

Communication Brief

Headlines this dull won't get anyone's attention

If you want employees to read what you send them, you need to write good headlines. Here's how advertisers do it:

- **Appeal to self-interest** – Get your main selling point into the headline.
- **Provide news** – Announce something new and different.
- **Arouse curiosity** – Make a statement that entices the reader to learn more.
- **Suggest quick and easy** – Claim there is a faster, simpler way to do something.

Remember: Most people will spend only a few seconds – while distracted by something else – deciding whether to read your message. Think like an advertiser to give yourself an advantage.

Get more out of employee focus groups

Focus groups can yield rich insights – if conducted correctly. For good results, be sure to:

- **Include 8 to 12** participants.
- **Organize topics** from general to specific.
- Ask only **open-ended, non-leading** questions.
- **Avoid using jargon** and any other language that might be unclear.
- **Don't ask "why,"** as doing so can elicit false replies. Probe thoughts and feelings instead.

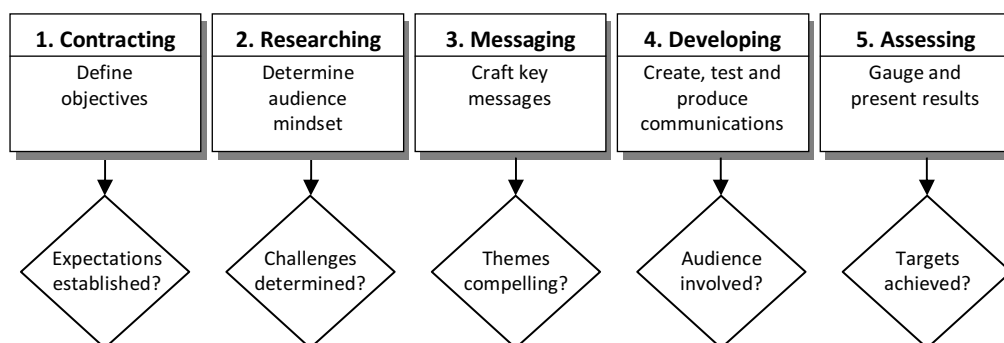
Tips on employee research and communication

Need a model that reviews the key stages of a communication campaign? Consider the change communication model below (for a full-size version go to www.ahscommunications.com/resources.html).

The model describes the critical steps at each stage in the communication process, activities associated with each step and checkpoints to assess progress.

The time you spend completing each step should match the importance of the communication. To avoid re-work later, however, resist the urge to skip ahead to Step 4 until you have defined your objectives, audience mindset and key messages.

Change Communication Model



ACTIVITIES

Identify what needs to be accomplished.	Define what your target audience currently believes about issues related to the change.	Craft persuasive messages that reinforce positive beliefs, counter negative beliefs and enhance people's understanding.	Plan communication approach and tactics.	Measure impact of the change, reactions and opportunities to enhance perceptions.
Determine whom you wish to reach.	Identify the values and perceptions driving those beliefs.	Express each message in terms of a theme, a summary statement and supporting evidence (e.g., facts, statistics, etc.)	Create prototype communications.	Present results to those leading the change effort.
Decide what your target audience should know, feel and do.	Outline likely challenges to your message.		Test prototypes with target audiences.	Supplement communication as necessary.
			Revise communications as necessary.	
			Obtain approvals and finalize deliverables.	
			Communicate the change.	



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Bridging Research and Communication