



International
Labour
Organization

The Effective Employers' Organization

A series of "hands-on" guides to building and managing effective employers' organizations



Persuasive communication

Making the voice of business heard

How to design and implement more efficient strategies, techniques and tools of communication





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I. Section One

How to use this guide

“**Persuasive communication**” belongs to the series of “**The Effective Employers’ Organization**” hands-on guides published by the ILO Bureau for Employers’ Activities and the Programme for Employers’ Activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (International Labour Organization).

The present guide aims primarily to assist managers, officials or directors of employers’ organizations in less developed countries, or those with economies in transition, to develop an effective, professional approach to their organization’s communication, both in-house and external. Moreover, these guides can be a source of valuable advice both for leaders of regional and sectoral organizations responsible for representing the interests of employers and for those of national employers’ organizations in industrialized countries,

especially if they wish to evaluate their current approaches and practices.

Persuasive communication is designed as a reference source on best practice in communication. Obviously, everyone has to adapt individual practices to the culture, the situation on the ground of each country or community in which they operate. But communication has common roots in human organizations and the fundamentals remain, whatever the region of the world in which they develop. Therein lies the richness and beauty of communication: it is universal!

Best practice



This is ‘theory’, but theory derived from long practice. It gives you a solid foundation for mastering each topic. It is sometimes illustrated with diagrams and charts to help you put it into practice.

Exercises



Exercises can be used individually or in groups, so that you can learn quickly before you start for real.

Best practice checklists



At the end of each section, these lists allow you to see where you stand compared to best practice. Use them to improve your personal practice.

II. Section Two

Communication by employers' organizations

“I communicate therefore I am”

Now that with a simple click of the mouse, anyone can make their voice, opinion, dissent or criticism heard in a city, region or country, or indeed all over the world, it is no longer possible to exist ... without communicating.

Public relations, a discipline that focuses on creating a positive image of organizations, emerged in the middle of the last century because companies had discovered how far the media influenced their business environment. It was no longer possible for them to ignore public opinion or new consumer advocates like Ralph Nader, a “media personality” who did not hesitate to use the media to stir citizens up. Access to the media (often called the ‘fourth estate’) had become an obvious tool for companies to use: a way of influencing the environment in positive ways to safeguard their economic progress.

The discipline has skyrocketed, not because of fashion, but by simple necessity. It is better to talk about yourself in *your* own words than to let others do it for you, using *their* own words.

An employers' organization speaks on behalf of its members, and therefore businesses, vis-à-vis public authorities, trade unions, the media, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations. It expresses opinions, negotiates bills, conducts studies and takes joint initiatives with other organizations. It is therefore clear that an employers' organization is first and foremost a business ... a communication business!

We now have half a century's hindsight with which to decide on the fundamental laws that make a communication actually contribute to an organization's interests. They are simple but extremely challenging: the communication must be consistent, coherent and systematic.

Communicate, don't improvise

Consistent: appropriate to the issue and the field of interest of the people to whom it is addressed.

For example, talking about political issues on television without linking them to their impact on everyday life makes little sense to citizens.

Coherent: it must fit into a framework, a logic that is expressed in its length and timing.

For example, if you regularly change your opinion, and show yourself to be opportunistic, you lose the credibility essential for people to listen to you and believe you.

Systematic: the world of communication is always in motion. It never stops. What is true today may be different tomorrow. To make a real impact on public opinion or on the groups you are targeting, sending a single message once is not enough.

For **example**, to persuade politicians to change a law, you should tackle the issue through different channels of communication, through various opinion makers and over several months.

Become real communication professionals

In the following sections, you will learn, step by step, how to become an organization that uses effective communication to guide your action towards full satisfaction of your members.

In the following sections, we go into different aspects of communication by employers' organizations.

Section 3: Reputation management

Find out first of all why the reputation of your organization is interwoven with the success of your efforts, and learn to build it up using the *raison*

d'être of your organization, a vision of the future and values that guide your action.

Section 4: Strategic communication plan and key messages

Knowing that communication must be consistent, coherent and systematic, learn to build a strategy and a communication plan, and to set out key messages.

Section 5: In-house communication and communication with members

How to ensure effective communication within your organization. Knowing that a reputation is built from the inside out, it is vital to become true professionals. You will also discover current best practice in communication with members and potential members.

Section 6: Internet communication

This new form of communication is taking precedence over traditional communication. Your toolkit for electronic communication is laid out in this section.

Section 7: Communication with the media.

How to develop and maintain lasting relationships with the media.

Approaching them in a professional manner.

We illustrate practical ways to use each tool best, in line with your objectives.

Section 8: Interview technique

You cannot improvise an interview, unless you like risks and disasters. Unfortunately, they are legion ... often due to lack of preparation. In this section, you learn to master a highly effective interview technique that has been devised ... by journalists themselves, for use in all circumstances.

Section 9: Presentation technique

Your organization is a communication enterprise. But how can you convince your interlocutors of the validity of your action, your arguments, your proposals? Here, too, there is an infallible technique, based on how our brain works. Again, for use in all circumstances.

Section 10: Crisis management

Overcoming a crisis by communicating. Unfortunately, we do not always live in a tranquil world. A crisis can occur without warning. It may call into question the reputation of your organization, that of your members, or that of an official. Since "preparation is half the battle", you will discover in this section how to prepare for any eventuality.

III. Section Three

Reputation management: mission, vision and values

A reputation for what?

Look around you. Do you have an opinion about the other organizations around you? Is it positive? Negative? How do you see the government, the unions? How do you see the media? How much confidence do you have in any particular leader?

In fact, without realizing it, we have 'ready-made' opinions on the world around us. Sometimes those views stick to reality. Very often, they reflect only a portion of reality or truth. But, in any case, they clearly influence our assumptions and thus how we relate to others.

It was discovered in the 1980s that some brands had 'sympathy capital', which helped them to sell products and ensured consumer loyalty. Over time, this phenomenon has spread to businesses and organizations. Some firms have high 'trust capital', which allows them to function better than their competitors. For example, it is easier to attract the best people on the market if the reputation of your organization is positive and strong. Such organizations are more resistant than others to the vagaries of the market. They have easier access to capital and to policy-makers.

In short, a good reputation can significantly boost the performance of any organization, in all its areas of activity! That is so true that a new discipline has been created in the field of communication: **reputation management.**

This discipline was developed by a forerunner, Charles Fombrun, in collaboration with the Harris Interactive company, starting in 1997.

The idea has been scientifically analysed. It started with a question. Do companies that continually perform better than others and therefore have a strong reputation in the market have specific features in common that account for their success?

By analysing nearly 40 companies, Charles Fombrun was able to establish that a reputation was made up of 23 (identifiable) attributes along seven dimensions. Each attribute can be measured, and the author was able to develop a 'reputation quotient' which measures the firm's reputation and links directly to its performance in relation to all its stakeholders.

Attribute	Dimension
Innovative First onto the market Acts quickly for change	Innovation
High quality Innovative Value added Defends its products / services	Products and services
Capitalizes on market opportunities Excellent leadership Clear vision of the future	Vision and leadership
Well managed Good employer Talented workers	Work environment
Outperforms its competitors Demonstrated profitability Low-risk investment Growth prospects	Performance
Committed to good causes Respects the environment Treats employees well	Social responsibility
Open, transparent Behaves ethically Honest in its dealings	Governance

What applies to a company applies to an employers' organization. Your organization's reputation can help open doors, lobby, attract new members, keep current members, work with international organizations, etc. It is thus also capital to nurture consciously and continuously, through principles and behaviour shared by all staff.

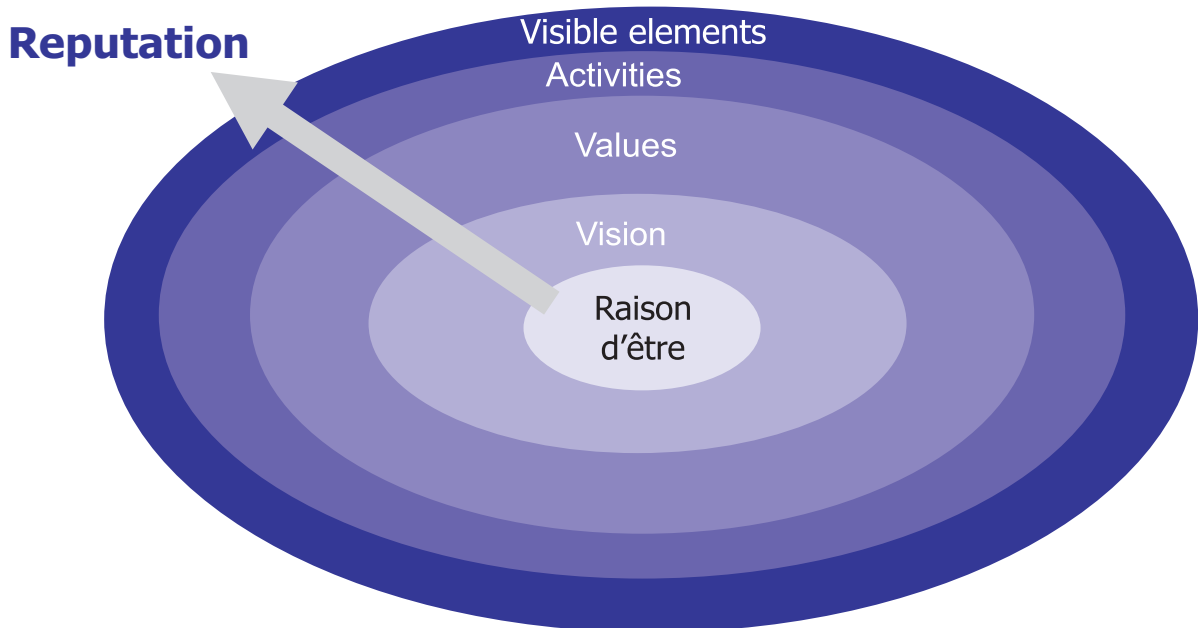
Take performance. That of your organization will instead be reflected in its ability to influence the society around it, in its weight as a body to turn to when discussing and drawing up new policies, in how pro-active it is in analysing economic and social developments in your country. But the overwhelming majority of attributes apply to your organization.

The attributes listed above are not all applicable to your organization.



A SIMPLE EXERCISE TO DO WITH SOME COLLEAGUES, WHICH CAN HELP YOU THINK ABOUT THE REPUTATION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.

1. Review the list of attributes and possibly adjust the performance.
2. Evaluate each individual dimension. What mark out of ten would you give your organization on each of the significant attributes? Compare the scores. What are the reasons for the below-average scores (less than 5)?
3. Do the same exercise with some people you know well among your members, opinion leaders and journalists whom you think particularly highly of.
4. Compare their views with yours. Do you see areas to improve?



How to build a reputation

A reputation is built with patience and determination, starting within the organization.

Indeed, an organization or business can be likened to an onion: different layers overlap. Without the inner layers, the outer layers would not exist.

Let us take an employers' organization and look at it from outside, as a neutral observer. The first thing that we see are the tangible, **visible elements**: website, publications, newspaper articles, television interviews, seminars, etc.

Is that enough to give me an opinion about it, to create a reputation? No. I may have a partial and superficial view, but I lack the 'depth' to endorse its ideas or not. The layer of visible items is not enough to create a reputation for the organization.

So dig into the next layer. Here we find all the organization's **activities** and 'battles' on important issues that concern all of human society. We also find all the activities of the organization which are often only partially known, or even unknown, by its members or by outside audiences. By taking into account the visible elements and the activities, I can already get a more complete idea of what the organization stands for. But is it enough to create a more sustainable bond between me and the organization? No!

I am still missing some elements before I can put my long-term trust in the organization, before I can really endorse what it stands for and what it does.

I can only find those elements at the heart of the organization, in its *raison d'être* (its 'mission'), in the vision it develops to meet changes in society and the values it embodies and defends.

A reputation is created from the very heart of the organization. It is rooted in the rationale for it, unfolding through a clearly articulated and inspiring vision, and takes on real values. Together, these form the personality of the organization.

This personality will influence how the employers' organization intends to defend the interests of its members, how it carries out its activities by translating them into concrete action on the ground.

It is all of these elements (the whole onion) that will build the reputation of the organization and make it endure.

In building the reputation of your organization, the first step is to define its "personality". This has three core elements:

- The organization's **raison d'être** (also called its 'mission')
- The organization's **vision**, which is itself composed of two elements:
 - **strong and ambitious major objectives** ("BHAGs" – see below);
 - the **values** that the organization promotes.

We will explore these different components in the following pages.

1. Raison d'être: the organization's "mission"

The *raison d'être* is your reason for existing. Why was your organization created? What is it supposed to do? In other words, the mission statement is a succinct description of what the organization sets out to achieve.

The *raison d'être* is mainly for the staff of your organization, thus for in-house use, even if it is found in many documents and media, such as your website.

The mission must hold good for at least 15 years. It is the very foundation of your existence, so it is

built to last! Whilst it is good practice to review the mission statement periodically against strategies and work programmes, this is primarily to check whether the work programmes are in line with the stated mission of the organization.

Has the purpose of your organization been defined? Have you done the definition exercise?

The second "hands-on" guide to building and managing employers' organizations published by the Bureau for Employers' Activities of the ILO, which focuses on strategy, includes a section on developing a mission statement (p.9)



EXERCISE: DEFINE THE MISSION

It is best to do the exercise in groups, with several colleagues, and possibly also one or more members that you think especially highly of for their openness and their creativity. We recommend limiting the number of people to six.

A simple but effective method is to ask the question 'Why do we exist?' Then we ask the question *why* another three times in a row.

1. Why does our organization exist?

Everyone taking part puts their answer on a document you have prepared beforehand. Go through the answers and turn them into key words on a chart.

2. Why?

Then ask each participant to give you the 'why' behind their answer. Let them all work individually, then go through each answer again and turn them into key words on a chart.

3. Why?

Repeat the previous step, again asking why they gave their previous answer.

4. Why?

Repeat the previous step, again asking why they gave their previous answer.

At this point, if you get this far, you have reached the quintessence of your *raison d'être*. Is there a consensus in the group on the most important key words?

Use all this material to do a first draft of the mission in A FEW KEY SENTENCES. Have them endorsed by the group members. If they are happy with your few sentences, be sure that your mission will hold water with everyone. Experience shows that it is unnecessary to hold a referendum among the staff or your members to validate this work. You would not come out of it any the wiser!

**SOME TIPS:**

Your mission must be written in clear and simple terms. It should be easy to remember. All your staff ought to be able to identify with it, because it is to inspire all of them in their daily work. At any time, your staff must be able to refer to it and decide whether they are acting in line with it, for it underlies all the action of the organization.

2. A vision, so you know where you are going

Successful and 'visionary' organizations have set out their vision of the future, how they want to face it, the ways in which they want to commit themselves, the paths they intend to follow, the results they want to achieve. The vision allows you to anticipate an uncertain future with certitude.

In other words, the organizational vision is a statement of overall objectives and guiding principles and as such is not subject to frequent revision.

Visionary organizations know where they are going! They succeed like no others in making their **objectives** attractive to their members and their staff.

The goals **to achieve in the 10-30 years** ahead are big and bold.

Authors James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, who scrutinized the success of visionary companies, talk about "Big Hairy Audacious Goals" (BHAGs).

These BHAGs are all challenges that mobilize people. The challenges are both tangible and energizing. It is possible to focus on them. The BHAGs, variations on the organization's ambition, must be clear.

They give a positive impetus to going beyond yourself to attain the common objectives of the organization. They are bold, and remain valid despite the potential turnover of managers responsible for achieving them step by step. They therefore hold good for generations of staff. The BHAGs act as catalysts for the energy expended by the organization and guide the whole organization towards the same ultimate goal.

A vision reflects the motivation of staff to invest in the organization. It forges the spirit and culture of the organization. In it, we also find the social, moral, ethical and behavioural commitment of the organization and its staff. Whatever the personality or charisma of the Chair or CEO, the vision goes far beyond their imprint. Visions thus outlast generations of leaders. In business, they transcend many life-cycles of products and services.

The authenticity of the vision must give staff, and all members, too, direction, inspiration and vigour with which to carry out the tasks of the organization. It must be motivating.

The vision is neither an exercise in futurology nor creative brainstorming, whatever one might think. It is the translation of **the attitude of the organization towards changes in society and the needs that stem therefrom.**



EXERCISE: SET OUT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VISION

To set out the vision of your organization, we recommend that you use a mixed group of staff and members selected to represent the lifeblood of your organization.

