7 steps of successful communication programs

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What is communication?

Technology transfer, public relations, marketing, adoption, publicity, extension, social marketing…

- interpersonal communication
- corporate communication
- science communication
- public communication

Why communicate?

1. awareness
2. dialogue
3. counselling
4. entertainment
5. social networks
6. dissemination
7. promotion and persuasion
8. action and change
9. public advocacy
10. regulatory communication.

"If you can't get your message or ideas across clearly, concisely and with impact, then you have failed a key test of communication."

1. Understand how communication works

"It's not what our message does to the listener, but what the listener does with our message that determines our success as communicators."

"Communication is the process of gradually achieving a sense of being on common ground with another person" (Hugh Mackay)

- it's about building relationships
- package information to suit your audience
- face to face communication is best
- **plan more effective workshops and meetings**

# 2. Understand how people want to receive information

People:

- **seek information from easily accessible sources**
- **rely more on friends and colleagues**
- **are often lazy in information seeking habits**
- **follow patterns in their information seeking**
- **prefer face to face**

"Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding."

3. Don't rely on sophisticated information technology

- always provide information in plain language
- understand your stakeholders needs (social research)
- involve users in project teams
- don't over rely on information technologies to communicate
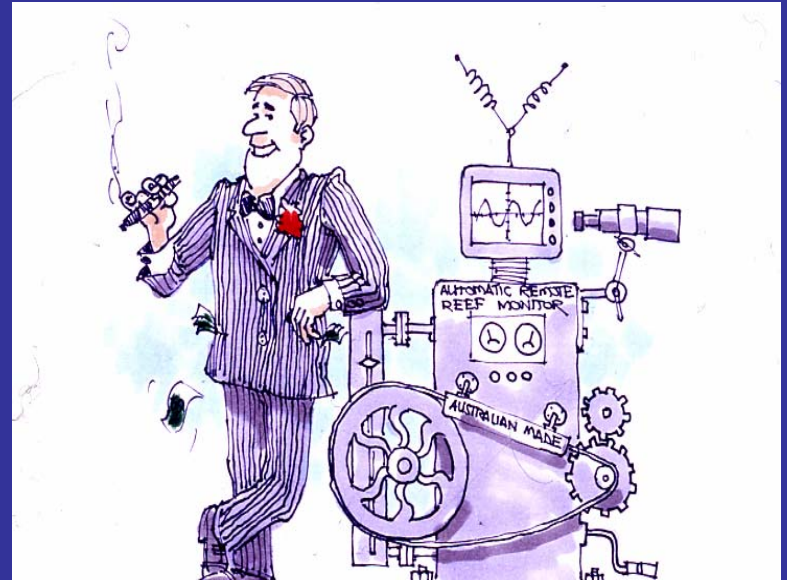
"On one hand, we receive too much information, while on the other hand, we don't get enough of the right information."

4. Build group communication skills

- **help teams develop communication plans**
- **use participatory research and learning**
- **employ specialists**
- **improve plain English writing skills**
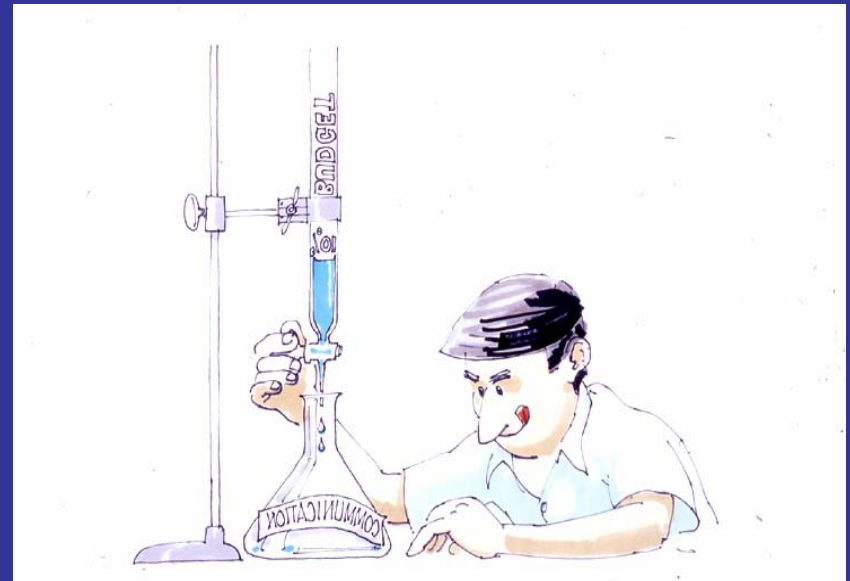- **develop media and presentation skills**
- **arrange training**

