

External communication



External Communication

Communication with people outside the company is called “ external communication”. Supervisors communicate with sources outside the organization, such as vendors and customers. External communication comprehends all information developed by the company, which is related to its activity that is released in the press, for public knowledge. Such information is crucial in order to promote the company’s image.

When it comes to business communication, or for that matter, any aspect, the most important thing is the customer. We need to ensure that we deliver what the customer wants. Even when it comes to things like marketing or advertising, we need to show what the customer appreciates and likes. Different customers accept different kinds of marketing. It all depends on us to ensure that via business communication, we are able to cater to the choices of a wide range of people. If we are able to master the art of impressing many people by various means, we will be able to take our business to the top.

However, merely enticing our customer by showing them certain things is not good business. Good business means getting a quality product together and then marketing for it wisely so that people accept it. Just promising our customers a lot and then delivering nothing will only get our business into a soup. So gauge our products and services and then embark upon advertising and marketing. Internal business communication is the key to get all our people together and then inspiring them to deliver the best.

If we want to create a world class product, the first thing that we need to do is believe in yourself. This is where internal business communication comes in. It helps we get all our employees together and tell them that we can pull it off with élan. If there is a lot of positive thinking and bursting enthusiasm in our camp, the good spirit will show in our product. Our employees are an integral part of the company, so keeping them happy and making them believe in the company and themselves is very important.

External Communication is used for:

1. Through ensuring the information flow from various stakeholders to the organization, they help to meaningfully define the organization's environmental policy, targets, as well as operational performance, environmental condition and management performance indicators.
2. Through ensuring the information flow from the organization to various stakeholders they promote the credibility of the organization.
3. Image management is one of the company's most relevant concerns, not only because of its own presentation, but also because it is considered to be a success-factor.

It is commonly assumed that the most important image is the perception image, as far as impression formation is concerned.

However, this company bets on an aesthetical and a visual approach so as to foment a constant reflection flow on what is seen and how it is seen.

In this context, and contrary to the majority of companies, the organization demonstrates a collective motivation in constantly synchronizing its external image to the accessible products.

Another way to divulge its image is to provide the media with information on the company's relevant events and areas of intervention.

4. Public relations include ongoing activities to ensure the organization has a strong public image. Public relations activities include helping the public to understand the organization and its products. Similar to effective advertising and promotions, effective public relations often depends on designing and implementing a well-designed public relations plan. The plan often includes description of what you want to convey to whom, how you plan to convey it, which is responsible for various activities and by when, and how much money is budgeted to fund these activities. Similar to advertising and promotions, a media plan and calendar can be very useful, which specifies what media methods that are used and when.

Key Principles of External Environmental Communications

External communication should be interactive and work in both ways

External communication should be sensitive to the needs of both the organization and its stakeholders with whom the organization intends to communicate. External communications should not discriminate different audiences based on their language, technical skills, race or other factors.

Thus, the content and form of external communications should be developed in a participatory manner

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External communications should be objective, use sound data sources, be clear and accessible to its intended audiences (in terms of language, form of presentation, etc.)

The Scope of Guidance on External Communications

There is a need for several kinds of guidance on external communication: process-oriented as well as product-oriented. The former guidance should focus on the process of developing and implementing an external communication program (for example, in relation to EMS introduction and implementation, certification, environmental labeling etc.). The latter may involve specific advice on information products, such as environmental reports, which constitute such a program. It is also possible that both types of guidance are combined in a single document.

Process-oriented guidance

Guidance of this type may cover the main principles (see above) and the essential elements (stages) of the process of external communication accompanying certain organization's activities such as:

- identifying the objectives and audiences of the external communication program;
- identifying the existing information which may serve these information needs and any related issues of confidentiality;
- Identifying the types of information to be communicated (these may be, for example, performance indicators of different types as appropriate to the needs of the audiences), in which form it should be communicated (what should be the information products?);

- setting up responsibilities for external communication (including data collection, analysis, validation (if necessary by a third party) and dissemination);
- Monitoring the quality, performance and effectiveness of external communications and adjusting them if and as necessary.

Guidance should emphasize that all these elements of the communication strategy should be performed in consultation with key stakeholders, such as the local community, government regulators, and other interested parties.

Additionally, such guidance should also define ‘ environmental information’ which should be included in external communications.

Product-oriented Guidance

This type of guidance covers the content and format of particular information products used in external communication, such as periodic environmental statements, environmental reports, or Internet sites, etc. It is possible that several types of guidance might be needed depending on particular information products. For example, guidance on producing a validated Environmental Statement may follow the principles outlined in EMAS (esp. Article 5).

Essential Content and Elements of External Communication

The form and the content of the external communications should be appropriate to its objectives and serve the needs of the intended audiences. Ideally, the objectives and the audience of the external communications should be clear from its content. Other key elements of external communications may be the following:

- Methods of obtaining data and arriving at conclusions should be acknowledged as well as any external data sources
- External communication should use widely recognized frameworks for assembling and presenting the data, such as, for example, the one defined in ISO 14031
- Care should be taken in the presentation of information to make sure that it is accessible to the non-specialist. The layout of the communications should enable the reader to find and assimilate data easily and quickly
- Unnecessarily technical or obscure language should be avoided. Technical terms, acronyms and initials should be defined.
- Information should be presented without bias and receive the emphasis appropriate to its importance in the context of the EMS. Prominence and emphasis should be given to potentially significant environmental issues. Adverse impacts should not be disguised.

Possible forms of External Communication

External communication can take a variety of forms depending on their purpose and intended audiences. If external communications are considered as essentially a two-way activity, then the following forms of communication may be useful:

- production of special printed or electronic documents and disseminating them to concerned audiences (or making them publicly available e. g. through libraries or Internet sites); such reports might be validated by a third party to increase their credibility;

- establishing more open access procedure for existing documents and information;
- organizing public hearing, public meetings, “ open door” events, exhibitions, seminars, etc. where communication is occurring more interactively;
- Setting up hot-lines and other services for disseminating information and collecting stakeholders’ comments; conducting surveys for the latter purpose.

There is no ‘ most effective’ form of external communications – it is not a particular form, but the process of determining it which defines the success of a communication strategy.

Some Techniques for External Communication

In the field of external communication we want to start by stating your opinion clearly, and making sure your message doesn’t sound too complicated. It is very important for us to follow this step; never do we want a misunderstanding since we may lose the customer or client’s interest. If we happen to have an external conversation through the phone make sure we aren’t speaking too loud as we don’t want to speak too low either.

If we speak too loud we can easily cause irritation to the client and the client may soon feel annoyed. Speaking too soft or too low is also irritating, try your best to speak at a moderate tone so the client may hear us clearly, and if possible try to stay away from noise pollution so we may hear with clarity.

When we are present with the client, the steps are somewhat similar as if we were talking to the client over the phone, but the only difference is that we

want to make good eye-contact. Obviously through the phone we can't make good eye-contact with a client, but we can make good eye-contact when we are present with the client, so then it is important we do so, since it proves we are interested on what the client is saying and we demonstrate a sign of respect towards the client.