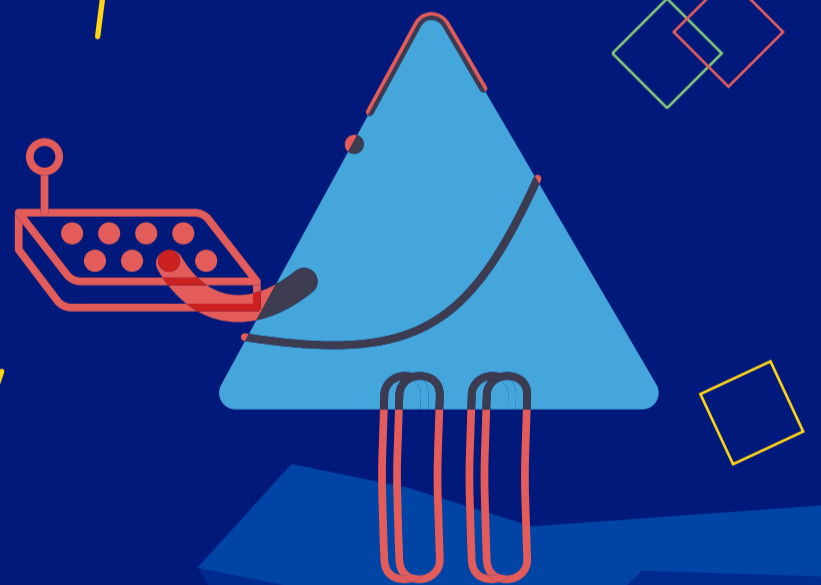


# The quick guide to internal communications tools

*Workplace communication made simple*



**jostle**<sup>®</sup>



## Welcome!

**If you've been browsing for internal communications tools recently, you may be feeling a little overwhelmed.** The number of tools on the market seems absurd.

How can you tell the good from the bad? Which ones are relevant to what you want to achieve? Which ones are essential?

This quick guide is here to help you clear up some of those questions! We've got an overview of six fundamental features of communications tools and a handy table to help you match your needs to the right tools.

Some of these features exist as stand-alone products (e.g. Slack is a chat tool) while other products include multiple features within their one tool (e.g. chat is just one of the many typical features within an intranet, such as the **Jostle**<sup>®</sup> platform).

Now, let's jump right into it.

