

Inform your customers first

Perhaps you heard yesterday that Netflix is adding a streaming-only option and increasing its rates. It was reported on various different blogs, websites and of course, Twitter. Here's a sampling (and notice the date/time):

L.A. Times

ABC News

Consumerist

I am a Netflix customer, and guess what, **I heard about it from Netflix directly last night, through a company email that arrived at 6:38 p.m.** Of course, by then I already knew that I was going to be paying more.

Companies should tell their own customers about changes to ANYTHING (pricing, service, hours, etc.) before they release the information publicly. Customers should not find out that their service provider or bank or whatever will be changing its ways from third parties. It does not make good business sense. It alienates customers.

When communicating news, you must have a hierarchy:

First, communicate changes to your internal organization.

Second, communicate to your users/customers.

Third, communicate to the public at large using media relations, advertising or other mass channels.