■ Step 1. The “pillars” on which to build your vision.

Decide in a group what are the trends that will most affect your members in your own country over the next 10 years. These will be the ‘pillars’ on which you build your vision.

- economic developments
- social change
- political developments
- other.

Create a group of 3 or 4 people to work on each development. Through research, discussion and debate, each group identifies as concretely as possible the phenomena, developments and highlights that will exert most influence over the future of members.

At the same time, each group proposes concrete objectives regarding each significant development.

This task may take several weeks.

It is often helpful to meet opinion leaders, prominent academics, journalists and other key individuals whose profession or function gives them a clearer picture of developments.

The working groups will engage in prospective research and synthesis that, in turn, will lead your executive committee to decide on the attitude of the organization toward its changing work environment.

■ Step 2.

Use the proposals to decide on your BHAGs.

These objectives may be either qualitative or quantitative.

Qualitative examples:

Pharmaceutical company: Make every effort to ensure that every citizen can maintain, achieve and/or recover the highest level of overall health.

American university: Become the Harvard of the West Coast.

Distribution company: Ensure that the poor can afford what the rich buy.

Quantitative examples:

IT company: Double our turnover every 5 years.

Service company: Reach 100,000 customers and a billion-dollar turnover in 10 years.

■ Step 3.

Once your BHAGs are well defined, write them in a motivating and powerful form. They must inspire those who read them. They will then be broken down into annual action plans that, year by year, will guide the evolution of your organization, which has become a ‘visionary’ one.

See also Guide II (Strategy) on building and managing employers’ organizations published by the Bureau for Employers’ Activities of the ILO (page 33).

3. Values to guide action

The third key to creating a strong personality that will distinguish your organization and build its reputation is **values that are shared and embodied by all employees**.

You adopt values because they challenge you and because they allow you to do your work in the best way. Not for the sake of fashion.

In other words, these are the beliefs or guiding principles shared by all, e.g. "quality outputs and value for money services".

It is interesting that the values quoted in most companies today by the employees themselves are respect, openness and team spirit (being involved in the work).



EXERCISE: DISCOVER YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VALUES

In this case, too, it is not a matter of creative brainstorming or of copying values from another organization. If values are not really felt by your staff, you will never form a strong personality that will build up your reputation.

Do the following exercise with your colleagues, ideally in a group of up to five people. If there are more of you, then have two groups working at the same time. There are 9 chances out of 10 that the two groups will reach the same conclusions!

Session of +/- 4 hours altogether.

Question 1. State three values that guide you in your private life, and are the most important ones to you.

- Give each one five minutes' thinking time. Ask each participant to write down (with a marker, in capital letters) each value on a large-format (12.5 x 7.5 cm) "post-it". Collect the "post-its". Go over each, and ask each participant to explain their choice. Stick them on a flipchart. Put similar values together. Focus discussion on them.

Question 2. State the 3 values that are most important to you in your working life.

- Do the same as for question 1. Stick the "post-its" on another chart.
- Do you find values that are common to private and working life?
- If so, put them together on a summary chart.

Question 3. From the "summary" values, ask participants to choose three core values, which, if they were no longer present, would lead them to leave the organization.

- Each participant may vote by putting a tick next to each of the three values they select.
- Remember the three values that attract the most votes. These are the ones you will adopt for your entire organization.

But the exercise does not end here!

For your values to induce the desired behaviour, you have to tie them in with rights and duties. This makes the values concrete, and you will see that, on the ground, that is the only way to change behaviour.

Ask the group to assign 3 specific rights and 3 specific duties to the 3 values they chose.

For example:

An organization finds that **taking the initiative** is a fundamental value for the future. Taking the initiative means more risk. If I take the initiative five times a day instead of once, I may make more

errors than in the past. With rights and duties, too, we will need to stipulate that I have the **right** to make mistakes, but the **duty** to report them all, so that others do not repeat them. Otherwise, nobody will take the initiative any more, and the value will remain just a concept on paper.



CHECKLIST OF BEST PRACTICE IN REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Mission

- The mission of your organization is set out formally
- The mission is succinct and comprehensible to everyone
- The mission is communicated in-house
- The mission is communicated on your website
- The mission is subject to in-house debate whenever you devise a communication strategy
- The mission is communicated and explained to all new staff
- The mission is communicated and explained to all new members
- There is a document that explains each sentence in the mission in more detail
- The mission is used to evaluate the results of all your communication annually

Vision

- The vision of your organization for 3-5 years is set out formally
- The vision is built on ambitious qualitative or quantitative targets (BHAGs)
- The vision is succinct and comprehensible to everyone
- The vision is communicated and explained in-house
- The vision is communicated on your website
- The vision is subject to in-house debate when you set the annual communication strategy
- The vision is communicated and explained to all new staff
- The vision is communicated and explained to all new members

- There is a document that explains each sentence in the vision in more detail
- The vision is used to assess the results of all your communication annually

Values

- The values that guide your organization are set out formally
- The rights and duties connected with each value have been set out.
- The values are communicated in-house
- The values are communicated on your website
- The values are communicated and explained to all new staff
- The values are communicated to all new members
- The values are included in individual appraisals (human resources policy)
- The values are used to draw up a code of conduct to guide all your communication

IV. Section Four

Strategic communication plan and key messages

Developing a communication strategy

The key to any effective **communication strategy** lies in three words: **consistency, coherence and system**. Your organization has many goals. Does it have to reach them all at the same time? Some goals are very short-term, others longer-term. Managing communication is therefore primarily managing priorities and constraints. Priorities in terms of action and outcomes, constraints on time and budget.

To ensure **consistency** in communication, we will first try to **understand the audiences to whom we are talking**. What do they think of us? Do we have strengths to highlight or weaknesses to compensate for? We need to know our organization well and to use this knowledge in preparing all our communication activities.

The **coherence** of the communication will be ensured by referring constantly to the mission, vision and values of the organization. These guide your approach whatever the subject. Coherence will translate into **key messages** that will underpin any communication.

Finally, the **system** really necessary to obtain any result will be provided by the **communication plan**.

Being strategic is to know yourself in order to make better progress.

Before you get down to strategy and a communication plan, it is good to know how your organization is seen from outside.

There are several ways of collecting opinions about what you are and what you do.

The following are the best practices, from the simplest to the most complex and costly in time and money: systematic evaluations of actions, a 'log book' of opinions, press analysis, SWOT analysis, focus group and opinion surveys.

Systematic evaluations

When you take any in-house or external action, make a **systematic, objective assessment of your action**, allowing participants the opportunity to comment after the meeting through a simple and anonymous questionnaire. Five questions are usually enough:

- Was the announced topic well covered?
- Did you find what you were looking for? If not, please explain.
- Do you want other issues to be covered in the future? If so, which?
- Do you know the employers' organization?
- Did the action strengthen the participants' capacities?

'Log book' of opinions

A 'log book' is comparable to a ship's log, in which the captain records the salient features of each day: strength and direction of the wind, wave height, vessels encountered, on-board events (illnesses, accidents, etc.). Thus recorded, these facts are useful if there are problems, because they make it possible to establish the exact conditions affecting the vessel at a specific time. Moreover, by browsing through them, the captain can get useful information for the onward journey. The log is like the crew's memory and the ship's surroundings, which are constantly changing.

For your organization, it is also useful to note regularly important points made by the wide variety of people you meet: from the world of politics to the economic and social world, members, opinion leaders, etc. In the course of a year, you amass a huge amount of opinions, advice, criticism, encouragement and more.

As the saying goes: "Words vanish, writing remains". All you need is a small personal notebook in which you regularly write down whatever seems useful and important for your

organization to remember, and share it with your colleagues regularly. By noting the most important ideas, you create this 'log book' of opinions that will serve you well for further thought.

Press analysis

Press cuttings are another very useful source of information on the image of your organization. We refer you to the chapter on evaluating your communication, page 33, which deals with this subject in depth.

SWOT analysis

Every 2 or 3 years, do a SWOT analysis of your organization. It will help you prepare communication

better afterwards, because it will bring out your priorities in terms of image and reputation.

SWOT analysis has already been discussed extensively in the Guide II (Strategy) on building and managing employers' organizations, published by the Bureau for Employers' Activities of the ILO (page 14) . We shall limit ourselves here to a quick glance at it.

Simple tips to keep in mind during your SWOT analysis:

- Be realistic and objective when you evaluate your strengths and weaknesses.
- Be specific (precise). Do not go into too much detail. Your analysis is effective only if it is concise, simple and short.



EXERCISE: DO A SWOT ANALYSIS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

Do this analysis working in groups. Give everyone time to answer the questions first, then share the points of view.

Strengths

- What are the strengths of my services?
- What are the strengths of my organization?
- What are the strengths of my staff?

Weaknesses

- What are the weaknesses of my services?
- What are the weaknesses of my organization?
- What are the weaknesses of my staff?

Opportunities

1. Opportunities arising from the political environment

- What current or future developments generated by the political environment are an opportunity for my organization?
- What current or future events have a positive impact on my organization?

2. Opportunities arising from members

- What new developments or events can increase the members' interest in my services?

Threats

1. Threats from the political environment

- What current or future developments constitute a threat to my organization?
- What current or future events have a negative impact on my organization?

2. Threats linked to members

- What new trends or events may reduce or eliminate members' interest in my services?

3. Opportunities arising from the socio-economic context

- What social changes favour my organization?
- What economic developments offer new opportunities to my organization?

= List of issues to be strengthened and to be highlighted in communication

3. Threats from the socio-economic context

- Are there any adverse social developments for my organization?
- Are there economic developments that are harmful or detrimental to my organization?

**= List of issues to be improved.
How? Through communication, lobbying**

Focus groups

This technique is very useful for getting the opinion of target audiences on your past action, but even more so on future action that you want to test.

Put together one or more focus groups of no more than eight people (to ensure plenty of interaction).

Depending on the issue you want to deal with, a group may be composed of individuals who specialize in the subject or else are representative of the target audiences you want, and can therefore be made up of very different people. The only requirement is that the people in the group are interested in the subject matter.

The idea of this approach is to get the participants to speak freely about the key ideas that you have prepared in advance.

A key idea is a fairly short sentence which makes a proposal about which you wish to know the opinion of the participants.

It is chaired by a facilitator, who asks questions and makes sure that everyone is heard. The facilitator will go more deeply into some answers, put conflicting opinions into perspective and ensure the smooth running of the discussion. This will ensure that the topic is exhausted by the end of the discussion.

The facilitator does not express his or her personal opinions, because that might lessen the spontaneity of the discussions. It is a good idea to appoint a facilitator who is 'neutral' about the topic.

A discussion lasts no more than an hour and a half. A colleague will also be present and note all the ideas and opinions expressed during the group session. The facilitator and this colleague will produce a written summary no later than the day after the discussion.

EXAMPLE: FOCUS GROUPS

You want to know how your organization is seen as a lobbyist by your members.

You decide to form four focus groups to cover the various activities undertaken by your organization.

Your three key ideas are:

1. The government is preparing a bill that will raise the minimum wage by 5%. Do you know about this project? What do you think of it?

- With this first issue, you open a debate on the relationship between the authorities and your members. Take good note of the reactions. See if your members are very concerned by the government policy, whether they have an idea of what you can do, and what image they have of the authorities.

2. During the last three years, our organization has lobbied the authorities to change a bill four times. Do you know on what issues? And with what outcome?

- This more precise question about your organization will let you know whether your members know about your lobbying and possibly if they like it or not.

3. Do you feel that the employers' organization has real political clout, and that it should continue, intensify or reduce its lobbying? Why?

- This last question will give you precise opinions on your lobbying. With everything that has been said before, this will give you a wealth of comments for subsequent analysis.

N.B. It is better to start with general key ideas, so as to broaden the subject as much as possible. Do not start with a specific question about your organization. That often blocks the participants. Moreover, once the group has warmed up, discussion becomes easier.

Opinion survey

You can poll a representative sample of your target audience. In this case, you are looking not only for qualitative answers: you want to quantify the opinions. These surveys are done using forms (sometimes via the Internet) or by phone.

Note that this process must respect the rules of statistical sampling and that the questions must meet specific criteria in order not to elicit responses that skew your survey. In short, such an investigation is a matter for specialists, which makes it expensive.

But it remains a useful tool in some cases. For example, a survey of the political world concerning your organization and your action may prove useful.

There are 3 types of survey:

1. **Quantitative surveys**, with 'closed' questions. People answer just by checking a box.
2. **Qualitative surveys**, with 'open' questions. People can express opinions and reactions.
3. **Mixed surveys**, mostly quantitative but also qualitative.

In general, charges for surveys depend on the number of questions and the type (closed/open).

Summing up, to define your organization's strategy, you need to:

- analyze stakeholders' perception
- analyze your environment
- define your core communication objectives
- draft your strategic communication plan (see below).

Strategic communication plan

A communication plan enables you to structure your different communication activities. It allows coherent, synchronized implementation of all forms of communication, both external and in-house.

A communication plan cannot be improvised. To get it right, answer the following questions first. They will help you set your goals:

A. Why do you want to communicate? What are your goals for this year in terms of action on the

ground, projects to develop, support or defend? What are your priorities in terms of reputation?

B. What messages do you want to get across in your communication plan?

C. Who are your target audiences?

D. What methods will you use? What communication tools?

WHAT ARE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES?

You have set your long-term BHAGs, but your communication objectives for achieving them must be precise. We talk about SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound.

Specific:

An objective must be specific, clear, understandable and unambiguous. "You need to improve" is too vague and imprecise to produce results. What exactly is expected? What is "doing better" or "improving"? A precise objective helps you know where you are going, and direct your action accordingly. It is, moreover, easily measurable and therefore verifiable.

Measurable:

Not being able to measure progress towards your goals is like moving forward blindly without maps or compass. That is not motivating for anyone. "I want to learn English" is a vague goal, not easily measurable. In contrast, "When an English counterpart calls me, I want to understand who is calling, what they want, and be able to put them through" allows for easy measurement of when the goal is reached. Quantify the results you seek.

Attainable:

Goals should be reasonable and accessible to those who need to reach them. If setting the bar a little higher is an incentive to excel, in the long term, unattainable goals are a

disincentive. Wanting to move mountains, without taking into account the imponderables, the unexpected, and purely material means (resources, budget and time available) is doomed to failure.

Realistic:

Keep your feet on the ground. We all dream of winning a lot of money without getting tired or taking risks, or staying slim effortlessly, or being eternally young, but we know it is mere utopia. Instead of setting an unrealistic goal like "I want to overcome my fear of public speaking overnight", go for "At the next congress, I will make a presentation in public to boost my self-confidence".

Time-bound:

An objective has a beginning and an end. It has a specific length. Without scheduling, your objectives may get lost under the mountain of things to do, and fall into oblivion. Setting a deadline creates a sense of urgency that gives an impetus to take action, thus increasing the possibility of achieving the objectives. In addition, a well prepared schedule listing all sub-goals and intermediate milestones makes it possible to track progress. And to congratulate yourself on the progress already made. Which is an excellent source of motivation and an incentive to keep on until you reach the final goal.

What messages do you want to incorporate into your communication plan?

You have set out your mission (see page 11). You have identified the values that are dear to your heart. You would like people to associate those values with you spontaneously. This means that every action you take must demonstrate those values. They must be reflected in all your

endeavours to lead your organization in the desired direction.

Use the vision to devise **messages that reinforce the image** you want to have. These messages must **convince** decision-makers, policy-makers, public opinion, captains of industry and other 'stakeholders' of the seriousness of your organization.

STAKEHOLDERS

'Stakeholders' are the individual or collective parties affected by a decision or project. These parties, internal or external to the enterprise in its broadest sense, are concerned with its good operation in terms of social responsibility. The internal stakeholders include managers and workers (both white-collar and blue-collar).

External stakeholders include:

- the **public authorities** (local bodies, governments, etc);
- **economic agents** (chambers of commerce and industry, creditors, shareholders, investors, banks, fund managers, insurance companies);
- **pressure groups**, consumer associations, environmental protection groups, heritage groups, residents' associations, non-governmental organizations;
- **suppliers, members and clients.**

We owe the notion of stakeholder to a new ethical demand by civil society, which insists that organizations take into account the social, financial and environmental impact of their activities. Some stakeholders are critical to the survival of the organization, which cannot lose their support without jeopardizing its performance or its sustainability. Knowing who those stakeholders are is crucial to you.

