



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, preserving our future

Communication **Handbook** Veterinary Services



World Health
Organization

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This book has been developed by:
World Organisation for Animal Health – OIE
OIE Communication Unit

In collaboration with
World Health Organization - WHO
WHO Headquarters
Department of Communications Director-General's Office

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Introduction

Veterinary Services and their partners play a key role in protecting animal health and welfare. Everyday, they monitor, detect, notify and respond rapidly to animal diseases. They develop and implement protective animal health and welfare measures, and establish and deliver international veterinary certification.

To carry out these missions, Veterinary Services personnel rely not only on scientific knowledge and expertise, but on collaboration with key stakeholders and concerned publics. Veterinary Services need to talk to health professionals, farmers, civil society, communities, media and others who are largely unfamiliar with the scientific knowledge of the world of animal health.

In an era of globalisation and rapid circulation of goods, people, animal products and live animals, effective communication has become ever more important. Enormous evolutions in information technology and transformation of how people access information have further increased the demand for experts and officials to communicate clearly, quickly and credibly about risks to animals and humans from the animal sector.

In 2011, the Member Countries of the OIE adopted international standards on the communication of Veterinary Services and Aquatic Animal Health Services. Relevant provisions are included in the section dealing with quality services of the Terrestrial (chapter 3.3, section 3), and the Aquatic Animal Health Codes (chapter 3.2, section 3) respectively.

National Delegates of OIE Member Countries are encouraged to designate Focal Points for Communication. OIE conducts regional seminars for National Focal Points to further strengthen their communications skills and capacities, and provide an opportunity to network. This publication is another contribution from the OIE for further improving communication capacities of the Veterinary Services.

Veterinary Services communications contributes significantly to the protection of human health. With 75% of new human diseases reported to be emerging from the animal world, two-way communication between human and animal health sectors is essential. They have to communicate effectively on risks and events such as disease outbreaks. Collaboration between the two sectors is equally essential in health education and health promotion, and other risk communication activities. During outbreaks and epidemics, the two sectors must harmonise their communication on hazards, on the nature and magnitude of risks and vulnerabilities, and on actions taken to control the crisis. They must quickly identify and address perceptions, beliefs, rumours and misinformation. Timely, credible, easy to understand and trustworthy information and advice will minimise the loss of lives, disease and economic and social loss due to disease.

The International Health Regulations (2005), of the World Health Organization require all Member States to develop core capacities for detecting and responding to disease outbreaks and public health events. One of these core capacities is risk communication.

OIE and WHO work closely on many aspects of the One Health approach which views human, animal and environmental health in a holistic interlinked way. The two organisations collaborate in the area of risk communication and this publication is one of several joint initiatives to strengthen the risk communication capacity of organisations' staff, and international and national counterparts.

This Handbook was adapted directly from WHO-s Effective Communications Participant Handbook which is used in their face to face and online communications training programme. The adapted Handbook allows you to brush up on your communications knowledge and skills and share with your international and national counterparts.

I hope you will find this handbook useful.

Bernard VALLAT

Director General of the World Organisation
for Animal Health - OIE

User Guide




Thank you for finding the time to read this handbook. This handbook contains material that will help you to better communicate on animal health and welfare issues. Each chapter contains:

- the main learning points of the chapter.
- tools to help you digest and internalise the material.
- worksheets for you to use during the training.

The overall objective of this handbook is to improve your communications skills. Specific learning objectives are listed for each chapter in the corresponding chapter notes.

If you are attending an OIE Seminar for Communication Focal Points, you will use it during and after the training. Your trainers will be OIE staff, as well as WHO staff or external experts working closely with us.

Here is a quick guide to the handbook:

-  **Blue** pages contain chapter or training session notes: introduction, objectives and narrative of main points covered.
-  **Orange** pages are worksheets you will need during learning.
-  **Purple** pages contain reference material.

This material is continuously being updated and refined based on feedback from participants, and to accommodate the changes taking place in OIE. Please, feel free to make comments and suggestions in writing to: communication@oie.int and write “OIE Communication Handbook” in the subject line.

SECTION A

**FRAMING YOUR
COMMUNICATIONS**

Session 1
**The SOCO
and the POINT**

Session Notes 1:

The SOCO and the POINT



1. What is this session about?

The most fundamental skill that a good communicator possesses is a clear understanding of the change they want to see regardless of what they say or how they say it. This session deals with the two most basic tips for effective communications: developing a Single Overarching Communications Outcome (SOCO) and getting to your point fast (POINT).



2. Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants are able to:

- describe the two basic communications tips – SOCO and the POINT;
- develop a single overarching communications outcome (SOCO);
- demonstrate getting to the POINT quickly and effectively.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 The SOCO (single overarching communications outcome)

The most important questions to ask oneself regardless of the type of communication are these:

“Why am I speaking/writing/answering/presenting, etc?”

“What is the change I want to see as a result of my communication?”

Knowing and always remembering the answer to these questions keeps your communications effective, compelling and on track. Remember this and you will NEVER go wrong.

The SOCO, or single overarching communications outcome, is the change you want to see in your audience as a result of your communication.

- It is an outcome, and must therefore be expressed from the perspective of the audience.
- It is not an objective, which usually reflects your perspective.
- It must be explicit about the change you want, and time-limited.
- It must be realistic and achievable.
- It must, together with other interventions (programmatic, advocacy, etc.), contribute to a larger programme goal or objective.
- It will be the fixed point on which you keep your mind when communicating. Messages are developed to achieve the SOCO only after considering the needs and nature of your target audience(s).

How to develop a SOCO:

Step 1: What is your issue?

Step 2: Why do you want to focus on this issue and why do you want to focus on it now?

Step 3: Who needs to change their behaviour (audience)?

