

## Unit 401: Effective communication in business

### Handout 2: Communication cycle

Regardless of which medium we choose to use for communicating, the underlying structure of the interaction – the **communication cycle** – remains the same.

There are a number of different communication cycles devised for different business and marketing situations. The one outlined below is generally accepted to be the overarching cycle. Variants are also identified (in brackets) where considered appropriate.

The communication cycle is made up of six steps:

1. Aiming
2. Encoding (composing)
3. Transmitting
4. Receiving (depending on the situation, some practitioners call this stage 'feedback')
5. Decoding ('analysing' and/or 'learning' if 'feedback' is used)
6. Responding ('changing' and/or 'improving').

Step	Questions to ask about this stage of the cycle
1. Aiming	What do I want to communicate? Who am I communicating with? Why do I want to communicate this? What do I want the receiver to do with the information? What is the best way to communicate this information? What would make the receiver interested in my communication? Have I prioritised my information? Would it be more appropriate presented verbally or in writing? Will I need pictures, charts or diagrams?
2. Encoding (composing)	What language should I use? What assumptions am I making about the receiver? Are these assumptions valid? What does the receiver already know about the subject I'm trying to communicate?

	<p>What might the receiver be assuming about me that would get in the way of effective communication?</p> <p>Am I expressing emotions in my message? If so, which emotions?</p> <p>Will my audience need any additional resources to understand my message?</p>
3. Transmitting	<p>Can the receiver see/hear/read what I am communicating to them?</p> <p>Will there be any distractions to make the communication difficult?</p> <p>Is this the right time to communicate this subject?</p> <p>Can I add anything to my chosen method of communicating that will make the subject clearer?</p> <p>Is what I'm saying/writing/showing consistent with the way I'm saying/writing/showing it?</p> <p>Do I need to summarise?</p> <p>Should I include anyone else in this communication?</p>
4. Receiving (feedback)	<p>Am I mixing anything into the communication that could 'garble' the message?</p> <p>Do I have a process for getting feedback from my audience?</p> <p>When I receive feedback, is it generally what I want and expect?</p> <p>Did I get the response that I wanted from my communication?</p>
5. Decoding (analysing or learning)	<p>Do I understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the meaning of the message is the responsibility of the sender (me) – not the receiver?</li> <li>the process of decoding depends on the complexity of the encoding of the message?</li> <li>the more effort required to decode the message, the greater the risk of the recipient losing interest in the message?</li> <li>a recipient requesting clarification may be demonstrating interest in the subject of my message?</li> </ul> <p>Why did I receive this feedback?</p> <p>What does this tell me about my message?</p> <p>Did the audience feel the way I expected them to feel? If not, why not?</p> <p>What could I have done differently to get the response I wanted?</p> <p>How should I act or behave differently to move forward?</p>
6. Responding (changing or improving)	<p>Was the response to my communication what I expected or desired?</p> <p>Does it appear that my communication was successful?</p> <p>What information does the response provide about my message?</p> <p>What information does the response provide about the method of communication that I chose?</p> <p>What information does the response provide about the manner of my communication?</p>

	<b>Respect the feedback you've received. If you believe it's valid, change your message or behaviour. Identify resources to help you improve your communication.</b>
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The communication cycle is a six-stage process for organising and presenting a message. It can be applied to any situation that involves communication, and its value is widely recognised, especially in important or complex communications.

The advantage of the process is its cyclical nature, helping to ensure effective communication.

Each communication interaction can be a valuable learning experience and, if you apply the lessons of the communication cycle, each successive communication should improve over the previous one!