

Talking your language

Is there a gap – between the messages you send – and your target audience? How can you tell that your messages are being received and understood?

Rubicon specialises in employee communications. That's what we do. If it's not what you do, then talk to us and we'll do our job to help you do yours!

Peter McNulty
CONSULTANT

Tel 01475 727717
Mob 07595 835749

rubicon-benefit.com
peter.mcnulty@rubicon-benefit.com

distinctive communications



We'll find out what your audience needs to know and engage them using clear language and striking design. Whether they're **a**ware, **b**ored, or even **c**onfused, with our help, your communications can take them on a journey to **u**nderstanding and beyond.

Check out the **Rubicon Lexicon** for an **A-Z** of communications and call **Peter McNulty** on **01475 727717** for a chat about how Rubicon can get you talking.

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A

Audits

Objective measurement by a specialist arm's length communications expert will help you to assess the impact of your current communications, identify gaps and find areas for improvement. An audit will inform your decision making and answer key questions such as: Are you targeting the right people with the right messages? Are you using print and web effectively to engage and motivate?

B

Booklets & brochures

Even in this day and age of the pad and pod, there's still a need and desire for the printed word that can be read at a workstation, on the bus, the train, or at the kitchen table. Different audiences relate to different channels of communication in different ways. Use everything at your disposal to cover your bases.

the Rubicon **Lexicon**

C

Coaching

Give your key personnel the skills they need to manage difficult communications, or deal with particularly challenging change such as takeovers and mergers, through one-to-one coaching sessions or small group seminars.

Change

Consulting with employees about change is not just a legal requirement. The way you frame your proposals for the future will have a fundamental impact on the way those affected view your organisation. Planning and implementing communications for employee consultation is key to the success of your change management strategy.

D

Design

The role of design in communication is often underestimated. Dynamic and appealing design can help grab attention, engage and motivate. Think of design as the key that unlocks your audience's understanding of the information you want to share with them. It often makes the difference between people ignoring your communication and embracing it.

That's why Rubicon has a highly experienced in-house team of graphic and web designers.

an A to Z of communications

E

Editing

A fresh eye can help a well-written piece become a masterpiece.

F

Flyers

Short, punchy communications, with high impact messages dealing usually with a single subject (a reminder, a follow-up etc) – take action now!

Focus groups

Researching your audience can help you plan your communications before undertaking any kind of major strategic exercise, and at periodic intervals to 'test the water' as regards the relative success of your existing communications. Informal focus groups based on a cross section of your target audience can provide valuable insight into: people's knowledge, perceptions, understanding, opinions, attitudes, issues and concerns, needs and preferences, abilities, intentions and future behaviours.

G

Gatekeeper

Key audience opinion-former who, when identified, can be useful for trial run communications, surveys, focus groups and audits.

H

HR communications

Where in-house resources are not available or are stretched, engaging a third party communications specialist can provide the solution for communications such as pensions, flexible benefits and occupational health.

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I

Interactive

Effective communication involves a two-way dialogue, not just an outpouring of information in one direction (from you to your audience). Interactive communications, allowing the audience to provide comments and feedback, are vital to the success of any communications strategy. Although normally associated in today's web culture with content management websites and social networks, it can also be achieved through focus groups, surveys, face-to-face meetings and even a letters' page in a newsletter or company magazine.

J

Jargon

The enemy of all communications. Many people find it hard to shake off the jargon because they spent so long trying to work out its meaning! Translating technical jargon into straightforward language is a professional skill that shouldn't be underestimated. Use jargon and you will not be understood. Lose jargon and you may well communicate in a compelling and engaging manner that will be read and acted upon.

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K

Knowledge

One of the main reasons you should be communicating. Give people the knowledge they need to make educated decisions.

L

Leaflets

A leaflet allows you to grab attention and make key points using a short and snappy approach. Regular communications on specific strategic issues relating to an ongoing change or a series of one-off topics help keep open the dialogue between you and your audience.

M

Measurement

Can you demonstrate that your communications are working and that they add value? If they're not, do you know why? Successful measurement isn't just about seeking answers. You need to ask the right questions. Surveys can provide hard measurement about how many people are actually reading your publications (online or offline) and soft measurement can show how they react. Without clarity the numbers are meaningless.

Media

Change can provoke anxiety and uncertainty. It's important to make sure that you manage your messages and time these to meet the needs of your change consultation exercise. Put in place a crisis management plan with pre-agreed press releases to manage any media leaks.

