

Planning a Communication

Communication is at the core of all organisations. The more important the message, the more we need to plan. This ensures that our communication is successful. If the message is complex, then we need to plan in more detail and make sure we are thorough in our approach. Before any communication that is of value, ask yourself:

Why am I communicating?

- What do I want the receiver to do as a result of my communication?
- What action do I require?
- Why does the receiver need to be given information?

Who is the receiver?

- What is their background and attitude?
- What do they know about the subject?
- What language, jargon and terms will they understand?
- What are their expectations?

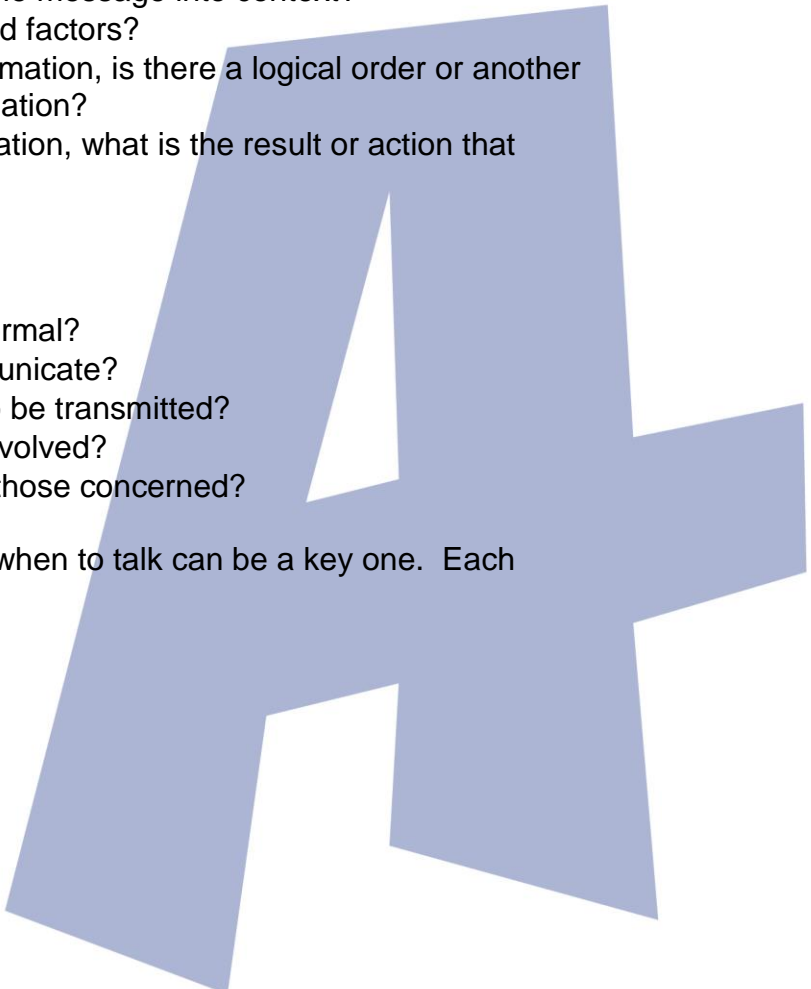
What is the message?

- Is there an overview to put the message into context?
- What are the main points and factors?
- How do I sequence the information, is there a logical order or another way of structuring the information?
- How do I end my communication, what is the result or action that needs to be indicated?

How should I communicate?

- Is the situation formal or informal?
- How fast do I need to communicate?
- What level of detail needs to be transmitted?
- Is persuasion or influence involved?
- Is it better to write or talk to those concerned?

The question of when to write and when to talk can be a key one. Each method has its own advantages.



Advantages of Written Word

- It provides a permanent record, this can be useful for legal requirements.
- The document is available for reference and as a record.
- Writer can choose words carefully in dealing with complex or sensitive matters.
- It can provide evidence of information, instructions or advice given.
- It is more convenient – can be circulated quickly among many people.
- It can minimise overt conflict and personality clashes. It can make the reader take an objective approach.

Advantages of the Spoken Word

- The communication is more personal and you can establish rapport with your receiver. This will seem more human, less bureaucratic.
- You get immediate feedback on whether or not your message is being received, understood and accepted. This enables you to amend or expand your message accordingly as you go along.
- The listener has the chance to ask questions to clarify points he does not understand.
- The use of tone, emphasis, and pauses enables you to add meaning to your message and so to be more economical in your use of words.

Whichever method you decide to use, remember these important factors:

- Think clearly about what you want to say
- Arrange the information in a logical order
- Express it clearly
- Using language appropriate to your receiver
- Express yourself concisely
- Make sure no information is missing