

# Launching a regular CEO communication

Whether by email, blog or video, CEOs are increasingly keen to communicate directly with staff. Whilst this is great news for any communicator, the fact that just about everyone in the organisation will see it means it has to be right. Below are some tips for ensuring success:

- **Clarify purpose.** CEOs communicate for different reasons: to share strategy and progress, engage people in discussion or raise their individual profile. Make sure you and your CEO are clear about why s/he wants to communicate and ensure it is clearly positioned within the wider communication mix.
- **Match message to audience.** An organisation-wide communication has to meet the needs of a diverse group of people. Unless you want to target one audience specifically (managers for example), keep the messages clear, simple and relatively few in number. This kind of communication can never provide a comprehensive business update.
- **Consider alternative delivery methods.** Research tells us that people have different preferences when it comes to how they receive information. If the communication is essentially one-way (like an email), then consider producing it as a podcast or video as well. It will also persuade the cynics that the CEO really is involved in the communication!
- **Adopt a style the CEO is comfortable with.** Every CEO is different and it's important that the style matches the individual. Some CEOs will prefer to be filmed in an enclosed environment whilst others happy in the staff restaurant. If the communication is written, it's vital that the CEO's own words and expressions are used even if they are not actually writing it.
- **Decide upon an appropriate frequency.** Clearly this is a long term commitment on the part of the CEO. Frequency though can vary: if the communication is essentially giving high level guidance then quarterly or even half-yearly is fine. If the message is more conversational then it would need to be more frequent.
- **Adopt an appropriate tone of voice.** CEOs understandably want to be positive and upbeat about everything. If the message though has negative connotations, the audience will expect a style to match.



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