



BALANCE
green and stable

Bringing Sustainability and Environmental Action
Together for Future



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MODULE 6 - External and internal communication methods



Introduction

This module is about communication tools and methods that SMEs can utilise to raise brand awareness in connection to their green initiatives and agenda. It will focus on communication strategies and their value in delivering the right message to the right audience, as well as highlight the reasons why such strategies are cost-effective.

UNIT 1 - External communication



1.1 Promotion and visibility of a green initiative to customers and the general public

Consultants should underline the importance of **different** communication channels:

- **Formal** outlets.
- **Informal** channels.





Formal communication channels for your client to invest in:

- *Advertising (on the company website and beyond)*
- *Presentations/ life events/formal meetings*
- *Conferences*
- *Networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn)*
- *E-mail marketing and newsletters*
- *Press releases*
- *Videos (e.g. Facebook live video)*



Marketing strategy:

- Marketing campaigns
- Promotional material
- Digital marketing and branding
- Advertising networks



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2020/07/17/why-you-should-teach-your-clients-about-marketing/?sh=498acf1f6eef> “Why You Should Teach Your Clients About Marketing”



Characteristics of *informal* communication channels:

- *Unofficial – personal/social*
- *Unstructured, casual*
- *Unregulated*
- *Spreading fast*
- *Prone to rumors and invalid arguments*



Advise *caution* to your clients!



Pitfalls of informal communication channels:

- *Often undependable*
- *Prone to incomplete information*
- *Not ensuring consistency*
- *Not convincing per the legitimacy of arguments*



Tips for effective informal communication:

Advise your clients to:

- *Organise frequent meetings/group events to ensure **transparency** and enhance **teambuilding***
- *Keep employees and external audiences well informed*
- *Allow employee access to upper management*
- *Receive and appreciate **feedback***



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1.2 Networking and further opportunities

Inform your clients:

Communicating responsible business practices:

- Benefits the **environment** and the **local community**
- Is a great advantage to the organization itself
- Keeps **key groups informed** of respective planning and actions
- Helps define the business's **principles** and **values**
- Earns the public's **trust** – creates a **consensus**
- Brings **new business partners**



Advantages of **Networking**

- Create a **consensus** around sustainability issues
- Build **bridges** across various stakeholder groups
- **Engage** new stakeholder groups
- Find new business **partners**
- Increase **resources**/ secure financial support
- Gain **valuable feedback**
- Gain **legitimacy**



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2018/09/04/creative-networking-tips-for-small-businesses/?sh=52a87c5e6b88> “Creative Networking Tips for Small Businesses”

UNIT 2 - Internal communication



2.1 Promoting green practices inside a company online and offline

Internal communication can keep all stakeholders informed of green initiatives and:

- Ensure **cohesion**
- Build a **strong brand** image
- Enhance **engagement** in a common vision



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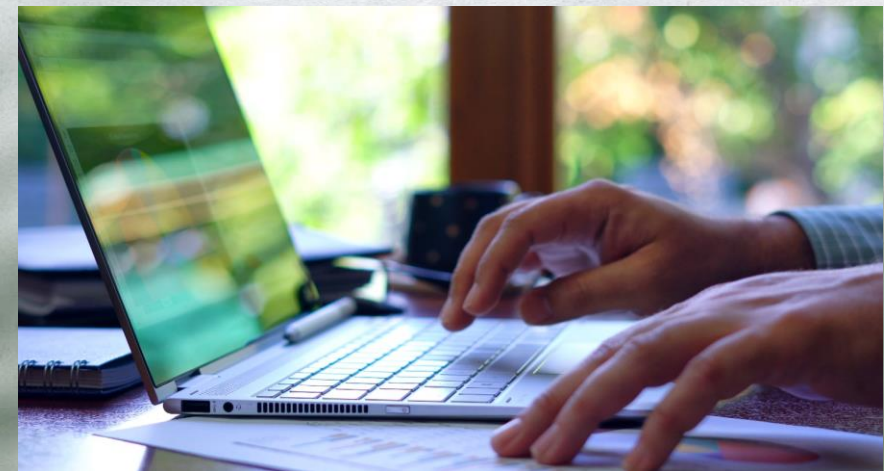
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Online internal communication

- *Employee newsletters/personalised alerts*
- *Social intranets* (e.g. Sharepoint)
- *Team collaboration tools* (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Slack)





Offline internal communication

- Face-to-face/ direct
- Printed material
- Events / Speeches/ Conferences
- Learning opportunities / Seminars



2.2 Sensitising employees: finding a **common vision**

To help employees understand and endorse its message, a company can:

- Invest in *educating* employees
- Keep them *informed* per the company's strategy and actions
- Implement *reward-and-recognition* programs
- Solicit employee *feedback* on sustainability issues
- Create a *sense of teamwork* and increase *positivity* in the workplace



3. Alignment of internal and external communications



- Internal and external communications must be **aligned**.
- Employees, customers and all other stakeholders must receive the **same information**.