N

Newsletters

Essential for keeping regular contact with your audience and can be published in traditional print format or online.

Newsletters can provide information in a variety of ways. Words, photographs, graphics and charts can all be used to communicate your message in an engaging and entertaining manner.

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Peter McNulty APMI



Peter can help you get the best return from your investment in rewards by maximising employee appreciation and usage.

'I have an in-depth understanding of the products and services available in most employee benefit packages. These can seem very bewildering to employees if not backed

up by a communications strategy that reaches individuals using all available channels.

I can help you assess the effectiveness of your communications, plan consultation programmes around future changes and help you decide the best tactics to use to reach your specific audience.'

Tim Webb FIA



Tim has worked for some of the UK's leading HR consultancies, providing pensions solutions for clients throughout the UK and overseas.

'The current level of pension change is perhaps even greater than the likes of the introduction of Personal Pensions in 1988, the Pensions Act 1995 and simplification in 2005.

Against this background, trustees and employers simply must communicate effectively with their employees. I believe that communication is a key part of the success of an employee benefit programme and I work alongside Rubicon to provide actuarial and pensions consulting support with regard to communications.'

Peter 01475 727717 | Tim 01403 788430

O

One-to-one

Consistently cited as the best way to communicate and make sure your message is both received and understood. Obviously a time consuming and expensive method of communication if you have a large audience. However, this issue can be alleviated somewhat through the use of podcasts and drop-in surgeries.

P

Production

Often the invisible part of the communications process but vital to the successful implementation of a project. Outsourcing your print production can save you time and money and offer expert hands-on advice about choosing the best method of delivery for your particular project.

an A to Z of commun

talking you

Q

Q&As

Provide feedback in your regular newsletter and/or on your website through a series of answers to the most common questions on topical subjects, or anticipate difficult questions in a consultation exercise and minimise traffic to your administration department.

R

Roadshow

Whether launching a change consultation or conducting a periodical face-to-face, a roadshow can repay the effort involved if staff feel you have 'gone the extra mile' to help them understand the issues. To be successful, a roadshow needs carefully managed communications, including briefing notes for presenters, scripts, powerpoint presentations and handouts for attendees.

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S

Statements

Personalised statements allow you to segment your audience and give them the targeted information and messages most appropriate for their needs, so that they can make informed decisions. Most people tend to view statements highly favourably as they are the communication that has most relevance.

T

Target audience

Focus your communication on the people with whom you need to engage. A one-size-fits-all approach won't do the job as your specific requirements will need a tailor-made strategy.

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U

Upper case (or lower case)

'Noise' can derail a communication. Anything that gets in the way of the message is to be avoided. Often it's the smallest errors that people focus on to the detriment of the carefully crafted communication you've toiled to produce. Expert proofreaders are worth their 'wait' in gold and can help make sure that there are no nasty surprises 'weighting' to be found.

V

Video

Broadcasting your messages can be a fun and effective way of getting across a complex communication in a short space of time. DVDs can be used as an introduction to a roadshow or other company presentation and/or can be taken away to watch in an employee's own time. Alternatively, podcasts now provide the opportunity for broadcasts to be made on secure intranets at comparatively little cost, although care must be taken as to the effectiveness of these if they are overused and lack the necessary scripting to make them entertaining and engaging.

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W

Websites

Your overall communications strategy will probably involve at least some level of online activity. Some younger audiences may now be unwilling to engage with anything other than an online channel so Facebook and Twitter may in future form part of your thinking. Websites based on content management systems allow you easy access to update your messages on a regular basis, keep the site fresh and ensure that it carries relevant communications about the latest developments in your area.

Writing

Making your communications interesting and engaging requires the ability to analyse the make-up of the audience and write in language they'll understand. It's vital neither to underestimate people's intelligence nor overestimate their knowledge.

Workshops

Enhance understanding and awareness of the aims and objectives of your communications strategy. Find out more about your target audience, how best to reach them and measure the effectiveness, or otherwise, of your existing communications.

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XYZ

Thank you for reading!

If you've got this far, thank you for reading. Rubicon can help your communications strategy get from ABC to XYZ so call us now on 01475 727717.

the Rubicon Lexicon

Registered Office:
Rubicon Benefit
Communications Ltd
Homestead House
Tuesley Lane
Godalming
Surrey GU7 1SG

distinctive communications



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with Rubicon