

Communications & Public Relations

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June 7, 2023



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Today's Agenda

- Introductions/Weltman overview
- Goals of improved communication and public relations
- Communication considerations
- Communication modes
- Forms of communication
- Purposeful communication
- Choosing the right method
- Impact of social media
- Legal implications



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About Weltman

- Nationally-recognized full-service collections firm
- We represent nearly every type of creditor, both locally and nationally in:
 - Bankruptcy
 - Consumer and Commercial Collections
 - Litigation
 - Real Estate Default matters



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About Weltman

- We operate with the strictest adherence to compliance and security standards, with a premium on reputation management
- To learn more about our leadership in accounts receivables management, visit www.weltman.com

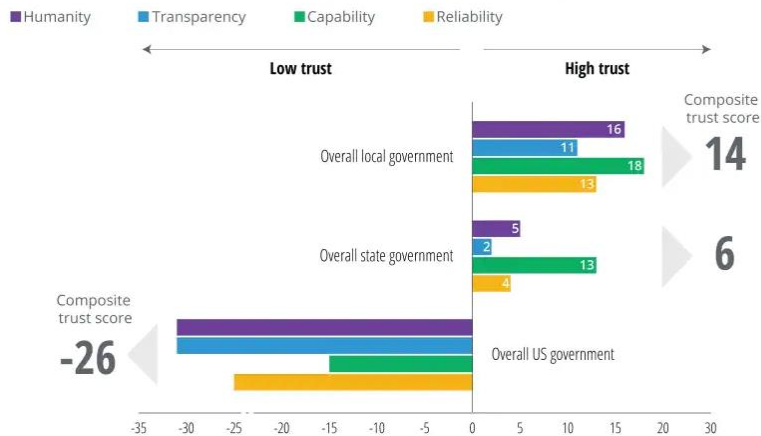


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Goals of Improved Communication

Local governments are the most trusted among the surveyed respondents



Note: The score for overall US government is based on the Deloitte federal trust survey conducted in November 2020 and taken from William D. Eggers et al., *Rebuilding trust in government: Four signals that can help improve citizen trust and engagement*, Deloitte Insights, March 9, 2021.
Source: Deloitte analysis.

Deloitte Insights | deloitte.com/insights

Communication

- Communication is a key to any endeavor involving more than one person.
- Public Relations is the management function which tests public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.



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Communication (PR)

- A successful PR function in local governments will facilitate active involvement of society in the process of decision-making by government structures and raise transparency of the reform activities undertaken by government authorities.
- An enhanced PR function will help to overcome current low levels of confidence and mistrust in government and build understanding of the reforms being undertaken by the government, and facilitate the establishment of productive and lasting partnerships between communities and their local governments.



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Communication

- The information age has altered the ways in which we communicate and placed an increasing emphasis on written versus oral communications.
- What Corporate America Can't Build: A Sentence.
 - Email is a party to which English teachers have not been invited
 - PR is the essential intermediary that builds strategic communication between organizations and the public, so it is crucial to define what target audience your efforts are targeting.

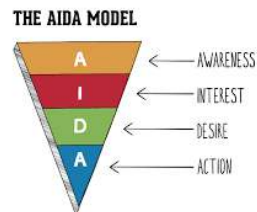


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Goals of Improved Communication

- Better communication with constituents - bridging the gap between age groups and demographics
- Improve community engagement
- Collaboration and exchange of ideas
- Little to no cost solution



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Goals of Improved Communication

- Good communication:
 - Extends from the way that a user experiences a service
 - Ensures that you are being heard
 - Influences your environment according to your own goals and requirements
- If you do not get your message across effectively, others will not know or understand your needs



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Goals of Improved Communication

- Effective communication achieves the following:
 - Positive influence on decision-making by presenting a strong point of view and developing mutual understanding
 - Delivers efficient decisions and solutions by providing accurate, timely, and relevant information
 - Enables mutually beneficial solutions
 - Builds healthy relationships by encouraging trust and understanding



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Why Governments Need Public Relations

- Implementing public policy
- Assisting the news media cover government activities and events
- Informing citizens about government agency activities
- Facilitating internal cohesion of government agencies
- Expanding the government agency's sensitivity to the public's needs and desires



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Why Governments Need Public Relations

- When Crisis Occurs
 - Transparency
 - Public apathy
 - Maintaining a positive image
 - Managing public media
 - Political interference
 - Ethics concerns/violations



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Communication Considerations

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Why Communication is Vital in Public Relations

- Communication theory emphasizes its symbolic and social process aspects as seen from two perspectives—
 - as exchange of information (the transmission perspective), and
 - as work done to connect and thus enable that exchange (the ritual perspective)