Step 4: What is the change that you want to see in your audience as a result of your communication? (THIS IS YOUR SOCO)

Here are some things to remember about the SOCO:

Let's take an example:

	SOCO	
Step 1	What is your issue?	Antimicrobial resistance
Step 2	Why do you want to focus on this issue and why do you want to focus on it now?	There is growing evidence of antimicrobial resistance. On the one hand an adequate access to effective antimicrobial agents is necessary to treat animal diseases and ensure both animal welfare and food security, but their responsible and prudent use in animal health is essential for maintaining their therapeutic efficacy. Unfortunately, antibiotics are too often freely accessible in many countries and used without veterinarians' supervision.

SOCO, continued		
Step 3	Who needs to change their behaviour (audience)?	Option 1: Farmers Option 2: Veterinarians
Step 4	What is the change that you want to see in your audience as a result of your communication? (THIS IS YOUR SOCO)	If Option 1: Farmers stop buying and administrating antibiotics without veterinarian supervision and carefully respect veterinarian prescription, notably withdrawal periods in food-producing animals. If Option 2: Veterinarians, under the supervision of a Veterinary Statutory Body, use laboratory testing more often and only prescribe antibiotics with proper medical indications for their use which are supplied through licensed or authorised distribution systems.

3.2 The POINT

Once you are clear about your SOCO, you know where you are going or aiming. Once you know where you are aiming, you must get there as fast as possible. Here is why:

Experts are trained to explain the situation and all possible aspects of an issue, as well as to be complete, accurate and lead people slowly and step-wise to a logical conclusion. If this was depicted graphically, it would look like a triangle on its head, with long explanations eventually leading to the point.

However, people do not listen or hear in the same way. We tend to listen when our attention is grabbed quickly and focus is achieved. Once we are interested, we will listen to the explanation and other nuances. This becomes even

more important in a world transformed by technology for communications. Listeners, including experts listening to other experts, are inundated with competing information. We need to get to our point as fast as possible and explain the supporting information and nuances incrementally and in a decreasing order of relevance and importance to our audience. Graphically, we would turn the triangle mentioned above so the point is at the top. The POINT is a basic, common-sense and essential communications tip.

Experts speak like this



Long, complete, logical explanation



The POINT

People listen like this



The POINT

Reasons, evidence, explanations follow



4. Key messages from session

1. If you have no time for anything else, take time to develop a single overarching communications outcome (SOCO) that expresses the specific change you want to see as a result of your communications. Do not start messaging without defining your SOCO.
2. Once you know your SOCO, keep focus on it. It will show you where to go, what to say and how to get back on your path if and when you are derailed, distracted or challenged.
3. The SOCO clarifies the POINT you want to make. Get to the POINT as fast as possible. Explain and elaborate as needed. Conclude again with your POINT for greater effect.
4. We will discuss the audience, their needs and motivations in the next section.
5. Do not be tempted to start writing messages yet.



Worksheet #1: The SOCO

The **S**ingle **O**verarching **C**ommunications **O**utcome

	Proposed 1	
Step 1	What is your issue ?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Step 2	Why do you want to focus on this issue and why do you want to focus on it now ?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Step 3	Who needs to change their behaviour (audience)?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Step 4	What is the change that you want to see in your audience as a result of your communication? (THIS IS YOUR SOCO)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

What is NOT a SOCO:

The change I want to see is that my audience is:

- × told...
- × informed...
- × made aware...

What IS a good SOCO:

The change I want to see is that my audience is:

- √ reassured...
- √ convinced...
- √ prevented from...
- √ confident...
- √ changed...
- √ influenced...
- √ donating funds...
- √ modifying behaviour...
- √ changing or accepting policy...

Examples:

The change I want to see is that:

My audience is (VERB) to do (VERB). -OR- My audience (VERB).
X Y Z X Y

The change I want to see is that:

The Minister is convinced to give funds for the campaign.
X Y Z

-OR-

Farmers put identification tags on their cattle.
X Y

Session 2

The audience

Session Notes 2:

The audience



1. What is this session about?

This session is about the most important, and changeable, element in any communication: the audience. We will look at how to identify your audience (for each different SOCO you have) and how the audience pays attention to your messages. We will consider findings from neuroscience research and adult learning theory to better understand how people hear, take notice, remember and even change behaviour.



2. Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants are able to:

- explain why multisensory communications is important for communicating effectively;
- describe at least three adult learning approaches that can enhance understanding and retention;
- carry out a stakeholder analysis and outline strategic options for selecting target audiences.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 How can you identify your audience, grab their attention and convince them to be part of the change you want to see?

There is an enormous amount of information out there competing with anything you want to convey. The sources of information increase continuously. Some of

these sources contradict one another. Your audience is distracted, overloaded with information, and struggling to unravel contradictions.

If you do manage to get your messages out, the media, politicians, lobbyists and those with other interests will amplify your message. Sometimes, they will distort what you intended to say for their own benefit.

The erosion of trust in scientific and animal health experts, institutions, governments and authority in general is also negatively affecting how the Veterinary Services' messages are perceived and acted upon.

Neuroscience tells us that adults learn and retain information in particular ways. The following are important aspects of adult learning which are important to remember when communicating with our audiences:

1. Our brains are wired to forget, not to remember. Multisensory communications help slow down the forgetting curve.
2. Use of multisensory communications increases understanding and retention of information.
3. When people have something to do, even if it is to call a number, visit a website, be vigilant, etc., they tend to remember messages more.
4. People remember what is outstanding or things that have particular meaning to THEM.
5. The human brain chunks information into manageable sizes. Most people cannot retain more than seven plus or minus two pieces of information. It is safe not to expect people to remember more than five things. Three is optimal.

6. People understand and retain information if there are regular “breaks”. Present one idea at a time and take physical breaks if possible. This could mean presenting an idea and inviting questions or reflection before going on to the next.
7. Great educators, entertainers and salespersons know that people remember the beginning and the end. The middle is often a vast cognitive wasteland.

