

Communication Brief

Tips on employee research and communication

Quick Ways to Make Your Message More Persuasive

Use the techniques below to increase the credibility and influence of your message.

- **Align your ideas with theirs.** People will judge your opinion based on the attitudes and beliefs they already hold, so help them make the connection. If your ideas seem to reinforce their worldview, they will be more likely to accept your position.
- **Address counterarguments in your message.** Doing so shows you are aware of opposing views and provides the opportunity for you to refute them before they are raised by others.
- **Keep it fresh.** Don't just reiterate the same tired arguments people have already heard. Instead, offer fresh evidence – e.g., news, analysis, opinions – to get others to listen.
- **Include testimonials from credible sources.** Whenever possible, inject supporting opinions from credible or seemingly unbiased people. This suggests your views are objective and that you have done your homework.
- **Give parallel examples.** Show how what you are advocating has worked at a competitor or a respected company in another industry.
- **Emphasize benefits (not features).** Feature: what something can do. Benefit: how it helps you.
- **Get to the heart of the matter.** Cut through the complexity with a simple summation of your argument.

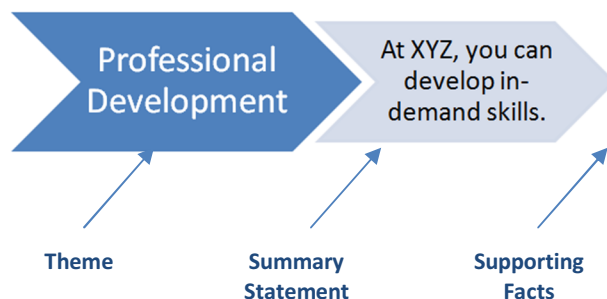
Do This Before You Communicate an Important Change

To come up with the right messages when communicating change, you will want to gather information from two key stakeholder groups: people who need to change and people necessary to implement the change. Start with the issues below.

Consider stakeholders'	By probing
Current perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of current state• Prevalent beliefs and attitudes• Satisfaction with status quo
Likely reaction to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceived gains and improvements• Potential drawbacks and takeaways• Issues and concerns
Communication advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggested actions to take• Insights into what works and what doesn't• Potential derailers

How to Organize Key Messages

To structure key messages, it's helpful to organize them in terms of themes, summary statements and supporting facts. The diagram below shows a key message XYZ Company wants to convey to job candidates for scientific positions. The theme is "professional development," which the company's research suggests is appealing to the target audience. Notice how XYZ sums up the theme in one clear statement and backs up the statement with compelling facts, each of which can then be fleshed out further.



1. We routinely make "best employer" lists for professional development.
2. Every scientist here receives a minimum of 100 hours of training annually.
3. Our operations span four continents, and scientists often take on cross-border assignments.
4. We use cutting-edge technology.
5. We tackle some of the toughest challenges in our industry.

The company will need to organize its other key messages similarly. After doing so, it will be ready to communicate and reinforce the messages through print and online channels, presentations and one-on-one discussions.