
Developing a Communication Campaign for Educating Employees Regarding Benefit Reductions

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Developing the Communication Campaign

Organizing Your Strategy...

Step 1 – Plan for Success

Step 2 – Select the Best Ways to Succeed

Step 3 – Create the Best First Impression

Step 4 – Build Momentum and Help
Participants Understand and
Use Benefits

Step 5 – Reinforce the Messages

Developing the Communication Campaign

Step 1 – Plan for Success...write out your:

Communication strategy

- What are the communication objectives?...what do you want to happen for your participants and organization ...list from most to least important.
- What are the key success measures?...how will you know when your objectives are accomplished?
- What are the key messages?
- What are the guiding principles?
- How does it reflect “your brand” and “your way”?
- How will you help participants “arrive at the intended destination”...and what’s expected from them?

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Adult Learning – *sequential steps*

Step 1 – **Awareness** – Get my attention

Step 2 – **Motivation** – Make me care

Step 3 – **Understanding** – Help me
obtain what I need to know

Step 4 – **Appreciation** – “I get it”
...I want to know more

Ask any teacher, “Can you teach the unaware and unmotivated?”- benefit communication often skips those steps.

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Step 2 – The Best Ways to Succeed...write out your:

The tactics, responsibilities, and timing

- Who are the stakeholders and audiences?
- What are the major time milestones?
- What are the critical impediments to your success...and how will they be overcome?
- How will you ensure participants trust the message?
- What communication tactics will you use?...what communication vehicles...how will they be used to make success happen (*awareness...motivation...understanding*)?
- Who has what responsibilities...who does what by when?
- How will you 'pre test' the vehicles and messages?

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Step 3 – Great First Impressions

Describe *Excellence in Action*

Uncertainty is the killer of workplace change. Defeat it by describing "excellence in action":

- Where we're headed and how we'll know when we've arrived.
- Why we need to get there and what will likely happen if we don't.
- How we intend to get there and when.
- How the organization will help participants get there.
- What participants can expect from the organization.
- What the organization expects from the participants.

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Step 3 – Great First Impressions...write out your:

Initial communication effort

- How will you set the right tone?
- How will you manage and meet expectations?
- How will you roll out the initial communication campaign?
- How will you describe “*Excellence in Action*”

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Step 4 – Build Momentum and Help Participants Understand and Use Benefits...write out your:

Main additional details communication

- How will you implement major communication?
- How will you measure results?
- How will you focus on the objectives (say), and activities (do) of “Excellence In Action”?

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Step 5 – Reinforce the Messages...write out your:

On-going messages and success story communication approach

- How will you implement the continuing communication campaign?
- How will you shift focus from the *vision* of “Excellence In Action” to reporting on how it’s being demonstrated – stories of it being put into action?
- When will you conduct follow-up communication planning sessions...and who owns the ongoing communication?

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A few tools to help the planning process

Defining the Guiding Principles... Building on a Solid Foundation

The “it goes without saying”
that should be discussed
and agreed upon!

Defining Guiding Principles

Focusing the direction of the campaign

Which ones apply...need to be modified...what's missing?

- Deliver information in a timely manner—as defined by participants—to help reduce “grapevine” activity.
- Commit to participants who will communicate what by when.
- Ensure all participants have access to the same information—with a deeper level of detail provided or available to people with personal interest.
- Use a variety of communication channels—especially face-to-face communication.

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Defining Guiding Principles

Which ones apply...need to be modified...what's missing?

- Have high-status and high-credibility messengers involved in delivering the key elements of the message.
- Explain why the action is being taken.
- Teach participants how to make the best use of any new communication and education tools.
- Explain how the changes support the organization’s values and business mission.
- Acknowledge the personal concerns surrounding any uncertainties—and pledge to address the “me issues” quickly (and define the timeline).

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Defining Guiding Principles

Which ones apply...need to be modified...what's missing?

- Identify who made the decision.
- Describe the effort that went into the decision.
- Outline some of the alternatives that were considered.
- Explain how the new program adds value...and to whom.
- Describe what the participants are expected to learn and do by when.
- Involve participants in determining how the new program will be implemented—how the communication effort will be designed and rolled out.
- Identify additional sources of information.
- Promise every question will be answered.

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Defining Guiding Principles

Which ones apply...need to be modified...what's missing?

- Communicate in a straightforward and candid way.
- Use clear, jargon-free descriptions.
- Obtain buy-in and support from managers and first-line supervisors...and “individuals of influence”.
- Provide managers with effective communication tools.
- Demonstrate that the organization cares about employees, customers, and other key groups.
- Set up feedback mechanism to help ensure that the messages were received in the way they were intended.

What's missing?... Identify your “it goes without saying” principles that not everyone agrees upon.

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A few tools to help the planning process

"What Do You Wish For" ...Setting the Bar High and Challenging Creativity Thinking

If We Did It Perfectly...

I wish we could create a perfect
communication campaign that would
get all participants to understand:

The knowledge that participants need to make
the best decisions and the background of why
the benefit changes are being made.

If We Did It Perfectly...