What is communicated must **be backed up by facts**, by the action taken by your organization. The reputation of your organization depends on it. Make sure that your action matches your words: keep your promises.

Choose simple messages. Do not overwhelm the recipient with a flood of information. Be satisfied with one or two messages at a time.

EXAMPLE OF KEY MESSAGES:		
Goal	Target Audience	Key Messages
Enhancing our image as a strong, social organization	Government Leaders of political parties	We represent the vital economic and social forces in the country We are the preferred partner for raising living standards in the country
Our information is credible and up-to-date It is the best source of data with which to assess future policy	Media	Access to our sources of information is free. We will provide journalists with secure access to our sources. This will enhance the quality and relevance of their articles
(...)		

EXAMPLES:

- Our organization innovates (or our members innovate).
- Our organization adds value.
- Our organization creates or provides jobs (or our members do).
- Our organization attracts new investors (or our members do).
- Our organization is attentive to the environment. It contributes to sustainable development.

Tailor information to each target group

What kind of information is likely to interest your target audience? We have identified some issues that could help you in your search.

Target Group	Type of Information
1. The government representing your environment (legal, economic, social)	<p>Interests of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the members whom you represent (e.g. re taxation, import duties, export duties, level of training, infrastructure [roads, telecommunications, ports, railways] etc.) ■ society (the community) ■ country (the population) <p>Your organization advocates these interests to the authorities and official bodies</p> <p>...</p>
2. The world of politics	<p>Interests of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the members whom you represent ■ society (the community) ■ country (the population) <p>Your organization becomes their spokesman to the authorities and official bodies</p> <p>...</p>
3. Public opinion (The media as a vehicle for your communication)	<p>Awareness</p> <p>Crisis communication</p> <p>Interests of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ society (the community) ■ country (the population) <p>Awards won by your organization if in line with the sensibilities and interests of the general public or its readership or audience (health, ecology, education, quality of life, etc.)</p> <p>...</p>

Target Group	Type of Information
<p>4. Your current and future members</p>	<p>New services, improvements Awards won by your organization Press articles or TV broadcasts covering your activities Stand or attendance (conferences, debates) at fairs and exhibitions Campaign to recruit new members ...</p>
<p>5. International organizations (NGOs, international institutions, etc.)</p>	<p>Interests of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ civil society (the community) ■ country (the population) <p>Awards won by your organization, if in line with the sensibilities and interests of international organizations (health, ecology, education, etc.) Press articles or TV broadcasts covering your activities ...</p>
<p>6. Economic partners (donors, banks, investment funds, insurance companies, investors such as multinational companies, etc.)</p>	<p>Useful economic or social information (files on the economic impact of certain sectors of the industry, craft or trade) Awards won by your organization Stand or attendance (conferences, debates) at fairs and exhibitions Press articles or TV broadcasts covering your activities ...</p>
<p>7. Your staff and job applicants</p>	<p>Corporate culture (mission, objectives) Recruitment campaigns (skills, education level, etc.) ...</p>
<p>8. Unions</p>	<p>Useful economic or social information (files on the economic impact of certain sectors of the industry, craft or trade) Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ society (the community) ■ country (the population).

Know your target groups

Once you have identified your target groups, go on to analyse each target group. Identify and establish the profile of each one, with its own characteristics and behaviours.

Your answers will guide your choices of communication tools and messages to convey.

They will help you to set your priorities and to know what communication actions to take, aware that others like you are seeking to influence the same target groups. In such a fraught context, your information will be severely tested. It has to stand out, attract the attention of the target and challenge it (affect it). Your information will have twice the persuasive power with concrete arguments.

As it is important to analyse how your organization is perceived from outside, do not hesitate to ask openly when you contact stakeholders. Examine all the press articles that speak about you. And analyse their tone. Make sure that their vision of your organization coincides with your vision of it. If you detect significant differences, your communication plan must include corrective action to change the perception of your key target audiences.

What features should you consider when you communicate with each of those target groups?

- *What are they sensitive to?*
- *What are the topics to avoid in order not to offend them?*
- *What means of communication do they prefer?*
- *How can you contact them (personal contact, individual interviews or an official delegation)?*
- *How can you get their attention?*
- *How can you awaken their interest?*

Adapt your communication approach to the specific features of each target audience. Businessmen have little time for you. They want to go straight to the point. They prefer summaries backed up by key

data. Policymakers like to have complete, well structured records.

So, not rhetoric, but concrete and precise information on what your organization or its members stand for and can do for everyone they deal with or who comes to them.

This is the famous principle of “What’s in it for me?” We might go on to say, “That’s all fine and dandy, but personally, what is the point of my speaking to your organization? What are you going to do for me?” You must try to translate each of your services into **benefits for the recipient**.

Finalizing the communication plan

The mission, vision and values have no more secrets from you. You have done a SWOT analysis of the organization, you have set out the BHAGs, you know your targets, you have an idea of priorities in terms of communication for the year. It is important now to translate all that into a strategic communication plan with a budget.

A comprehensive communication plan is **twofold**: a **general communication plan** (timetable), often annual but sometimes quarterly, very visual, incorporating all actions, and a **more detailed file** (a ‘worksheet’) **for each communication action**.

The communication plan (timetable)

This allows you to see at a glance how intense your communication activity over the year is. It gives you an overview of communication activities: what message is sent to which target group, and when.

Simply placing each action on the calendar for the year can show you whether it is realistic in terms of effort (workload, number of staff free at that time, time available, etc).

Your annual plan will be a kind of dashboard for you.

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN

STEP 1. ACTION LIST

First of all, list the **main actions you intend to take** in the coming year (your organization's own initiatives).

- **The actions you will take** in response to developments or situations that could have an adverse effect on the activity of your members or your own organization.
 - To achieve your BHAGs.

Be attentive to what may emerge for the future of your members and your organization. Put up your antennas. Look at what is happening in society and giving rise to changes in the law, regulations, etc.

For every action, focus primarily on the target groups that are essential to its success.

- **Action that you must continue to take.** This fits into a longer-term plan. Action that started earlier, that has worked well and that you want to prolong. Make sure that such recurring action is still effective and fruitful.
 - *Did you get what you hoped to get out of it?*
 - *Are the target groups still interested?*
 - *Is complacency setting in?*

- **Action by others** (partners, official bodies) with which you could **associate** to achieve your goals. E.g. Taking a stand at a trade show or participating in a debate held by a university.

STEP 2. SET A BUDGET

For each proposed action (recurrent or specific to the coming year), make a budget estimate. *What budget must you allocate to it? How much must you provide?*

Confirm the action if it fits in with your budget. This means making choices.

OBJECTIVE	DECISION MAKER(S)	COMMUNICATION ACTION TO BE TAKEN TO PERSUADE DECISION MAKER(S)	BUDGET TO PROVIDE	BUDGET VALIDATION
Recurring activities				
		-		
		-		
		-		
Activities for the coming year				
Development 1 :				
Development 2 :				
Development 3 :				
Development 4 :				
Development 5 :				

- Set your priorities among the actions validated in terms of budget. You cannot juggle everything. You must split your actions over the year to use your resources and means best.

STEP 3: DRAW UP A DETAILED FILE FOR COMMUNICATION ACTION

- The link between the overall plan and specific actions is a detailed file (a worksheet) which will become your daily working tool. This file contains all aspects of each communication action: when to communicate, what to communicate, to whom, by what channel, what means of communication, how often, etc.

You can build your own 'models' (usually in Excel). These frameworks are easy to fill in.

Communication action worksheet

Action :....

Objective:

Date

(Deadline by which the action must be taken)

Frequency

(Number of times that this particular action is to be repeated)

Target audience

(People that you wish to reach through this action)

Message

(Content of message to convey to achieve the objective. The 'why' behind the action).

Channel of communication

(The 'how' of the action to convey the message. By what means will you inform your target audience?) Examples: information session, training, newsletter, meeting.

Sender

Is the head of the employers' organization speaking on its behalf? Or a particular department? Or your spokesperson?

Equipment to provide, documents to prepare.

Potential constraints to take into account?

Evaluation criteria?

You can build your own 'models' (usually in Excel).
These frameworks are easy to fill in.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

The legislation, both at national, regional and local is not very favourable for creating a new company.

There are about 12 processes to go through. That costs a lot of money, both to get the permissions and for the mandatory deposit of a minimum amount of capital. It takes a long time, because it involves seven different bodies. Your request: to simplify procedures and reduce delays so that more entrepreneurs can start their own businesses.

Your communication strategy is not to attack the government directly and frontally, but to create a favourable climate of opinion first.

Only then will you descend into the arena and make clear the point of view of businesses when you meet all the parties affected by the problem.

Finally, through a range of actions, you will try to mobilize other groups who might back up your demand: your members' staff, unions, opinion leaders, prominent institutions, etc. This approach will build a coalition in favour of your proposal, and increase the pressure on politicians and government, and hence your chances of success.

You will need to decide and organize logical steps to meet your priorities:

- Have a third party, a neutral academic of great renown in your country, draft a 'white paper', an analysis that shows in black and white how the current procedures discourage many entrepreneurs and hinder the creation of wealth (and jobs) for the country.
- Set out your organization's position in a well-documented file, to serve as a press kit, but also a statement.
- Organize a communication campaign.

Worksheet**ACTION 1: Press conference to raise the issue**

Objective: To inform policy makers and public opinion of the implications of current problems in setting up businesses.

Date:

press conference on (date)

Target audience: government officials, members of parliament, business people, trade unions, opinion leaders

Key messages (= communication objective): the process of setting up new businesses should be simplified, because by stimulating entrepreneurship we enrich the country and create jobs.

Source: Professor Jones and the head of the Federation

Channel of communication: business and economic media

Materials needed: a white paper, press release, press kit, statistics

Constraints: Because the issue is new to the country, you will have to get your independent expert (Professor Jones) to explain why many current procedures are unnecessary

Material to provide, documents to prepare	By whom?	Deadline	Person responsible	Budget needed	Evaluation criteria
12-page white paper* = calculation of the expected effect of simplifying procedures (* Written by a neutral third party who has high credibility)	Written by a team headed by Prof. Jones of XY University	10/02/2010	Mr A	\$ 10,000	Must present data on the impact in terms of creating wealth and jobs.
Press kit for the press conference (including press release)	Mr A	03/03/2010	Mr A/Ms B	\$ 130	See press conference
Press conference at XY University	Federation spokesperson and Prof. Jones	05/03/2010	Ms B/Ms C	\$ 2 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presence of most national newspapers. ■ Articles should reflect our position. ■ Min. 3 TV interviews ■ Min. 5 radio interviews
Prof. Jones interview	Prof. Jones	10/04/2010	Ms C	Travel (means of transport) by Prof. Jones	goal = three magazines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 economic ■ 1 specializing in social issues ■ 1 women's magazine (working women)

Worksheet

ACTION 2: Face-to-face meeting with the government and political parties

Objective: To lobby politicians in the governing party or coalition; to encourage them to open discussions on the subject. (Key messages = communication objective): facilitating company start-ups will create additional wealth for the whole country. It will also stimulate the creation of many jobs and thus benefit the people. We propose reducing 12 steps to two steps, and the number of bodies involved, now seven, to one.

Source: The Federation

Channel of communication: formal and informal meetings. We are targeting the top five decision-makers in each party in the government.

Materials needed: a white paper, press kit, statistics

Constraints: Because the issue is new to the country, we will also have to consider the reactions of trade unions in our field.

Material to provide, documents to prepare	By whom?	Deadline	Person responsible	Budget needed	Evaluation criteria
File, including the white paper	Mr A	03/03/2010	Mr A/Ms B	\$ 130	Must present data on impact in terms of job creation.
Activities to organize	By whom?	Deadline	Person responsible	Budget	Evaluation criteria
Organize round-table discussions with each political party	Federation spokesperson	30/04/2010	Mr A/Ms B	\$ 1,000	Number of favourable majority votes
Meeting by a delegation with the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Economy - official presentation of the white paper	Federation spokesperson	30/04/2010	Mr A	\$ 300	Prime Minister puts our request on the government agenda

Worksheet

ACTION 3: Dissemination of information on the proposal by the employers' federation

Objective: Raise the awareness of staff and members of the positive impact of the creation of new businesses. Make them ambassadors for our cause.

Source: Head of the Federation

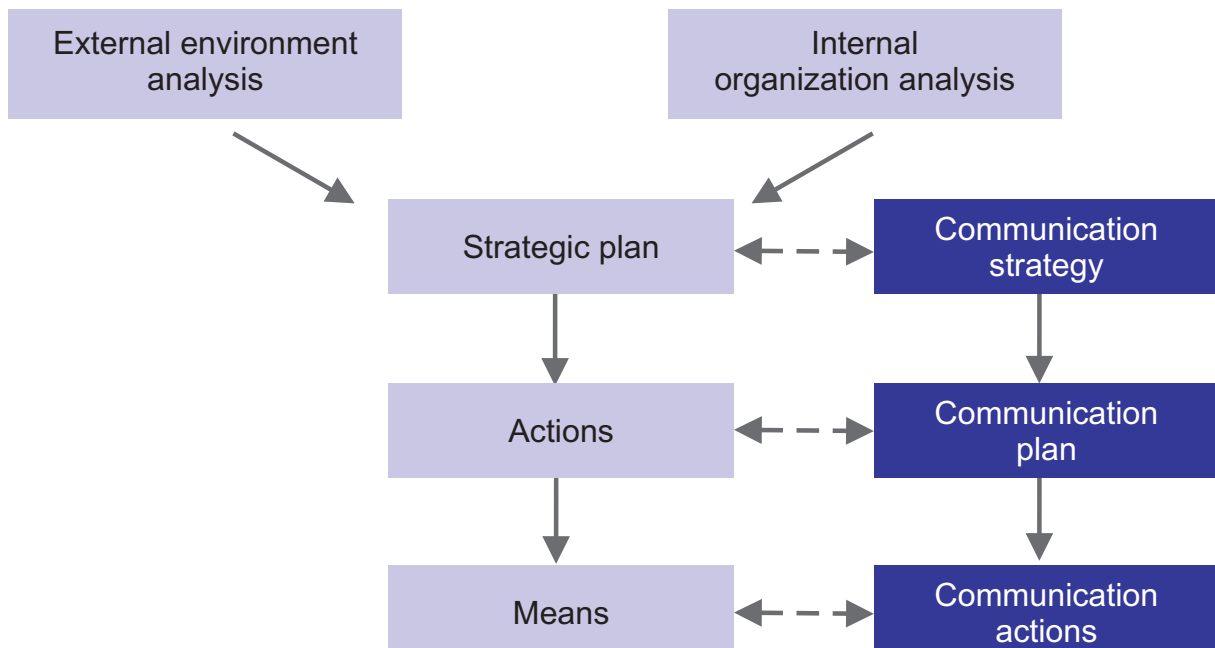
Channel of communication: intranet, newsletter, etc.

Key message: Stimulating the creation of new businesses by making procedures less complex and lengthy will, in turn, stimulate employment.

Material to provide, documents to prepare	By whom?	Deadline	Person responsible	Budget needed	Evaluation criteria
Article in the company's in-house magazine, also put on the Intranet Communication Manager	Communication Manager	03/02/2010 and 04/05/2010	Mr A/Ms B	-	Article on the Intranet
Clippings of media coverage of our actions outlined in our in-house newsletter	Communication Manager	07/03/2010 and 15/03/2010 and 10/04/2010 and 10/05/2010	Ms B	-	Press review in newsletters

Summary

Devising a communication strategy and plan



Evaluate your communication

When you communicate, it is important to know whether your communication is effective and, whether it has achieved its goal.

- *Did the message reach the audience?*
- *Did the audience acknowledge the message?*
- *Has the audience understood the message?*
- *What has it learned?*
- *After getting the message, has it is taken the action envisaged?*

Scan the press (continuous press monitoring)

Make the time, every day, to survey everything that is published or broadcast about you: newspapers, magazines, trade journals, the Internet, TV and radio.

In some countries, there are companies that cut press articles out for you. At your request, they harvest items containing key words (such as your name or the name of your chair, director or spokesperson, or the name of your product or service). In other countries, everything is available via the Internet. In that case, you can search using key words.

Some also offer a complete transcript of reports, debates, or excerpts from TV news or radio that you specify. Alternatively, pick up your scissors and cut out your own articles, and scan the Web for information published about you.

Insist on receiving the cuttings before 10 a.m. Thus, if you need to take action without delay, you will have a little more time to get organized and respond. Circulate information in-house without delay, every day, once you have the press cuttings.

