

Essentials of Organizational Communication



Endeavor Management

2700 Post Oak Blvd.
Suite 1400
Houston, Texas 77056

P + 713.877.8130
F + 713.877.1823
www.endeavormgmt.com

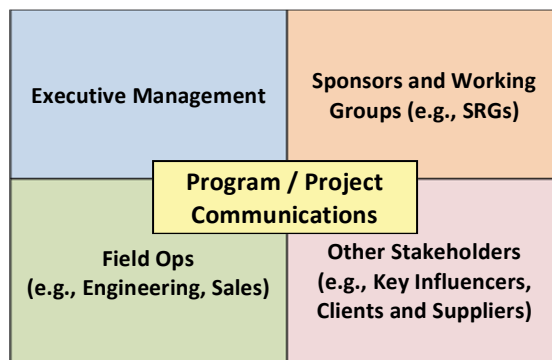
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Overview

Almost all communication has at least one of these four broad objectives:

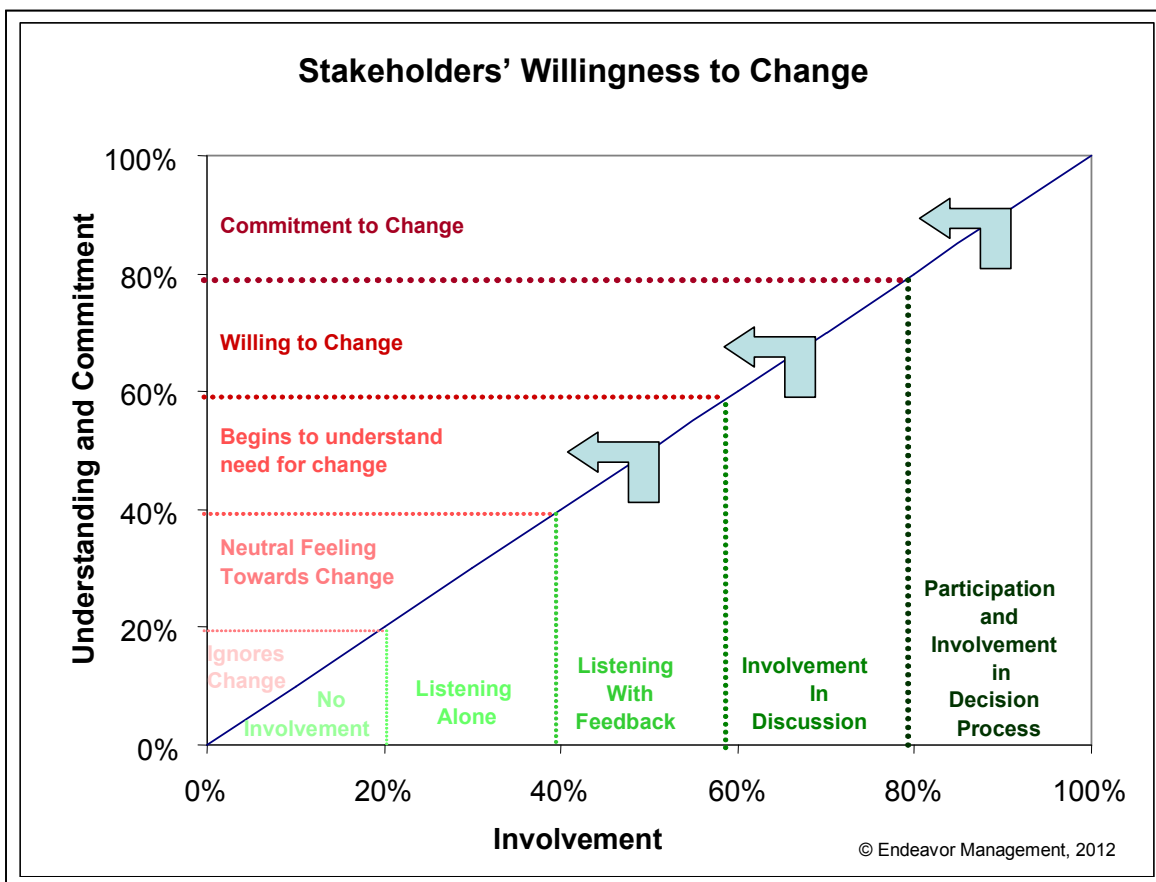
1. **Instruction** – informing or teaching people something
2. **Inspiration** – motivating listeners/readers to act in a certain way
3. **Advocacy** – convincing or selling people a point of view
4. **Stimulation** – stimulating discussion, debate or action



