



MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

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Lesson 5



MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

- LO3: Be able to develop communication processes
- LO3.2: Design ways to improve appropriateness
- LO3.3: Implement improvements to ensure greater integration of systems of communication in that organization

The Basic Syllabus

- Understand how to assess information and knowledge needs
- Be able to create strategies to increase personal networking to widen involvement in the decision-making process
- Be able to develop communication processes to improve the gathering and dissemination of information and organizational knowledge
- Be able to design and improve appropriate systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of and access to the information and knowledge gathered

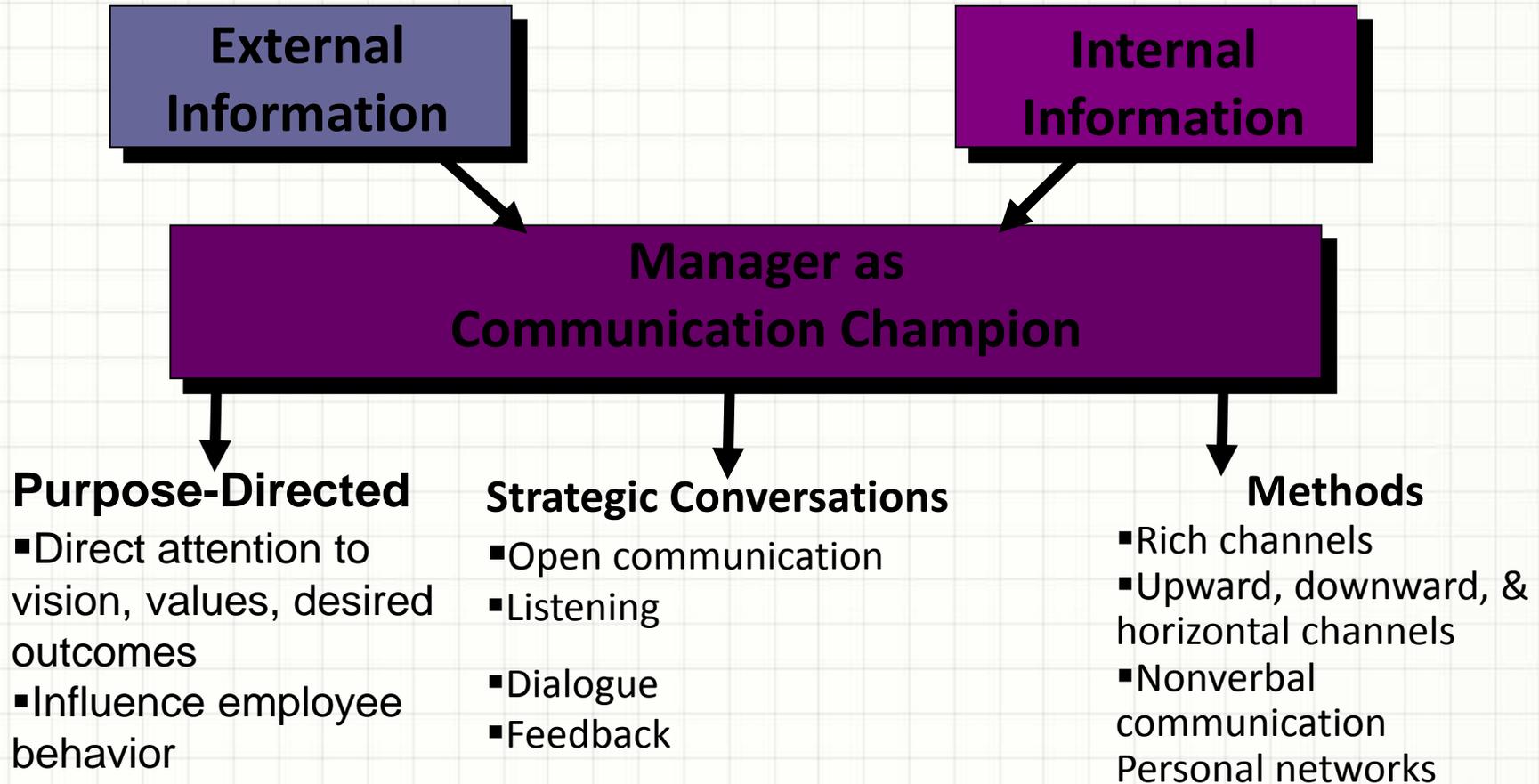
Objectives

- Define dissemination
- State the three ways of thinking about dissemination
- Explain the models of information dissemination
- List the issues to consider for effective dissemination.

Communication

- In today's turbulent environment, crisis communication is at the top of everyone's needed-skills list.
- Effective communication, both within the organization and with people outside the company, is a major challenge and responsibility for managers

The Manager as Communication Champion



Source: Adapted from Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature Of Managerial Work*(New York:Harper & Row, 1973),72.

