

## **'Clear Communication'**

We have to ask ourselves the question: 'What is communication'? It's what divides us from the animal kingdom for sure. But it's not always that easy. For instance today after 155 days of trying to communicate, we still do not have a new Belgian government. But this is something totally different and we won't go deeper in to that issue.

### **what is communication**

But think about it , how would you write it down, describe it?

After using Google (my close colleague and alibi for a lot of research-work) provided me with the following answers:

- "A giving or exchanging of information, signals, messages as by talk, gestures, or writing"
- "Communication influences thoughts, feelings, and actions." – "Information merely informs"
- "The art of expressing ideas in speech - writing – visuals"

These were the 3 results that did the job of describing communication very well. By providing information to people we have the ability to influence those people. This is important if for example you want to sell something to a group of people. But we're not selling anything we just want to spread information, something as important and perhaps even more important because the information is intended to help the people who read it.

### **what does Europe Direct do**

So Communication starts with an idea or message you want to get across to a group of people. This determines our first step to set up a communication/marketing plan.

What do we want to communicate and to who? In this case What does Europe Direct and it's relays want to communicate? The answer is easy and well know by everybody of you. (because it is on the main Europe Direct's website)

### **Europe Direct gives you**

This is what I found on the website:

- General information about EU matters in any of the official EU languages
- An answer to your questions on any European Union policy
- Practical information on dozens of subjects: for example, how to get your qualifications recognised or how to complain about unsafe products
- Contact details of relevant organisations you may need to deal with
- Advice to help you overcome practical problems with exercising your rights in Europe

### **Europe Direct's mission is clear.**

This means that we know what kind of information that we want to communicate. You could say that those 5 topics that I found on the Europe Direct's website is kind of a mission statement of Europe Direct and it's information network.

### **what is Europe Direct's target audience?**

But do we know our public or target audience? Yes we do, our target audience is, a very large group indeed. All of the European inhabitants who might have the need of

finding out more about EU Matters. Some Professionals other Students but all are citizens.

### **target audience, some questions**

But what are they looking for? What should people know about you or your services? Why should people want to use these services? Why should people want to work for you? Why should a community feel good about your presence in their area? These are questions that we all should ask ourselves. Important here is **'the people'**, because that's who you will communicate with.

### **target audience, understand the needs + research**

Try to understand the needs of your target audience/public through research. Research is time-consuming but necessary.

### **communication plan**

This concludes the first 2 steps in creating an effective clear communication plan. Those 2 steps being:

- **What do you want to say?**
- **Identity your public.**

Before I go any further and talk about the next step. I want to give you some tips and guidelines in how you can optimize these first 2 steps.

### **communication guidelines**

Be clear in what you want to say, what do I mean by that:

- Clarify what it is you intend before writing
- Clearly state your intent in the lead (a good title works like magic)
- Try to keep one topic per communication.
- or in case of larger formats (newsletter) try to keep it structured.
- provide supporting detail (for those who might want it.)

Once you've decided on your messaging, it's always good to bear the "Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? Rule in mind. Answer those questions in your communications and you'll be giving people what they want to know.

Now we'll move on to the next step.

### **This step being - The tools that make your plan.**

If markets are conversations, what is the best communication tool for you to get that conversation going about your service or product? They can range from the traditional, brochures, annual reports, press releases, whitepapers to online options such as: Websites, blogs, online forum, wikipedia or virals campaigns with or without the use of existing social networks. But these tools need formatting. This formatting is done through a concept. This concept being an idea in how to express your communication necessities.

The concept consists of a close interaction between copywriting, design and the media it will be developed in.

### **copywriting**

(it actually runs almost simultaneously with the 'design' process but we have to start somewhere) Copywriting or the art of writing the words that promote a person, business, opinion, or idea. This forms the base which delivers the message. This will

be dealt with in detail by Thomas a bit later on. But for the people who will not be attending this workshop I'll sum up some tips and guidelines that we always have to take into account when talking about copywriting.