Analyse the news articles

- Analyse the impact of your communication in the press.
- While it is always good to monitor what they say about you in the media, this is especially so after a press conference or a press release.
- For each previous communication action, analyse the cuttings about you and the scripts of what you said on the radio or TV (except advertising, of course). This evaluation is both quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative :

A press conference is successful if the journalists you want actually come.

How many journalists were present? Which media do they work for? How many newspapers, journals and magazines have passed on your information?

How many articles have been published in the wake of your press conference? How many readers does this medium have (coverage in terms of audience by each medium)?

How much space did they give you, by volume (number of lines, number of characters, amount of air time)?

Qualitative :

A newspaper article or an interview is considered successful if it accurately reflects your positions.

Are your key messages in the articles and publications? Do they make positive, negative or neutral comments about you?

- Make an annual assessment, too

Assess your communication action annually, counting the number of publications or citations by topic or by month, looking at coverage by each

medium. As to the content analysis of articles dealing with you, see if you notice any development, or a trend taking shape in the background.

Feedback for continuous improvement

Ensure continuous feedback on action taken and correct your aim if necessary.

Although it is not easy to measure the success of an action objectively, it is essential to assess your communication, be it in-house or external. The experience gained will be useful for future action. You will gain in both time and efficacy.

At the very least, do an in-house 'debriefing'. This requires neither money nor special skills.

- Have we achieved what we set out to achieve?
- What were the reactions?
- Has there been any criticism?
- Have there been any compliments?
- Possible areas for improvement.



CHECKLIST OF BEST PRACTICE: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND PLAN

The annual communication strategy

- Is set out 'officially' in a document
- Is described in terms of organizational goals
- Takes your vision into account (includes a component related to your ambitious goals - BHAGs)
- Is communicated to all departments
- Includes an analysis of your environment (SWOT analysis)
- Includes an analysis of the needs and expectations of your priority target audiences
- Specifies key messages
- Integrates all existing communication channels: conventional (mass media, meetings, ...) and Internet (e-zines, e-mail, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Includes an evaluation phase
- Includes a budget
- Is reviewed, verified and re-validated every six months

Communication plan

- Is set out 'officially' in a document
- Includes useful criteria for evaluating each action
- Includes an assessment phase for each action
- Includes a clear statement of responsibilities for taking each action
- Has a specific budget assessment for each action
- Is monitored weekly

V. Section Five

In-house communication and communication with members

This section is devoted to communication within your organization and communication with your members. It starts with 'best practice' in very many employers' organizations.

1. In-house communication: what is said outside must be known inside

In-house communication is a separate discipline from organizational communication. It must therefore be developed as professionally and as rigorously as external communication.

How can you build this factor that is so important for the reputation of the organization (see Section 3 on reputation) if staff are not made aware of the daily life of the organization, its struggles, successes, difficulties and challenges?

Who is responsible for in-house communication?

It all depends on the size of the organization. In general, someone is put in charge of updating and monitoring an intranet, if there is one. This person may be the same as the one dealing with external communication.

In the largest organizations, there is often someone on the human resources side who can act as a link between in-house communication, in-house information and, for example, staff development (training, appraisal, etc.).

What is important is to have at least one person who takes responsibility for monitoring 'formal' in-house communications closely, particularly by managing information sources (intranet, in-house newsletter with editorial board, archives, etc.) and team-building or other events for staff. We are talking here about 'formal' communication that is

managed centrally for the entire organization. This generally accounts for some 20% of in-house communication.

But the primary responsibility for in-house communication falls to ... the staff themselves. In any organization, 80% of in-house communication is generated, organized and developed by department heads, executives and the management. Such communication is mostly informal, but it is good to structure it in a very practical, no-nonsense way: short weekly department meetings, more general monthly meetings and so on.

The watchwords of in-house communication are:

- access to information
- sharing of information
- exchange of information and opinions
- feedback.

Access to information: Intranet

The primary source of in-house information today has become the intranet. Accessible and easy to update, this information tool (not a communication tool, and it will never replace in-house communication) is well worth the investment of time and money because it is fast, instant, structured and effective.

Setting one up requires a little thought at first, but it is worth it! Remember, especially, to update your intranet regularly! To do so, make someone responsible for 'cleaning' it regularly.

Some advice on setting up your intranet:

- Divide the items in a very specific way that makes them clear to everyone: news, publications, innovations, administrative information, staff (new arrivals, weddings), training, press cuttings (scanned or in electronic format), etc.

- Make sure everyone can indicate their 'favourites', so that they can be kept informed of news in the areas of interest to them.
- Make short summaries of the information in each section. Provide links for those who want to learn more.
- Some parts of the intranet can be protected and made accessible only to authorized persons through a code. You decide whether you want to reserve some information. Usually, everyone has access to everything, because there are other ways to handle confidential information.

Sharing information, views and opinions

In this area, be practical and down-to-earth. Many organizations use the following tools:

- Each department runs a **weekly meeting**, lasting no longer than one hour. This meeting is generally open to everyone in the department, though there are exceptions. You decide. Items to discuss:
 - What operations is the department currently undertaking?
 - What actions and negotiations are coming up? Who negotiates what?
 - Current and new topics.
 - News: events planned, discussion of hostile newspaper articles, taking of positions.

Each participant is responsible for their own notes. There is no formal report on the meeting.

- A **monthly meeting** is held for all those who have positions of responsibility in the organization, lasting no longer than an hour and a half. Items to discuss:
 - Summary of ongoing operations within the entire organization.
 - New topics in preparation within the organization.
 - Specific issues concerning the life and management of the organization: specific developments, organization of work, etc.

A brief report is drawn up and published in the in-house newsletter.

- A **monthly in-house newsletter** contains all the information disseminated at the monthly meeting and makes it accessible to all.

Key points in the newsletter:

- Comment of the month: an editorial expresses the opinion of your organization on a specific fact, change, etc.
- News: burning topics are briefly described, as is action taken by the organization.
- Life of the organization: specific actions that have been particularly noticed by the members, the press, staff, events, etc.
- Announcements of births and marriages.

N.B. If you already publish a newsletter for the outside, it is unnecessary to repeat the content in-house. Make sure everyone can get access to it via the intranet. On the other hand, you could give information already sent out an in-house slant.

Most organizations have an editorial board for their in-house newsletter, including a representative of each department. The role of this committee is to discuss the content and provide editorial material for the newsletter.

Informal communication and feedback

Let us be clear: communication within your organization will be even more effective if you practise openness and transparency amongst yourselves. Sharing contacts and sources of information, together with regular informal feedback on all aspects of your action will strengthen the position of everyone in the organization. Together, we are truly stronger!

PRACTICAL ADVICE

1. To enhance the skills of your managers, we suggest you run a course on the processes of lawmaking in your country. This will allow everyone to know and understand better when and how to influence decision-makers.
2. When you hire a new manager, do not hesitate to share existing contacts with policy-makers, influential journalists and opinion-leaders with that person. This will make it much easier for the new person to set up an effective network of relationships and will immediately improve your organization's lobbying.

2. Communication with members

Communication with your members also calls for a strategic approach, and then for you to develop the right communication tools.

We therefore begin by asking ourselves some questions before taking action. Only then will we set up the tools. In this chapter, we talk about communication tools whose effectiveness has been demonstrated by many employers' organizations. We conclude with some tips from the experience of many officials of employers' organizations in communicating with members.

A strategy for communicating with members

Each country has its own specific context. Each employers' organization has its own priorities and challenges. You therefore need to do some strategic thinking on communication with members, and use it to guide your choices.

- What are your specific goals?
 - Recruit new members?
 - Win the loyalty of current members?
 - Boost the knowledge and skills of members through training?
 - Mobilize members to deal with specific issues?
 - Other

It is vital to think about this and to prioritize your list, because you will end up with a series of different objectives. What are your three-year priorities? What are your priorities for the current year? Set them, because they will be useful when you come to decide on the financial and human resources you need to maximize the value of your action to members.

- What are your resources?
 - Your *financial resources* may restrict your chances of developing specific communication tools. You know that a website has become indispensable. Despite its relatively high set-up cost, it will allow you to reach all your target audiences, especially current and future members, very cheaply. The experience of several organizations has shown this: the mere fact of having a website has allowed them to boost the visibility of their organization and, almost immediately, increase the number of

members, sometimes by hundreds. This quickly pays off part of the investment.

- A useful piece of advice on investment in communication: do not 'sprinkle' what you can afford over a multitude of tools or actions. It is best to limit the tools and actions so that you can give them the resources that will make them a success. When you choose a tool or action, go all the way!
- Your *human resources* are just as important as financial resources. Communication with members normally comes under your in-house and external communication manager. Do you have such a person on board? If not, go and get one! Ideally, this person will come from the world of journalism or other types of communication, will write well, be good at summing things up, and have the ability to put themselves in the place of the target groups with whom you communicate. This person will create an appropriate communication strategy once your overall strategy has been set.

Tools for communication with members

■ Database

Without an up-to-date database of all your members, you will have great difficulty communicating effectively. All your members have different interests. Their fields of activity are very different. The first concern is thus to set up such a database and update it **every month**. An Excel document is good enough to start with.

Useful sources for updates:

- Contacts and data left by the members on your website.
- Annual data sent to each member with a request to confirm or update.

■ Website

A website has become the primary tool of communication with members for the majority of employers' organizations. For several years now, employers' organizations in some countries have allocated part of the budget to having a site with enough resources to make it professional and effective. They have not regretted it!

The next section, page 42, is devoted to this type of contemporary communication.

Give your members secure access to specific items such as:

- a list of all your organization's services to members
- specific administrative forms (or links to sites where those forms are kept)
- questions for a specific department
- training courses, with registration form
- events, with registration form
- reports, analyses and documents produced by your organization (or others) to download
- press cuttings (all your press releases should already be on your site).

These items make life easier for your members and really help their daily working lives. But then, how do you know what your members look for in terms of information or services? It is not always easy to meet a multitude of sometimes very different expectations. However, it is imperative to do so if you are to keep your members in the organization!

You need to do this research regularly:

- an annual analysis of the key words used to search within the section reserved for members
- questions from members using your site
- a survey via your site: invite members who click on to the secure part to answer a few questions (usually no more than five, because a user does not have much time!)
 - Are the topics clear and accessible?
 - Are the texts understandable?
 - When you navigate, do you usually find the information you want?
 - Are there any improvements you would like to see?
 - User profile (age, position, frequency of use)
- a survey via e-mail using a list of questions (rather expensive; often done every three years, expanding the questions to cover the whole of the organization's activity)
- regular feedback on training and other activities for members
- feedback when a member phones about a specific topic: through questions that ask their opinion of the information available on your site
- a panel: invite 6-8 members to a meeting during which you ask about their expectations and what your organization

provides. You can hold such meetings for every sector in your organization.

■ E-zine (electronic magazine)

We recommend that you read section six on electronic communication and e-zines. It gives you a comprehensive overview of the specifics of this new form of communication.

An electronic magazine is the 'digital' version of a publication. It is created by putting pdf files of individual pages together, adding animation features, and placing them on the Internet for people to read using a normal browser.

Features and benefits:

- It can be set up very easily and is cheap to produce.
- It has the look and feel of a paper publication.
- You can give it an index so that readers can go directly to a particular article or page.
- It can be downloaded as a single document, which helps to make it known to others through a link.
- You can insert links (key words) in the text to a website.

An electronic magazine is in essence concrete, short and to the point. Its main objective is to keep your members informed of current issues, activities, actions and services; in short, the life of your organization in interaction with them.

Tailor the frequency of your e-zine to your time and resources. In general, fortnightly is enough to keep up with the news.

Organize your e-zine into clear sections, and limit text content to the essentials. A good editorial rule is the following: announce your subjects in the e-zine, expand them on your website.

■ Road shows

The road show has its roots in the United States. When presidential candidates wanted to get known, they used to roam the country by train, stopping from town to town to get about and make themselves known.

Today, the term is used when an organization decides to leave its walls and reach out to its members and potential members across the country.

A road show has always involved a presentation of your organization followed by questions and answers and closed by a drink or cocktail party that allows everyone to get acquainted.

Who to invite

We advise you to invite members and potential members in the town or region you are visiting. By mixing them, you will boost everyone's satisfaction with your initiative. And there is nothing like having current members recruit new ones by their enthusiasm.

What to present

Always start with a current social or economic issue which closely concerns the city or region you are visiting. Only then make the connection with your activities by showing what your organization does for each of its members.

We suggest you use the structure and the advice in Section Nine, "Presentation technique", page 63.

■ Mail shots

Mailing hundreds or even thousands of potential members with a link to your site and an invitation to join your organization can be helpful, but do not expect miracles.

First, you need access to reliable databases with addresses that have been checked. This requires a financial investment. Furthermore, you need an out-of-the-ordinary talent for written persuasion to attract the readers and induce them to click on to your site.

Typically, this tool is targeted (e.g. at a specific sector of industry, or the medium-sized enterprises in a region) and can be effective, but you should only expect a return of a few per cent, if all goes well.

■ General annual meeting and annual report

Your annual general meeting provides an opportunity to take stock of your activities, and the annual report which follows is a useful document with which to build up your reputation among your external target audiences, and also among your members.

Your members could get a preview on the day of your meeting: a summary of major achievements and future battles in a special edition of your e-zine.

Moreover, the annual report contains a factual part about your organization: action taken, work, publications, analyses, etc. In short, you list what the organization has done to fulfil its vision and its objectives.

This report can become more than a summary of your past activities. Why not choose a particular topic each year, and go into it with testimonies, short essays and photos inside your report? The topic could justly relate to what your organization sees as the heart of its concerns for the following year.

The topic will generally be one that is in the news and reflects the human side of the economy and society. You could devote the issue to your staff one year: an opportunity to spotlight those who serve the members and society as a whole.



IN-HOUSE COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS: CHECKLIST

In-house communication

- You have a person in charge of in-house communication
- You have a procedure for informing any new member of staff about all aspects of your business
- Departments organize a weekly update meeting
- Your organization holds a monthly general in-house briefing
- You have an intranet which staff can consult
- For big organizations: you have a monthly in-house newsletter
- You have a system of regular feedback that allows you to listen to your staff and meet their needs.

Communication with members

- Your database is complete
- You have a procedure for updating the database regularly, and a person in charge of doing so
- Your organization has a website
- Your website has a secure section for your members
- You have specific sections for members, listing miscellaneous services, documentation, events, training, frequently asked questions, etc.
- Your organization sends an electronic newsletter (e-zine) regularly (at least once or twice a month) to your members
- Your website tracks what members search for on it (visitor profile)
- You analyse members' communication needs (survey, feedback at events) annually
- You hold local meetings (road shows) with your members and potential members once a year.

VI. Section Six

Internet communication

Traditional communication is a thing of the past.

The information cycle has changed a lot and, logically, so have the rules that govern it. Instant access to information on the World Wide Web has fundamentally changed the situation. Consumers of information have direct access, without having to go through channels of information that filter the information before passing it on.

Until recently, the only way for an organization to ensure the dissemination of its messages to the public was to write a press release and try to get journalists to convey the message. Journalists and editors inevitably had a role in relaying information. Much depended on their willingness to give you press space or air time. You had no option other than to convince the media of the importance of disseminating your information.

That time has gone. The media no longer have control over information. It flows freely in "real time", without intermediaries and without the time to process it.

Bloggers interact directly with businesses, commenting on their news. The media are still present, but no longer exclusive. They have to look for new ways to justify their existence, primarily by putting information into context and identifying major trends.

Why communicate via the Internet?

Websites, information portals on the Internet, extranet or intranet are easy ways to meet your target audiences' demand for rapid and effective answers to their questions at any time. You strengthen their trust in you and ensure their loyalty to you by meeting their wish to get the response they expect.

- E-mail: individualized communication via the Internet (a digital personal message)
- E-zine: a digital message to a group of several people

- Chat: instant individual communication ('live') via the Internet
- SMS: information over mobile phones or special Internet sites
- Peer networks: public virtual spaces, digital communities that coalesce around shared interests.

The World Wide Web is a dynamic, ever-changing world, which means that information on websites goes out of date very quickly. It therefore needs to be updated frequently. Managing a website is a continuous process and requires daily action.

Preparing to communicate on the Web: the initial phase

Set yourself clear objectives and devise a precise plan of attack.

