

# Communications Glossary<sup>1</sup>

## Adult learning

Adult learning is a specific methodology for education of professionals and adults. It differs from the methods used in the formal education system as adults learn best when

- learning is accomplished through dialogue
- they feel respected as responsible self directed learners
- they feel their knowledge and experience are valued and can be shared
- they feel able to trust, sense safety in the learning environment
- they see how the skill or information is relevant to their lives or their work
- when they see that the information or skill is immediately useful in performing tasks or to deal with problems they confront in their lives.

## Advertising

Those forms of PR and marketing communication aimed at the influencing and /or promoting purchasing behaviour with regard to the services and products of the organisation. Successful advertising is based on principles such as "*perception is the only reality*", "*one picture is more powerful than a thousand words*", "*emotion is what triggers action*". Advertising tools range from billboards and TV spots to direct mail.

## Branding

Branding is the use of texts and or images to create a specific image and positive associations for a person, organization, product or service.

## Capacity building

'Capacity building is the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular), human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems. Capacity building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders participate (ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and water user groups, professional associations, academics and others. Capacity building are activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way.

## Communication

Communication is an activity in which a sender transmits a message, with or without the aid of media and vehicles, to one or more receivers, and vice versa. The way in which communication takes place is referred to as the communication process. The ideal form of communication is a two way process aimed at mutual understanding, sharing of values and action. For governments the two-way exchange of information is a means to gain cooperation of groups in society by listening to them first and clarifying why and how decisions are made. In an instrumental approach governments use communication

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with other instruments to support biodiversity conservation to address economic constraints and to motivate action. Governments also use one-way communication to inform audiences about policies and legislation.

### **Communication plan or strategy**

A communication plan or strategy sets the communication goals, chooses the right media and messages and sets out the method of evaluation. One first analyses the management or biodiversity issue one wants to address. The second step is to analyse what communication obstacles have to be addressed to reach or change the relevant stakeholders. The third is to define for each group of stakeholders one needs to communicate to (*the target group*) the communication objectives, the messages and the means.

### **Communication objectives**

Communication objectives are different from the organization, policy, project or program objectives. Communication as an instrument for the organization, policy, project or program may have the following objectives: setting agenda, forming opinions, raising awareness or creating involvement, generating support, changing knowledge, changing attitudes, changing behaviour.

### **Corporate communication**

A management instrument that is used to harmonise all forms of communication in such a way that the Ministry acquires and/or retains the image it wishes to acquire and/or retain among its target groups and customers (both internal and external). Two key concepts in relation to corporate communication are image and identity. In successful organisations corporate communication is a priority of the top executives.

### **Diffusion**

Diffusion is a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The members of a social system are on the basis of innovativeness classified in 5 groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, laggards behind. Each group needs a different marketing communication approach. The diffusion process contains five steps: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, conformation and adoption or rejection.

### **Education**

Is the guiding of learning processes in the form of instruction, experiencing or setting examples. Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary through the tertiary institutions. Non formal education are organized educational activities outside the established formal system, intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable objectives. Informal education is the process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience, such as family, friends, peers and media.

Education is a set of processes that can inform, motivate and empower people to support biodiversity conservation, not only by making lifestyle changes, but also through promoting change in the way that institutions, business, and governments operate

**External communication**

All forms of communication that are geared towards external target groups. There are two types of external communication: press communication (or media relations) and communication aimed at the general public or specific external target groups.

**Focus group**

A major tool for listening is the use of focus groups. A focus group is a non-directive type of interviewing a specific social group: a segment of consumers, voters or stakeholders in a policy issue. It is a technique in commercial and social marketing. It draws on group interaction to gain greater insight into why certain opinions are held. Focus groups are used to improve planning and design of new products or programs, to provide means for evaluation and to provide insights and qualitative data for communication and marketing strategies. Good consumer-orientated companies have been using focus groups for years. Increasingly they are used in politics, policymaking and policy implementation.

**Formal communication**

Formal communication in general is exchange of information that adheres to the rules and standards that apply to the formal relation between organizations or between the organization and the individual. It is an effective form of communication to establish clear and precise transactions and statements. Formal communication takes place in written form through letters, contracts, articles and speeches during official meetings and recordings of those meetings.

**Formal Education**

Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary through the tertiary institutions.