"Provide communication skills training for your team and for your stakeholders."

5. Develop communication plans

- **develop written plans**
- **get executive team and CEO involved**
- **follow standard 9 step process (other models)**
- **don't forget to evaluate and measure impacts**
- **allocate adequate resources (10% rule)**

"A good plan helps manage expectations, ensures methods used are suitable, assigns responsibility, and clarifies the process."

Steps to prepare a plan

1. Analyse issues – and what you want
2. Outline role of communication
3. Determine target groups
4. Determine objectives
5. Design messages
6. Determine best means
7. Allocate budget
8. Organise and implement
9. Build in evaluation
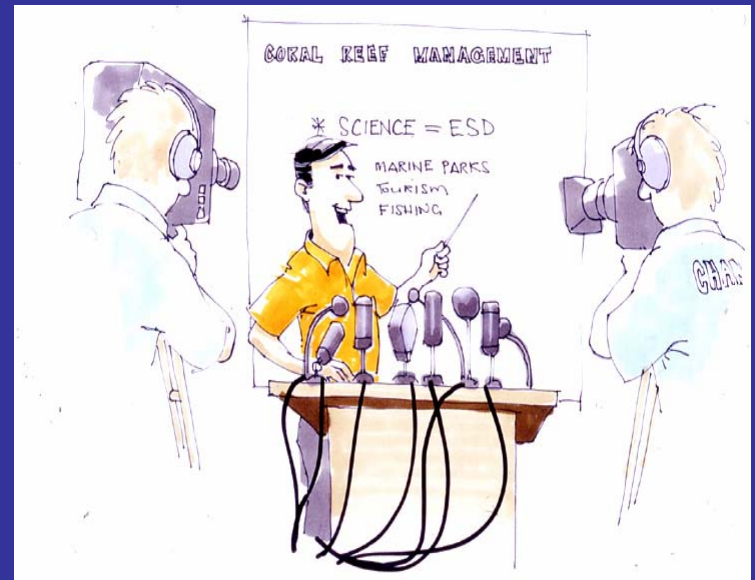
"When you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

6. Use specialists and staff expertise

Employ specialists for:
- **data management**
- **media publicity**
- **graphic design**
- **editing and proofing**
- **'knowledge managers'**
- **industry extension**
- **evaluation**

"People are more likely to support a change which affects them if they are consulted before a change is made."

7. Evaluate program and activities

- **use regular simple, short term techniques, surveys, polls, questionnaires, informal feedback, etc**

- **learn how to do formative research and impact evaluation, stakeholder analysis, client surveys, etc**

- **consider major independent review every five years**

"It's easier to measure output, harder to measure impact."

