

# Communicating Change



## Introduction

Communication is key. It becomes especially important at times of change. When we go through periods of change it is vital we feel kept up to date with new information. Explaining clearly what is happening can help someone to feel less anxious.

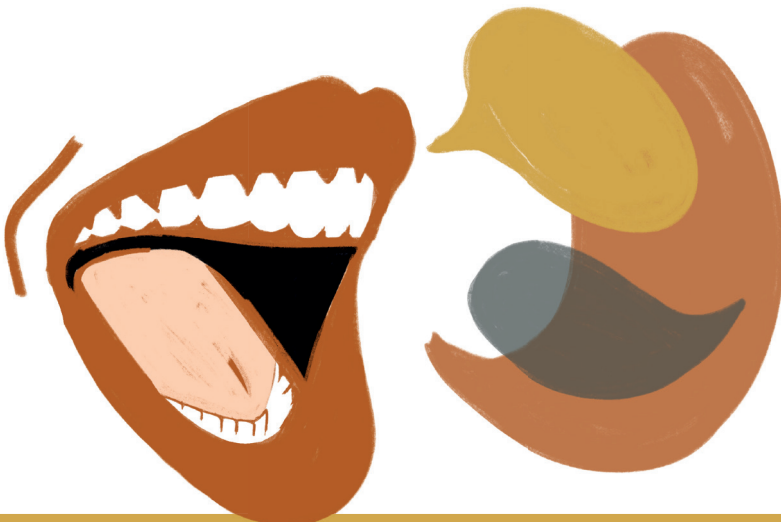
There are four main types of communication that people can use:

- ◆ Verbal Communication
- ◆ Non-Verbal Communication
- ◆ Visual Communication
- ◆ Written Communication

Depending on the situation a mixture of these will most likely be used at any one time.

## Verbal communication

This is probably the most common form of communication in daily life. We talk to people all the time but it is important to use it well. Verbal communication can either help a situation or make it worse depending on how you use it.



It's important we use the right words when talking to convey the right message. However, it's not just about the words. The pitch, tone, and speed of your voice all matter, pauses, logic and flow also have a big impact.

It is also good practice to adjust the way you are speaking based on the other persons non-verbal responses. For example, if they are looking nervous maybe change the tone of your voice so it's softer and slow down.

Especially when dealing with change, asking clarifying questions can help to make sure the other person has understood what is being said to them. This avoids any misunderstanding and gives them the option to ask for clarification back.

Choosing appropriate language is also important. Using words that someone doesn't understand won't help a situation, it will only cause confusion. Think before the conversation the kind of person that you're going to talk to, the language they would normally use and adapt your own to suit.

## Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is everything around the physical act of speech. This includes things such as the tone, pace, posture, body language, facial expressions, and hand gestures. We should aim to use these non-verbal skills to aid and reinforce the words that we are using. They can completely change the tone of a conversation and the intent behind the words being said so it is important to use them correctly to get the right message across.

If we use non-verbal communication in the wrong way, it can easily send the wrong message. For example, crossing arms, fidgeting, looking away from people that are talking can send a message that you are unapproachable, making the other person feel uncomfortable or anxious.

At times of change our body language and active listening skills can really help to elevate a situation, whether good or bad. At times of welcomed change having an excited tone of voice, open arms, smiling expressions can all help to heighten those feelings of happiness and success when communicating with someone. However, on the other side if someone is going through a time of un-wanted or difficult change it can be used as a way of support. Often, we say actions speak louder than words and sitting with someone and listening to them can be a huge help.



## Visual communication

Visual communication is the ability to use resources such as images, designs, and graphics to create a message. Visual aids are a great way to enhance and create a powerful presentation. This will then help you to effectively communicate your message. There are 4 main types of visual communication:

- ◆ Typography - Design features for letters and characters
- ◆ Graphics - Illustrations, images and logos
- ◆ Layout - Arranging the elements effectively on the screen or page
- ◆ Motion - Animation or videos to add a dynamic element

Using visual aids is powerful and can help you to express ideas or concepts. It can sometimes be easier to explain to people what you mean using images or a short explanatory video. This is more commonly used in advertising or giving presentations. By mixing visual communication with verbal communication you can really enhance your message and it will have a much bigger impact.

Visual methods have the power to inspire people and inspire change. They allow you to reach larger audiences without the worry of language barriers. However, it's important to use them correctly so you don't send out the wrong message and cause mass confusion.

Use appropriate text and images for the audience and message. Use relevant colour, fonts, and designs for the purpose. Finding videos that back up your message is great for creating a more interactive presentation and re-enforcing messages in different ways. These are all great ways to help create connections with the audience and help with retention of the information.

## Written communication



Finally, we have written communication. Another extremely powerful communication tool that can be used in so many ways. Writing is one of our main ways to communicate, whether it's through letters, emails, texts, or social media. In the workplace email communication is huge and it's used for anything from general business communications to meeting requests.

The way that we write is important. It's important to think about who you are trying to write to and why, this will change the way you construct your communication to them. In some situations, it's ok for a less formal approach, in others you might need to put more thought into your language and the complexity of the writing. If a wider company change is happening you may want to construct posters, website posts, emails, or brochures to explain. Each of these may use a different style of written communication.

We should think about the tone of our writing. It's very easy for people to misunderstand written text as much of it is down to personal interpretation and this is what you are trying to minimise. Using a professional tone mixed with a level of friendliness will help to give that personal connection.

Sentences should flow nicely and include the correct grammar and punctuation. This includes the correct use of tenses, commas, and full stops. You may even want to use exclamation marks or question marks to make an impact if appropriate.

It's always best to plan before you start writing. This helps to ensure you have a clear message and structure for the content. Choosing the right words is key. The words will determine how the audience interprets your message and knowing your audience is essential for this part. Explaining terms people may not understand is important and you should avoid using abbreviations or complex words.

Once you have learnt how to properly use all of these forms of communication effectively you will be able to get any type of message across. With anything it can take practice and it is mostly a trial and error process. Find the style of communication that works best for you and your needs and utilise it to the best of your ability.