- What **goal** do you want to achieve? Ask people both inside and outside your organization about this, so that you learn what needs they have that you could meet. Get an overall vision of your project.
- What resources do you have (time, money, skills, expertise)?
- When you fix your budget, take into account the in-house cost (e.g. the time you or your colleagues will spend on setting up and monitoring your website).
- Make a list of specifications that the website must meet (requirements, graphic design, guidelines, procedures, publication standards).
- Invest in content management software. This will make it much easier to update your content.

Website content

We strongly advise you to use your website not just to make your information available, but to create an **interactive platform**.

Use your website to exchange information with your members, with other organizations, etc. Provide

separate areas on your website. Divide pages reserved for your members with a password (for secure access) from those accessible to everyone.

At present, we are seeing a craze for 'blogs' and 'forums'. However, only follow this path if you have the resources, because they require heavy investments of time.

Find out what type of information people who read your site search for.

Profile the users. Do they seek very specific information? Are they interested, but have no specific requests? Are they specific target groups such as the media, politicians or your members?

There are three distinct ways you can determine their profiles.

- **Focus groups**, with whom you have an open discussion on topics that interest them, the questions they have, the desires that motivate them. Ask them about the type of information they wish to find on your website.
- **Surveys**. Ask Internet users who surf your website if they are satisfied and have found answers to their questions.
- **Task analysis**: carefully watch the surfers who view your pages. See if they find them easily, if the content holds their attention. See where they click. Note all the steps they follow. Question them, even orally, when they finish consulting your website.

Writing for the Web: a whole new style of writing

Writing Web pages is very specific. Make your authors aware of this. Ask them to follow the advice here.

- Opt for **short, simple sentences**. Be brief, because it takes 20-30% more time to read on screen than on paper. This already demands an effort by your reader. Do not add to it.
- Your paragraphs should not exceed one third of the screen, or 10 lines.
- Focus on facts and figures, as users seek factual data above all.
- Users do not read the text displayed on the screen word for word. They **scan**, they browse. They search for key words.
- Competition on the Web is enormous. If visitors do not find the information they want in no time,

they look elsewhere. They move on to what their search engine offers as other sources of information. Forestall '**zapping**' by making it easy to navigate your site. Make sure that people can find things fast.

- On your pages of text, make sure you have **clear titles** that sum up your message. This is all the more important because search engines use your titles to direct Internet users. Find **key words** that characterize your activity, and place them immediately in your introductory text.
- To get **listed** and included in the top rankings of search engines like Google, you need to identify key words and phrases that characterize you, that are important to you, to your members, to your country. By key phrases, we mean several words put together.
- Very often, the user types into the search engine a combination of 3 or 4 key words to refine the search. So start with key words that come to mind when looking for information relating to your activities. If you use words that are too vague, you will have little chance of being listed on the first page of results found by the search engine. Once you have compiled a list of your key words and phrases, check whether you figure at the top of the search engine's list of results. Enter your own key words to see whether it is easy to find yourself.

Before you launch your website, you can even take the lead in getting listed (without waiting for a search engine to come across your site and list you). You yourself can register your website with search engines.

You can also ask other sites to install a link to your website. You can contact official bodies (e.g. government agencies) and ask them to list your site on theirs. Link up with as many sites as possible so that you increase the chances that someone will click on to your site.

Make yourself known to index sites, directories and portals. This will increase traffic to your website, and hence the visibility of your organization.

Some free websites offer to register your website with many search engines, professional websites, directories, indices, etc. One of them is **www.submit-away.com/top-search-engines.htm**, which covers the majority of English-language search engines.

- Prioritize **intuitive navigation** (i.e. clear, flowing, inherently logical). Choose the wording on the **buttons** that send you to other pages carefully.

- Make sure that users understand directly where a link will take them, and what information they will find by clicking on it. Make sure that the links lead to the right page.

Your **press releases** can also **generate significant traffic to your website**. To the point that they are sometimes the most visited section of a website.

Have a special section on your site for all your press releases. and monitor the number of times people visit that specific section. On your home page, announce your latest press release, with the date and a link to it. Again, there are websites that will distribute your press releases on a large scale. They forward them to online media such as Yahoo, Google and Lycos. Here are four of them, tailored to the Anglo-Saxon world. See if they cover your country, and under what conditions.

- www.businesswire.com
- www.prnewswire.com
- www.prweb.com
- www.marketwire.com

When writing press releases, therefore, be sure to put links into your text. That way, when they go on the Internet, people who read them can learn more by clicking on your links.

Make your home page lively. Vary the emphasis, giving news pride of place (e.g. presentation of a new member, a new tax measure, a law coming into force, a new procedure, a visit by a delegation).

Send out a 'newsletter' via the Internet

Digital newsletters or e-zines are increasingly successful. This is because of their low production cost and their effectiveness in attracting the attention of your target audience to your activities. In addition, they make wide dissemination possible. Caution: in some countries, the law requires you to obtain the written consent of recipients before mailing. Check whether this applies to you.

An **e-zine** is a useful tool for winning your audiences' loyalty and getting them to visit your website regularly. Make sure, therefore, that your newsletter makes them want to learn more by clicking on the **links** provided in your e-zine. These links lead interested persons to **your website**, where they will find more information.

See your e-zine as an invitation to visit your website. Highlight site news, and announce new

additions. Keep your e-zine short. Go straight to the point. Have it provide a summary of the information held on your website. A few key words can put the information in a nutshell and generate a desire to learn more.

Given the importance of constantly updating your website, it is logical that the **frequency** of your e-zine should be either weekly or fortnightly rather than monthly. But make sure you do not send your e-zine out unless you have something new to offer.

When you update the content of your website, send out your e-zine. Regularity is good, because it forces you to update your site accordingly. Bring together the pieces of information to highlight in your weekly or fortnightly e-zine.

Tips

Shaping the **layout** of your e-zine is not expensive. The investment is all the more worthwhile because it makes you look very professional. Some systems can even go further: readers indicate on a form the content they are interested in and want to receive. But experience shows that few readers actually bother to set their own criteria.

- Contact information for people who have asked to receive your e-zine, or who have registered online on your website, can go into your **database**. The information you collect can inspire you to refine the content of your e-zines to your audiences.
- Nothing is more irritating than to receive unsolicited e-mail. This **'spam'** is a plague in the view of a growing number of Internet users, who see it as violating their privacy, and who therefore delete any unsolicited e-mail without even reading it. Make sure people **can unsubscribe** from your e-zines easily (one click) at any time. And give the people on your files a way to modify or delete their profile on your website. This might reduce the number of subscribers to your e-zines, but at least you know that you actually reach those who are genuinely interested in what you are doing.
- On the other hand, nothing prevents you from doing **a one-off mail shot** to people who might be interested in your activities.
- At the end of your e-zine, add a link for people to **forward your e-zine** to an acquaintance who might be interested. Do the same on your website by adding a button to click to 'recommend this site to others'. Word-of-mouth is still always a great way to make yourselves known. Exploit it by making the task of your

ambassadors who recommend your services to the people around them as easy as possible.

- When you design your e-zine, and when you decide on the content, think about your **target audience**. Topics, distribution, etc., vary depending on the type of audience. Not all of them look for the same thing. So consider **sub-folders**, e.g. “Investors”. Another avenue to explore: have **different versions of your e-zine which cover specific topics**. You could thus have both a more general e-zine and a version dedicated solely to legislation.
- Do not try to make your e-zine all-encompassing. No need to try to cover all the services you perform as a federation. Too much information suffocates the reader in a mass of undigested data. To keep an overall view, limit yourself to a small number (5-10) of subjects that you mention briefly in your e-zine and expand on your website. If you want to get away from the classical topic-based structure, you can instead focus on the company of the month (the one which shows the best results or which stands out from its competitors), significant new legislation, etc. This is fine as long as the information is well structured.
- **Strike the right balance:** inform and entice. Arouse curiosity. Informing is good, but see if you can provoke a reaction from your readers by playing the interaction card. If you announce a trade show or seminar, offer tickets to attend to the readers who are the first to react. Push your readers/members into action. See if you can back up this kind of action with simultaneous announcements in your other channels of communication (magazine, e-zine, banner and specific page on your website, your office - e.g. displays in the reception area).
- Make sure that your audience **immediately recognizes your e-zine** among a hundred others.

Have your layout stick to specific styles, typography, etc. Make sure the layout is attractive, with a strong visual effect and your logo. It is best to associate your e-zine with a specific image. Thus, the reader who comes across this design in other sources of information will link it to your e-zine. These references reinforce the synergy among your various means of communication. Make sure that your audiences clearly identify where they can find certain kinds of information. Make their search for information easy.

- **Writing an e-zine is very different from a printed publication.** This is simply because reading a text on screen is more difficult than on paper. As a result, users fly over text on screen. They scan it for key words, whereas they would read a text printed on paper more linearly, looking at the entire text. Complex sentences, long paragraphs and passive sentences reduce on-screen readability. Bear this in mind.
- **Monitor the number of subscribers to your e-zine.** Since they can unsubscribe or recommend your e-zine to people they know, their number will give a good indication of the relevance of your actions and your initiatives. Put all the data on subscribers to your e-zine into a CRM (customer relationship management) programme. This will help you target direct marketing actions (e.g. e-mail marketing or a sponsorship campaign). If you want to surf with the latest technology, invest in an RSS (really simple syndication) system. Imagine ... as soon as news appears in an area of interest, subscribers to the RSS service receive it immediately on their mobile phone or in their e-mail box in the form of a headline, two sentences of introduction and a link to a site. Yours, for example.



GOOD TO KNOW

Advantages and disadvantages of a website or an electronic newsletter

- ☺ Whatever your message or your target audience, **you control** your own **communication process**, from drafting to dissemination.
- ☺ **Continuous** (website) or **regular** (newsletter) communication.
- ☺ **Quality content** that meets the needs and expectations of your **target** audience. They will come back to your site regularly or willingly read your newsletters to keep abreast of your news and your activities (agenda). This means you need to update your site: you must feed it, renew the information. An out-of-date website gives a bad impression and no-one will look at it again.
 - A newsletter is suitable for target groups that you already know.
 - Your website must primarily showcase your activities to anyone who does not know you yet. However, your website will also offer specific pages (secure or not) to those who follow you more closely and regularly.

As an example, consider the case of a restaurant which uses the Internet to present its management, its staff, its location, and, for the regulars, its dishes of the month.

☺ **Global communication**

Your e-mail newsletter and your website bring together a wealth of information.

- The **website** is similar to an online library, with archives and news items. Put information on your website about everything that makes up the life of your organization (at least the part you want to show the general public and highlight). Include links to all articles about your organization, and publications (reports, brochures, catalogues, etc).

At any time, day or night, people can find information on their most common questions, without having to contact you (saving you time). All this wealth of information is accessible at any time, even outside office hours. They can also find practical information like the address of your offices, opening hours, full contact information (phone, fax, e-mail), a map and your organization chart.

In addition, you can have a specific section with links to other useful websites (municipalities, federations, chambers of commerce, etc). Readers appreciate having all the information at their fingertips.

- The **newsletter** brings together several highlights of your news: for example, upcoming meetings, planned activities, new staff, new regulations that have an impact on your operations and those of your members, procedures explained, new buildings or new services.

Useful information and information that does not date can then be stored on your site in an archive, accessible by a search engine inside your site.


☺ **Instant communication**

People who want more information about your services should not have to wait until your offices are open. They will save time if they can find the information they need immediately. And you will be less bothered by requests for trivial information.

 **Expensive**

Creating and designing a website costs a lot because you must turn to outside experts. They can also lay out your newsletters.

You then have to put at least one in-house person in charge of feeding the website with information, bringing it alive, continuously updating it with new information and removing information that is obsolete or of no interest. This person will also gather information to communicate through the newsletter. He or she will write the text (writing for the Web is special: it is short and concise). They must have enough technical knowledge to send out newsletters and adapt content online using the space provided for that purpose by the company that developed the website at your request. They may change the site to some extent: including pictures, titles, text. On the other hand, when it is time to change the form of the website, he or she will turn to the company that designed your website.

 **Uncertainty as to the addressee**

- You do not know who will visit your **website**, at first.

You can choose to secure part of your site, accessible only by using a personal, individual identification code ('login') and a password. You can then select which of your contacts (e.g. all your members) get access to the secure part.

This may lighten your administrative burden, because each member can view their user profile and read information about it directly. They can tailor the information they wish to appear there.

- You can choose to whom you send your newsletters. So you target your information. However, remember that your recipients can forward this information to their contacts. Be mindful of the confidentiality of information transmitted.

 **Content quickly outdated**

Given the immediacy of the Internet and of **newsletters**, new information drives out old, and is itself quickly outdated. Hence the importance of keeping your information constantly up-to-date.

The information contained in your newsletter must be on your website at the same time. If warranted, it may remain in the 'archive' of your website (if the information is still useful to those who view your pages on the Internet).



CHECKLIST OF BEST PRACTICE IN INTERNET COMMUNICATION

- Your website mirrors the general graphic style of your organization (colours, logo, typography, etc.)
- Your URL (Abbreviation of Uniform Resource Locator, it is the World Wide Web address of the site) is listed in all communication supports
- Your site is listed on major search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc.)
- Your site registers what people search it for (visitor profile)
- Your home page has a heading called 'news' that draws attention to each item of news (press releases, agreements, events, etc.)
- You make an annual analysis of visitors to your site
- You make an annual analysis of your visitors' needs
- You make an annual analysis of your site's informative and communicative value
- You "rejuvenate" your site every 3 years
- Your texts include key words with links to further reading
- You never use more than 5 bullet points at a time
- The texts do not occupy more than one third of the screen (or 10 lines)
- Your site has links to other organizations, your members, etc.
- Your site has a secure section for your members
- Your site has a multi-media library where you archive all your organization's communications (press releases, reports, electronic letters, e-zines, etc.)
- Your organization distributes an electronic newsletter (e-zine) regularly (at least once a month)
- You regularly list discussion forums that are relevant to your activity
- You regularly take part in discussion forums
- Your organization is in 'social' or 'professional' networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)

VII. Section Seven

Communication with the media

Disseminating messages through the media is an inexpensive and very effective way to influence opinion. Most media are easily accessible. They offer a wide audience (or readership). Some very specialized media offer very targeted audiences. So check if there are already specialized media (e.g. professional or economic media) that target the same audiences as you.

Radio = 100% speed, 60% emotion and 40% information

The strength of radio is its speed. You can react immediately. But it is also fleeting and ephemeral. It is instantaneous. People forget what they have heard faster than what they have read. You need to weigh your words. You only have a few words, a few minutes, to get your message across. It must be clear, direct and understandable. Your words have to fly, and hit home directly.

TV = 90% emotion and only 10% information

The strength of TV is its pictures. Hence, emotion. If you want to broadcast a message on TV, make sure you use pictures that support and illustrate your words.

Daily press = 80% information, 20% emotion

The strength of print is its content. It is possible to argue, to expand on a point of view, whereas radio and TV require you to stick to basics, to say everything in 20 seconds or one minute. You can go much deeper with the press. You can explain your point of view in detail, qualify what you say, clarify things, and add figures. You have the chance to recall facts, and to put things in context. It is ideal for changing the views of your target audience and getting your issues from public debates on to the agenda of the economic and political world.

Weeklies and periodicals = 50% information, 50% emotion

Magazines are especially suitable for in-depth analysis and full features on major societal issues.

They let you expound your thought in even greater depth. Pictures, and hence emotions, come into play a bit more, and so here we have a ratio of 50% information to 50% emotion.

Example. You want to raise public awareness of the importance of not imposing new tax measures related to energy consumption.

- **Press conference:** present your point of view, get the issue into the news. Involve all the media.
- **Magazine interviews,** in which your view confronts others: you defend and argue your point of view with well-chosen examples. They illustrate your words and speak to the public's imagination.
- **TV interview with one of your members.** What they say affects the audience. An emotion-based sequence strengthens your overall message.
- **A detailed and rational article in a financial journal** known for its reliability. In this article, you state calmly, with supporting figures, the impact the tax measures proposed by the government would have.

To communicate effectively with the media, you have to know them, just as they must get to know you. You must know how they work, how they are organized. Bear this in mind. Adapt to their schedules. Contact them via the communication channel they prefer.

Interaction among media

The first readers of newspapers are ... journalists. They are constantly in search of subjects, checking that they have not missed a fact, an event, a scandal. There is constant interaction among all the media. You should know this, because when a piece of news is released, it is quickly picked up by other journalists and amplified. Better act quickly if the news is about your own organization!