3.2 Audience analysis

You need to do a thorough stakeholder analysis before you think of strategy or messages. Your stakeholders can and should be analysed in this way:

- **Step 1:** Look at the framework for stakeholder analysis.
- **Step 2:** Write your SOCO at the top.
- **Step 3:** Look at the X-axis (horizontal) and consider which of your stakeholders are supporting your SOCO (common interest).
- **Step 4:** Look at the Y-axis (vertical) and consider how much energy each stakeholder puts to support or block your SOCO.
- **Step 5:** Plot every group or person you think can influence the achievement of your SOCO. Be honest about your analysis.
- **Step 6:** Understand that the position each person or group occupies:

- › can change with time,
 - › can influence others in the matrix (i.e. public can influence politicians, veterinarians can influence clients, and vice versa).
- **Step 7:** Decide which groups or persons are best to target to achieve your SOCO. Think of what needs to be done at what time. This is the beginning of your communications strategy.
- **Step 8:** For each target group, think about what their needs, wants and concerns are. How can they be reached? What languages and levels of complexity of messages will best suit them? What channels can best reach them? How can you make your messages compelling for your audiences?
- **Step 9:** Review your analysis at specific time intervals or if the situation or context changes for some reason.

ONLY NOW ARE YOU
READY TO START
WORKING ON MESSAGES

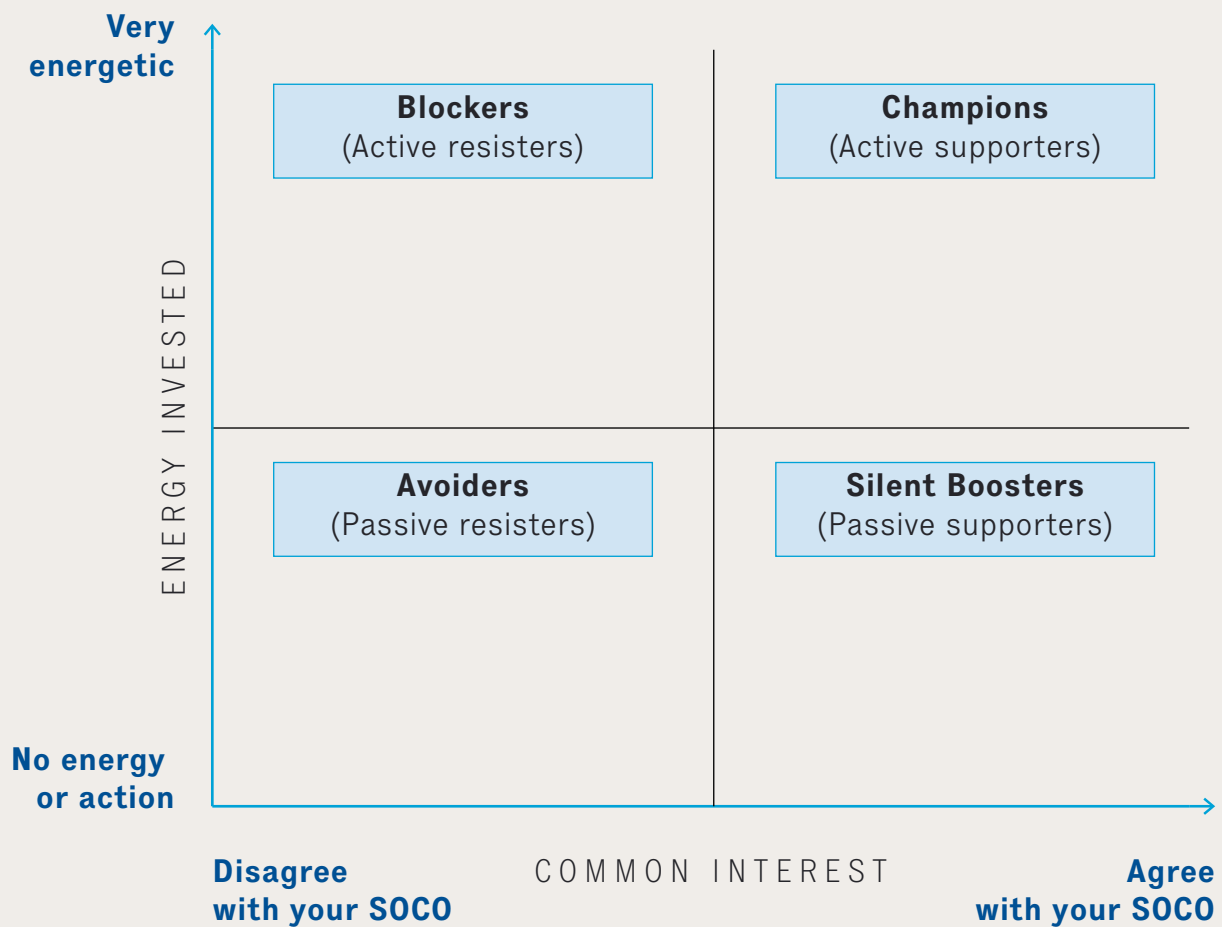


4. Key messages from session

1. Take time to analyse your audiences ONCE you have your SOCO and BEFORE you start messaging.
2. Remember that your audiences are distracted, overloaded and sometimes even confused about your issue.
3. Be serious and honest about your audience analysis and review periodically or when something changes.
4. CHOOSE your audiences based on how much they influence positively or negatively the achievement of your SOCO and your ability to reach them.
5. Remember that communications is only one of the many things that need to be done to influence people and groups for a particular health or programmatic outcome.



