

# Communication Plan Template and Example



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# Communication Plan Template

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## **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Provide background on the situation and events driving the need to communicate.

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## **KEY MESSAGES**

Summarize the themes and messages you intend to convey. Describe what the themes and messages mean for stakeholders.

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## **COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

Identify your desired outcomes. To the extent possible, make your objectives SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)

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## **APPROACH**

Explain your overall strategy for communicating the messages. How will the messages be conveyed? What guiding principles will you follow?

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## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

What will generate a positive response? What is likely to cause resistance?

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# Communication Plan Template

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List the specific communication tactics to be employed. Try to think in terms of phases and steps.

Tactic	Purpose	Audience	Timing	Accountable
<b>Phase 1:</b>				
<b>Phase 2:</b>				
<b>Phase 3:</b>				

# Communication Plan Example

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

XYZ Company has been losing ground to competitors for the past five years. To turn the business around, the company must:

- Reduce operating expenses.
- Nurture and reward innovation.
- Enhance product quality.

To achieve these goals, XYZ is implementing a new strategic plan. To ensure employee actions and rewards are aligned to the plan's objectives, the company is introducing a new incentive program.

## COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

1. Employees are aware of what's changing, the rationale and what it means for them:
  - 80% of employees believe the information they received explained the changes thoroughly.
  - 80% of employees believe they understand what the changes mean for them personally.
  - 90% of managers believe they know what to do by when.
2. Employees stay focused on customers throughout the transition:
  - Customer satisfaction scores remain at current level or better.
  - Calls to HR call center are less than five percent above normal.
  - Manager and employee feedback suggests the changes produced minimal noise and distraction across business units.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Positive messages to convey:

- Tighter link between pay and performance
- Less ambiguity for managers assessing employee results
- Chance for top performers to earn more

Factors likely to produce resistance to change:

- Employees must learn new HR processes.
- Employees have more pay at risk.
- Managers need to have tough discussions with low performers.

## KEY MESSAGES

*Rewards* – Employees will have new opportunities for rewards.

- Tighter link between pay and performance
- Better reward opportunities for top performers

*Clarity* – A consistent pay approach will be used companywide.

- Managers have easier time measuring employee contribution
- Common benchmarks used to measure results

## APPROACH

*Gain active support from managers.*

- Provide tools that help managers explain the new incentive program.
- Prepare managers to hold difficult discussions with low performers.

*Provide clear instructions.*

- Keep communications simple, straightforward and direct.
- Help employees understand the new program.

*Listen and respond to feedback.*

- Capture ongoing feedback from managers and employees.
- Maintain flexibility and respond quickly to communication needs as they arise.

# Communication Plan Example

Tactic	Purpose	Audience	Timing	Accountable
<b>Phase 1: Prepare managers to communicate changes.</b>				
<b>Prepare manager briefing kits</b> that highlight changes, explain manager responsibilities, and provide talking points for addressing employee questions and concerns. Include a video portraying manager/employee discussions about the changes and potential employee reactions.	Inform managers of the new incentive program and prepare them to implement the changes in their business units.	All line managers	Feb. 1 – 28	Corporate Communications
<b>Create execution teams</b> consisting of local HR managers to review communication materials and implementation plans for their business units.	Ensure communication and implementation plans are appropriate across business units. Assess whether modifications or additions are needed.	Local HR managers	Feb. 15 – 28	Human Resources
<b>Pilot test briefing kits</b> with selected managers.	Ensure briefing kits achieve desired results.	Selected line managers	March 10	Corporate Communications
<b>Email briefing kits to managers</b> and post a copy on the HR website. Use HR site for posting follow-up information.	Prepare managers to communicate the changes and keep an archive of communications in one location.	All managers	March 24	Corporate Communications
<b>Phase 2: Communicate to employees.</b>				
<b>Hold employee discussions</b> to explain the changes and their implications.	Ensure employees know how the changes will affect their job responsibilities and pay opportunities.	All employees	April 1-30	Line managers
<b>Publish a series of print and online newsletter articles</b> that describe what the changes will mean and how the implementation schedule is proceeding.	Build understanding of what's happening, why and the implications for employees.	All employees	April – June	Corporate Communications
<b>Send an email or letter</b> to all employees stating that by now they should have had a conversation with their manager about the new incentive program. Email managers an advance copy of this communication.	Encourage managers to convey the changes before employees receive the email or letter.	All employees	May 15	Corporate Communications
<b>Phase 3: Survey managers and employees to assess the effectiveness of communication.</b>				
<b>Conduct an online survey</b> with a sample of managers and employees.	Gauge communication results: Compare actual to target results and determine whether follow-up action is warranted.	Sample of managers and employees	June 1-10	Research Group