EXAMPLE OF INTERACTION

- 5 am, presenters and journalists at radio stations leaf through the newspapers and dispatches from news agencies.
- 7 am, they broadcast their news bulletins.
- 8 am, the editors of TV channels determine the topics to be covered that day.

The editors of newspapers also rely on radio news reports to choose the issues to give priority to. They scour their newspaper competitors, which have different perspectives on certain items in the news. They also read news from news agencies.

Throughout the day, radio stations continue to send out news bulletins updated with the latest information.

- 1 pm, TV channels make their news broadcasts.
- The newspapers check whether there is anything that has escaped them so far.
- 7 pm, TV news again. The newspapers follow them and put their editions to bed at 8 pm. The papers are printed overnight and distributed in the early morning to newsagents, news stands and subscribers. These newspapers will be read by radio journalists at daybreak.
- The loop is thus completed. The information is relayed throughout the day by the various media, which constantly take into account the way the information is processed (content, approach) by the other means of communication.

The press release

The objective of a **press release** is to provide succinct information to journalists responsible for disseminating information.

Your press release should be:

- **Short:** maximum one A4 page, ideally 2000 characters (including spaces).
- **Precise:** go straight to the point.
 - Title that says what it is about
 - The first five lines (= the "lead") should summarize the information.
 - 3-4 paragraphs giving more details of the items mentioned in the lead. Always start your press release with general data and end with the details. And always put the most important news at the beginning.
 - Quote: highlight a comment by a person (from your organization or talking about your organization), as in an interview. This quote sums up your point of view well, or arouses curiosity, because the words chosen speak to the reader (through a comparison or key figures that make you think).
 - Your identification: a short description of your organization, its importance, its activities, etc.

Example: "The employers' organization represents the interests of 678 companies with 7,002 employees all over the country."

- **Accessible:** Use terms that everyone can understand.
- **Identifiable:** It is important that we can clearly identify you as the issuer. The name and logo, if any, of your organization should be included. On the other hand, avoid mentioning the name of your organization too often. That irritates people.
- **Dated:** Specify the date and place of issue. If you send your release out in advance, but you do not want journalists to divulge your information until later, on a specific date that you tell them, state this clearly in capital letters: 'EMBARGOED until (date). Please respect.'
- **Interactive:** Do not forget to indicate the name of the contact person responsible for answering press questions. This person can collect requests for information and interviews, and pass them on to the official spokesperson for your organization. Provide your contact information (phone, fax, e-mail).
- **Tell journalists** how to get supporting photographs. Get photos ready for them, both of leaders of your organization and ones that illustrate your news (e.g. pictures of your new buildings, your new products, the official

presentation of an award that your organization has won). The ideal way is to make the photos available on your website (possibly a secure part of your website, protected by a password and a log-in). Journalists can then download them.

Give them the address of your website if you have one.

- **Make the journalists' work easy.** Soften the task up for them. Make it so that they only have to regurgitate your statement. Journalists are often overwhelmed with work. They appreciate it when they can simply repeat at least some of the text of press releases. Write the press release like an article ready to be published as it is. Write in the style of the media into which you want to get your message. Write the text from the point of view of the recipients. Consider what is important to them. Take care over spelling and presentation.

- **Who to send your press release to.** If you send it by e-mail, paste your press release into the body of your e-mail. Do not send your press release as an attachment. Keep an up-to-date database of freelance journalists or those with links to mass-market or specialist publications, to the local, regional or national press who:

- have contacted your organization (inquiries);
- have already published articles on your activities;
- write about your sector of activity.

The press conference

Organizing a press conference is not very expensive, but it calls for serious preparation.

Whatever the original purpose of your press conference (to showcase your organization, your services, your views on a social issue), you must first make sure your subject is topical.

The advantage of a press conference is that you can present a subject to a wide audience and generate a lot of questions. These questions will probably be the same for most journalists. Answer them in batches by holding a press conference.

The choice of a date for your press conference

A press conference can take many forms. It is up to you to decide which will be the most effective.

A press breakfast works well when business journalists have a lot of work and press conferences (when companies are publishing their financial results), as does late morning (11 am), which allows daily press, radio and TV journalists to go over your information in the course of the day.

The advantage of a press breakfast or lunch is that you are at the table with the journalists, so it is less stuffy than a formal press conference, where you are in front of reporters lined up in rows. The contact is more friendly.

At a press breakfast or lunch, you give each reporter a copy of your slides, so they can follow easily.

Choose the date of your press conference according to **the schedule of your speakers and the likely schedule of the journalists.**

Suitable speakers are:

- Your official spokesperson
- The project head
- Witnesses (members, clients) or partners with whom you work (as long as their testimony or information matches the subject of your press conference). They add credibility to your speech by talking about what your services or your cooperation bring them.
- A politician or a recognized opinion-leader (possibly).
- A third party who can summarize what your new service does for people.

The location of the press conference

Holding the press conference on your premises allows you to show off your organization and offer direct access to all your in-house resources. Check whether your premises and infrastructure are up to it. If not, rent a hall.

Make sure that, as well as the room in which you make your presentation, there is a lobby where you can provide refreshments or a hot drink for those who arrive in advance. For individual (radio/TV) interviews, choose a separate room, well insulated from noise.

Be ready to receive the journalists a good half-hour before the advertised time.

The invitation to the press

The printed, audiovisual and electronic invitation to the press (general, regional, specialist, professional) must include:

- the subject of the meeting (brief description of 5 to 10 lines that makes people want to learn more)
- the date
- the time
- the place
- the speakers
- a map
- your e-mail address and phone number, so that they can register with you (3 days in advance, at the latest).
Preferably add a registration form that can be completed easily, and sent to you by fax or post. Clearly state your fax and phone numbers, and your postal and e-mail addresses. Specify the deadline for registering.

Reminders for the journalists invited to your press conference

Do not expect journalists to respond to your invitation. You will need to remind them by phone, **two or three days before your press conference**. Ask if you are listed on the agenda of the editorial teams. That is already a good sign, because editors often make decisions on the morning itself, depending on the news-value and available staff. It is up to you to show that the message of your press conference is worth the trip. Your invitation must be persuasive about the importance and the 'new' nature of the information that you will be giving.

The day itself

Get to the facts fast. Do not blather. Be clear and concise: a maximum 30 minutes of presentation and at most 20 minutes for questions and answers. You can set an example by putting (to yourself) 2-3 questions at the end of your presentation. The journalists will then be more inclined to ask questions themselves.

Right after the conference, nothing prevents you from giving individual interviews (in a separate room).

The press kit

Your press kit will contain:

- the press release
- photos you have selected (people, events, buildings, products)
- the history of your organization (key dates) and a detailed explanation of its sector of activity (key figures on your 'core business'). Add a five-line description ready to be copied unchanged
- information about your new service, your new procedure, etc. (illustrated with photographs or drawings)
- detailed quantitative data (reports, statistics)
- CVs (curriculum vitae) of speakers at your press conference, including third parties (members, customers, partners)

Informal meeting with the press

You can also get together with journalists with whom you have a relationship of trust to discuss topics related to your business. When you feel it is appropriate that they know and understand your position, consider holding an informal meeting.

Be sure to prepare your presentation. Provide the journalists with handouts, even if the goal is not to get published. The objective here is to present your views to reporters that you respect and who have followed you for a long time. Or even to rally journalists to your cause.

Remember that the reporters are free to publish an article afterwards that sets out your point of view or situation. So use 'off-the-record confessions' sparingly.

The position paper

This is a document summarizing the opinion or attitude of your organization on social issues such as global warming, the country's economic or social policy, the government's priorities, debates within society.

This document allows you to put down on paper messages to convey to anyone within the organization who might have to communicate on the subject. It means you can be sure that your vision will be known to everyone in-house and that the message they broadcast will be uniform and consistent.

- Devote no more than five paragraphs to each subject.
- Because these documents are closely related to the news, you must constantly update them.
- See also what facts in the news require a position on your part.
- Take the trouble to inform your members about your positions. They will better appreciate the action you take to defend their interests and will also echo your point of view if they are interviewed by the press.
- As these documents are for a wide audience, you can make them available on your website.

A conference, a forum, an economic mission, a visit to several of your members, etc., are all useful for such junkets.

You travel together and you spend time together, which gives you ample opportunity to get acquainted.

In most countries, the journalists' travel and board are at your expense. You invite them with no guarantee as to what they will publish, or even if they will publish anything.

To provide proper guidance to the journalists, the recommended proportion is one person from your federation to each group of three journalists.

Be very selective in your choices, because the investment is heavy. Even though you are not sure of media coverage, experience shows that journalists give you a good 'return' in terms of coverage. The articles are generally longer, seeming to justify the time spent on the press trip.

Press trip

There is nothing better than to take a small group of hand-picked journalists on a press trip, inside your country or abroad, for getting to know them better and building relationships of trust with them.



GOOD TO KNOW

Advantages and disadvantages of a report (article, interview, feature) in the press or a broadcast on radio or TV (report, interview, debate)

😊 Credibility of media deemed neutral

Journalists make themselves liable. They are therefore critical, and verify your sources, as well as the merits of your statements.

That is a plus for readers, who can rely on the information reported by the medium with confidence. An article has great credibility, and gives credibility to your message, which will gain impact.

😊 Information that requires you to be clear, precise and concise


Journalists pass on your information. They are intermediaries between your organization and the general public. If they ask you questions, it is because they want to understand you and to pass on what you want to communicate as clearly as possible. Take care to be clear and credible. Otherwise, they may water down or transform your messages.

You lose control of your communication as soon as you hand it over to them. It is up to you to ensure that you do not misrepresent yourself, by being very clear and precise.

😊 Low cost

On average, a press conference attracts three media. If it is successful, it attracts a dozen journalists.

Whether three or ten media turn up, it costs the same (your PR work, the conference room, invitations, maybe a caterer or photographer).

 **Dependence on journalists' goodwill**


You are not paying the piper.

You do not control the content of the article, nor the date of publication, nor the length of the article, nor its surroundings when it is published (advertising or another related article).

 **Duty to convince the journalists**

You must be very convincing to encourage the reporter to pass on the information. Otherwise you will miss out on a large audience. The stakes are high. Journalists will only devote a news article to you if they deem it interesting to their audience. It is up to you to show them that it is (highlight the advantages for their readers, listeners or viewers, plus news-value).

Hence the value of making their task easier (a well-written press release that can be re-used virtually unchanged - copy and paste).

 **Limited lifetime** of an article (daily, weekly). Readers rarely look at articles they have already read. **One shot**

You cannot publish the same article twice. You can at best make sure that several media speak about you at around the same time, for added effect. This will make you "ubiquitous".

 **Each medium has a specific audience**

Only certain people will read the articles about you. How do your target groups get their information? Make sure you are in the media they consult and read!



CHECK-LIST OF BEST PRACTICE IN MEDIA RELATIONS

- Your organization has a person skilled in communication/media relations
- You have an up-to-date press list
- You have a procedure for updating the press list regularly
- You know the leading journalists in your country personally
- You have been trained in doing interviews with the media: TV, radio and the press
- The people in your organization who are often sought by the media have had specific training in interviews with TV, radio and the press
- Your press releases are dated, and written in the form of a lead and a body of two or three paragraphs of text; they include a standard paragraph about your organization, and the name and telephone number of a person to contact for more information
- Your press releases contain hyperlinks (for subjects that appear on your website)
- Journalists can download photos from your website
- You monitor press articles daily and distribute the results within your organization and among your members (website)
- You hold press conferences on topics that might generate a lot of questions
- Two days before a press conference, you phone those who have not yet responded to your invitation with a reminder
- Whenever you hold a press conference, you distribute a press release and a press kit to each participant. You then send these documents to the journalists who did not come
- Press conference: you limit presentations to 20 minutes or less, and allow time for questions and answers
- At a press conference, you prepare for the questions that are most likely to be asked
- You write a 'position paper' on any social issue that involves your organization
- You systematically distribute your 'position papers' to your members
- You evaluate every major press action quantitatively and qualitatively, and release the results of your actions annually (e.g. number of press cuttings)

VIII. Section Eight

Interview techniques

The **media** are partners worth favouring. Think of them as a **conduit between the public, civil society and your organization**. They inform citizens of activities that you run. Through the media which pass on your key messages, you influence public opinion. At the same time, decision-makers, investors and politicians rely heavily on what the media echo.

Logically, this exchange of information goes in both directions, between civil society and your organization, via the media channels.

When we discussed the 'stakeholders' in an organization, we saw that the media represent civil society and its values. And civil society demands that companies and organizations behave ethically and responsibly. That is to say that companies and organizations are accountable for the social, financial and environmental impact of their activity. If they fail in this duty, the media, whose primary purpose is to inform their audience, are sure to question them about it and ask them to explain.

Whenever you talk to the press, TV or radio, you put your image at stake.

This is a paradox: if you make a mess, you damage your reputation. Without advance preparation, the effect on your image can indeed be disastrous. And you will have the devil of a job to get back what you

have lost. On the other hand, if your performance is brilliant, you boost your image.

So it is worth the effort. See your **reputation as a valuable but fragile asset, just waiting to grow through actions that are well thought out and well prepared**.

Preparation, the key to success

Preparation is the key to success. It is indispensable. You must be ready to handle any unexpected question from a journalist. If the media ask you to explain, you cannot but respond. Avoiding comment is a false step, very damaging to your image and reputation.

The better prepared you are, the more you will gain in confidence and so become even more convincing.

For the sake of professionalism, therefore, prepare yourself. How? Identify journalists; get to know the media and their audiences.

Practise how to answer any questions that may arise at any time. This chapter will show you the technique to follow for successful interviews. It is estimated, in fact, that good preparation accounts for more than 50% of the success of what you say.

GENERAL RULE: IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED, DO NOT GIVE INTERVIEWS

"What are your questions to my answers?"

An interview is not an examination. It is an opportunity for you to convey a message ... whatever the question! Before each press conference he gave, Henry Kissinger, American diplomat, Secretary of State under Nixon and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1973, started meetings with these words: "What are your questions to my answers?" Do like him. He felt that the questions allowed him to communicate his information. He saw the interviews as windows on the world – on his world.

Radio and TV interviews

Why not start with the **most difficult**? For who can do the most can do the least ... **The TV interview** is a dangerous exercise if improvised. It is complex. It involves managing not only the message (= the words), but also all the non-verbal aspects. Managing your image is not easy. Like climbing Everest, it takes serious preparation and training, using proven techniques.

What is true for TV applies broadly to radio interviews and *a fortiori* to press interviews. We shall point out a few differences in the pages that follow.

Your interview has two important aspects:

- **Information.** This is the journalist's work. It is he who supplies the information.

You are not there to give information during the interview!

You will have taken care to brief the journalist before the interview (see page 60 on how the interview unfolds).

- **Illustration.** This is your task as the interviewee. You are expected to show a certain attitude toward the problem and its solution.

The word 'attitude' also implies 'commitment' and 'emotion'.

During the interview, **you must personally demonstrate your organization's commitment.** Stick to that role.

Illustrate your organization's views. Show that it is willing to communicate and that it is taking action. Back up your words with concrete action that you are taking.

Express your organization's **attitude** to the issue.

If journalists believe that you lack the courage of your convictions, they will force you to react. They will push you up against the wall with ever more aggressive questions. When you answer such questions, feel free to show your **emotion**.

- How can you get your message across to journalists? There are **three separate briefings** to give to journalists.

BRIEFING No. 1: First contact

- A journalist contacts you. He asks you to give him an interview.
Know your interlocutor. Ask who you have to deal with.

A reporter? Someone preparing a programme?

You can also use the type of document on page 71. It allows you to take note of journalists' questions, so that you can then pass them on to the in-house person best able to answer them. Taking detailed note of questions and contact information will make that task a lot easier.

- **What programme or subject are they contacting you about?**

- *Is the broadcast aired live? Or is it taped, to be broadcast later?*

- *When will it run?* Bear the time gap in mind, so that you do not provide information or documents that will be outdated by the time it runs.

- *On what channel?*

- *What is the audience?*

- *How much time do you get to speak? How long will you be on the air?*

- *Are other people being interviewed, taking part or speaking? Who are they? What have they said?*

- **What will the topic be? Ask for details!**

- *On what subject and specific issues will they ask you to speak?*

- Why you?

- Why does the journalist want to raise this issue? For what reasons?

If it comes in the wake of an article, ask for a copy of the article if you do not already have one. Always ask to see the journalist's sources. Check them out.