Worksheet #2: Stakeholder & audience analysis



Write your SOCO here:



Worksheet #2, continued: **Stakeholder/ audience analysis and communications strategy**

	Share your objective	Energy Invested	Communications strategy
Champions	YES	Support publicly/ vocally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Give them information→ Appreciate + acknowledge their contribution→ Let them champion your cause
Silent boosters	YES	Support silently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Educate, enable, inform and motivate→ Energize them by involving champions they admire

	Share your objective	Energy Invested	Communications strategy
Avoiders	NO	Oppose silently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Inform or ignore → Get critical mass of champions to influence them
Blockers	NO	Oppose loudly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ignore if they are not influential → Confront if their influence is significant → Counteract by giving facts and enlisting champions → Monitor what they say and who is listening to them

<p>Write down your primary target audience(s) here:</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Note: Your communications strategy must be further refined using the risk communications strategy to understand how your selected audience responds to your issue.

Session 3

**Communicating
on risk**

Session Notes 3:

Communicating on risk



1. What is this session about?

This session is about how risk is perceived and the four strategies for communicating risk.



2. Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants are able to:

- describe how risk is perceived;
- explain the risk communications framework linking hazard and emotional engagement of the audience.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 Risk perception

In the animal health and public health sectors, risk can be considered as the probability of something bad happening when people or animals are exposed to a hazard (something that has the potential to harm physically or economically, like a contagious disease). The magnitude of the risk is directly related to the magnitude of the hazard, how much exposure people have to the hazard, and how vulnerable to the hazard those exposed are. But experts and those “at-risk” do not necessarily perceive risk the same way.

- For technical experts, risk is directly related to the nature and magnitude of the HAZARD.
- The public (or others at risk) perceives risk based on many other factors and their ability to create a sense of OUTRAGE (fear, concern, intense emotional engagement).

Risk communications experts¹ have observed the following factors as affecting how risk is perceived. They all contribute to the development of a sense of outrage. Outrage is usually higher when the public perceives the hazard to be:

- imposed involuntarily;
- uncontrollable;
- exotic or unfamiliar;
- manmade;
- irreversible;
- disastrous in scale (regardless of probability);
- unfairly distributed;
- dangerous to children and future generations;
- poorly understood.

The job of communications officers is to bridge this gap between how the experts define risk and how the public perceives it. So:

RISK = HAZARD + OUTRAGE

¹ This material is adapted from work done by Peter Sandman and Vincent Covello as well as WHO.

Many experts believe incorrectly that if we are transparent and accurate, risk can be communicated well. However, technical information (facts and figures needed to support key messages), although core and central to risk communications, is not nearly enough. Here are the building blocks of risk communications:

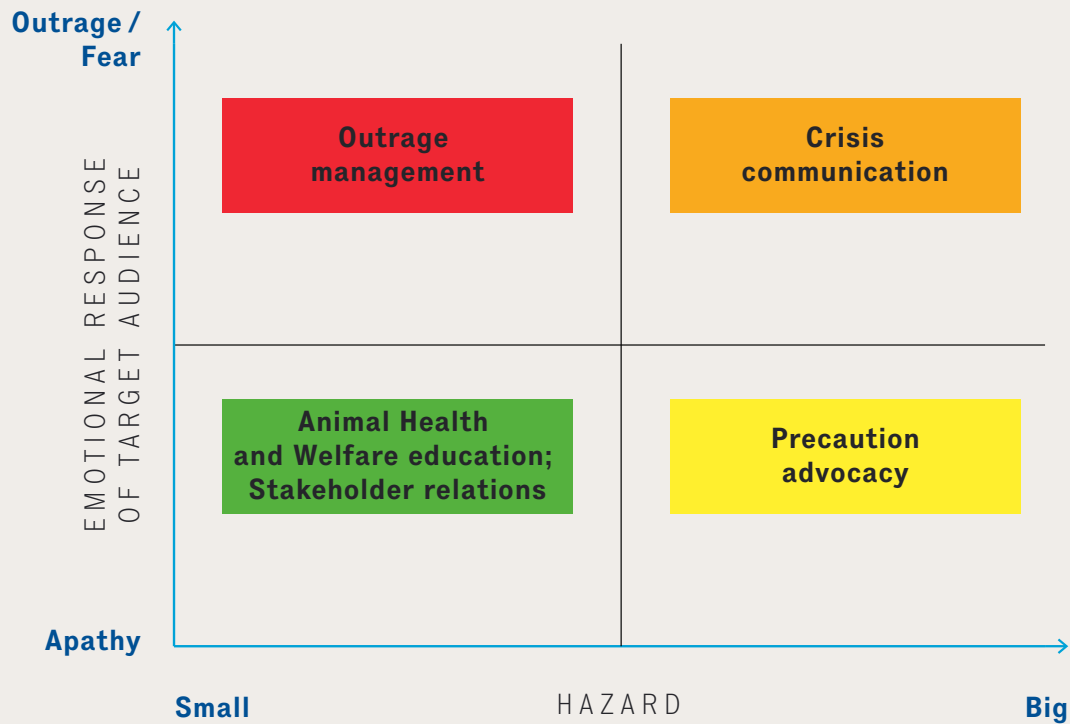
- Technical information: these are facts and figures needed to support key messages.
- Values: we need to appeal to people/cultural values.
- Trust: individuals and Veterinary Services must be trusted (The most important! By far!).
- Credibility: of the messenger and the Veterinary Services.
- Expression of caring/empathy: people will listen more closely and pay attention to your message if they feel the messenger cares.

3.2 Risk communications strategies

The following model is proposed by Peter Sandman. It analyses risk perception based on:

- the extent of the hazard.
- the degree of emotion (fear, anger, concerns, outrage, other emotions) of the affected audience(s).

Based on your analysis of where the risk perception lies in the following matrix, you will use one of four risk communications strategies described here.



Strategy 1: Animal Health and Welfare education (and stakeholder relations): when the hazard is relatively small and emotional engagement is low or there is apathy.

Goals:

- Monitor communications surveillance to identify and address outrage early (before the situation moves to outrage management).
- Maintain public and stakeholder engagement in ongoing projects.

