



# Unit - 3

## Communication Strategies

Staff Training Solutions

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Define the essential pieces of communication
- ✓ Customize these essential pieces for your company

## Unit 3

### Communication Strategies

#### Setting a Goal for Each Communications Piece

##### Setting the Objective

Each communications piece, from a three-day conference to a 50-character tweet, needs a clear objective to be effective. Consider the following questions when developing any communications piece for your company.

##### Communications Checklist

**Who is the target of this communication: businesses, individuals, or someone else?**

---

---

**In what geographical region will the communications piece be circulated: local, regional, national, or international?**

---

---

---

**What is the purpose of this communications piece?**

- ✓ Building relationships with customers
- ✓ Increasing visitors to our location or website
- ✓ Improving Internet visibility
- ✓ Increasing sales
- ✓ Increasing customer connection to the brand
- ✓ Other (Details: \_\_\_\_\_)

**What are your targets (if applicable)?**

- ✓ Number of visitors per month: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Number of unit sales per month: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Monthly sales: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Average dollar amount per sale: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Strengthening Your Core Message

## Building Core Strength

Lately, there has been a big health focus on core strength: the benefits to body and mind when one's torso is toned and properly aligned. Appearance, energy, agility, concentration, and wellness are all affected by the degree of a body's core strength.

Likewise, your core message supports the strength, efficiency, outlook, and reach of your communications efforts. As discussed earlier, your core message should be reflected in your mission, vision, and values statements; elevator pitch; and company plans. Like your body, your core message benefits from consistent use and occasional adjustment. There is always opportunity for improvement.

## Key Words and Ideas

Consider some key words that describe you, your company and/or your product or service:

- |                        |                 |                  |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| ✓ Accountability       | ✓ Excitement    | ✓ Nature         |
| ✓ Achievement          | ✓ Expertise     | ✓ Order          |
| ✓ Adventure            | ✓ Fame          | ✓ Power          |
| ✓ Affection            | ✓ Freedom       | ✓ Public service |
| ✓ Authority            | ✓ Friendships   | ✓ Purity         |
| ✓ Change               | ✓ Growth        | ✓ Quality        |
| ✓ Commitment           | ✓ Honesty       | ✓ Responsibility |
| ✓ Community            | ✓ Independence  | ✓ Security       |
| ✓ Competence           | ✓ Influential   | ✓ Self-respect   |
| ✓ Cooperation          | ✓ Inner harmony | ✓ Serenity       |
| ✓ Creativity           | ✓ Integrity     | ✓ Sophistication |
| ✓ Decisiveness         | ✓ Intellectual  | ✓ Stability      |
| ✓ Democracy            | ✓ Involvement   | ✓ Status         |
| ✓ Ecological awareness | ✓ Knowledge     | ✓ Sustainable    |
| ✓ Effectiveness        | ✓ Leadership    | ✓ Tranquility    |
| ✓ Efficient            | ✓ Meaningful    | ✓ Truth          |
| ✓ Ethical              | ✓ Merit         | ✓ Variety        |
| ✓ Excellence           | ✓ Money         | ✓ Wisdom         |

Use these key words in your communications as often as possible and where appropriate. Even if you are not using them directly, keep them in mind when developing your pitches and documents.

## Thinking MEDIA



## Key Pieces of the Media Release

### Looking at the Options

A **media release** is an invitation to another outlet to share your message. The benefits include minimal cost (your time and expertise). As well, you can leverage their credibility and their audience. The drawback, however, is that you cannot control how or if the message is shared. The media outlet may use all, some, or none of your release. If they do run the story, it may be with their own slant or context.

A **blog** is a media release of sorts, or an article, in your own words. Typically, a blog has minimal cost as well, but it gives you more control over the message and how you share it. You will also have the option to share your blog on other blog sites. On the downside, however, it can take much more time to get your blog out there. You need to know how to leverage SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to build your blog audience. As well, your blog may not be widely read or established as credible, causing it to get lost in the vast sea of Internet information.