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7 C's of Communication

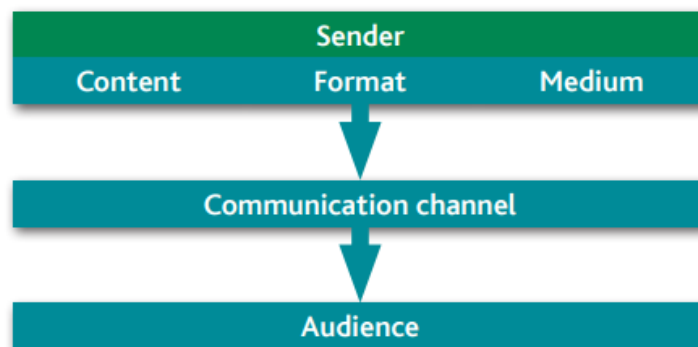
1. Clear
2. Concise
 - a. Winston Churchill wisely stated, "Big men use little words, and little men use big words."
3. Concrete
4. Correct
5. Consider the writer / audience
6. Complete
7. Courteous



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Stages of Communication



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Communication Modes

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3 Modes of Communication

- What is a mode of communication?
 - Mode is used to describe purpose or means of communicating
 - When using the phrase "mode of communication," this describes the way communication is expressed, or the method of communication.
- There are 3 types:
 1. Interpersonal communication
 2. Interpretive communication
 3. Presentational communication

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Interpersonal Communication

- A two-way means of communication that allows the participants to evaluate and respond to each other.
- The key characteristic of interpersonal communication is that it involves a spontaneous exchange of information: One participant states information or expresses feelings, and the other participant listens to what is said and responds accordingly.



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Interpretive Communication

- Interpretive communication is a one-way form of communication and is used to interpret and analyze what is heard, read or viewed
- No recourse to the active negotiation of meaning
- Reading, viewing, or listening



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Presentational Communication

- One way communication is intended to facilitate interpretation by members of the other culture, where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of two cultures exist
- Writing, speaking, or visually presenting



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10 Simple Tips to Remember

1. Have something to say
2. Be specific
3. Choose simple words
4. Use short sentences
5. Use the active voice
6. Keep points short
7. Eliminate fluff
8. Don't ramble
9. Don't be redundant/repeat yourself
10. Don't over communicate



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Forms of Communication

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5 Types of Communication

1. Listening
2. Verbal/Oral communication
3. Non-verbal / interpersonal communication
 - a. Eye contact, facial expressions, body language
4. Written communication
5. Visual communication - imagery

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Core Listening Skills

- Listening is a vital part of communication
 - Giving the other party your full attention
 - Encouraging the audience to speak. Use open-ended questions
 - Showing that you are genuinely listening by nodding, repeating back what they have said but in your own words
 - Acknowledging the audience's feelings
 - Asking for clarification when you do not understand
 - Not judging - trying to understand their point of view, rather than immediately applying your own preconceptions about the respondent
 - Not interrupting - letting the other party respond fully before you react. Giving them time to express their point of view
 - Being cautious in expressing your opinion. If it is clearly not appropriate, don't express it
 - Being timely in your reaction to the other party's responses to your messages - this is particularly true with communication that is not verbal



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Verbal/Oral Communication

- Verbal communication occurs when we engage in speaking with others.
 - It can be face-to-face, over the telephone, via Skype or Zoom, etc.
- Regardless of the type, it is not just about the words, it is also about
 - the caliber and complexity of those words,
 - how we string those words together to create an overarching message, as well as
 - the intonation (pitch, tone, cadence, etc.) used while speaking
- When occurring face-to-face, while the words are important, they cannot be separated from non-verbal communication.



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Non-Verbal Communication

- We send out messages that are neither oral nor written yet can be equally, or in some cases more, persuasive.
- Areas to consider the following:
 - Attitude
 - Body language
 - Making eye contact
 - Talking to and making visual contact with all stakeholders present, not just one or two
 - Smiling when appropriate
 - Having a confident, open, but not aggressive posture
 - Looking engaged and interested, particularly when others are speaking
 - Branding and presentation



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Written Communication

- Whether it is an email, a memo, a report, a Facebook post, a Tweet, a contract, etc. all forms of written communication have the same goal:
 - To disseminate information in a clear and concise manner – though that objective is often not achieved
 - Poor writing skills often lead to confusion and embarrassment, and even potential legal jeopardy
- One important thing to remember about written communication, especially in the digital age, is:
 - The message lives on, perhaps in perpetuity
- There are two things to remember:
 - First, write well – poorly constructed sentences and careless errors make you look bad; and
 - Second, ensure the content of the message is something you want to promote or be associated with for the long haul.