In a transformation program or in a big project, there are several groups of stakeholders – those people who are actively involved or whose interests may be affected by a result of the program/project. While their information needs are different, there is a single broad objective for communication – to create change receptiveness.

At a basic level, the purpose for communications around a business project is to . . .

- Create awareness/inform
- Create understanding
- Influence (gain acceptance; enlist support and commitment; engage actions/behaviors)



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The Campaign

The communications campaign is, first, to gain people's attention and then, over time, to build awareness, understanding and involvement and, ultimately, to gain commitment. The campaign will have multiple engagements and requires some precision planning to execute successfully.

These are sequential outcomes. It does not work just to pour on the communication fuel for a few days and create spontaneous understanding and instant willingness to 'jump on board.' Generally, people need some period of time and multiple doses of communication from knowledgeable, influential people in order to...

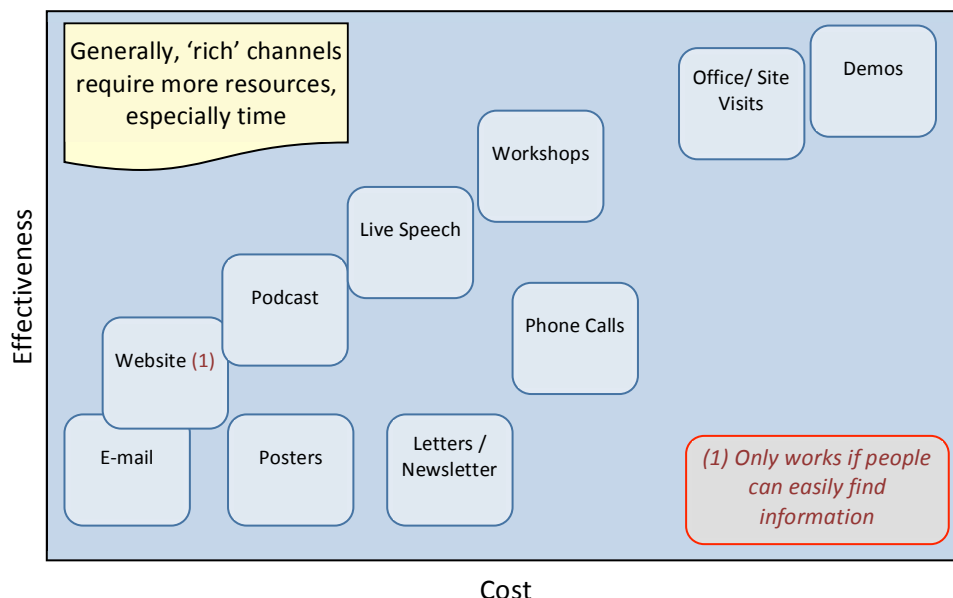
- Just see/hear it Break through the message clutter
- Consider it Decide whether this makes sense
- Question it Identify the what/why/when/where/how issues for 'me/us'
- Consensus it Get peer group input/assurance
- Just do it Accept and commit/comply

Many Times, Many Ways: 3M conducted a study of communications effectiveness. (Bulletproof Presentations, G Michael Campbell, Career Press (2002). The study found that, generally speaking, people remember...

Richness of Communications Channel	
10%	Of what they read
20%	Of what they hear
30%	Of what they see
60%	Of what they see, hear and read

Low – Individual setting with no discussion or interpretation opportunities
Low – Single auditory channel with no visuals for reinforcement
Medium – Includes graphic visuals, body language plus observation/demonstrations
High – Engages multiple senses, usually involves multiple communication 'doses'

Implications: Messages are communicated most effectively when a variety of media is used, multiple times, over a period of time. Most people 'get it' best when they can interact; i.e., ask clarifying questions, personalize WIIFMs (what's in it for me), and experience it (hands-on demonstrations, trial periods and pilots).