Notes:

- Craft messages based on strong scientific evidence.
- Disseminate general information, which is usually sufficient, but watch out for problems early.

- Rely on audience self-motivation to seek out and use communications products.
- Understand that it is unlikely to achieve major changes on its own.

Examples:

- Using a web newsletter or mobile alerts to keep veterinarians informed about the latest animal disease outbreaks in their region.
- Leaflets on prudent use of antibiotics, veterinary medicines withdrawal periods in food-producing animals, human and animal symptoms of rabies, etc.

Strategy 2: Precautionary advocacy: when the hazard is big, but people are not very concerned or outraged. They may be apathetic to the issue.

Goals:

- Arouse emotions – outrage the public to bring them to your level of concern (not higher) so that they take action.

Notes:

- This is the ONLY situation where you want to increase public outrage but stop when it reaches the expert's level of concern.
- Be careful not to over-dramatize. No scare tactics. Be honest and transparent.
- Incite people to take action to avoid secondary crisis from this risk.
- Send messages based on strong scientific evidence, in lay language.

Sometimes, animal health problems tackled by Veterinary Services pose serious threats but your audiences are not emotionally engaged enough to take your advice.

Examples:

- Communications about animal identification, biosecurity measures in farms, etc.
- People are unaware of a new threat: risk of avian influenza transmission by wild birds. They need information to understand the magnitude of the risk and to know what measures to take to protect their flocks and themselves.
- Dog-rabies vaccination rates are low in developing countries. People do not realize how vaccinating dogs, both domestic and stray, could eliminate this fatal disease, which continues to kill tens of thousands of people every year, unfortunately mostly children.

Strategy 3: Outrage management: when the hazard is small (little or no real danger) but people are very outraged or upset, or their response is out of proportion to the real risk.

Goals:

- Calm the public down, respectfully and reasonably.
 - › Listen to their concerns first.
 - › Apologize for any mistakes your service has made if the outrage is about your mistakes.
- Communicate facts and evidence; respectfully acknowledge anger and fear.
 - › Explain the actual danger.
 - › Cite credible third parties (experts, scientific research, etc.).

- › Correct misinformation.
- › Resolve rumours.

Notes:

- Act: there is a time pressure to communicate early and frequently.

Examples:

- Farmers fear that Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) vaccine could affect their goats' fertility.
- Fear that all bovine meat could transmit prion.
- Allegations that Veterinary Services are colluding with private industry.

Strategy 4: Crisis communication: when the hazard is large or imminent, and fear is also (appropriately) high.

Goals:

- Put everyone on the same page in terms of information.
 - › Explain what is happening, explain early and keep providing information frequently.
 - › Tell people what you know, what is being done and when you will communicate next.
 - › Correct misinformation and resolve rumours.
 - › Messages will likely be based on uncertain scientific facts.

- › Be transparent; admit what you do not know. In a crisis, much of the information is likely to be missing or at least uncertain at first.
- Modify behaviour.
 - › Send a message that creates an impetus to act.
 - › Give people something to do (making risk seem controllable).
- Act: there is a time pressure to communicate early and frequently.
 - › Deal with emotions.
 - › Show empathy.
 - › Do NOT over-reassure.

Notes:

- Use a mix of methods: social mobilization, social media, mass media, trustworthy spokespersons, etc.
- Update information daily or even more frequently in the acute phase.
- Listen for concerns and address them proactively.
 - › A certain degree of fear/concern is necessary to motivate people to act to protect their health.
 - › False assurances that later turn out to be unfounded erode trust.
- Communicate a sense of “we’re all in this together”.

Examples:

- Numerous cases of rabies in a country considered free from the disease
- Zoonotic H5N1 Avian influenza outbreaks in China
- Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks in North Africa



4. Key messages of the session

1. Experts and those affected do not perceive risk the same way.
2. Consider levels of outrage before you consider a risk communications strategy.
3. All health communication is about communicating risk.
4. This model can and should be used for all advocacy, health communication, crisis communication, risk communication and outbreak communication.