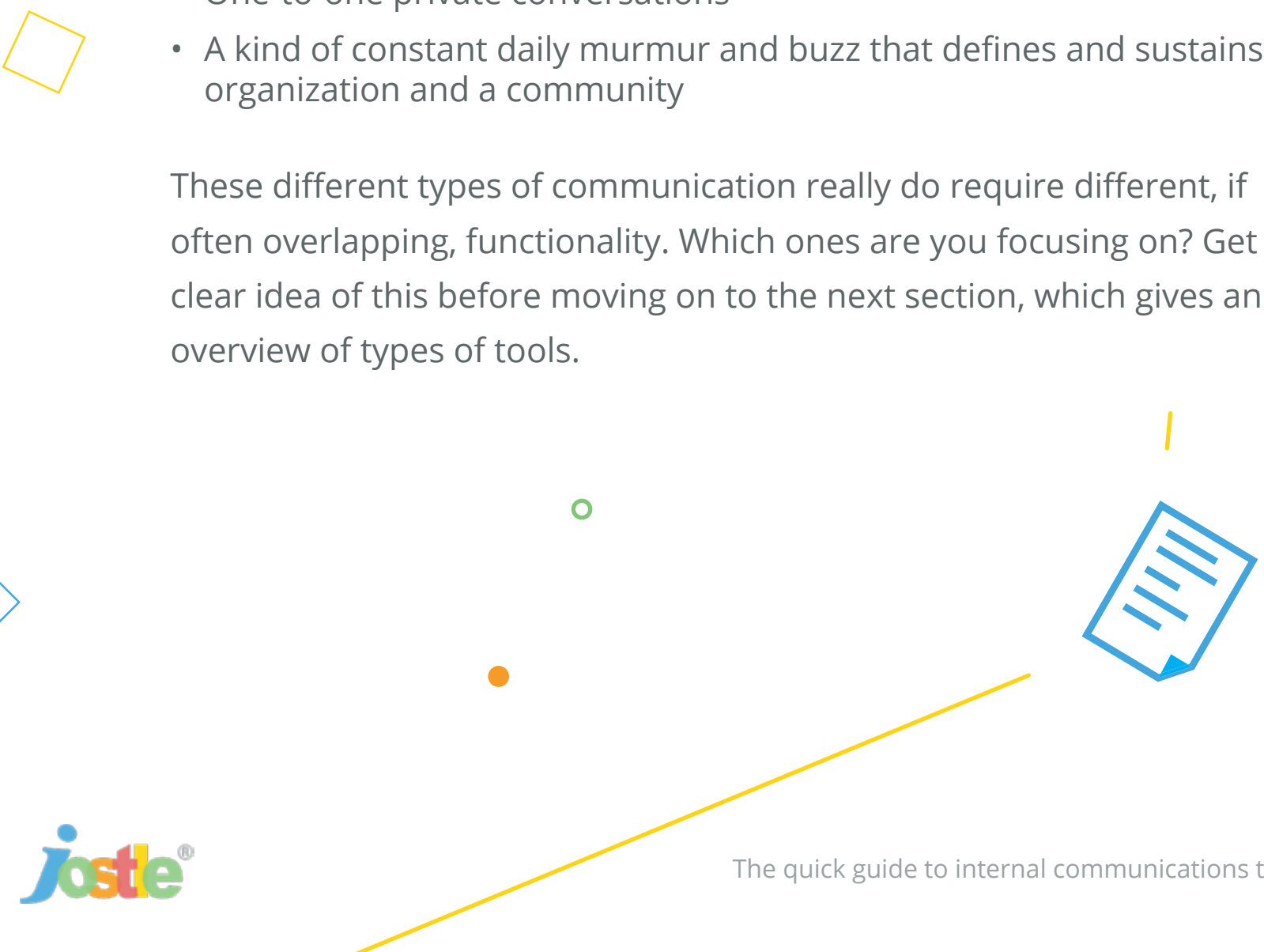




## What type of tool do you need?

**Before you consider using or buying a communications tool, it's important to focus on your needs.** What type of communication do you want to improve or encourage? In your organization, you'll have a wide variety of types of communication. For example:

- Announcements for the whole organization
- Team-based collaboration
- Process and status communications
- One-to-one private conversations
- A kind of constant daily murmur and buzz that defines and sustains an organization and a community



These different types of communication really do require different, if often overlapping, functionality. Which ones are you focusing on? Get a clear idea of this before moving on to the next section, which gives an overview of types of tools.

# 1. Streams

**A stream is a free-form, open-participation forum for short updates - just like Twitter.** Inside the organization, streams help people stay connected to the vibe of the organization. People can use them to ask/answer questions, keep people informed, and recognize other colleagues for great work. A stream helps keep a vibrant community of peers connected.

**Pro Tip:** In larger organizations, it's useful to have the ability to filter the stream. This means individuals will be able to reduce the volume of posts and focus on what's interesting to them.

# 2. Chat

**If you've used Instant Messenger, then you know why chat is helpful for quick 1-1 or small group communication.** It's a great way of checking on something, asking a quick question, or working through a small issue live from different locations. But, while you can share documents, it's not a good place to get and stay organized or distribute documents. It's simply not meant for that depth or type of communication.