What is a strategy?

- A plan of action designed to achieve a vision.
- All about gaining a position of advantage over adversaries or best exploiting emerging possibilities.
- A detailed plan for achieving success in situations such as war, politics, business, industry or sport.

Types of communications strategy

- Organisation – ideally reviewed annually
- Major, complex, long term project
- A major announcement
- A big event – e.g. a conference
- Building and opening a new building

What is a communications strategy?

- Written document – not just in people's heads
- Collaboration between the project leader(s) and the communications professional(s)
- A reference document against which to judge progress
- Contains clear and measurable objectives
- Identifies relevant audiences
- A plan of activities and a timetable
- Identifies resources – financial and people

Why is a strategy important?

- Taking time to agree what you want to achieve
- Plan ahead rather than last minute panic
- Exploit all the channels available to you
- Agree responsibilities
- Identify and seek resources
- Identify risks and plan how to deal with them
- A plan against which to measure success
- A process which helps you learn lessons for the future

A comprehensive communications strategy

- Research
- Mission
- Vision
- Aims
- Objectives
- Audiences
- Messages
- Channels
- Timing
- Resources
- Risks
- Evaluation

Background research

- What are your objectives?
- Your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?
- Learn lessons from previous projects
- Learn lessons from peers' and competitors' experiences
- Look at past media coverage, event attendance, web visits
- Speak to colleagues – experienced and fresh-faced
- Focus groups and surveys among your key audiences

Mission (purpose) + vision (ambition)

- National Trust
 - We're a UK conservation charity, protecting historic places and green spaces, and opening them up forever, for everyone.
- Cancer Research UK
 - We are the world's leading charity dedicated to saving lives through research.

Communication goals

- Should reflect the organization's mission.
- Goals should link to the business strategy and be measurable in terms of business outcomes.
- Communication goals are always either informational or motivational.
 - Audiences either need more or different information before they will act, or they have the knowledge or information but need something else before they will behave in ways that support your business outcomes.
 - (Instantly, you have clues as to what you need to research before you begin to plan.)
- Goals need to state outcomes that are both meaningful (that advance the business) and measurable (tell you how you will know when you get there).
 - Counting brochures distributed is an output measure, and is valueless on its own unless it supports an outcome measure.

Communication objectives

- Communication objectives should be drawn from primary and/or secondary audience research, contextual organizational research (such as an environmental scan), or other information that establishes the communication need or opportunity.

Objectives need to be SMART

- Specific, significant, simple
- Measurable, manageable
- Achievable, agreed, assignable
- Relevant, resourced
- Time bound, trackable

Objectives need to be smart

- Not SMART:
 - “We need to raise more money.”
- SMART:
 - “We want to raise £5million to set up a fund to create an extra 20 graduate scholarships from October 2014.”
- There can be one or more objectives

Audiences

- Board of Directors
- Government
- Your colleagues
- Customers
- Shareholders/Investors/Donors
- Future/prospective customers
- Local community: residents, businesses, groups
- Media: local, national, specialist

Audiences

- Two considerations...
 - Who holds the keys to success or failure?
 - And who influences those people?
- And...
 - Don't forgot the internal audience – e.g. students and colleagues in your department or college, people in your division

Categorise your audiences in relation to your situation and your objectives

- Power/influence + interest + supportive
 - your partners in achieving your objectives
- Power/influence + interest + opposed
 - use persuasion and dialogue; accurate coverage of your objectives/views; correct their claims

Categorise your audiences in relation to your situation and your objectives

- Power/influence + not interested
 - capture their attention; enlist the help of your partners
 - Use third parties to help persuade and create interest