- What do they know about the subject? Check what the journalist knows about the issue. If necessary, give them additional information. Make sure they understand what it is. Remember that the journalist is not an expert in your field. You are the expert.

- Do they know your organization? If not, send them documentation with figures.

■ **What is the time frame? When should the interview take place?**

This lets you know how much time you have to prepare or to find a spokesperson who will take over.

If you are not the best person to answer, advise them to contact someone you think is well grounded in the subject or in a better position to give an adequate answer to the question. Put the journalist in touch with that person.

Concerning radio interviews.

- Before you give your interview, ask whether what you say is recorded immediately. Often, the interview starts from the first contact! Ask not to record right away, so that you can ask them the basic first-briefing questions.
- Do not start the interview immediately. Ask the reporter how much time he or she has before the interview is aired. This will give you time to prepare detailed answers to give to their questions. You have the right to ask for time to prepare.

BRIEFING No. 2: Just before the interview

During this briefing, **convey your message to the journalist. Tell them what is important to you!** The journalist will base the interview on this information.

BRIEFING No. 3: At the end of the interview

Ask the reporter if your message was clear. If it was not, ask him or her to ask one last question to

give you a final chance to get your key message across.

Three factors determine the success of an interview:

Authority: 40%
Words: 7%
Non-verbal aspects: 53%

- **Your authority** (you are an expert, who speaks from knowledge) accounts for 40%. The public will show interest if you are credible in your role. You are on top of the subject, so you are the person best able to speak about it. But do not fall into the trap of experts who prove unable to make themselves easily understood.
- **The words**, or verbal communication, account for only 7% of the success of your interview as a way of communicating. This means that your 7% of words absolutely must include your key message, your goal. In addition, you may not know what footage will be used by the journalist. Often, they shoot more footage than they need. They therefore choose the best moments, the most significant statements likely to catch their audience's attention. Your message must be present in each excerpt that may be seen.
- **Your non-verbal communication**, which accentuates and confirms your involvement, your commitment, accounts for more than 50% of the success of your interview!

The viewers and journalists judge your level of commitment by looking primarily at your **non-verbal** communication. Your voice, your posture, your eyes, your breathing, your facial expressions, all reflect your level of involvement or betray your lack of commitment.

- It is all about perception. Non-verbal factors (the tone and speed of your voice,

STRUCTURE OF A CLASSIC TELEVISION NEWS INTERVIEW

“What are your questions to my answers?”

- 20 seconds of filmed material, framing the issue: *introduction by the commentator / reporter who puts the problem or situation into context.*
- 20 seconds to interview you or your counterpart = *what is the attitude of your organization to the issue?*
- 20 seconds of filmed material = additional arguments and information concerning the possible solution by the commentator / reporter.
- 20 seconds interview with you = *attitude of your organization to the solution.*

confidence, posture, facial expressions, a relaxed stance, and deliberate coordinated gestures) greatly influence the image that you put over.

- **Rule number one:** maintain constant eye contact with the journalist! Hold their gaze. Do not lower your eyes. Look them calmly in the eye, 100% of the time.
- **Rule number two:** Capture the listener by putting **energy into your voice**. Vary your tone of voice; put intonation on key words. Use stress and pauses. This takes practice.
- It is not compulsory to fill a silence. Do not attempt to embroider. Be careful not to talk too fast.
- The **decor** should preferably be neutral, or else in harmony with the topic. For example, to illustrate a technological subject, you could have a background of machinery.
- Pastel **colours** look better on the screen. Think about this when you choose your outfit.
- Have a **natural stance**: relaxed, not tense, with your shoulders loose and your hands resting quietly on the table or at your side. Keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. Are you standing up during the interview? Keep your feet apart, the better to anchor your legs to the ground. Keep your arms at your sides.
Are you sitting during the interview? Cross your feet to keep your posture upright. Do not fold your arms or interweave your fingers. It is better to make open gestures. Keep your hands flat on the table. Be yourself regarding your body language.

Words: how to construct your key message and get it across

On radio or TV, limit yourself to transmitting a **single message**. In print, you can go for up to three key messages.

Link your key message to the values held by a journalist who represents civil society. The 'bridging' technique that we describe below helps you connect everything together into a smooth flow.

Answer questions with your key messages. During the interview, do not lose sight of your goal. Get your key messages in at all cost. Do not hesitate to repeat a key message consistently, regardless of the question. Apply the 'bridging' technique to every question they ask you.

Never, ever say: "I think that ..." or "I believe that ...". Say instead: "I am convinced that ...".

The technique of 'bridging'

This technique allows to get your key message out, regardless of the reporter's question, via the values they cherish. It is very useful, especially against hostile questions.



If you analyse broadcast or published interviews, you will realize that journalists uphold certain values of society that fit in with the ideology of their medium. Through their questions, they want to check the attitude of your organization to those values. Thus, in the Western world, we find values such as family, health, safety, protection of minorities and the 'weak', consumer protection, the environment, culture, quality of life.

Identify with the journalists the values that are current in your country.

(See also the table on page 68)

Ask the journalists with whom you are familiar, with whom you have established a relationship of trust, to draw up a list of the values they have at heart, the values they defend. That way, you will have values that correspond precisely to the realities and sensitivities of your country, not ones modelled on sometimes distant Western values.

- Respond briefly to the question asked by the journalist.
"No, absolutely not." "That is not our analysis."
- Then, you make a 'bridge' or a 'gateway' to the societal value you selected during your preparation.
- *"What matters is ..." "As regards ..." "It is important to ..." "We care about ..." + formulate the chosen value in a few key sentences.*
- Then make a second verbal 'bridge' towards your goal, your key message: *"In our case ..."* + formulate your goal, not forgetting to insert a concrete action.

Question	Short answer, (max. 10 sec.)	1 st verbal bridge 	Press values (max. 20 sec.)	2 nd verbal bridge 	Your goal (key message) (max. 20 sec.)
Question 1 (and replicate technique for the next questions)	"Yes ..." "No ..." "In fact, ... "	"But ... " "What matters is ... " "As regards ..." "It is important to ... " "We care about ... "	Describe your attitude to the value chosen And do so in a few key sentences	"Besides," "In this regard," "In our case, ..." "On the other hand, ..."	Get your key message in + specify your concrete action

PREPARATION OF A RADIO-TV INTERVIEW: VALUE AND MESSAGE

1. After the first briefing, decide what your key message is. Describe it in 3-4 key sentences.

2. Then see which value of the press is closest to your key message. Describe how your organization is concerned with this value in 3-4 key sentences.

YOUR INTERVIEW IS READY! The questions are no longer important!

Press interview

The newspaper interview differs little from the radio or TV interview, except it is easier, because the reporter is less pushed for time. You can therefore

convey a lot more information to them, but do not forget to prepare your 3-4 key messages, using the technique we have just described.



TIPS

- **Prepare yourself:** do not be put under pressure! Ask for preparation time. Prepare your speech in comfort in a quiet place.
- **Practise beforehand.**
Warm your voice up. Before going on the air, do a rehearsal. Pretend to respond tit for tat to the journalist.
Go through it aloud, if possible, in front of a mirror before going in front of the cameras.
- If your topic is complex, **simplify, even at the risk of being less precise. And remember to brief the journalist.**
- **Do not** hide behind **obscure comments**, because that will only attract a further question from the journalist.
- **Keep confidential information to yourself.**
In your contacts with journalists, be aware that you have no control over what is published or withheld from your message.
Do not disclose confidential information. Nothing forces you to answer all the questions! Some information is confidential. Conceal it neatly. Avoid “no comment”.
Say instead: “*That is not important to understanding the problem, the issue, etc. What I can tell you is ...*” or “*I cannot answer that question because it deals with confidential information. However, I can tell you that ...*”
- **Assume that everything you say becomes official.**
Be sure, therefore, of the information you give and the comments you make. Mention only figures that have been checked and are reliable. You cannot retract later, with rare exceptions when a journalist agrees to have a simple informal exchange of information with you. To take things back is to undermine your own credibility.
- Only speak ‘**off the record**’ (supposedly off-air, with no microphones plugged in) to journalists you have known for a long time and whom you trust. But do so with caution, and sparingly.
- On radio and television, **use words a child of 12 could understand.** Keep it simple, as you would if you were to explain spontaneously what you do, the impact of your action and what is at stake to a young person who had never heard anything about it before.
- **Avoid all jargon.** It will make you incomprehensible to anyone who is not familiar with your sector or business!
- **Aggressive or embarrassing questions**
Stay calm at all times and use the bridging technique. It is incredibly effective!
Despite the nervousness and inner tension you may feel (try not to let it show), stay polite and courteous.
Do not show aggression toward the journalist. He or she always has the last word ... in the article or editing!

Even if you feel aggressive, do not see the interview as a boxing match. You would lose. Both you and the journalist have every interest in its going well. Both of you want the best interview possible: he or she, because they want to do a professional interview and you, because you want to convey your key messages in a professional manner. The journalist is not your opponent or enemy. They play their role as a 'challenger' in order to inform and explain.

Avoid being on edge, on the defensive, ready to respond with animosity. Losing patience or becoming aggressive harms your image.

But get things straight!

- **On radio or television, do not repeat** a question or accusations.
- **Do not blame those absent.** They cannot defend themselves and it will make you look nasty.
- **What do you do if you make a mess of an answer on television or radio?** Unless the show is live, stop your answer, ask for the question to be put again. Ask them not to not use a shot that does not suit you because you were not comfortable or satisfied with what you said. But do not overdo this! If you are on the air, stop answering and plunge straight into your key message.



CHECK-LIST OF BEST PRACTICE IN GIVING INTERVIEWS

- You have had special training in media interviews
- You understand and practise the saying, "What are your questions to my answers?"
- You do not accept any interview without preparation (objective / message to be decided in advance)
- You prepare your messages using the technique of social values: 20 seconds, twice, at most, for TV (see page 58)
- You give the required three briefings for a radio or TV interview
- You repeat your messages out loud before any radio or TV interview
- You pay attention to the principles of non-verbal communication: eye contact, intonation, hand position, general attitude
- You use simple words (understandable by a child of 12) for all radio and TV interviews
- You analyse the interviews and draw lessons on how to do better
- You organize interview training for people in the organization who are likely to be interviewed

IX. Section Nine

Presentation techniques

In your job, you are asked to persuade people every day. Persuading is anything but an easy task unless you have a proven, highly effective and simple method to use. You will discover just such a method in the pages that follow. Use it whatever the number of people you need to convince, in-house or in public.

Convince the two parts of the brain

To make a striking presentation, just apply some scientific evidence about how our brain works. In the last ten years or so, the scientific world has made tremendous progress in analysing mental processes. The approach we propose here is based on phenomena related to persuading and convincing demonstrated by neuroscientists.

Be brief!

First thing to know: **you cannot persuade people by the length of your presentation**, but by using a proven technique that we shall explain here. A short presentation ensures better success. **20 minutes are a maximum**. Sustained focus is difficult beyond 20 minutes.

A human being is a complex being. Our decision-making process has been analysed in detail by scientists. To make a convincing presentation, it is essential to know the main foundations of this process.

All parts of the brain

Our brain consists of two distinct parts, each with its areas of expertise.

Characteristics of the two hemispheres of the brain

The left hemisphere of the brain	The right hemisphere of the brain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rational ■ Intelligence (e.g. if someone says “the ocean”, it will ask “which ocean?”) ■ Language ■ Analysis ■ Logic ■ Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relational ■ Associative, imaginative ■ Visual, global ■ Spatial (e.g. ocean, vast expanse of water leading out of sight) ■ Synthetic ■ Artistic
<p>COLD, SLOW</p> <p>Exhaustive verification (with maximum detail, step by step)</p>	<p>HOT, IMPETUOUS</p> <p>Anticipates constantly, no verification, intuitive</p>

The brain likes us to reconcile the two halves, to appeal to its two hemispheres, not to favour one over the other. If you want your audience to absorb your words, you must give it what each of its hemispheres is looking for and wants to hear.

■ Right Brain: desire for a solution: PROMISE.

Show what tomorrow will bring, how your solution will change things and improve the situation.

■ Left Brain: Fear of the solution: PROVE.

Bring proof of what you say; prove your statements with established and verifiable facts.

■ Right Brain: desire for action: DRIVE, ACTIVATE, MOBILIZE.

Spell out the direct benefits of your action for your audience. Encourage them to take action.

■ Left Brain: fear of action: REASSURE.

Release, one by one, the mental brakes that prevent full endorsement of your words. To be

convincing, you need to overcome the objections that remain to following you into action.

Insist on the easy, convenient side that needs little effort or time to get a result. Show that what you are advocating is feasible, realistic and practical.

To persuade, use three types of argument

The arguments that you use must satisfy three parts of our body. You have to talk to our 'head' (rational elements), our 'heart' (emotional elements, linking with the audience) and our 'body' (action).

Three types of convincing argument: HHB

- **'Head'** arguments: intellectual, thought, ideas, figures

- **'Heart'** arguments: emotional, sharing, human

"What is in it for me?" "What are the benefits and direct advantages for me?"

- **'Body'** arguments: action, experience

"This is what we are going to do. We'll start with (action)."

"Believe in my experience. It will be for the best. It's worth it."

"We have plenty of experience in this field. It will help us carry this through."

Experience reassures (see what the left hemisphere wants to hear before deciding to commit itself or take part).

How to build your argument

First and foremost, **adapt the content** of your presentation to the needs of your **audience**. Who are they? Specialists? Non-experts? Managers?

- **Step 1: Start with the conclusion, two or three sentences that sum it all up.** Ask yourself what you want that audience to think, decide or do at the end of your presentation.

- **Step 2: Expound the 'head' arguments (intellectual, thought, ideas, figures).**

Make a list of all the arguments and facts that might support your conclusion. Only use the 3 or 4 most important.

If you use numbers, turn them into clear and simple charts. Use only what you need to make your point.

- **Step 3: Expound the 'heart' arguments (emotional, the benefits or advantages for your audience, how they are involved).**

Limit the number of 'heart' arguments. Ideally one or two arguments are enough.

+ Use 1 or 2 examples that prove what you say (reassure the left side of the brain).

- **Step 4: Expound the 'body' arguments.** Involve your audience so you move them to action. Address the right side of the brain.

'Body' argument: Suggest a maximum of two concrete actions to deal with your issue. What are you asking of the audience in terms of 'winning' action?

+ spell out the benefits of the action (reassure the left brain).

- **Step 5: Conclusion.**

Come to your conclusion.

- **Slides**

You do not need slides (or transparencies) to persuade people! Slides are just back-up. They do not replace the presentation as such. Focus on your bright ideas and arguments that will persuade your audience. A PowerPoint presentation is just one way of presenting the key points in your message. Make sure it remains just an aid.

Remove from your slides anything that is not necessary to understanding your key idea. Focus on key words that express your key messages.

- **Present.** Do not read what is on the screen word for word. Your audience has learned how to read ... and does not need you to read for it.

BODY LANGUAGE		
Show your self-assurance (self-confidence)	Show your enthusiasm	Show your commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Smile. ■ Speak in a loud, distinct voice. ■ If someone asks you a question, get closer to the person who asked it. ■ Use gestures that show openness (do not fold your arms). ■ Make eye contact with people in the audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Smile. ■ Vary your intonation. ■ Move. ■ Use gestures that show support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use friendly gestures. ■ Listen attentively to the others. Show your interest by signs of listening attentively. ■ Go to your audience. Get closer to them.

Prepare

Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. So make your motto *repeat, repeat, repeat.*



TIPS

- Greet your audience with a smile, introduce yourself, thank those present for coming.
- Say at the outset how long your presentation will last. *"I have 20 minutes to explain / demonstrate / present (specify your goal) to you."*
- Agree with your audience on when they can ask their questions. Can they interrupt you during your presentation, or keep their questions for later during a 'question and answer' session?
- Say also whether it is necessary to take notes. What documentation is available? When will they get it: before or after your presentation? If the text is detailed, it is better to hand it out after your presentation. On the other hand, a simple printed version of any slides can be distributed beforehand.

DEALING WITH QUESTIONS

- If someone asks you a neutral question, or one that is advantageous to you, express appreciation of it. Thank them. "As you rightly point out, (...)".
- If you are facing a large audience, or if there is a lot of noise, repeat the question before answering, all the more so when the question is neutral or to your advantage.
- Ask whether your answer is satisfactory: "Have I answered your question?" "Does that answer your question?"
- You do not know the answer to a question.
 - "To give you a proper answer, I shall have to check a few things first ... Let me note down your question ... How can I get the answer to you?"
- If the question comes too early ... say: "I will be happy to answer your question shortly. In the meantime, I'll make a note of it."
- Faced with a real objection, dig into other issues. Find a way of sending the ball back into their court.
 - "How often does that happen?"
 - "Do you use that often?"
 - "When was the last time that happened?"
 - "Does that offset the advantages, such as ...?"