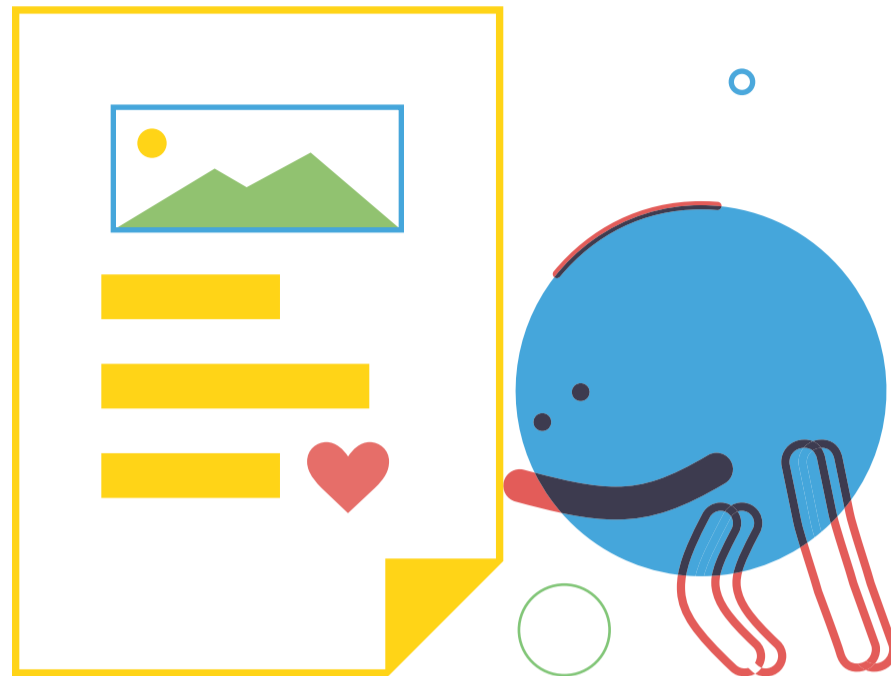
**Pro Tip:** Lots of communications tools, such as intranets and enterprise software, have great chat features built right into them. Save time and money by adding a tool that does more than one thing to help your internal communications.

### 3. News/Blog

**A news/blog page is the heart of your organization online.** It gives everyone a universal touchpoint – a place to gather, stay informed of company news, and be aligned with a common purpose. It's a great way for leadership to connect with everyone, to celebrate big wins, and announce new initiatives.

Your news feature should be visually attractive, but rich enough to support comments and feedback from readers such as “Likes”.

**Pro Tip:** A good news feature will let you target information to specific teams within the organization, so you don't need to bore customer service with the new sales quota strategy, or marketing with the new maintenance plan.

