



Strategic Communications

Many, if not all, organizations are confronted with a significant problem: How to communicate large amounts of information to large numbers of people in a brief time?

There are three problems that must be overcome if a communication is to be successful and acted upon. It must be understood - completely, it must be connected to the individual's inner ideas and his/her outer experience, and in order for individuals to take action, they must connect their inner ideas and their external experience.

The Strategic Communications process described below addresses these three issues and explains how each is overcome. Most communications assume that resolving the first problem, understanding, is sufficient to achieve communication.

Unfortunately, understanding is the least of the issues.

Understanding

There is a simple basic rule regarding communication. If the individual has not understood, then the speaker has failed to communicate. The burden for communicating is always upon the speaker, never upon the individual receiving the communication. While there may be a few exceptions to this, one does not change the rule to accommodate the few exceptions. The challenge is always to the speaker to find the appropriate means of

achieving understanding in the recipient.

However, the second rule of communications is that one cannot understand for someone else. The recipient of the communication must do the understanding. There is no way that you can pound understanding into someone. They must discover the understanding for themselves.

Strategic Communications: The Discovery Principle .

The first phase of Strategic Communications is to achieve understanding through the discovery principle. This is based upon research done in the 1950s and 1960s with Programmed Instruction. It is a methodology that has been adapted and developed by Borwick International, Inc. The Strategic Communications process identifies key communication issues, breaks each one of those down into sub units and then establishes learning targets for each of the units.

Each learning target is explained through examples, stories, events, graphs, charts, or discrimination examples, which provides understanding. This is immediately tested through allowing the individual to "discover" the answer through a similar or related example, which is unexplained. The individual proceeds, step by step, through a series of learning events, each a process of

discovery. The remarkable aspect of this is that individuals retain information that they have discovered, as opposed to information which has been explained or spoon fed.

Through a systematic, step by step process, of accumulated learning targets, sub units of information and key communication issues the individual discovers and amasses a comprehensive understanding of large and complex issues with little difficulty, and retains it.

Research¹ has demonstrated that 97% of the people will understand and retain 97% of the information. This includes such things as Labor Contracts, Marketing Strategies, Business Strategies, Complex Changes in Logistical Operations, Advanced Information Technology concepts, etc.

Inner Ideas and Outer Experience

It is insufficient to understand an idea and expect that individuals will act upon it. Having discovered and understood an idea, the next step is to ensure that the individual can relate this information to their inner understanding and their outer experience. Paradoxically, this can best be achieved in group settings rather than alone.

Once individuals have had the opportunity to work alone with the specially prepared Strategic Communications booklet, they work together in small teams of 6, 8, or 10 people. The first step is to permit them to explore a series of case situations in

which they must test their knowledge of the communication with their own inner understanding of their job in the organization. Working individually they test their knowledge and their understanding.

They then have the opportunity to test their own understanding with others in the same organization. As a team they now test the same case examples with each other, in order to explore the shared outer experience of the organization.

In this manner they have an opportunity to test both the inner and the outer knowledge and to adjust one to the other. At the same time they are afforded the opportunity to learn further and to adjust their inner and outer experience to the information they have learned. The total experience reinforces their understanding of the information while it helps them to connect the learning and their experience of their job. They are connecting one with the other.

Connecting the Inner and the Outer to take action

It is insufficient to understand and to relate this understanding to your experience in order to take action. Our organizations are filled with employees and managers who fully understand the concepts of quality, service, and productivity and its relation to them. However, they still have great difficulty working acting upon this knowledge. The greatest difficulty is to act upon an idea, even one that we strongly endorse and believe in.

The last stage of the Strategic Communications process is to help the individual, working in homogeneous work teams, to make the link between the communications and their jobs in

¹ Borwick, Irving; The Effectiveness of Consensus and Pre-Reading in a Structured Laboratory, Boston University School of Education, Boston, MA, 1972. Unpublished Thesis.

the company. By collectively working together to design a link between the ideas and the job, and sharing this with the other work teams in a public forum, they create a social obligation, a new set of operational rules for working together on a common problem, sanctioned by the organization. Public approval by the organization for implementing change makes it possible for the managers and employees to transform the communication into action.

This last stage transforms the understanding and the relation into public action on a coordinated basis. It is not one individual, alone, but a team, and a collection of teams, a system that has collectively committed to implementing new ideas, recently learned, into action.

Strategic Communications overcomes the three barriers to communication: It ensures understanding through programmed individual discovery, it links the inner ideas with the outer experience of the individual, and it links these together in a social setting to ensure the taking of action.

How long does it take to implement a Strategic Communications Process?

Preparation: It takes from two to four weeks for a consultant, working with the company's subject matter expert, to prepare a Strategic Communications process.

Implementation: Implementation is divided into two phases:

Pre-work: All participants are provided with the Strategic Communications booklet two weeks in advance of the actual communication

process. Working on their own time they read and discover, through anecdote, story, example, and cases, things about their own business.

One day Communication process:

The last phase of the Strategic Communications process involves a maximum of one day to complete the communication processes. In all, the participant spends one day, maximum, away from work.

Research on the Strategic

Communications program has validated that 97% of the participants will learn 97% of the material and act upon it.

How many individuals can participate in a Strategic Communication process at one time?

From five to five thousand or even more. The size of the group is determined only by the size of the room and the availability of participants. Since all processes are done in small groups you can have as many small groups as required.

Summary

The Strategic Communications process communicates large amounts of information to large numbers of people in a brief time, and in a manner which ensures that they both understand it, relate it to their own work, and then implement it collectively in a coordinated and planned manner.

For further information :

Borwick International, Inc

New York Office

Tel. 212 664 0295

Fax 212 957-0954

Borwick International, Inc

146 West 57th Street

Suite 68/69 D

New York, NY 10019

OR

Brussels Office

Tel. (32.2) 535.7547

Fax (32.2.) 535.7575

Borwick International, Inc.

149/24 Ave Louise

1050 Brussels

Belgium

EEmail: Irving@Borwick.biz

[www. Borwick.biz](http://www.Borwick.biz)