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GUIDE

How to communicate with your staff: announcements and internal inbox



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> There are two different things that get mixed up all the time. One is **telling something to a lot of people** — the warehouse closes on Friday, the remote working policy is changing — and there you don't want replies: you want it to get through. The other is **talking to one specific person** about a matter that drags on, and there what you want is the whole thread in one place.

Fube has a tool for each, and this guide explains when to use which. We start with the first, which has a catch worth knowing about before you touch anything.

Before you start

Both are admin areas: publishing announcements and opening threads requires permission over the staff area. Staff receive, but they don't publish or open conversations, and for now they can't reply in the inbox from the web either: we cover this in step 4.

Step 1 — Write the announcement

Go to **Team > Communication > Announcements** and click **Create announcement**.

The **title** and the **content** are the obvious part. The two fields that really matter are the recipient — which we come to in the next step — and the **publication date**, which is the catch we mentioned.

> **The publication date doesn't schedule anything. It's a switch.**
>
> As soon as you fill it in and save, the announcement **goes out at that very moment**, whatever date you enter. It isn't compared with today's date: there's no process waiting for next Tuesday to arrive. If you enter 20 September, it's sent today.

What you can do — and it's the right way to work with this — is **leave the publication date empty**. That way the announcement stays as a draft, nobody finds out, and you have it there to review. On the day you actually want to publish it, open it, add the date and save: **it's sent at that instant and only once**.

There's also an **expiry date** and an **image URL**. The image is decorative. And it's worth being clear about expiry: after that date, the announcement **stops appearing on the Announcements card** in each employee's Overview, but it remains in your list and in the notification each person has already received.

Step 2 — Choose who receives it

The **recipients** field has three options and they work exactly as you'd expect:

Recipient	Who receives it	When to use it
Whole company	All staff	Bank holiday closure, general policy, safety notices
By department	Only those with that department on their record	Changes affecting one team
By workplace	Only those assigned to that workplace	Works at the unit, shift changes at a warehouse

With **By department** or **By workplace**, a selector appears below for ticking **which ones**: you can choose several. With none selected, the announcement is saved as a draft but can't be published, so that it doesn't end up reaching nobody.

Targeting properly isn't a courtesy: a warehouse announcement that reaches the whole office teaches people to ignore announcements, and then none of them work any more.

If you're going to use departments or workplaces, set them up beforehand: you'll find them in **workplaces and departments**.

Step 3 — Understand how people receive it

The announcement reaches each recipient in two places:

- **On publication, each recipient gets a notification** — 'New announcement' — containing the **title and the full text**.

- **In their HR Overview**, the **Announcements** card shows them the ones still current: the three most recent and, with **View all**, the rest, from newest to oldest. This card reads the announcement as it is now, not as it was when it was published.

Two practical consequences follow that you'd better know sooner rather than later:

- **Editing an announcement that's already published doesn't notify anyone again.** The Overview card shows the corrected text, but the notification was sent with the text at that moment and isn't rewritten. If you've got something important wrong, the honest thing to do is **publish a new announcement** with the correction.
- **A draft announcement reaches no one**, not even people with permissions: until it has a publication date, it doesn't exist outside your screen.

Step 4 — For a matter with one person, open a thread in the inbox

Announcements are for lots of people. When what's needed is to write to one person about a specific matter — asking for missing documents, following up an issue over several weeks — the tool is the **inbox**.

Go to **Team > Communication > Message inbox** and create the thread with three details: the **subject**, the **employee** you're opening it with and the **status**, which starts as **Open**. **Threads are always opened by HR or a manager**; employees don't start their own.

Messages are ordered chronologically and everything stays in the same place. Each one you write reaches the person as a notification — *New message received* — with its first few lines.

The person reads it and replies in My inbox, their inbox screen within their **Team** area. The notification takes them straight to the thread, which they see in full, and they reply from there while it remains open. Their reply goes into the same thread, and you receive it as a notification — *Reply in employee inbox* — with its first few lines, as does anyone else handling the inbox with you.

The inbox puts the thread with the **latest message** at the top and marks with a dot, and the subject in bold, those with something from the employee that's **unread**. Unread status belongs to the inbox, not to each person: as soon as someone handling the inbox opens the thread, it stops being marked for everyone, and anything replied to is also treated as read. Anyone who can only view the inbox, without replying, opens it without marking it as read. The same happens on the other side: in My inbox, the person sees marked the threads with something from you that they haven't opened yet.

Step 5 — Close the thread once the matter is resolved

There are only two statuses and they do exactly what they say:

Status	What it allows
Open	You can keep writing in the thread
Closed	The history is kept in full, but **no further messages can be added**

Closing isn't archiving for appearances' sake: it's a real closure. When you close it, the employee receives a notification —*Conversation closed*— that takes them to the thread, and the thread stops accepting messages: they can still read it in My inbox, but they can no longer reply. And if the matter comes back to life, **you reopen it by setting it to Open again** and the conversation carries on where it left off.

Edge cases and common mistakes

- **'I set a future publication date and it was sent today.'** That's the expected behaviour: the date doesn't schedule anything. To publish later, leave the field empty and fill it in on the day.
- **'I corrected a typo and nobody noticed.'** Correct: editing doesn't resend. Publish a new announcement if the correction matters.
- **'The announcement expired and it's still there.'** The expiry date only removes it from the employee's Overview card: your list and the notifications already sent don't change. If the announcement is no longer valid, delete it.

- **Someone asks you for days off.** Don't take it to the inbox: holidays have their own workflow, with balance and approval, in the guide to **managing team holidays and absences**. The same goes for clock-in corrections, which go through their own request and not through the inbox.
- **An employee with no department assigned.** They won't receive announcements targeted by department. Check their profile if you expected them to get them.

Frequently asked questions

Can employees reply to an announcement?

No. Announcements are one-way by design. To write to a specific person, use the inbox, as explained in step 4.

Can I schedule an announcement for next Monday?

Not at the moment. The publication date publishes immediately. The way to work around it is to leave the announcement as a draft —with no date— and publish it on the day you want.

How do I know whether an announcement arrived?

It's sent to all recipients in the segment at the moment of publishing. There's no per-person read receipt.

Can I open a thread if I'm an employee?

No. Threads are opened by HR or a manager. What you can do is read them in full and reply in **My inbox**, within your Team area, while they remain open. You'll find everything you can do on your own in the guide to the **employee portal**.

Is anything deleted when a thread is closed?

Nothing. The full history is kept; the only thing that changes is that it stops accepting replies.

One channel for announcing and another for

talking

If you separate the two —announcements for what everyone needs to know, the inbox for what concerns just one person— internal communication stops living in a messaging group where everything gets mixed up and nothing can be found. And remember the one thing that genuinely catches people out: **the publication date publishes straight away**.

You'll find the whole module within **Fube's Time tracking and HR** and the options for each plan on the **pricing** page. If you'd like to see it from the inside, **create your free account** and publish your first announcement.

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