### Media Releases

Let's discuss the media release first. Before you start to write, ask yourself:

- ✓ Is your topic newsworthy? Some people think everything they do is newsworthy, or that everything outside of the usual routine is newsworthy. Make sure you look at your news from the perspective of the media and the public. If it's not newsworthy, it may be time to rethink your topic.
- ✓ Can you write the release in a way that it answers all the questions that it raises? That will help cut down on questions after you release it. It also prevents turning off the journalist reading it who may not have time to call you.
- ✓ Will this release help to meet some part of the organization's strategic plan and move it forward?
- ✓ Have you checked every piece of information in the release? All facts, data, dates, links, and references must be accurate.

Once you are in a position to answer "yes" to all the questions above, you are ready to create the first draft of your media release.

### Drafting Your Message

Once you have chosen your topic, organize your writing to start with the most important elements first. Then, if an editor has to cut the size down, nothing essential is deleted. Keep information concise and on the topic or you will lose the interest of the editor and the reader.

The following items should be included in your draft.

### Choose Hard or Soft

A hard release includes topics like new product releases, surveys, product releases, and staff appointments. A soft release, also called a feature release, can include updates of ongoing projects, trends, or human interest stories.

### **Release and Issue Dates**

There are two dates included: the date of issue and the date of release. Keep the release within your organization until it is ready for the public, just in case. You cannot control the message once it is issued, even if it is sent before the release date.

### **Contact Person**

If you write the release, you should usually be the contact person. However, sometimes you need to direct inquiries to the spokesperson for a particular project, issue, or department. Include their name, e-mail, and contact number. If this release pertains to an emergency, it is likely that an inquiry could come outside of regular business hours, so you will need to include a cell phone number, too.

### **Catchy Headline**

This is the first chance for you to differentiate yourself. Keep the headline short, valuable, and compelling so people read what is underneath it. Although an editor who publishes your release will change your headline to match their publication or website, your job is to catch the editor's attention. If you are using e-mail to submit a press release (and you likely will), your headline becomes your subject line.

### **Font and Letterhead**

Use your official company letterhead, which also includes your address and a look at your brand.

### **Consistent Design and Font**

You can have this created for you by an outside firm or you can set up a template of your own. You should use a standard font such as Times New Roman or Courier in size 11 or 12.

In the document, use consistent grammatical styles and formatting. If your company has a style guide, use it. Otherwise, use a media reference guide like The Associated Press Stylebook.

### **Q & A List (Question and Answers)**

If you can see that your press release will lead to some questions but you don't answer them within the release itself, you can attach a sheet of answers to help people out. This is also a great way to help out members of your own executive that might have to field questions. You can use this list to give them background information that is too wordy for the release.

### **Photos**







A blog feature can be added to an existing website, or a site can be started specifically for blog posts. The cost of blogging is primarily time and expertise. To be effective, blogs should be posted consistently, frequently, and in a timely manner, especially if the goal is to build credibility as a subject expert.

### **Guidelines**

Here are some guidelines for blogging.

#### **Read as many blogs as you can. Pay attention to what's working (and what's not!).**

Pay attention to things like page layout, length of posts, pictures, color, and, of course, the content.

#### **Explore your options.**

Depending on who is hosting your hub site, they may also offer a blog space, or you can have one created for you. You can also look at some of the popular blog sites that offer free spaces, such as Blogger and WordPress.

#### **Be brief.**

With people's very short attention spans, blog posts need to be concise. Seth Godin, who writes about marketing and has a brilliant blog, sometimes creates posts that are only a few hundred words long. Whether you are creating short, informative pieces that are less than 500 words, or longer, more introspective pieces, you want people to read, remember, and think about your blog.

#### **Choose a voice.**

The tone of what you say should reflect who you are, what your company stands for, and catches people's attention. You can explore being informative, being controversial, asking questions, and having some fun.

#### **Do NOT assume that you are a writer unless you have those skills.**

If you are new to writing as well as to blogging, behave like a student and learn what you need to do.

#### **Add tags or keywords.**

This will help you find your old posts and categorize things. It will also help people find what you are writing. Make sure that you set up some kind of analytics, too, so that you can see which posts attract attention, which ones didn't, and who is reading them.