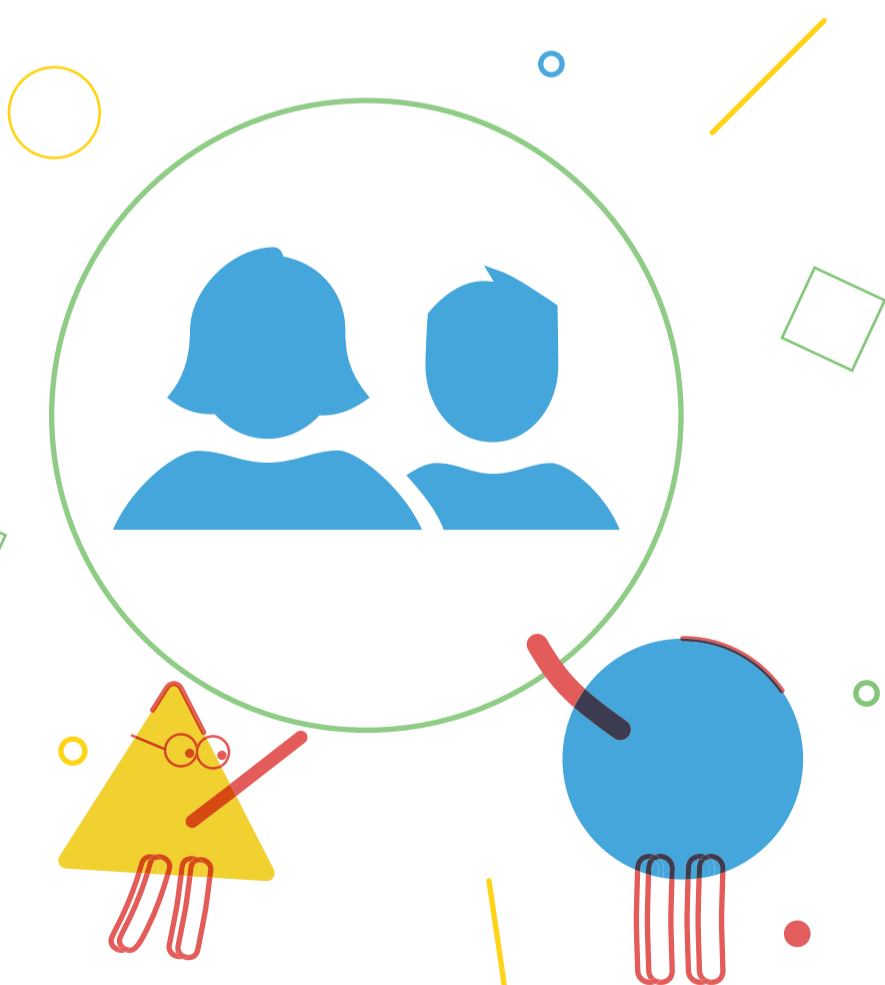


### 4. Team spaces

**Team spaces help teams collaborate and get work done.** Teams need to form, get organized, collect resources and work, iterate and refine their work, and deliver that work.

Generally, spaces designed to support teams include some kind of chat and document sharing. This allows teams to talk things out and develop content together. Advanced team spaces may include calendars, and a few will also include task management.

**Pro Tip:** Team spaces can be used for specific projects, or sometimes the ongoing work of permanent teams. The marketing team, for example may have multiple project spaces and one global team space to help plan and communicate at a higher level.