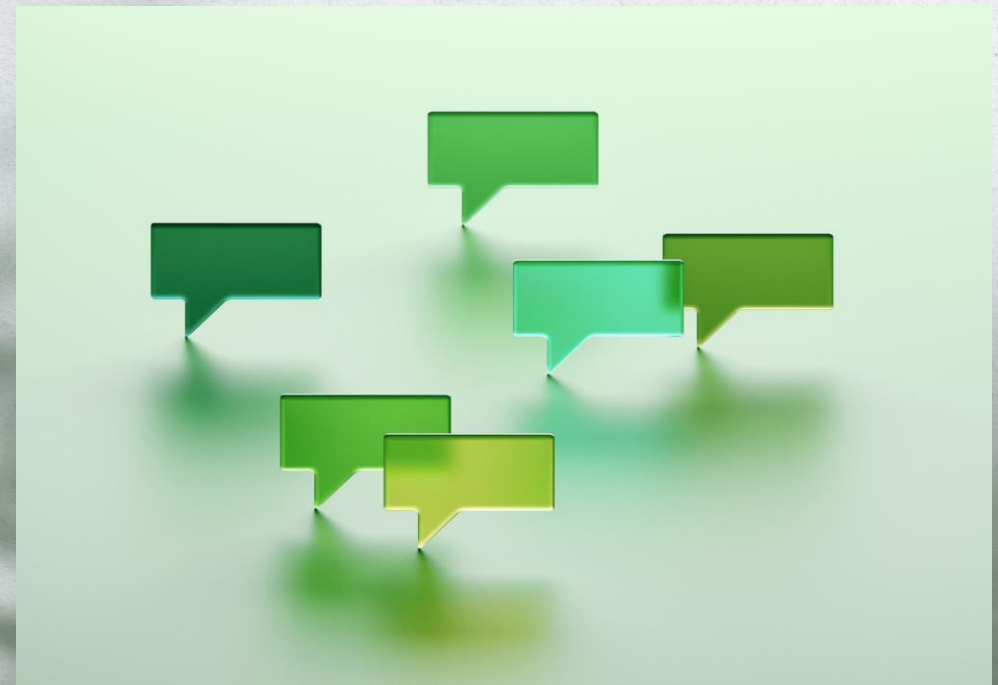
Effective communication strategies

- Choose the right **tone** and **style** to address the right **audience**
- **Organise** your ideas
- Present your ideas in a **clear**, **precise** and **logical** manner
- Show **empathy** and **respect** toward your audiences
- Appreciate **feedback**



Advantages of effective communication strategies

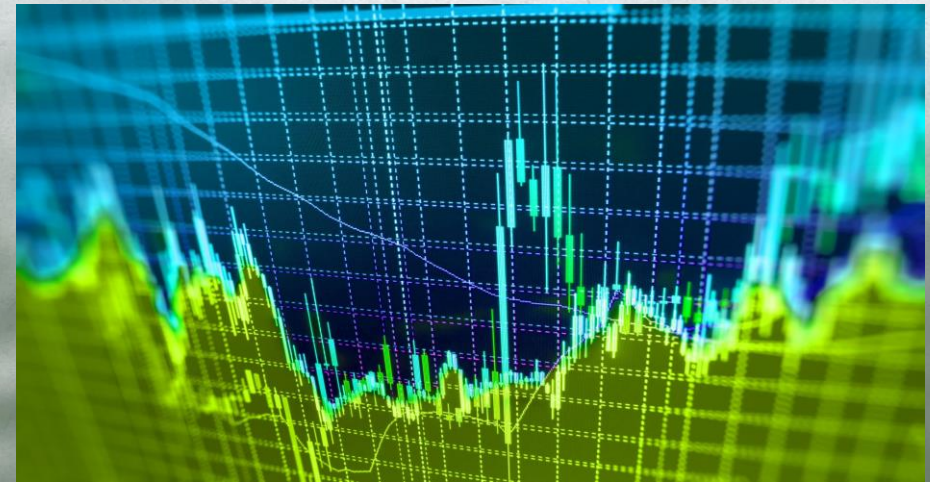
- Make an **impact**
- Inspire others to share your **vision**
- Enhance your **leadership** (within and beyond your network)



Why are internal and external communications cost-effective

Effective communication is good *Return On Investment (ROI)*:

- Builds brand **awareness**
- Brings **new** partners/clients/resources
- Increases sense of **teamwork** and **positivity**
- Increases **quality of performance**
- Increases **productivity**





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Thank you!



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