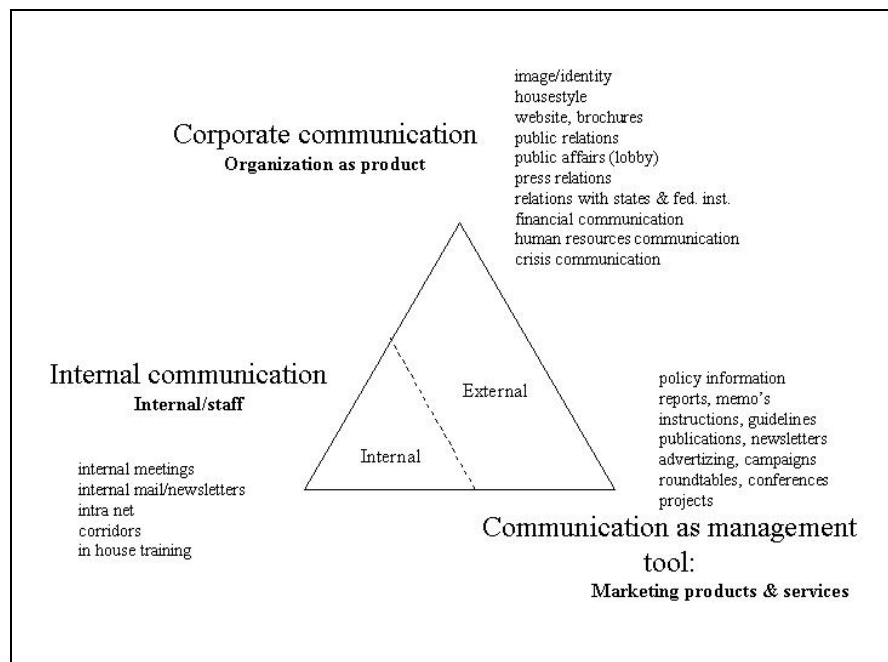


# Communication Glossary

Edition March 2003



# Communication Glossary

## **Introduction**

Communication, information, marketing, PR and so forth are examples of terms which form part of the vocabulary of any manager of a nature conservation organization, program or project. In practice these terms often lead to confusion, as people tend to have their own ideas about what exactly they mean. Confusion is not conducive to effective communication.

One of the objectives of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication is to contribute to effective communication of IUCN, its programs, projects and its members. On the basis of work done by the Dutch Ministry of Environment for a communication course<sup>1</sup>, the CEC product group on corporate communication helped to formulate this glossary. The glossary is a living document, as it will be regularly updated on the basis of new insights and inputs of CEC members from various parts of the world and different cultural backgrounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Course book Government Communication and Public Information, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, Central Information and Public Relations Department/ Press and Public Information Division, The Hague 1997

# Glossary

## **Advertising**

Those forms of PR and marketing communication aimed at the influencing and /or promoting purchasing behaviour with regard to the services and products of the organisation. Successful advertising is based on principles such as “*perception is the only reality*”, “*one pictures is more powerful than a thousand words*”, “*emotion is what triggers action*”. Advertising tools range from billboards and TV spots to direct mail.

## **Capacity building**

Capacity building is the effort to increase capacity of civil society to support for policy development and institutional strengthening.

## **Communication**

Communication is an activity in which a sender transmits a message, with or without the aid of media and vehicles, to one or more receivers, and vice versa. The way in which communication takes place is referred to as the communication process. The ideal form of communication is a two way process aimed at mutual understanding, sharing of values and action.

## **Communication plan or strategy**

A communication plan or strategy sets the communication goals, chooses the right media and messages and sets out the method of evaluation. One first analyses the management or conservation issue one wants to address. The second step is to analyse what communication obstacles have to be addressed to reach or change the relevant stakeholders. The third is to define for each group of stakeholders one needs to communicate to (*the target group*) the communication objectives, the messages and the means.

## **Communication objectives**

Communication objectives are different from the organization, policy, project or program objectives. Communication as an instrument for the organization, policy, project or program may have the following objectives: setting agenda, forming opinions, raising awareness or creating involvement, generating support, changing knowledge, changing attitudes, changing behaviour.