I wish we could create a perfect communication campaign that would ***accomplish these key things:***

Focus on what behaviors you expect...and how you will measure success.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

I wish we could develop the perfect communication campaign that would ***use the most effective communication techniques and vehicles*** including:

Gets you to think about what works best...not just what's been done.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

If we could **“wish away” major problems or obstacles** that we are likely to encounter in our communication efforts, I would wish away:

Re-examine the problems and focus on fresh ideas to solve them.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

If we could **“wish away” major causes of misunderstanding**, I would wish away:

Think about the root cause of participants' lack of understanding or wrong ideas or impressions.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

If we could “**wish away**” **major uncertainties**, I would wish away:

Uncertainty generates content for the grapevine and increases participants’ apprehensions.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

Focusing on the Intended Accomplishments

I wish we could demonstrate how the new program:

- Directly supports the organization’s key strategies by_____.
- Reflects the organization’s intended people values by_____.
- Incorporates the organization’s customer and marketplace strategy by_____.
- Allows for key cultural differences by_____.

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If We Did It Perfectly...

Focusing on the Intended Accomplishments

I wish we could demonstrate how the new program:

- Adds value to participants by_____.
- Strengthens and builds participants' trust of the organization's message by_____.
- Involves the best people-to-people communication (one-to-one and one-to-many)_____.
- Is described in the same way through each of the communication touch points ... at the same time by_____. (touch points = people, electronic, paper)

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A few tools to help the planning process

"Signs Along the Road to Success"

Creating the key messages.

Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

Arrive at the intended destination

EXAMPLE

You are the ‘purchasing department of one’ for your health care. Are you using our medical plan to buy the services and treatments that work well and are cost-effective?

Others...

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Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

See the key “what’s in it for me” aspects

EXAMPLE

Our revised Medical Plan continues to assure that, in the rare occurrence, if you or an enrolled family member has extremely high medical expenses – for example, \$100,000 or even \$500,000 – the most you would pay out of your pocket in a year for services from network doctors, hospitals, and other facilities is **\$3,000.**” the lifetime of each enrolled person.

Others...

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Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

**By reinforcing when they are on the
“right road”**

EXAMPLE

Over 60% of participants are using cost-effective, government-approved generic drugs...are you?

Others...

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Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

**Clear up misunderstandings...what road
signs must be torn down?**

EXAMPLE

Employers and you pay every dollar in medical plan claims...it's not an insurance company's money.

Others...

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Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

Avoid hazards and obstacles

EXAMPLE

Half of all health problems are related to poor behaviors – tobacco use, improper diet and sedentary lifestyle.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Others...

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Signs Along the Road...Key Messages

Road signs that will help the “travelers...”

Recognize what behaviors are not appropriate and what can happen if these actions continue

EXAMPLE

Last year, our Medical Plan paid over \$X million for smoking-related medical care ... that’s why smoking is not permitted at our worksites.

Others...

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A few tools to help the planning process

Audiences and Stakeholders... Who Sends, Who Receives, and in What Order.

Potential Audiences and Stakeholders

Board of Directors	Service Center
Trustees	Recruiters
Other Senior Leaders	Labor Relations Staff
Managers	Bargaining Units
Local Leaders	Management
Team Leaders	Non-Bargaining Employees
Individuals of influence	Media/Public Relations
Participants	Retirees
Human Resource Staff and Representatives	Terminating Participants
	Others????

Potential Audiences and Stakeholders

Potential Audiences and Stakeholders

Who has what role in delivering?

Big picture concepts?

People values?

General endorsement?

General content / overview?

Specific details?

Who is best?

Is there a sequence?...preview, testing, general, ongoing and reinforcement?

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A few tools to help the planning process

What are the
Effective Existing
Communication Tools?

Getting The Right Tools

Which tools do you use...who's responsible?

- Organization's internal home page
- Participant portal
- Bulletin boards
- E-mail
- Orientation Guide – paper and electronic
- Organization-wide publications
- Benefits publications
- Paper memos
- Meetings
- Recruiting brochures
- Retiree communication materials

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Getting The Right Tools

Which tools do you use...who's responsible?

- Celebrations and gathering (special events, picnics, holiday parties, etc.)
- Safety/Quality/Success meetings
- Benefits/Compensation statements
- New hire orientation
- Benefits fair
- Organization and participant surveys
- "Ads" on the internal web pages or in newsletters
- Manager meeting materials
- Video – live and recordings

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Getting The Right Tools

Which tools do you use...who's responsible?

Organization billboards/posters

Union publications

Investment club meetings

Web-based educational sessions

What else?

What resources are available for the communication...are there any that must be used?

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A few tools to help the planning process

Getting the Right "Look and Feel"

How to Portray Your Organization?

Aggressive?	Fun?	Personal?
Caring?	Growing?	Polished?
Changing?	High-tech?	Practical?
Competitive?	Independent?	Progressive?
Conservative?	Individualistic?	Responsive?
Cost-conscious?	Industrious?	Secure?
Creative?	Influential?	Serious?
Decisive?	Informal?	Stable?
Diversified?	Innovative?	Successful?
Dynamic?	Inventive?	Thoughtful?
Efficient?	Large?	Tolerant?
Established?	Leading-edge?	Traditional?
Friendly?	Lean?	Unique?
Frugal?	People-oriented?	

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Getting the Tone Right

- Formal?
- Informal?
- Straightforward?
- Warm, friendly?
- Not complicated?
- Legalistic?
- Low key?
- Just-the-facts?
- Technically complete?
- Personal?
- Upbeat?
- Fun?

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Getting the Look Right

Slick?	Colorful?
First rate?	Conservative?
Simple, plain?	Simple, elegant?
Nice, middle-of-the-road?	Glossy?
Light, bright?	Innovative?
Graphically sophisticated?	High-tech?
High quality?	Hard working?
Flashy?	
Low cost?	
Somber, serious?	
Soft?	