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Visual Communication

- We are a visual society.
 - Televisions are running 24/7;
 - Facebook is visual with memes, videos, images, etc.; and
 - Instagram is an image-only platform, and advertisers use imagery to sell products and ideas.
- Think about from a personal perspective – the images we post on social media are meant to convey meaning – to communicate a message.
 - In some cases that message might be, look at me, I'm in Italy or I just won an award.
 - Others are carefully curated to tug on our heartstrings – injured animals, crying children, etc.



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Purposeful Communication

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Communication

- Answer all the questions relevant to the audience:
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When
 - How



Communication

- Call the audience to action
 - The content of documents that are simply informative are rarely retained very well.
 - Most communication is meant to achieve some purpose, so make sure they include a call to action – something that the reader is expected to *do*.
 - Don't leave it to readers to decide what to do with whatever information is provided – most won't even bother, and enough of the ones who do, will get it wrong.

Communication

- Be the decision maker
 - Don't provide too many choices, or ideally, none at all.
 - If looking to set a time for a meeting:
 - Give a single time and ask them to confirm or present a different time, or
 - At most, give two options and ask them to pick one.
 - Too many choices often leads to decision paralysis, which generally isn't the desired effect.



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Communication

- Create a benefit
 - A cornerstone of effective writing is describing benefits, not features.
 - Why should a reader care?
 - Benefits engage readers, since they're naturally most concerned with finding out how they can make their lives easier or better.



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Communication

- Drilling down clarity
 - Unsmother verbs
 - Avoid adjectives
 - Rely on the power of short words
 - Communicate to express, not impress
 - “Use small, old words where you can. If a long word says just what you want to say, do not fear to use it. But know that our tongue is rich in crisp, brisk, swift, short words. Make them the spine and the heart of what you speak and write. Short words are like fast friends. They will not let you down.”
 - Richard Lederer, *The Miracle of Language*

Choosing a Proper Communication Method

Choose the Method *Wisely*

- Criteria to help you choose the communication methods wisely:
 - Level of sensitivity of information to be communicated
 - Relationship
 - Communication method the recipient prefers
 - Your preferred communication method
 - Amount of information to be shared
 - Urgency
 - Efficiency of the communication process



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Quick Reference

1. When delivering delicate information, pick up the phone or meet in person.
2. When a lot of detailed information must be conveyed, email may be best.
3. When sending directions, phone numbers, and similar information, text and/or email.
4. If the message is time-sensitive, consider using two forms of communication, such as an email and a phone call or text (depending on the recipient).
5. Snail mail is still good for a personal, handwritten note, like a thank-you note.
6. If something extremely important needs discussed, consider doing it in person.
7. Skype and other video conferencing programs are great communication options.
8. Don't put anything in writing (email/text/social media) that wouldn't be welcomed plastered on the front page of the New York Times.



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4 Step Process

Start by identifying the channel that best supports the targeted objectives — and then take these four steps to optimize your *channel* strategy:

1. **Add and use different channels** more frequently as they become more popular and as necessary to reach specific audiences. Research current stakeholder behaviors on different channels such as social media, and determine which ones they use and which are influential.
2. **Experiment with new channels** and measure their effectiveness before using them frequently.
3. **Evaluate your channel options** and select the channel mix that is most appropriate for your objective and target audience. For example, consider which non-traditional channels are best for different types of employees, such as remote workers.
4. **Use the channel selection guide** in the next slide to identify which channels are best suited for your communication objectives.



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4 Step Process

Channel Type	Example	Good Way To	Pros	Cons
Central communications (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press release - E-mail - Memo - Intranet post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update/Inform a large group about a issues of 'big' concern/initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scalable - Reaches multiple stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to gauge impact - Limited opportunity to clarify
Leader presentation (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media interview - Press conference - Town halls - CEO video/blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivate and energize audience - Make important announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good way to address issues - Highly credible source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-way communication - Audience often intimidated to ask questions
Manager cascade (one to few)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication in team meetings - Emails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform/update on team specific and/or sensitive matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trusted source - Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Messages often fail to get through - Manager not familiar/bought-in
Manager dialogue (interactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion - Manager one-on-one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solve/gain feedback - Translate strategy into action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps resolve issues - Drives behavioral change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time intensive - High variability in manager communication skill
Mobile and social media updates (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company blogs - Intranet - Twitter account - SMS mobile - Company Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time-sensitive information updates/alerts - Humanizing the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ease of access to information - Tracking sentiment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If not done properly, company can be seen as 'phony'
Social media participation (interactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion forums - Blogs - Twitter - YouTube 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing viewpoints - Engaging in debates - Creating a dialog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds engagement - Gives a human face to the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little control over the communication - Possible rejection of corporate agenda
Enabling advocates (many to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees - Suppliers - Customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation management - Reaching out to skeptical audiences - Spread viral message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trusted sources - High resonance - High "stickiness" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to find suitable advocates - Time-sensitive