#### **Keep and reuse your old posts.**

If your content is good, it has staying power. A blog post you wrote six months or a year ago that remains relevant can be included in another blog post or re-posted to Twitter because it seems like a timely topic.



---

---

---

---

---

### **Connecting Through Social Media**

#### **The Importance of Social Media**

Social media is a firmly established element of the media, and it's going to continue to evolve and wrap its way throughout our lives in intangible ways. Every media release, public appearance, and annual report, as well as aspects of information that used to be kept protected, are now found within social media. If you're going to embrace your role within communications, you need to embrace social media.

#### **Test your Knowledge**

**Do you know how to find information on all the big social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Tumblr, Flickr, LinkedIn, Google+, and others that will come up from time to time?**

---

---

---

---

---



#### **What about news services and blogs?**

---

---

---

---

---

#### **Getting on Board**

Social media has been embraced much more quickly by individuals than businesses, although big business is slowly getting on board as well.

Social media platforms (such as Facebook) have increased their integration with our personal lives by being accessible on desktops, tablets, and smartphones. They started as a website to visit and post status updates. Now, they offer a dedicated chat service; a personalized experience; ability to add photos and videos; and applications for gaming, shopping, and more. In addition, many social platforms now work

together so that you can access all of your social information in one place, meaning that information you post on one service pushes to other platforms as well.

From a marketing perspective, you've got to determine which social networks are worth your time. Establishing a presence takes time, as does making those very important connections with your prospects and customers. If you do it right, your market share increases. If you make a mistake, your time and money have been wasted.

The overall trend seems to be that social media is becoming a bigger part of an individual's life. Businesses are starting to understand that they need to use these platforms to catch people's attention. Keep in mind that marketing with social media is still a segment of Internet marketing, which is all just a part of your overall marketing plan.

### Social Media Plan Worksheet

This worksheet can be used to develop a new social media plan or to augment your existing plan.

#### Basic Information

##### Business Name

---

Is the social media plan for the entire business or a portion? (If it is for a portion, describe it.)

---

What does the company sell: products, services, or a combination of both?

---

---

---

Briefly describe the products or services that you sell.

---

---

---

---

Is there an existing social media plan? If so, are you conducting an update, or creating an entirely new strategy?

---

---

---

**Does the company have an existing website, social media profiles, or social media sites? List the URL(s) here.**

---

---

---

---

**Does the company have an existing social media presence? What is currently taking place? (Some ideas: blogs, podcasting, or status updates)**

---

---

---

---

**Who is the target of your social media campaign: businesses, individuals, or someone else?**

---

---

---

---

**What geographical region will the social media campaign target: local, regional, national, or international? Write the details of the range below.**

---

---

---

---

**Rank the goals of your social media campaign in priority order, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important. Each item must have its own number; no ties allowed!**

- \_\_\_ Building relationships with customers
- \_\_\_ Increasing visitors to the web/hub site
- \_\_\_ Improving search visibility
- \_\_\_ Increasing sales
- \_\_\_ Saving money on print advertising
- \_\_\_ Increasing customer connection to the brand
- \_\_\_ Other (Details: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Campaign Budget**

**Fill out the table below to create a draft budget for your social media plan.**

Category	Amount Per Month
Design and Writing	\$
Photography and Video	\$
Marketing and Paid Ads	\$
In-House Labor (costs and hours)	\$
Programming	\$
Tools and Equipment	\$
Revisions and Changes	\$

**Return on Investment:** \_\_\_\_\_ % within \_\_\_\_\_ month(s) / year

**Campaign Objectives**

**Fill out the objectives that apply to you.**

- ✓ Number of Visitors per Month: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Number of Downloads per Month: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Number of Comments per Month: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Conversion Rate: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Monthly Sales: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Average Dollar Amount per Sale: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**List any other objectives here.**

---



---



---



---



---

### Competitive Analysis

Describe your target market very clearly. Use specific demographics, geographics, industry, segments, job titles, etc.

---



---



---



---



---

Why should a customer buy from you instead of a competitor? Use this space to clearly describe your value proposition.

---



---



---



---

List at least ten competitors and their websites, blogs, and related social media pages.

Competitor	Website	Blog	Social Media Pages


**Further Reading:**