Key messages

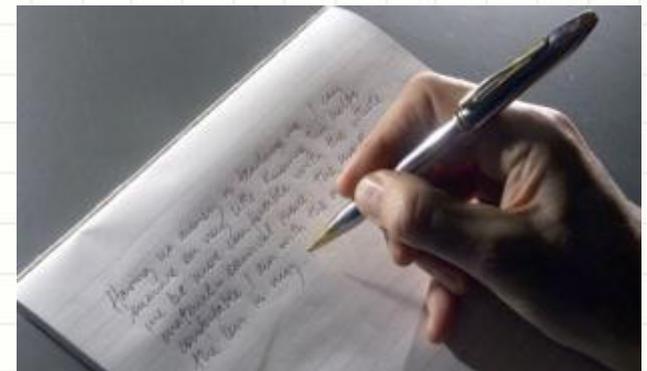
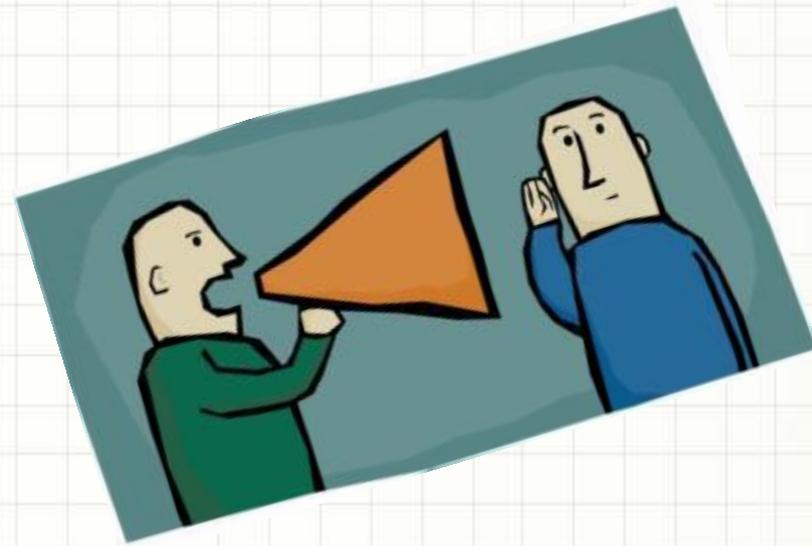
- These should be appropriate to both the audience and the communication tools or vehicles.
- Key messages should also link the communication objectives to audience needs.
- Key message development is less about crafting language and more about the net impression that audiences take away from your communication.

Messages

- What do you want them to know?
- What do you want them to think?
- What do you want them to do?
- Why should I care? How does it affect me?
- Tailor them but avoid contradiction and false promises
- Statistics and case studies
- Third party endorsements

Messages

- Make people sit up and listen
 - “Oxford offers the most generous bursary package to undergraduate students from the least well off households”
- Inspire action
 - “We need 5,000 signatures on our petition to the local council to save our library”



Channels of communication



Media: local, national, international; print, broadcast, web, social



Lobbying: local and national government, funding bodies, special interest groups



Marketing: brand, website, advertising, brochures, fliers, video



Events: conferences, launch events, public speeches, tours of building sites

Timing

- Work backwards from your deadline
- Accommodate long lead-in times
- Exploit 'hooks' to attract interest
- Availability of spokespeople and venues
- Coordinate who is told what and when
- Create a timetable of activities
- Monitor timetable and adjust as necessary

Timetable

	December 2014	January 2015	February 2015
Lobbying	Ask local MP to book venue	Send out invitations	Event in parliament
Media	Identify key messages and spokespeople	Propose an interview	Issue press release
Publications	Design invitation and display boards	Print the materials	Distribute the materials at the event

Resources: people and money

- Who do you ideally need to assist you?
- Who is actually available to assist you?
- What funds do you need?
- What funds do you have?
- Do you need to bid for extra? From whom?
When?
- Are there conditions attached to the funding?
- Prioritise, and manage people's expectations

Risks and mitigation

- Identify risks that could prevent you achieving your objectives
- How you will deal with them?
- Identify options – a plan A and a plan B
- Prepare ‘lines to take’ – anticipate audiences’ reaction

Risks and mitigation

Risk	Mitigation options
A student protest could threaten the success of your event.	Plan A: Meet with the students in advance to discuss issues. Plan B: Change the event date/venue.

Evaluation strategies

- These should be built into the program outcomes relative to the planned goals.
- Evaluate the outcomes you promised in your goals.
- *Don't* confuse outputs for outcomes; the number of media pick-ups isn't a measure of accuracy in coverage, and event attendance isn't a measure of increased understanding.

Evaluation: did you succeed?

- Often neglected
- Did you change understanding, opinion and behaviour?
- How will you measure – and will it cost anything?
- Quantitative
 - Event attendance, website visitors, donations, column inches
- Qualitative
 - Feedback forms, focus groups, key messages in the media
- ‘Wash-up’/Lessons Learned with the project team

The written strategy

- Introduction: summary; emphasise added value
- Mission and vision, aims and objectives
- Audiences, messages, channels
- Timetable
- Resources
- Risks and mitigation
- Means of evaluation
- Approvals process

The essentials

- One or two clear objectives
- List of key audiences
- Summarise the key activities and dates
- Agree who is doing the work and who will pay
- Still write it down, even if it's just a side of A4

And finally...

- Keep a record of the communications strategy
- Electronic and printed copies of material produced
- Record of quantitative and qualitative evaluation
- Minute the wash-up; record lessons learned
- Keep a contacts list
- Share best practice with peers
- Publicise your success
- It's good PR for our profession!

Discussion Questions

- Are you a process person, or are you an outcomes person?
- Do you find yourself focusing on the process of communication planning, or do you see the process as being merely the path, with the plan itself being the outcome?
- Here's the critical thing: What do you intend to do with the plan once you have it?
 - Store it on a shelf so you can say you have one?
 - Or actually use it as the living document it really should be?