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Social Media Campaigns

- Social media is a vital channel for government outreach.
- It has become an important tool for messaging
- A targeted social media strategy can efficiently communicate a particular government agency's message.
 - This includes fan acquisition, increased engagement, and taking the desired action

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Impact of Social Media

- Social networking sites
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - LinkedIn
- Social review sites
 - Yelp
 - Trip Advisor
- Media sharing networks
 - Instagram
 - Snapchat
 - YouTube
 - Vimeo
- Community blogs
 - Medium
 - Tumblr
- Discussion sites
 - Reddit
 - Quora
- Sharing economy networks
 - AirBnB
 - Rover

Impact of Social Media

- Many governments have problems in their communication due to low budget and not prioritizing communication with their stakeholders.
- Governments use the traditional methods of communication such as newspapers, radio, and television; this one-way communication reflects the low feedback of stakeholders to communicate with government, which leads to low participation from the stakeholder's side.
- Social media enables the democracy to be shared internationally, enables the citizens to express their opinions, and the governments to get feedback from their citizens.

Impact of Social Media

- Risks
- Blurred line between personal and professional use
- Lack of control over site
- Potential criticism of negative feedback
- Difficulty maintaining public records
- The internet is forever - once posted, it can't be taken back



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Impact of Social Media

- Rewards
 - Inexpensive
 - Easy to monitor
 - Can engage in direct dialogue
 - Provides prompt emergency/crisis forum
 - Builds trust through citizen engagement



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Impact of Social Media

- Key Benefits
 - Transparency - which is the release of information for which stakeholders are always checking.
 - Participation - is to maintain citizens engagement with their governments, by allowing citizens to express their opinions, experiences, and wisdoms. Governments can use a survey to get feedback from citizens before any decision is taken, then pass this information to different government agencies for actions to be taken.
 - Collaboration - is the high level engagement between government and citizens, where citizens participate by creating the content of government topics and the government uses and follows the content generated by citizens to fulfill the government's mission.

Impact of Social Media

- Transparency: the availability of information on matters of public concern, the ability of citizens to participate in political decision-making, and the accountability of government to public opinion.
- Governmental transparency allows the public to develop a more accurate picture of what is happening in government, which allows citizens to hold governments accountable and evaluate performances of government agencies.

Impact of Social Media

- **Influencer Marketing**
 - The power of influencers in the modern media environment cannot be overstated. Tapping into this modern-day word-of-mouth marketing is not a tactic reserved only for brands and products. It is an important part of the strategy for sharing messages, encouraging attendance at events, and increasing awareness of issues and programs.
- **Storytelling**
 - Done well, government PR is the lens through which citizens can connect with the government – it makes government seem more human and less remote. People connect with other people, not policies. Authentically telling the story of how a policy affects real people is a critical factor in raising awareness and changing behaviors.



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The logo for Weltman, featuring the word "Weltman" in a blue sans-serif font with a right-pointing arrowhead at the end of the "n".

Legal Considerations

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Legal Considerations

Be sensitive to the following language in a professional document:

- Race and gender roles
- Age appropriateness
- Disabilities
- Political correctness
- Generalizations
- Cultural awareness
- Religious symbols



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Written Communication

PROOF READ



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Legal Considerations

- Drafting policy around communications
 - Standard Operating Policy
 - Public Records Policy
- NLRB – 3 memos detailing social media cases



Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (A) As used in this section:
- (1) "Public record" means records kept by any public office, including, but not limited to, state, county, city, village, township, and school district units, and records pertaining to the delivery of educational services by an alternative school in this state kept by the nonprofit or for-profit entity operating the alternative school pursuant to section [3313.533](#) of the Revised Code.

Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (B) (1) Upon request ..., all public records responsive to the request shall be promptly prepared and made available for inspection to any person at all reasonable times during regular business hours. ... If a public record contains information that is exempt from the duty to permit public inspection or to copy the public record, the public office or the person responsible for the public record shall make available all of the information within the public record that is not exempt. ...



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Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (B) (2) To facilitate broader access to public records, a public office or the person responsible for public records shall organize and maintain public records in a manner that they can be made available for inspection or copying ... A public office also shall have available a copy of its current records retention schedule at a location readily available to the public.

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Questions?



Please feel free to contact me anytime:



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