Communication Design and Evaluation System (CODES)
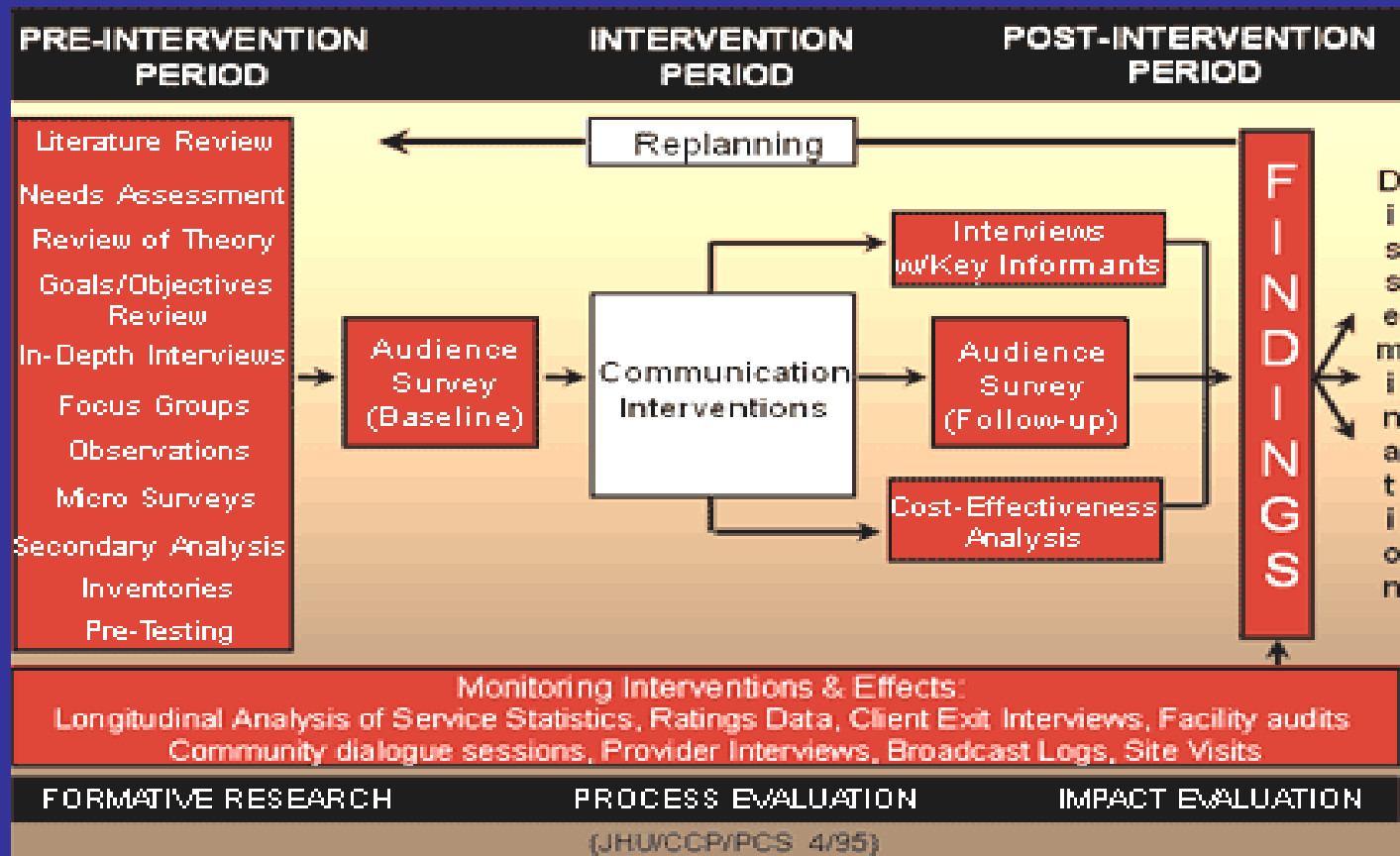
"Developing, applying and evaluating of your communication activities is a constant process."

Online resources

- **The Communication Initiative: www.cominit.com**
- **Citizen Science Toolbox: www.coastal.crc.org.au**
- **International Federation of Environmental Journalists: www.ijef.org**
- **Evaluation: John Hopkins Centre for Communication: www.jhuccp.org/research/**
- **IUCN Communication: www.iucn.org/cec**
- **GreenCOM: www.usaid.gov/environment/greencom**
- **Social Marketing: www.cbsm.com**

  www.social-marketing.org/papers.html

Contact

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