## **Corporate communication**

A management instrument that is used to harmonise all forms of communication in such a way that the organisation acquires and/or retains the image it wishes to acquire and/or retain among its target

groups and customers (both internal and external). Two key concepts in relation to corporate communication are image and identity. In successful organisations corporate communication is a priority of the top executives.

### **Diffusion**

Diffusion is a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The members of a social system are on the basis of innovativeness classified in 5 groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, laggards behind. Each group needs a different marketing communication approach. The diffusion process contains five steps: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, conformation and adoption or rejection.

### **Education**

Is the guiding of learning processes in the form of instruction, experiencing or setting examples. Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary through the tertiary institutions. Non formal education are organized educational activities outside the established formal system, intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable objectives. Informal education is the process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience, such as family, friends, peers and media.

### **External communication**

All forms of communication that are geared towards external target groups. There are two types of external communication: press communication (or media relations) and communication aimed at the general public or specific external target groups.

### **Focus group**

A major tool for listening is the use of focus groups. A focus group is a non-directive type of interviewing a specific social group: a segment of consumers, voters or stakeholders in a policy issue. It is a technique in commercial and social marketing. It draws on group interaction to gain greater insight into why certain opinions are held. Focus groups are used to improve planning and design of new products or programs, to provide means for evaluation and to provide insights and qualitative data for communication and marketing strategies. Good consumer-orientated companies have been using focus groups for years. Increasingly they are used in politics, policymaking and policy implementation.

### **House style**

The house style of an organisation is the codification of the rules how to communicate externally. A house style manual contains

standards with regard to logo, colours, lay out, typography etc. in all forms of written communication. It also contains procedures and standards for oral communication and organizational behaviour. House style is an instrument of corporate communication and culture. It is closely connected with marketing. In successful organisations management and control of house style is a priority of the top executives.

**Identity**

(Corporate) Identity is the way an organisation wishes to be perceived by the outside world. The corporate culture is an essential part of the corporate identity.

**Image**

(Corporate) Image is the way an organisation is actually perceived by the outside world. The corporate image is the result of the actions and behaviour of an organisation and its staff.

**Information**

Information is the deliberate and systematic transfer of knowledge by means of processed facts and data aimed at opinion forming or decision making.

**Corporate Information**

The information on the organisation has three functions: disclosing, performing a public service, acting as an instrument to support organizational policies or programmatic objectives.

**Internal communication**

All forms of communication within an organisation. Internal communication has a strong link with the corporate culture. It is geared towards the interests both of the organisation and of its staff. It takes the form of both formal and informal communication.

**Interpersonal communication**

All forms of communication involving direct interaction between two or more people. It is the opposite of mass communication. Interpersonal communication is highly appreciated by the “*receivers*”. It satisfies their needs of acknowledgement. Tools are visits, phone calls, interviews, informal meetings, personal letters. The effectiveness of a personal approach is the possibility to customize the message, receive feedback and ensure action.

**Lobbying**

See public affairs

**Marketing**

Those corporate activities aimed at systematically identifying, satisfying and creating the needs of current and potential market parties. The optimal form of marketing is a mix of product, price,

place and promotion (marketing communication). Marketing is connected with continuous research of the market, the current and potential customers.

**Marketing communication**

Those strategic activities – based on research of trends, target groups and/or customers - to promote the services or products of an organisation based on such principles as “*perception is the only reality*”, “*it is better to be first than to be best*”, “*exclusivity is better than imitation*” and other principles of trends in society. The communication is aimed at acquiring a top *brain position* for the brand or product. The core business of an organization influences the major choices of marketing communication strategy, as a consumer oriented business has a different market than a business to business operation. A nature conservation fund has a different market than a nature conservation research institute.

**Mass communication**

All forms of external communication which are theoretically accessible to everyone, as use is made of mass media and mass communication vehicles. The characteristics of mass communication are that it reaches a large number of people at the same time; it is easy for the receiver to ignore the message; it is not possible to customize the message for individual receivers; it is difficult to obtain feedback; it is relatively cheap per receiver reached.