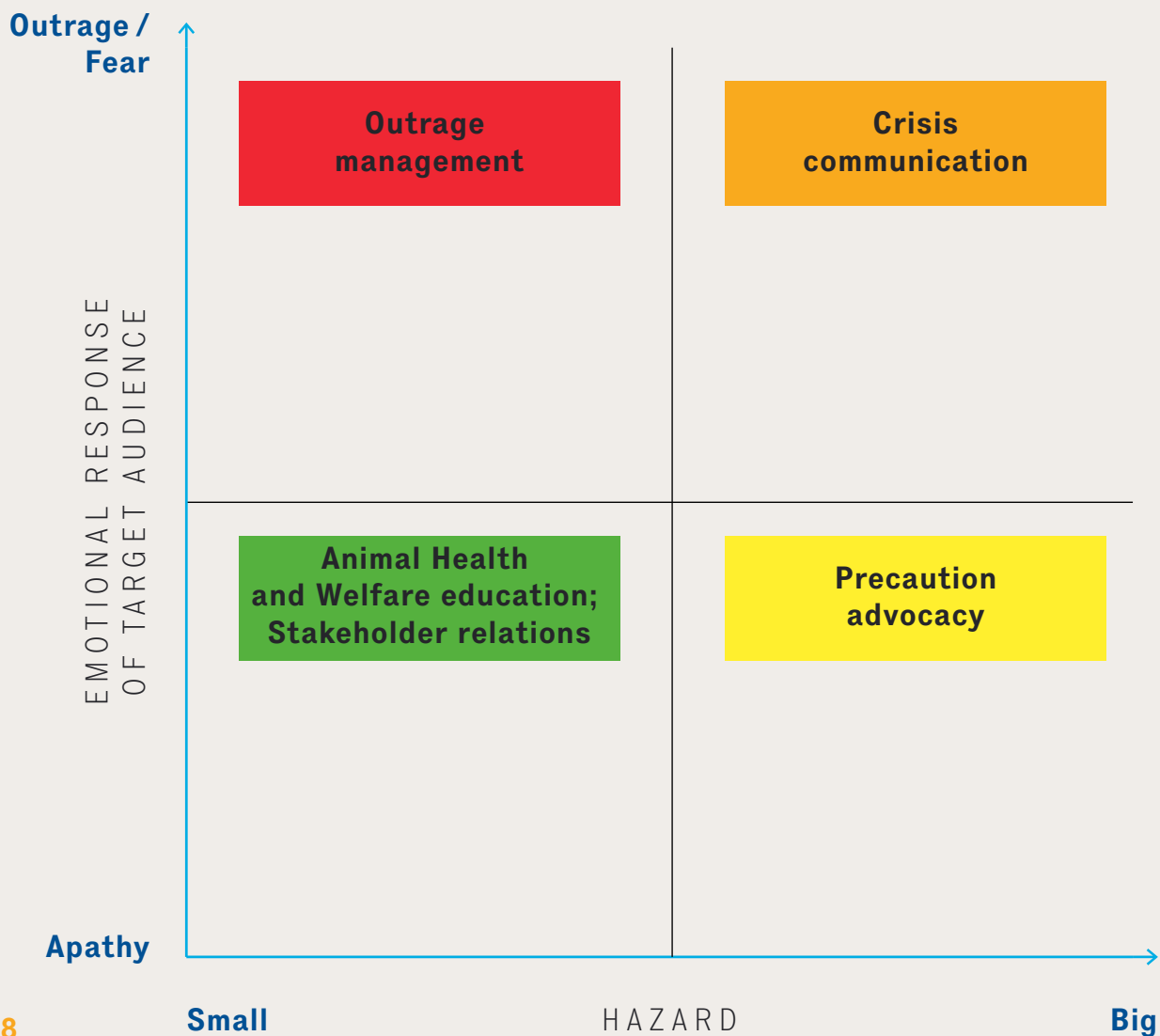
Worksheet #3:

Risk communication

Where is the audience perception? Is the audience emotionally engaged or concerned? Or is there lack of interest and apathy about your issue? Map where they are on the grid below.

SOCO: _____

Audience: _____





Worksheet #3 continued: Risk communication

Applying risk communication strategies

Communication strategy	Hazard (danger) vs outrage (concern)	Examples of hazards (real or perceived)	Dealing with outrage (concern)	Main message	Required action
Precautionary advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hazard big → Outrage low (apathy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Outdated veterinary products → Roaming dogs → Refusing vaccination → Insufficient biosecurity measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Raise outrage to your level of concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Beware! Something bad could happen! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increase people's emotional engagement
Crisis communication ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hazard big → Outrage high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Natural disaster → Disease outbreak → Animal products contamination (real or suspected) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Keep outrage high so as to maintain people's vigilance and the motivation to act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → We're in this together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Communicate proactively and early → Explain what is happening → Make clear what you know and what you don't
Outrage management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hazard small → Outrage high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Suspicion of fertility impact from PPR vaccination → Rumours of prion transmission by all bovine meat → Allegations of VS decisions influenced by conflict of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Try to lower outrage level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → I appreciate/understand your concern Here are the facts as I know them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Communicate proactively and early → Listen and acknowledge fears and present the evidence or facts → Explain why you believe there is no danger
Health education and stakeholder surveillance ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hazard small or intermediate or not imminent → Outrage low or absent (apathy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Micronutrient deficiency → Deworming campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → No action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Be watchful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Conduct communication surveillance as soon as possible → Identify potential causes of concern early on

¹ Also termed outbreak communication, pandemic communication and risk communication.

² Communication or stakeholder surveillance involves assessing the public's beliefs, opinions and knowledge about specific risks.

SECTION B

**DEVELOPING
COMMUNICATION
MATERIALS AND
PRODUCTS**

Session 4
**7 Cs of
Veterinary
Services'
communications**

Session Notes 4:



7 Cs of Veterinary

Services' communications



1. What is this session about?

This session introduces a checklist that is useful for ensuring that your animal health and welfare communications and products follow good practice.



2. Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants are able to:

- list the 7 Cs of Veterinary Services' communications;
- → apply the 7 Cs to develop and test public animal health and welfare material or products.



3. Steps and guidance

Good animal health and welfare communication products follow the criteria below.

1. **Command attention:**
Effective communications products command attention. We do this by focusing on the point fast and using compelling arguments, facts and emotive images.
2. **Clarify the message:**
Once you have people's attention, you need to clarify what you mean. What does the number mean? Who is at risk? What is the cost of not doing something? How can something be done?

3. **Communicate a benefit:**
This is one of the most common mistakes in communications. We must be EXPLICIT about the benefits for our target audience(s). For example: your cattle will be healthy and produce more milk; or, this will protect your herd and your farm's income, etc.
4. **Consistency counts:**
We must be consistent in all our content including numbers, facts and calls to action. There must be consistency over time (unless our communication is about a change in the knowledge or advice the Veterinary Service offers) and consistent across all parts of your service. Being inconsistent damages our reputation and credibility very quickly and undermines our ability to do our work even in other areas of focus.
5. **Cater to the HEART and the HEAD:**
We are usually good about scrutinizing the content of our communications. Do we have our facts right? Are they backed up by evidence or agreement? But we must remember to pay equal attention to the emotional needs of our audiences. People listen with their eyes, ears and heart. Issues and messages that appeal to people's hearts or emotions have greater chances of being heard, understood and acted upon, thus leading to action and change.
6. **Create trust:**
Sound technical content, respect for the values of the audience, credibility of the Veterinary Services or the messenger and expressions of caring all invoke trust. Announcing a situation early, being transparent and available for clarification help strengthen trust. Genuine expressions of caring and empathy also help maintain trust. In many situations the use of Veterinary Services' logo or veterinarian qualification (Doctor) provides credibility and increases or inspires trust.

