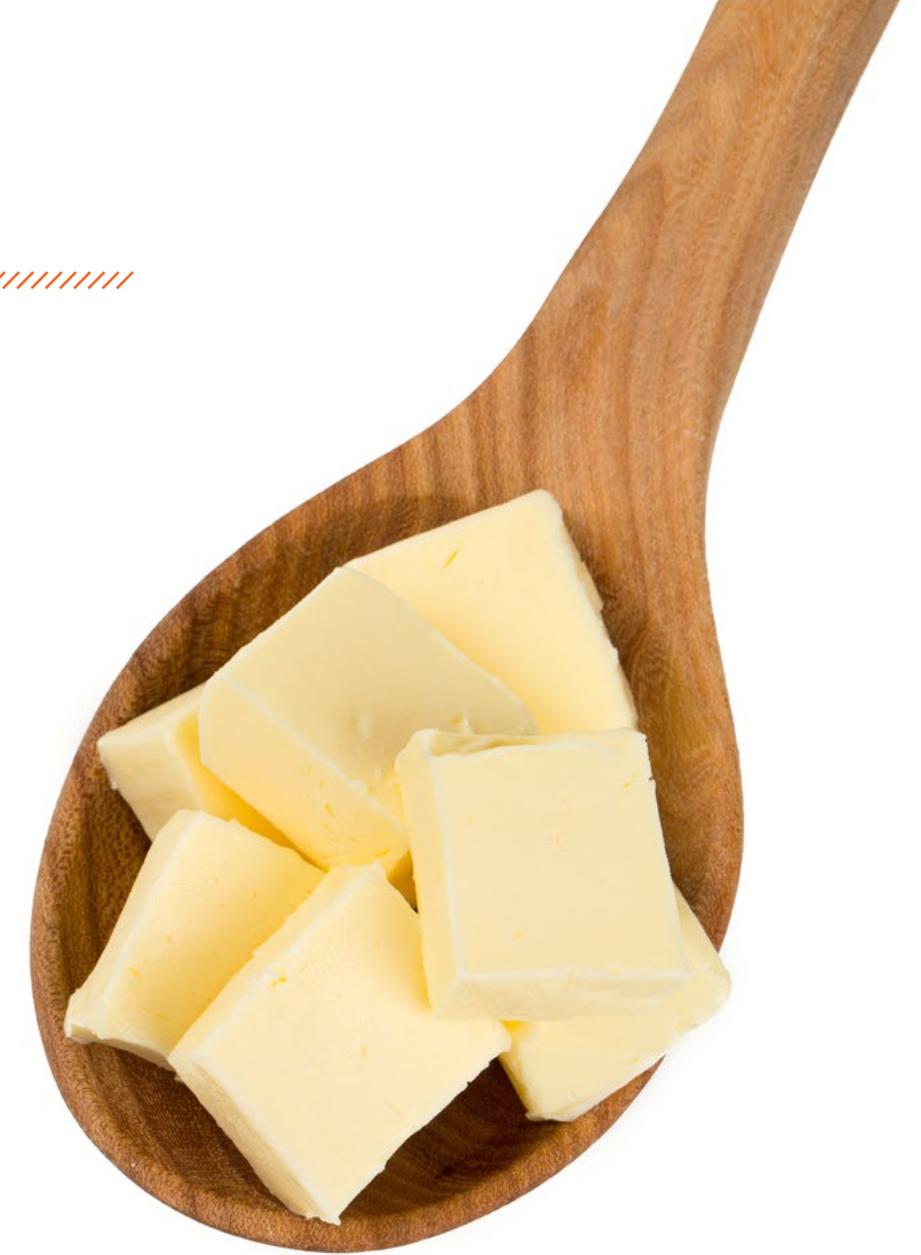
Do they pick up the printed newsletter?

What happens when they walk by the digital display?

How do they navigate the intranet when they need to find specific information?

One classic **observational technique** is the [site visit](#).

Play the role of observer when you want to **understand behaviors.**





Step 2: Select the best ingredients

Look outside to revitalize your overall program



A benchmark study compares your **employee communication program**

with the approach of companies you admire.

Conduct a benchmark study **when you're looking for inspiration to re-imagine** your entire employee communication program.



New to employee communication audits?

Start with this simple recipe and savor the results.

Want to learn more about employee communication audits? Check out our Smart guide [How to conduct an internal communication audit.](#)