**Message**

The message of communication is the content one sends to the receiver. In communication planning one formulates the message in terms of the desired residue of the communication in the mind of the receiver. These are often one-liners, with an emotional undertone appealing to the values of the receiver and inviting him/her to the desired attitudes or actions. The message is always transmitted by a person or by other means. The body language or the choice of the medium has to support the message, if not the result can be counter productive (“*the medium is the message*”).

**Process or interactive communication**

All forms of communication, both internal and external, which are designed to ensure that a policy-making, program, project or management plan development process proceeds as smoothly as possible and that through an optimal involvement of major stakeholders the final result can count on a maximum of support. Communication in this sense is an *integral part* of the process. Tools are hearings, round tables, focus groups, workshops, electronic discussion groups, telephone interviews, live shows on mass media, excursions etc.

**Product or policy communication**

All forms of communication, particularly external, which are designed to put across a policy or organizational product (policy proposals, documents, projects) as favourable as possible. Communication in this sense is *about* a policy or product. Tools are annual reports, books, brochures, CD Roms, AV presentations, websites, lectures, articles, newsletters etc.

**Public affairs**

Public affairs or lobbying are a specialised form of public relations. It refers to those activities aimed at building up and maintaining informal relations with formal decision-makers. The informal relations are used to influence decision making processes in the interest of the organisation, its program and/or objectives.

**Public relations**

The PR of an organization is aimed at systematically promoting its objectives and priorities. PR aims to realize mutual understanding between the organization and its main clients, other stakeholders and target groups. PR uses free, paid or sponsored publicity. It is based on the principle “*be good and tell it*” or “*be good and let others tell it*”. PR tools are advertising, new letters, websites, brochures, gimmicks, etc. The relation management is often supported by a specialised information system, which contains information about clients, last contacts, etc.

**Specific forms of communication**

Specific forms of communication are e.g.: result communication, risk communication, crisis communication, labour market communication, financial communication.

**Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are those people or organisations which are vital to the success or failure of an organization or project to reach its goals. The primary stakeholders are (a.) those needed for permission, approval and financial support and (b.) those who are directly affected by the activities of the organization or project. Secondary stakeholders are those who are indirectly affected. Tertiary stakeholders are those who are not affected or involved, but who can influence opinions either for or against.

**Survey**

Regular or incidental surveys are an important tool of communication managers. They can be aimed at researching the market, the degree of client satisfaction or a specific target group one intends to communicate with. Tools are trend panels, focus groups, personal interviews, questionnaires etc. Surveys can either be qualitative or quantitative. Successful organisations have integrated such surveys in their management cycles and relation management systems.

**Target groups**

A target group is a group of people which you need to reach with your communication in order to realize a result (see communication objective). For communication purposes is better not to view them in terms of statistics but as people of flesh and blood. It is best to segment the target group as far as possible and identify the opinion leaders (name, address etc.) to whom face to face communication is possible. It is important to explore how they relate to the issue and what would motivate them to act as desired. One has to realize that for successful communication their perception of the issue is the starting point. Information about scientific facts will not convince them. Most probably our issue might not even interest them: it is a fact of life that for any issue there are always many more people not interested in it than that are interested.



## **Colophon**

**IUCN - The World Conservation Union** was founded in 1948 and brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 760 NGOs, 37 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Within the framework of global conventions IUCN has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies.

IUCN has approximately 1000 staff, most of whom are located in its 42 regional and country offices while 100 work at its Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland. More information: [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

**IUCN Commission on Education and Communication - CEC** is one of IUCN's six Commissions. It contributes its communication expertise to support IUCN's mission.

CEC is a global network of voluntary, active and professional experts in environmental communication and education, who work in NGO, mass media, government, international organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. They have a special interest in applying their knowledge and skills for biodiversity and sustainable development issues.

More information: [www.iucn.org/cec/](http://www.iucn.org/cec/) . Contact: [wendy.goldstein@iucn.org](mailto:wendy.goldstein@iucn.org)

### **CEC Product group Corporate Communication**

Is one of the thematic product groups of CEC. It consists of a group of CEC members, who are experts in (corporate) communication and are working in this field either in government, academia or private sector.

The group aims to advice IUCN on corporate and strategic communication and build capacity in this field within IUCN.  
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