

Staff communications plan

What is the change you need to communicate about with your staff?

What does your audience currently think—and how do they feel—about the topic?

Staff's current knowledge and opinion of the topic

New information or opinion staff need to have

How will that knowledge—and their impression—need to shift?

What messages will reinforce the new information and opinion they need to have? Remember: messages aren't just words—they can also be pictures, sounds, or use physical space.

Auditory messages

Visual messages

Kinesthetic activities

What auditory, visual, or kinesthetic communication channels can you use to communicate the messages?

When, during the next 30 days, will you begin your communication efforts?

Where (in what channels) will you communicate the messages?

When will you start and how often will you repeat?

How often and when will you repeat the messages?

How will you gather feedback from staff and relay it to leadership?

What will you need to support your communication plan?

Communications checklist

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Did you answer the question: "why is this change happening?"

When people learn about a change, their first question is *why*? Acceptance of, and participation in change increases when people know why it is happening. It is important to reinforce the *why* throughout the entire project, especially if there are large time lapses between communication events.

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Did you answer the question: "what are the benefits and how does it affect me?"

After communicating the *why* about change, the next question people have is "*how will this affect me personally?*" To gain support from the people who must participate in change, it is important to provide a compelling case about how the participants will be better off or what they will get out of engaging in change.

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Are you using the right channel to deliver communication?

Research shows that employees prefer to hear messages from two people in the organization—the leaders of the organization (for messages about the business issues and reasons for change) and their immediate supervisor (for messages about the personal impact of change.)

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Are you using face-to-face communication?

This is the most effective form of communication. While it is more time intensive, it is an important component of a communications strategy around change.

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Are you creating opportunities for two-way communication?

People need the opportunity to share concerns, provide feedback and ask questions. Two-way communication creates buy-in and provides answers in real-time.

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Are you repeating key messages at least 10 times?

When change is first announced, people are usually focused on how it will affect them personally and will not pay attention to the details of the change. Repeating key messages is essential to ensure that what you want to get across is being heard. Err on the side of over-communication.

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Are you using effective ways to reach employees?

The best communications approach uses a variety of channels to reach people—newsletters, presentations, one-on-one, meetings, intranet, Q&A forums, workshops, brainstorming sessions, etc.