7. **Call to action:**
To induce the change of behaviour desired, communications MUST have a call to action. This could be: wash hands, identify your herds, vaccinate your dogs, call you veterinarian, visit a website, etc.

These tips apply to all communications, posters, leaflets, videos, interviews, etc.



4. Key messages of session

1. The 7 Cs help us ensure that our animal health and welfare messages are effective.
2. Use them ALWAYS for ALL products.



Worksheet #4:

The 7 Cs of communication

7 Cs of communication assessment sheet

Before sending a message, verbally or written, take a minute to think about your communication points... are the 7 Cs covered in your message?

Use this assessment as a guide to creating a message that is clear, actionable and most importantly, listened to.

Type of material: _____

Subject: _____

SOCO: _____

Audiences: _____

The 7 Cs	Description	No	Partially	Completely
Command attention:	Have you focused on the point quickly? Does it have compelling arguments, facts and images?			
Clarify message:	Is your message clear (meaning of numbers, pictures, risk groups, actions needed by particular audience and consequences of them not doing them)? Is it clear what should be done?			
Communicate a benefit:	Have you made the benefit explicit to the target audience(s)?			
Consistency counts:	Are the numbers, facts, and calls to action consistent?			
Cater to the HEART and HEAD:	Do you have your facts right? Are they backed up by evidence or agreement? Have you paid equal attention to the emotional needs of your audiences?			
Create trust:	Is your message trustworthy? Is it transparent and credible? Does it express empathy?			
Call to action:	Is there a call to action? Is there a verb?			

Session 5

**Storyline and
talking points**

Session Notes #5:

Storyline and talking points



1. What is this session about?

This session helps you develop ‘talking points’ and a storyline for your interview or conversation.



2. Learning objectives

At the end of this session, participants are able to:

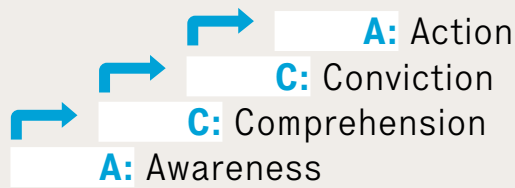
- › develop a storyline;
- › prepare talking points in preparation for an interview on a key subject or message.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 Before you think about developing a storyline and preparing talking points

As discussed in Session 2, you must know your audience before communicating with them. Most often, the goal of your communication is for your audience to take some kind of action – this is what you define with your SOCO. But before people take action, they usually go through some internal steps. Understanding how people make decisions and take action is a critical part of the communication process. People are usually in one of the four following steps of the decision ladder:



Your ultimate goal is for your audience to take the top step – Action. Depending on where people are in the decision ladder, however, your intermediate goal will be for your audience to take the next step. Your audience can only go up the ladder one step at a time.

3.2 Importance of creating a storyline

For thousands of years and all over the world, stories have been used to transmit knowledge and information. This can be explained by how the brain works: cognitive scientists have found that humans are not ideally set up to understand logic, they are ideally set up to understand stories. So when you speak about the work of Veterinary Services, or about a certain topic or issue, it is important to frame what you say as a storyline.

A typical Veterinary Services storyline flows like this:

The problem: give a very short description of the problem, and how it has evolved to this point; address the question “so what”?

The solution: describe what can be done about the problem – concrete, appealing, feasible actions.

The Veterinary Services response: what are the Veterinary Services doing about this? how is it contributing to the solution? And what can others do?

3.3 Importance of creating talking points

The speaker plays a key role in any verbal communication. After thinking about the WHY of the communication (SOCO)

and understanding his/her audience, the speaker will prepare the WHAT – the content of this communication. In Aristotle’s model of communication, the speaker:

- discovers rational, emotional and ethical proofs;
- arranges these proofs strategically;
- clothes the ideas in clear and compelling words;
- delivers the communication appropriately.

Talking points help focus your “WHAT”.

In any media communications, it is important to ensure the version of the story being reported is what your service wants. The way to ensure this is to create talking points.

Talking points are key messages that provide background facts and supporting evidence about a topic in a conversational way. Talking points are written to help speakers or interviewees to address the media and other influential audiences. Although talking points are written in a conversational matter, it is important to have strong supporting statements that provide credibility to the talking point.

3.4 Steps for creating talking points

1. Have a SOCO (single overarching communications outcome), the change or outcome you want to see as a result of your message.
2. For your particular topic, and keeping your SOCO and your audience in mind, think of the three key points you would want someone to know, one point each for the problem, the solution, and the Veterinary Services’ response.
 - › These are your three talking points.

3. For these three talking points, explain each in a conversational way and write it on paper.
4. Take each of the three talking points and, in bullet-point style, create three supporting arguments for each, including:
 - › concrete examples, or
 - › facts, or
 - › statistics.

Note:

When preparing the three supporting arguments, think about the information that will be needed to back up your talking points. If someone were to challenge the talking points, what facts and examples will support the talking points?

- › As of DATE we have X farms affected by DISEASE and are doing Y to address the situation.
5. Read the talking points out loud to yourself before finalizing. This is important because ultimately the talking points are for a speaker who will need to sound conversational as well as knowledgeable on the key messages.



4. Key messages from this session

1. People are usually in one of four following steps of the decision ladder: awareness, comprehension, conviction, action. They can only go up one step at a time.
2. Humans are not ideally set up to understand logic, they are ideally set up to understand stories.
3. Talking points are the basic framework for the main messages, facts and information you want to convey in your interview.
4. Always prepare, practice and get feedback on your talking points BEFORE your interview.
5. Talking points are written in a conversational manner, and it is important to have strong statements to provide credibility.