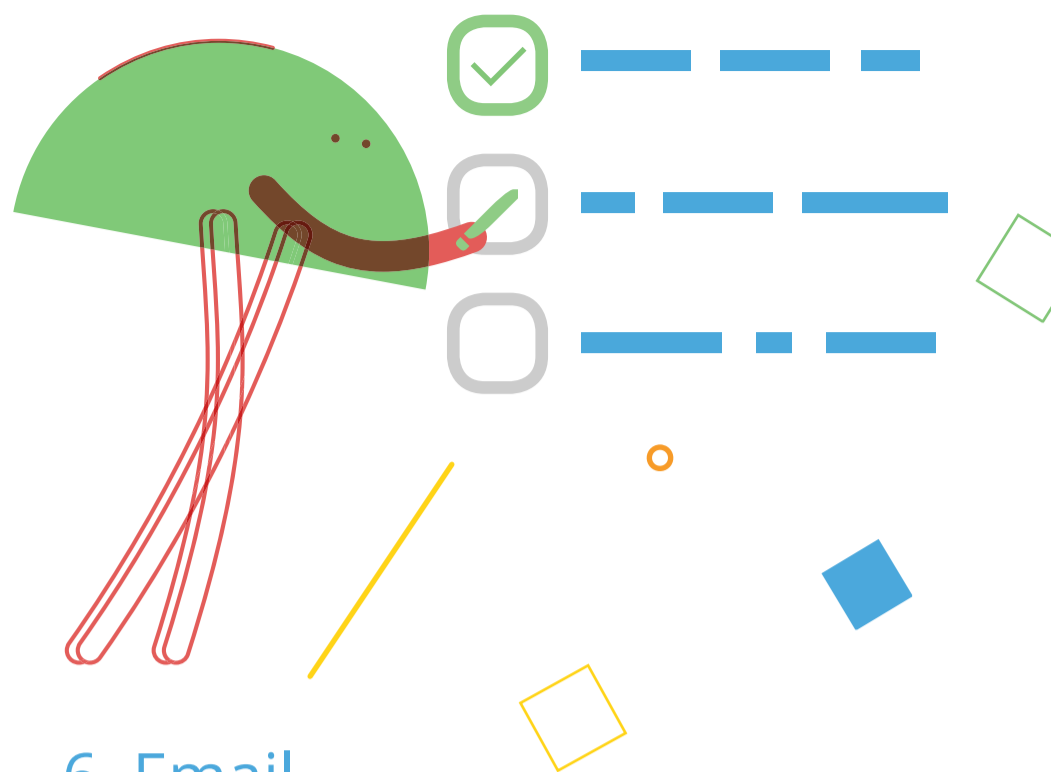
## 5. Task management

**The current generation of task management tools is a huge relief to anyone who ever used Microsoft Project.**

You can track due dates, task-based conversations, and who's responsible for the next stage of the project. Unfortunately, few of these are well integrated into other tools. You may still want to invest in using one (because they can be an organizational game-changer) but just make sure you have some basic ground rules on how your team uses them.

**Pro Tip:** Be strict with your task management tools; this is a shared space and everyone is responsible for the joint upkeep and effectiveness of the tool. An example of some rules:

- Always @mention people in comments
- All comments about this task have to happen in the board (not a private chat elsewhere)
- Use the same naming convention for checklists



## 6. Email

**Email is not going away. It remains the standard for external communication and is often synced up to calendar and notifications from other apps.** It's the established workflow for many employees, so fighting for it to go away is probably not the best approach.

However, that doesn't mean the usage can't be optimized. With the right enterprise-grade messaging tool or feature, you can cut back on unnecessary and inefficient emails. It's possible to solve the "reply-all" email problem and get team-level collaboration out of email.

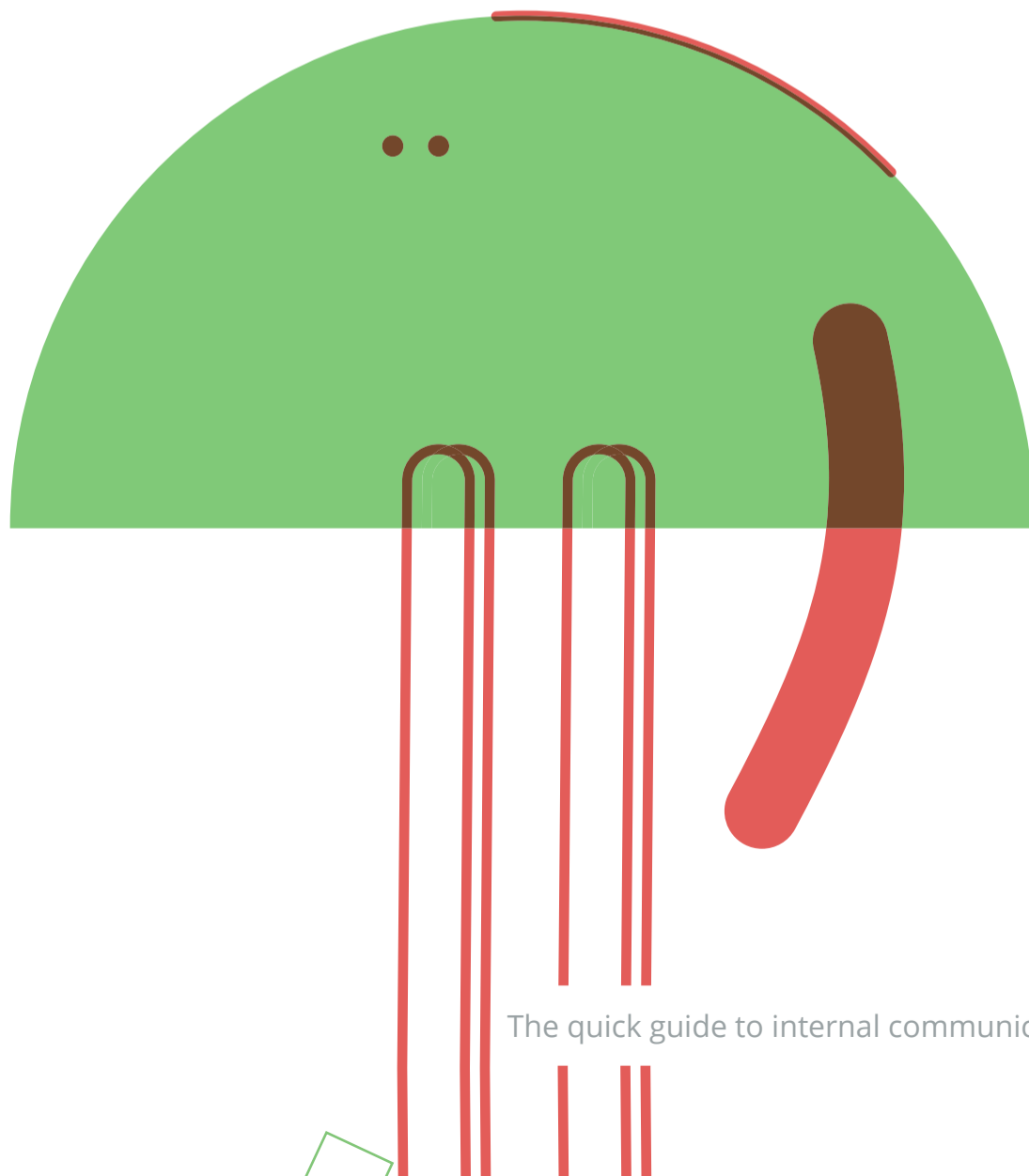
**Pro-Tip:** Email isn't the best for file sharing, especially to a group of people. It gets buried in other emails and is tricky to go back and find. Task management works well for task-based files, and for non-task-based files, a good messaging tool performs much better. Get one that saves and sorts all of the files and links you've ever attached to that message.



