

Delivering inclusive communication

Inclusivity (or diversity) is an emerging theme in internal communication and means providing communication in a form that best meets the needs of the receiver. New technology, a more multi-lingual workforce and the law are combining to force organisations to communicate in a way that doesn't alienate staff. This toolkit provides you with a starting point for delivering inclusive communication.

Step 1: understand the communication preferences of your audience

Ask any group of employees how they prefer to receive a piece of communication and you'll get a range of answers. Yet the bulk of internal communication remains read-only. So start by understanding whether your internal audience prefers to read, hear, see or interact with the communication they receive and build a channel mix that reflects these preferences.

Step 2: recognise the potential limitations of your read-only communication

Read-only communication (via email, newsletters or the Intranet) will always be your primary method but it's important not to exclude those suffering from both apparent and hidden reading difficulties (such as dyslexia or colour-blindness). Large print versions, sympathetic colour contrasts and audio alternatives can all make your read-only communication more inclusive. Download the Great Communication Guide for more.

Step 3: ensure your visual communications are accessible

Visual communication is becoming more commonplace internally but open plan environments, PC's without soundcards and intolerance towards 'just watching' can all negatively impact reach. Scheduled viewing (in team meetings), subtitles and mobile access can all help make visual communication more accessible.

Step 4: establish a clear role for dialogue and interaction

A proportion of your audience will expect to interact with any communication it receives. As it's impractical and probably undesirable to interact with everything, you'll need clear parameters for interaction as well as channels to interact both face to face and online.

Step 5: set up a policy and guidelines and engage people with it

A clear policy that sets out your commitment to inclusive communication is a must as individuals who feel excluded by current practice exploit the law to induce change. To be practicable, you'll want to underpin this policy with clear guidance to all communicators (ie everyone in the organisation) about how they can contribute.

If you require further guidance about any aspect of this toolkit, we'd be very happy to talk further with you!



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