

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY – HOW TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

To communicate effectively with your audience, you need to:

Communicate your message
clearly

Create content with a purpose

1. PLANNING CONTENT AIMED AT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Use personas to gain a deeper understanding of who you are trying to target - *You can't target everyone!*
- Creating a persona will allow you to understand customer motivations and find out what really motivates them
- Use word of mouth and social channels to discover where your consumers are engaging with content and the type of content, they interact with

Key message: DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Useful link – LinkedIn advertising targeting criteria as a helpful prompt for discovering your target audience:

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/lms/answer/722>

2. STRUCTURE YOUR CONTENT:

Your overall purpose when producing content is to help your audience, not to sell

Use the 'know, feel, do' framework to plan your content: As a result of reading your content ...

- What do you want them to **know**?
- How do you want them to **feel**?
- What do you want them to **do**? - make sure you include a clear 'call to action' (CTA)

What medium and/or channel will you choose?

Plan your writing:

Think about your readers:

- Put yourself in your readers shoes
- How much time do you think they will have?
- How much detail do they need?
- What's your relationship with them?

Group your point:

- Write out all the points you were thinking of making
- Group them together
- Mind-maps work well for this

Pick out the most important point:

- Put the points in order, the most important first
- Is it outcome based? Does it add value to your reader?

Break it up with sub-headings:

- Breaking up block text makes it less intimidating
- White space is important
- Helps readers skim to the parts they care about

The two-minute test:

- Does it pass the know, feel, do test?

When adapting your content think about changing:

1. Format/medium
2. Imagery
3. Headlines – for example this changes between B2B and B2C, as well as industry
4. Length of article/blog
5. Use of hashtags (or not)

3. HEADLINES – TOP TIPS:

Focus: What’s your angle?
 The outcome of the work, the main point, or your opinion?

Summarise: Can you express that point in six words or fewer?

Surprise: Can you make it more unexpected, or provocative or playful?

Top tips on style:

<p>Do’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it natural, draw the reader in • Keep it short, be as concise as possible • Use sub-headings in your content 	<p>Don’ts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force it, if it sounds forced or exaggerated, it will undermine your message • Use clichés • Be too clever, if you have to re-read a headline a few times before it makes sense, it’s too complicated
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Useful links:

- <https://buzzsumo.com/blog/most-shared-headlines-study/>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/types-of-blog-headlines>
- <https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/writing-headlines/>

4. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WITHOUT WAFFLE OR JARGON: Top tips

- Read your work out loud to find out if it sounds like something you would really say. Don’t try to dress up your words to sound impressive – use natural language.
- Be careful about using acronyms and abbreviations; most people won’t admit when they don’t understand something

5. COMMON MISTAKES & PITFALLS:

Common mistake	What to do
It’s all about you, not your reader	Put yourself in your readers’ shoes
What a lot of waffle	Plan your writing, use a mind-map to structure
Speaking a secret language	Avoid acronyms etc. and make your writing accessible
Lacks relevance to your reader	Research what they care about, or even better, ask them
Too salesy	Add value to your reader, what do they care about
It’s boring!	Put yourself in your readers’ shoes, test your content on someone else who will be honest

6. CHECKING YOUR CONTENT: Does it pass the test?

- 24-hour test
- Four-eyes test – proof reading and checking
- Use tech – e.g. Grammarly (has a free version)
- Phone a friend
- Test it on a friendly client/customer - people love being asked what they think

**IF IN DOUBT, START SMALL, BUT START!
 IT IS PERFECTLY NATURAL TO FEEL PENSIVE IF YOU’RE NOT USED TO CREATING
 CONTENT!**