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Channels:

Each communications channel has its pros and cons and best usage. The following table outlines these considerations:

Communications Channel	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Use
E-mail	Easy and cheap	Not at all personal; not effective for details	Announcements, reminders
Website	Recognized source of information	Design costs; requires effort to maintain; no assurance it will be seen if used by itself	Good place for details; reference it in emails and other communications
Posters	Easy and visual	Short shelf life	Use for short term issues like upcoming events to encourage participation
Podcast; webcast	More personal to see someone talking	Typically one-way communication	Effective way of explaining things to a dispersed population
Letters; newsletters	Provides a permanent record	Impersonal	Letters for personal issues only; newsletters for broadcasting status and path forward
Live speech; presentation	Even more personal	Often mostly one-way communication or limited interaction	Better than podcasts for local or centralized populations
Group workshops	Interactive	Lots of prep required; time consuming	Good for digging in and learning how it works
Phone calls	Personal and interactive	Time consuming for all parties	Best used for encouraging participation by reluctant or skeptical personnel
Office/site visits	Highly personal and interactive	Very time consuming for all parties	Like phone calls only more so.
Hands-on demonstrations	See/try something in action; give and get feedback	Lots of prep required; time consuming	Similar to workshops

The Five Rules of Communication:

In developing communications, it is helpful to take these five rules into consideration:

- 1. Rule of Purpose** – Cut out any guesswork for message recipients. Always give listeners/readers the purpose of your communication up front. Start your messaging with an introduction that identifies the context, issue or opportunity of interest.
- 2. Rule of Frequency** – People need to see and hear things multiple times in order for messages to get through the day-to-day activity and virtual ‘clutter.’ The rule of thumb average is 7 times. And these 7 times are ideally delivered in using a variety of media and spread out over a period of time as well. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a ‘single day’s dose’ of effective communication.
- 3. Rule of Primacy** – People remember well the first time they heard something. This becomes their ‘mental benchmark’ for interpreting all other communication on the same subject ... and

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for even deciding whether they will listen the next time. Just like a hit musical, you want to launch your program/project a big number.

4. **Rule of Recency** – People tend to remember the most recent communication and compare it to past messages for inconsistencies. If there is a change on the same subject from the last communication, be sure to explain it. Never assume that in the absence of clear, crisp, current information people will draw the same conclusions.
5. **Rule of Emotion** – People remember best and quickest information that impacts them directly. Whenever possible, include personal WIIFMs (what's in it for me) with changes, benefits, rewards and consequences.

Call to Action

A fundamental tenet of effective program, project and/or change management initiatives is the need to make sure everyone involved knows what is going on, why it is going on, how it affects them as individuals and organizational units and what is expected of them. This requires planning and effort that is often felt – erroneously – to be a distraction from “getting it done.” Resist this impulse. Make the effort. Plan it thoroughly. Execute it faithfully. The payoff is dramatic.

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About Endeavor

Endeavor Management, is an international management consulting firm that collaboratively works with their clients to achieve greater value from their transformational business initiatives. Endeavor serves as a catalyst by providing pragmatic methodologies and industry expertise in Transformational Strategies, Operational Excellence, Organizational Effectiveness, and Transformational Leadership.

Our clients include those responsible for:

- Business Strategy
- Marketing and Brand Strategy
- Operations
- Technology Deployment
- Strategic Human Capital
- Corporate Finance

The firm's 40 year heritage has produced a substantial portfolio of proven methodologies, deep operational insight and broad industry experience. This experience enables our team to quickly understand the dynamics of client companies and markets. Endeavor's clients span the globe and are typically leaders in their industry.

Gelb Consulting Group, a wholly owned subsidiary, monitors organizational performance and designs winning marketing strategies. Gelb helps organizations focus their marketing initiatives by fully understanding customer needs through proven strategic frameworks to guide marketing strategies, build trusted brands, deliver exceptional experiences and launch new products.

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