**Framing**

Framing is a process of selective control over the individual's *perception* of media, public, or private communication, in particular the meanings attributed to words or phrases. Framing defines how an element of rhetoric is packaged so as to allow certain interpretations and rule out others.

**House style**

The house style of an organisation is the codification of the rules how to communicate externally. A house style manual contains standards with regard to logo, colours, lay out, typography etc. in all forms of written communication. It also contains procedures and standards for oral communication and organizational behaviour. House style is an instrument of corporate communication and culture. It is closely connected with marketing. In successful organisations management and control of house style is a priority of the top executives.

**Identity**

(Corporate) Identity is the way an organisation wishes to be perceived by the outside world. The corporate culture is an essential part of the corporate identity.

**Image**

(Corporate) Image is the way a person or organisation is actually perceived by the outside

world (clients and stakeholders). The corporate image is the result of the actions and behaviour of an organisation and its staff.

### **Information**

Information is the deliberate and systematic transfer of knowledge by means of processed facts and data aimed at opinion forming or decision making.

### **Informal communication**

Informal communication in general is exchange of information on a personal basis and adheres less to the rules and standards that apply to the formal relation between organizations or between the organization and the individual. It is an effective form of communication to establish and maintain relationships, to discuss sensitive issues and get better and more detailed personal feedback. Informal communication takes place by face to face meetings often in informal settings, corridors, happy hours, pizza lunches etc.

### **Informal Education**

Informal education is the process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience, such as family, friends, peers and media.

### **Intermediaries**

In communication an intermediary is a third party that offers *intermediation* services between a sender and the intended receivers of communication messages. The *intermediary* acts as a conduit for the messages and facilitates communication. Typically the intermediary offer some added value to the transaction that may not be possible by direct communication, e.g. credibility, knowledge of the target group etc.

### **Corporate Information**

The information on the organisation has three functions: disclosing, performing a public service, acting as an instrument to support organizational policies or programmatic objectives.

### **Internal communication**

All forms of communication within an organisation. Internal communication has a strong link with the corporate culture. It is geared towards the interests both of the organisation and of its staff. It takes the form of both formal and informal communication.

### **Interpersonal communication**

All forms of communication involving direct interaction between two or more people. It is the opposite of mass communication. Inter personal communication is highly appreciated by the "*receivers*". It satisfies their needs of acknowledgement. Tools are visits, phone calls, interviews, informal meetings, personal letters. The effectiveness of a personal approach is the possibility to customize the message, receive feedback and ensure action.

### **Knowledge management**

The set of disciplined and systematic actions that an organisation takes to derive the greatest value from the knowledge it acquires, creates, stores, shares and uses.

**Knowledge networking**

The process of sharing and developing knowledge through human and computer networks. Knowledge resulting from people sharing information with one another formally or informally. Knowledge networking often occurs within disciplines (such as programmers communicating with one another) and projects (such as all of the people working on a new software product sharing information with one another).

**Lobbying**

Lobbying or public affairs are a specialised form of public relations. It refers to those activities aimed at building up and maintaining informal relations with formal decision-makers. The informal relations are used to influence decision making processes in the interest of the organisation, its program and/or objectives.

**Marketing**

Those corporate activities aimed at systematically identifying, satisfying and creating the needs of current and potential market parties. The optimal form of marketing is a mix of product, price, place and promotion (marketing communication). Marketing is connected with continuous research of the market, the current and potential customers.

**Marketing communication**

Those strategic activities – based on research of trends, target groups and/or customers - to promote the services or products of an organisation based on such principles as *"perception is the only reality"*, *"it is better to be first than to be best"*, *"exclusivity is better than imitation"* and other principles of trends in society. The communication is aimed at acquiring a top *brain position* for the brand or product. The core business of an organization influences the major choices of marketing communication strategy, as a consumer oriented business has a different market than a business to business operation. A nature conservation fund has a different market than a nature conservation research institute.

**Maslow's hierarchy of needs**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the four lower levels are grouped together as deficiency needs associated with physiological needs, while the top level is termed growth needs associated with psychological needs. While our deficiency needs must be met, our being needs are continually shaping our behaviour.

**Mass communication**

All forms of external communication which are theoretically accessible to everyone, as use is made of mass media and mass communication vehicles. The characteristics of mass communication are that it reaches a large number of people at the same time; it is easy for the receiver to ignore the message; it is not possible to customize the message for individual receivers; it is difficult to obtain feedback; it is relatively cheap per receiver reached.