CHECKLIST OF BEST PRESENTATION PRACTICE

- You always prepare your presentations starting with the conclusion and then putting forward arguments that appeal to the head, heart and body, respectively
- You prove every argument that you make
- You reassure your audience at every call to action
- You limit your presentation to 20 minutes or less
- You limit your slides to key points
- You practise every presentation, aloud
- You apply the basic principles of non-verbal communication: eye contact with the audience, tone of voice
- You give the people in your organization who often make presentations training in persuasive communication techniques

X Section Ten

Crisis management

Every organization sooner or later runs into a crisis. An unforeseen event that befalls it, a situation that takes an unexpected turn, numbers less favourable than hoped for, a divergence of views with the executive committee, a serious accident or the death of a key member ... Taking things in hand, going on stage and facing the public then become essential to maintaining credibility and trust.

A crisis = any event that risks damaging the functioning and reputation of the organization.

The only thing that counts in a crisis, whether you are wrong or right, is how you react and communicate. You must restore confidence and avoid misunderstandings and runaway rumours. Easier said than done, when the crisis generates anxiety and uncertainty. However, remember that a crisis can also mean opportunities. Provided you follow some basic rules.

Respond directly

A crisis has broken out? Be proactive. Do not wait until you are forced to communicate. You would only have to justify yourself or go on the defensive, which is good neither for your credibility nor for your legitimacy.

A crisis can escalate quickly. A snowball effect can produce chain reactions that deprive you of any further control if you do not manage the crisis quickly. It is crucial to understand the crisis properly and promptly if you are to keep control.

There are several scenarios:

- A situation in which the organization is unprepared, surprised by a crisis appearing from nowhere. Who could have foreseen the explosion of the warehouse, this accident, that fire?
- A crisis orchestrated by one of your rivals, seizing an opportunity to harm you.
- Loss of control due to bad management, or insufficiently strict or rigorous supervision.
- Crises due to several factors combined.

You can help your members who face a crisis (e.g. a defective product deemed dangerous to public health and withdrawn from sale). Our tips will guide you.

Your first reaction is critical

Your first reaction determines whether the sequence of events will be favourable or not.

If your organization has a clear vision of its goals, if you are ready for anything, it is possible to transform a crisis into an opportunity to make progress towards the goals that you have set yourself. Especially if those objectives are clear from the start. Whatever happens, stay in tune with your mission.

The mission, vision and values of the organization announced on the website and through the organization's other means of communication make full sense once a crisis erupts. Previously, they seemed nothing more than harmless, almost futile little sentences. In times of crisis, the important thing is to stay the course, not to start searching hurriedly for landmarks or navigating blindly in all directions. No over-hasty decisions, knee-jerk reactions or about-turns. The baselines that are the vision, the mission and the long-term objectives should be clear, otherwise it is difficult for the organization to respond proactively to the crisis that affects it. Without those navigation instruments, without this rudder, your organization, caught in a tempest, would fail to withstand the storm.

Crisis management = management of values.

- In the event of a crisis, communication necessarily means answering these two questions:
 1. What stance does the organization take, in accordance with its own values?
 2. What stance does the organization take, to be in line with the values of society? (See also radio / TV interview technique above and the 'bridging' technique on page 59.)

The communication should use factual messages to express the **stance** taken by the organization towards the problem and its envisaged solution.

How to prepare messages

Five steps lead to the message for you to communicate. The message has four parts.

Facts	The context	1-2 values of your own	1 value of society	Stated factual messages
Describe the exact facts				Factual message
	Describe the context of the facts			Factual message
		Show your commitment to your own values		Attitude message
			Show your commitment to your own values	Attitude message

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE:

A major escape has taken place from a prison known for its high level of security. In its statement, the management will express the attitude of the prison in terms of its own values and the values of society.

- Its own values: technological performance. This prison has invested in high-tech electronic surveillance.
- Value of society: the need for security.

This escape is **unacceptable to the management**.

Our surveillance systems have helped provide **specific evidence to the police** that will greatly **facilitate the search**.

Despite all the precautions taken, it appears that the **procedures can be improved further**.

We will do this **as quickly as possible**, with an **external expert** to ensure **complete objectivity**.

This can only **strengthen our ability to improve** our systems continuously and therefore be **extremely efficient**.

For us, public **safety is paramount** and we want ...

Be prepared

So what is the antidote to crises? Anticipation! Setting clear strategic objectives is one thing. Another is to prepare for the worst. Like the Romans said, “If you want peace, prepare for war”. Get ready. Set up a crisis procedure to have “just in case”. Form a crisis committee. Decide what role each member will have in times of crisis; make a list of key people to contact first and design a model press release. Drill your spokespeople in answering under pressure questions fired by journalists on issues that put your organization in a bad light. Simulate your reaction and your statement in worst-case scenarios.

Ask yourself what, in theory, could go wrong or what you could get blamed for. Put yourself in the place of your members or clients.

Communicate in-house, too

One pitfall to avoid is forgetting to inform members, suppliers or employees. Too often, leaders give priority to external communication (the media) and neglect or forget in-house communication. So they risk facing a second crisis, this time in-house, caused by frustration, panic or anger on the part of key personnel or those who are on the front line but have been left to their own devices in a complete fog.

Tell the politicians in your area

Another target is too often neglected: local politicians. If the crisis generates a groundswell of opposition among public opinion, local elected officials often take it up. Politics can amplify communication about a given event. Telling the politicians at the outset of the causes and issues gives you the chance to calm things down and avoid adding fuel to the fire. Fanning discontent and anger among public opinion will draw the ire of all, because when an organization has caused harm to individuals, public opinion will almost always side with the individuals.

Show empathy to restore confidence

Within an organization, a crisis often corresponds to a loss of trust. The feeling of trust is directly related to competence, transparency and empathy. If an organization loses points in terms of

competence, it must compensate with empathy. When all goes well, competence generates 80% of the stock of trust. In times of crisis, that falls sharply and empathy counts for more (50%). The public interprets signs of empathy very fast. It is up to the organization to show such signs, first and foremost by making an apology or expressing regret over what has happened. The audience feels listened to and understood. Their feelings have been taken into account. Confessing your shortcomings or mistakes partially disarms the listener. This reduces anger and grievances a little. It makes the audience feel better, less combative, less vindictive.

Simple messages that you repeat and illustrate

Overwhelmed by emotion, people faced with a crisis are unable to understand your message properly. So make it simple. Content yourself with a few key messages. Three at most; one or two, better still. Do not talk about related topics. The journalist might latch on to them, forcing you to improvise, and distracting you from your core topic. Repeat yourself. Illustrate your remarks with concrete examples, if possible. As long as those examples are different, you can repeat your key messages over and over again during the interview. Select your example carefully – give them human interest.

Assess the media impact

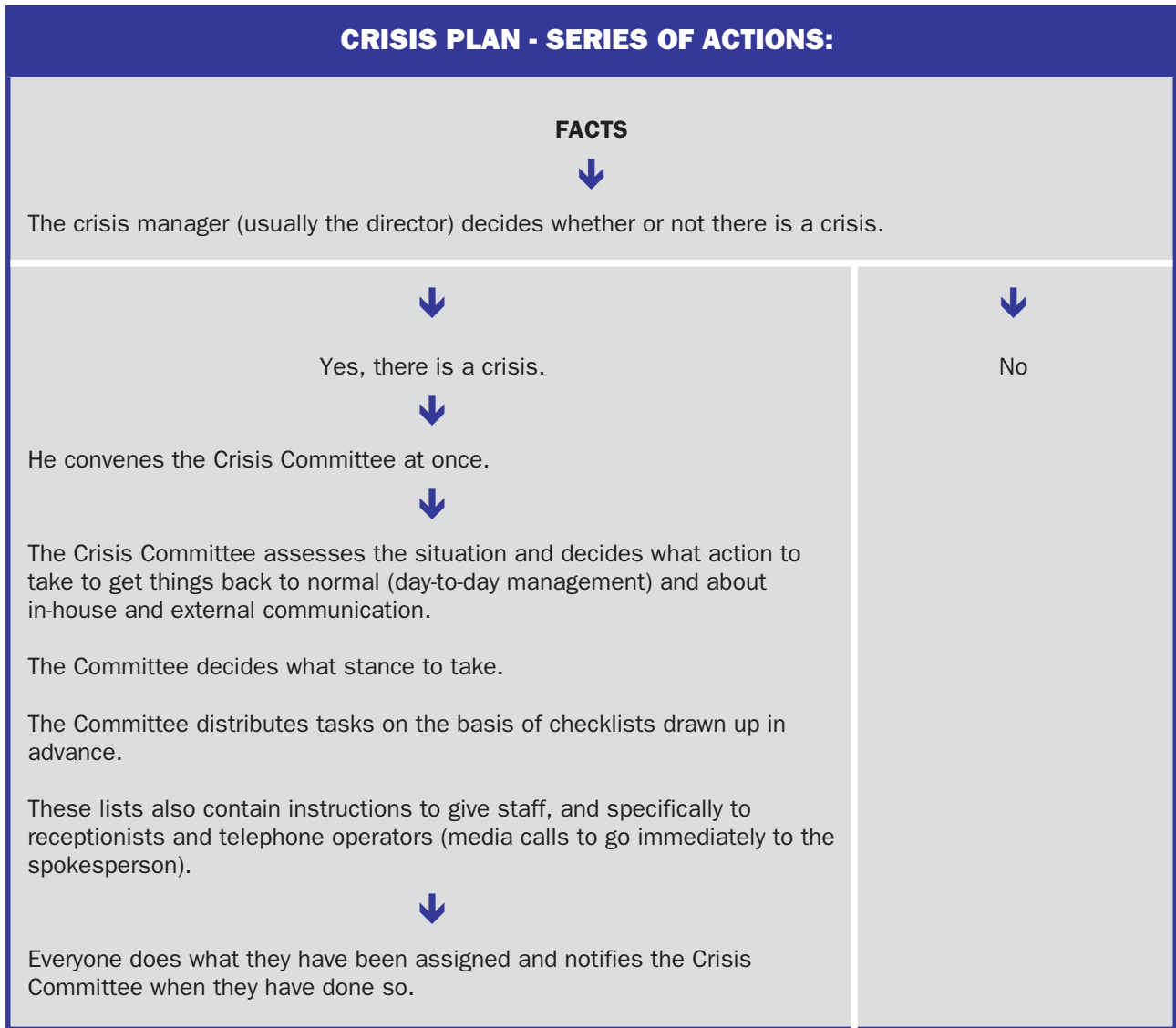
Do not cry victory too soon. Take the time to assess the impact of your communication (see page 33) in the various media. Do they present your point of view without distorting your words? If you have something to add or clarify, communicate again, in accordance with the principle of action-reaction.

Practical crisis handling

Get ready for crises. Anticipate. Do simulations and exercises with your teams.

Do not wait until a crisis finds you unprepared, pressed for time and under stress.

Do it with a calm mind. The result will be far more effective and efficient.



Keep the Crisis Committee as small as possible.

Limit the number of people on it. It will consist of:

- a management representative
- one of the people in charge of your legal department (or else your outside legal adviser)
- your person in charge of in-house and external communication
- a secretary, who will record all changes, the action taken by the Crisis Committee and the turn of events hour by hour.

These written minutes come in very handy later for tracing the response to the crisis as the hours

passed, so that you can assess how your organization handled it. It is also important for claiming damages through your insurance.

Make sure that at all times you are equipped to handle all kinds of crises. Examples: databases on the press, members, staff, relevant authorities.

Bring together all contact details. Put together all the details of contact persons to call or notify in a crisis. This will save you having to do it in a panic, under pressure, with the risk of errors that entails. And you will save valuable time, which will come in handy when every minute counts.

EXAMPLE KEEPING TRACK OF PRESS CONTACTS

Here is a model that can be helpful. Distribute it in-house to people who are on the press frontline, including your receptionist or telephone operator. It is essential that those individuals have the instructions necessary to handle the press properly.

MEDIA CALL FORM

Date of call: _____ **Time:** _____

Name of the person who took the call _____

Name of the journalist: _____

Publication / radio or TV station / channel: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail: _____

Request / Questions: (Nature, subject ...)

Deadline for calling the journalist back: _____

Answered by: _____

Answer: _____

Follow-up needed?

Request processed on: _____ **at** _____ **time**



TEN BASIC RULES FOR MANAGING A CRISIS

1. Do not focus on the problem, but on ways to overcome it. You will thereby find solutions faster and keep your reputation.
2. Show that you are dealing with the situation. Do not give in to panic.
3. Stick to the facts, without extrapolation. Do not jump to hasty conclusions. Do not raise additional problems yourself.
4. Show that you are concerned, that those affected are important to you.
5. Never lie.
6. Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
7. Avoid speculation. Honesty is often more rewarding than a wrong answer, which is quick to tarnish your reputation.
8. No-one outside your organization knows as much about your organization and your services as you do. You are the expert, so act accordingly.
9. Prepare for crises in advance.
10. When you are caught up in a crisis, remember the target audiences that are not affected by it. Do not neglect them.



CHECKLIST OF BEST PRACTICE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- You have a crisis plan in a formal 'crisis manual'
- The crisis manual was written in close collaboration with the management
- The crisis manual has been presented and explained to officials of the organization
- The crisis manual is updated once a year
- Each member of the management and each department head has a list of each other's phone numbers. Anyone who is involved in the management of a crisis can be contacted seven days a week
- You have tested your crisis plan in real life through an exercise
- Your staff know what to do if a journalist calls

XI Section Eleven

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Useful organizations and websites:

The Bureau for Employers' Activities at the International Labour Organization (ACTEMP)

<http://www.ilo.org/actemp>

ACTEMP - The ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities maintains close contacts with employers' organizations in all the member states of the ILO. The Bureau operates from ILO headquarters in Geneva and through a network of employers' organization specialists in the ILO's technical teams around the world. Its tasks are to make the resources of the ILO available to employers' organizations, and to keep the ILO constantly aware of their views, concerns and priorities. It promotes international cooperation among employers' organizations, and runs a programme of activities around the world.

The Bureau is available, via the national employers' organizations, as a gateway through which employers can gain access to some of the best information available on human resources development, industrial relations and a host of other employment and labour market-related subjects. The Bureau also runs a programme of technical cooperation that provides development assistance to employers' organizations in developing countries and countries in transition to a market economy. This work is mostly done through projects financed by the overseas development assistance funds of donor countries.

All the hands-on guides of the "The Effective Employers' organization" series are available from the ACTEMP website.

The Programme for Employers' Activities of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization

<http://lempnet.itcilo.org>

The Programme for Employers' Activities of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO) responds to the training needs of employers' organizations (EOs) by holding advanced training courses in areas which are strategic for economic growth, good governance, development and poverty alleviation.

The Programme offers more than 20 different training programmes, tailored to EO managers, professional staff and board members from Africa,

the Americas, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia.

It assists EOs in meeting the challenges faced by their members, by helping them to:

- Improve their services
- Increase their membership and resources
- Increase the impact and quality of their advocacy and lobbying activities
- Build their capacity to be more influential on important policy issues for employers (employment, social protection, social dialogue, Decent Work Country Programmes, skills policies, etc).

A detailed list of the training offer and more detailed information on the different activities of the Programme are available on its website.

The International Organization of Employers (IOE)

<http://www.ioe-emp.org>

Since its creation in 1920 the International Organization of Employers (IOE) has been recognized as the only organization at the international level that represents the interests of business in the labour and social policy fields. Today, it consists of 147 national employer organizations from 140 countries from all over the world. The mission of the IOE is to promote and defend the interests of employers in international fora, particularly in the International Labour Organization (ILO); to this end it works to ensure that international labour and social policy promotes the viability of enterprises and creates an environment favourable to enterprise development and job creation. At the same time it acts as the Secretariat to the Employers' Group at the ILO International Labour Conference, the ILO Governing Body and all other ILO-related meetings.

In order to ensure that the voice of business is heard at the international and national level, the IOE is actively engaged in the creation and capacity-building of representative organizations of employers, particularly in the developing world and in countries in transition to a market economy.



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