## The round-up reality check

**You'll probably need all of these tools for different reasons at different times.** They'll be used differently by different people, but they're all essential. The problem you need to avoid is turning each into its own communications silo and adding unnecessary complexities.

Whether you go with just a couple of tools or multiple different tools to meet your solution, it's best if there's just a single profile for users. Also look out for single sign on and a single search function to help you find who and what you're looking for across your tools. All of this will make your solution more efficient.



## Bonus: A nifty little table!

As we mentioned earlier, it's good to think about your needs before you focus on anything else. Now we've covered the basic features of most communications tools, try honing in on a few of your communication needs and finding out which tools are a priority for you.

Communication needs	Best communications tool	Worst communications tool
Feel connected to the whole organization	News page, stream	Email, team spaces
Solicit and share input and advice as a group	Team spaces, chat, task management	Email, stream
Deliver work	Task management, team spaces	Chat, email
Discuss projects and tasks	Task management, chat	Email, streams
Make decisions and be aware of others' decisions	Team spaces, group chat	Email, private chat, stream
Be aware of events, updates, and organization info	News page	Chat, email
Get and provide quick updates to individuals/ small groups	Chat, team spaces	Email, news page
Get and provide quick updates to the entire company	Stream	Email, chat
Get messaging across from leadership	News page, stream	Email, chat
Recognize good work publicly	Stream, team spaces	Chat
Keep everyone aware of your external comms (e.g. Tweets)	Stream	Email, chat





## Feeling inquisitive?

If you've got questions about internal communications tools or improving internal communications, we're happy to chat with you.

Chat online with a friendly Jostler [here](#)

Email us at [team@jostle.me](mailto:team@jostle.me)

Catch us on twitter [@JostleMe](https://twitter.com/JostleMe)

Check out our website [www.jostle.me](http://www.jostle.me)



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