**Message**

The message of communication is the content one sends to the receiver. In communication planning one formulates the message in terms of the desired residue of

the communication in the mind of the receiver. These are often one-liners, with an emotional undertone appealing to the values of the receiver and inviting him/her to the desired attitudes or actions. The message is always transmitted by a person or by other means. The body language or the choice of the medium has to support the message, if not the result can be counter productive ("*the medium is the message*").

### **Networking**

Networking consists of exchanging information and establishing personal connections. People network in many different settings: on the telephone, in hallways, in company lunchrooms, at professional conferences, at trade shows, company meetings, classrooms, lounges, hallways, elevators, airplanes, trains, busses, hotel lobbies and waiting rooms. Some networking is carefully planned and some just happens. Networking is friendly, low-key and essential in our complex society. People network to: advance their careers, advance their own business, to increase their impact on the world and to improve their social lives.

### **Non Formal Education**

Non formal education are organized educational activities outside the established formal system, intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable objectives. This can be e.g. professional updating courses organized by professional associations, trade unions, women's organizations, NGOs etc.

### **Process or interactive communication**

All forms of communication, both internal and external, which are designed to ensure that a policy-making, program, project or management plan development process proceeds as smoothly as possible and that through an optimal involvement of major stakeholders the final result can count on a maximum of support. Communication in this sense is an *integral part* of the process. Tools are hearings, round tables, focus groups, workshops, electronic discussion groups, telephone interviews, live shows on mass media, excursions etc.

### **Product or policy communication**

All forms of communication, particularly external, which are designed to put across a policy or organizational product (policy proposals, documents, projects) as favourable as possible. Communication in this sense is *about* a policy or product. Tools are annual reports, books, brochures, CD Roms, AV presentations, websites, lectures, articles, newsletters etc.

### **Public affairs**

Public affairs or lobbying are a specialised form of public relations. It refers to those activities aimed at building up and maintaining informal relations with formal decision-makers. The informal relations are used to influence decision making processes in the interest of the organisation, its program and/or objectives.

### **Public awareness**

Public Awareness brings the issues relating to biodiversity to the attention of key groups who have the power to influence outcomes. Awareness is an agenda setting and marketing exercise helping people to know what and why this is an important issue, the

aspirations for the targets, and what is and can be done to achieve these.

### **Public participation**

Public participation is an approach for governments, organizations and communities around the world to improve their decisions by involving those people who are affected by those decisions.

### **Public relations (PR)**

The PR of an organization is aimed at systematically promoting its objectives and priorities. PR aims to realize mutual understanding between the organization and its main clients, other stakeholders and target groups. PR uses free, paid or sponsored publicity. It is based on the principle "*be good and tell it*" or "*be good and let others tell it*". PR tools are advertising, new letters, websites, brochures, gimmicks, etc. The relation management is often supported by a specialised information system, which contains information about clients, last contacts, etc.

### **Specific forms of communication**

Specific forms of communication are e.g.: result communication, risk communication, crisis communication, labour market communication, financial communication.

### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are those people or organisations which are vital to the success or failure of an organization or project to reach its goals. The primary stakeholders are (a.) those needed for permission, approval and financial support and (b.) those who are directly affected by the activities of the organization or project. Secondary stakeholders are those who are indirectly affected. Tertiary stakeholders are those who are not affected or involved, but who can influence opinions either for or against.

### **Survey**

Regular or incidental surveys are an important tool of communication managers. They can be aimed at researching the market, the degree of client satisfaction or a specific target group one intends to communicate with. Tools are trend panels, focus groups, personal interviews, questionnaires etc. Successful organisations have integrated such surveys in their management cycles and relation management systems.

### **Target groups**

A target group is a group of people which you need to reach with your communication in order to realize a result (see communication objective). For communication purposes is better not to view them in terms of statistics but as people of flesh and blood. It is best to segment the target group as far as possible and identify the opinion leaders (name, address etc.) to whom face to face communication is possible. It is important to explore how the target group relates to the biodiversity issue and what would motivate them to act as desired. One has to realize that for successful communication their perception of the issue is the starting point. Information about scientific facts will not convince them. Most probably our issue might not even interest them: it is a fact of life that for any issue there are always many more people not interested in it than that are interested.

**Unique Selling Point – USP**

Something that sets your product or service apart from your competitors' in the eyes and minds of your prospects