### **copywriting guidelines**

- Make your points briefly, edit, re-edit your texts until it feels right
- Test your texts, slogans on co-workers, friends or if possible on real test-subjects
- Keep it simple, Less is more in many cases. People don't want to read large amounts of texts.

### **Graphic Design**

The sibling of copywriting is as you all know: "DESIGN". And in this case Graphic Design. Graphic Design is the process of communicating visually using typography and images to present information. Graphic design practice embraces a range of cognitive skills, aesthetics and crafts, including typography, visual arts and page layout. Like other forms of design, graphic design often refers to both the process (designing) by which the communication is created and the products (designs) which are generated. (Wiki)

But something else is also a fact: For a lot of you graphic design is very subjective. Because your taste isn't my taste and vice versa. But still there are some standards and guidelines each type of graphic has to live up to.

### **graphic design guidelines**

- External recognition and conformity are holy!  
This by using the same logo, typeface or font and colours
- Try to make a styleguide which lists all graphical possibilities and also says what can't be done
- Content & Design are each others equals, they have to obtain a certain balance so the message can't get lost
- Try to innovate, diversify but let the design keep its' simplicity, clarity, grace and beauty.

These things said about design, should give you some direction for your future designs. For the people who will attend the workshops about the Newsletter there will be more detail on this subject provided to you by Lotte and Rebecca.

### **Multimedia/media/new media**

And now the final step but not less important because the choice of media has great impact on the success of your communication efforts. Each target audience has it's own behaviors. Some of them will react upon posters and brochures while other will only react upon online media. That's why you can't stick to just one type of media.

Traditional media consists of communications delivered via paper or canvas. Restricting to one type of media doesn't suffice anymore. That's why we better talk about multimedia. Multimedia is a way of communicating that incorporates multiple forms of information content and processing.

An example of good use of Multimedia is for example The launching of an E-mailing in combination with the release of a new report or a newsletter that can be ordered or downloaded from your website.

Using new media also has its advantages. For example do the comparison, should I print 1000 copies of press releases or will I send them by email. Another advantage of using new media is that you get more accurate feedback about your communication efforts.

Some guidelines:

- As well as for printed media and new media , stick to the copy- and graphical guidelines.
- If you're using new media, try to get as much feedback as possible. This by registration procedures or analyzing statistics (GoogleAnalytics)
- combine media to get as much out of it as possible

The possibilities of this new media/multimedia will be shown in the workshop later this day.

### **Europe Direct Information Network**

And now a final and extra feature: Europe Direct has one great advantage! This being it's Network. It's already in place but it should be upgraded with tools to make the communication towards the people externally and internally more effective.

The network should use all of the techniques that we mentioned above.

Especially within the new media area there are a lot of possibilities:

- the sharing of layout templates based upon the Europe Direct styleguide which everybody within the network can use. (this can be templates for press releases to powerpoint templates to html templates)
- an online Emailing tool which enables Relays and EDC and team Europe to get more specific feedback about their target groups.
- The optimization of the website/intranet by making it even more user-friendly (web 2.0 standards)
- Interaction with other networks and in particular social networks. We already have EUTube leading the way.

### **new trends**

I hope the information brought to you today was interesting and helpful. And I would like to end by giving you some information and an example of the new trends in communication.

I will show you an example of how advertising and marketing is evolving. It used to be a sure thing but nowadays with more people on the internet then behind the television, things are changing. Viral marketing is the next best thing according to a lot of people and they might be wright.

Viral marketing you must have heard about it before. What is it?

This is a marketing technique which uses existing social networks to increase brand awareness through self-replicating viral processes. This can be word-of-mouth delivered or enhanced by the network effects of the internet. Most of you must have experienced this before. An email that you've receive of a friend to read a certain article of view a view a video or website. This type of marketing is based upon the

need of one to tell to others what he has seen or experienced. Viral marketing is based on this natural human behaviour.

It is claimed that a satisfied customer tells an average of three people about a product or service he/she likes, and eleven people about a product or service which he/she did not like.