Worksheet #5:

Talking points template

Originator: _____

Date & time: _____

Cleared by: _____

Main audiences: _____

Talking points topic: _____

SOCO (the change you want to see is...): _____

The problem: talking point #1: _____

> Supporting argument: _____

> Concrete example, supporting fact or statistic:

The solution: talking point #2: _____

> Supporting argument: _____

> Concrete example, supporting fact or statistic: _____

The Veterinary Services response: talking point #3: _____

> Supporting argument: _____

> Concrete example, supporting fact or statistic: _____

Now, read this out loud... how does it sound?

SECTION C
**WORKING WITH
THE MEDIA**

Session 6

**Media
spokesperson
tools**

Session Notes #6:

Media spokesperson tools



1. What is this session about?

This session outlines how to be an effective spokesperson for animal health and welfare, and for the Veterinary Services.



2. Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants are able to:

- describe the attributes of a good spokesperson;
- recognize and deal with difficult interviews using bridging techniques.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 The Spokesperson

The role of the Veterinary Services spokesperson is to communicate information that the audience wants or needs to prevent and reduce hazard, spread of disease or animal deaths. The spokesperson can bring the service to life by building trust and credibility for the Veterinary Services and by building support for the animal health and welfare response. Often Veterinary Services will be asked by media

to comment on new zoonotic diseases that affect people. When preparing as a Veterinary Services spokesperson, keep in mind the following guidance tips.

A. Remember, good spokespersons are made, not born

They:

- are prepared;
- have a compelling story to tell;
- have longstanding credibility (expertise, experience);
- have a solid reputation, past, present and sustained (individual and organizational reputation);
- are engaged with the key stakeholders and relate to the audience;
- are available to interact with the media;
- are good communicators.

B. Bring your story to life

Remember to personalize your message through:

- a story;
- a personal recollection or experience;
- social media;
- explaining concepts and jargon;

- explaining the implications for individuals affected;
- using the language of the audience.

C. Follow essential communication tips

Basic communications tips apply to all spokespersons, regardless of how skilled they are. Applying the following essential communication tips will help you to create three key messages, find stories, illustrations, factual evidence or examples and support your message.

These are the essential communication tips:

- Start with a single overarching communications outcome (SOCO).
- Get to the point, as fast as possible.
- Remember, the interviewer is thinking: “What’s in this for me?”
- Respect the 7 Cs of public health communications:
 1. Command attention.
 2. Clarify message.
 3. Communicate a benefit.
 4. Cater to the heart and mind.
 5. Consistency counts.
 6. Create trust.
 7. Call to action.

3.2 The interview

A. Media interviews are useful for animal health and public health work

Media interviews offer valuable opportunities for the Veterinary Services. They are cost-effective ways of reaching our audiences to highlight animal health and welfare problems, as well as for highlighting links to public health. They help us engage key stakeholders in solutions and actions. Done properly, they enhance the trust in public services, which is essential for Veterinary Services' overall work.

B. Know the rules of a media interview

Most interviews are straightforward if you have a clear, compelling message that is targeted at your primary audiences. Most media are friendly and want Veterinary Services spokespersons as experts in their stories. We are usually valued, especially for our technical knowledge. However, at times interviewers can be hostile or difficult regardless of how much you have prepared.

Interviews are NOT conversations. Here are the basic media interview rules.

- The job of the media is to get a story.
- Your job is to tell YOUR story, YOUR way.
- You don't have to answer the question asked.
- The only way to improve your media skills is preparation, rehearsal and feedback.
- Face to face communication: **55%** body language; **38%** voice, **7%** words.

- Be prepared; and be prepared for difficult media interviews.

C. Beware of difficult interviewers

A few journalists may use some of these unfair approaches.

- The Machine-gunner - lots of questions all at once...
 - › Pick one or two and ignore the rest.
- The Interrupter...
 - › Either ignore the interruption or say “I’ll come back to that later”; or “Excuse me please, let me finish”.
- The Dart thrower - tosses in an unflattering or unfair statement...
 - › Take exception if you are being unfairly characterized. Show indignation if the accusations are unfair. Don’t overreact or lose your professional demeanour.
- The Dumb-Dumb - has not done the homework or is uninterested...
 - › Lead the interview with, “I think your audience might be interested to know...,” or, “are you aware of the fact that...”

D. Some tried and tested ways to deal with difficult questions

Below are some techniques for transitioning back to the safety of your key message.

→ **Remembering your SOCO**

Keep your SOCO in mind and communicate so that you achieve your SOCO objective at every opportunity. Plan and rehearse your key messages. Use it if the interviewer asks “what would you like to talk about?” or “is there anything you would like to add?”

→ **Blocking**

Sometimes a reporter asks you a question you don't want to answer.

If it is a policy not to discuss certain issues, it is okay to say that you are not able to discuss the topic, and then follow up with what you can discuss as it relates to your key message. If you cannot answer a question, it is okay to say so and then explain why. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is okay say you don't have the information, and follow up with what you do know.

→ **Bridging**

You will often be asked questions that don't get to the points you wish to make or that you don't wish to answer. You can use bridging to turn the question to your points. Here are some bridging techniques to help you return to the safety of your key message:

- › “Let me start by...”
- › “I would describe it differently...(the answer)...
“let me explain...”
- › “That's the way it used to be... here's what we do now...”
- › “Historically, that was the case. Today, here's what we're doing...”

- › “I’ve heard that too... The real issue is...”
- › “Yes... (the answer) and furthermore... and in addition to that...”
- › “That’s interesting...The fact is (are)...”
- › “That’s one view... OIE experts’ research shows...”
- › “Yes, but... that speaks to a bigger point...”
- › “...I think what you are really asking is...”

→ **Flagging**

When trying to quickly make your key messages clear in an interview, start with the conclusions and end with the explanations – “flag” or “headline” the issue. This is especially important for broadcast interviews. It helps your audience remember your message by emphasizing or prioritizing what you consider to be most important first, then following up with the explanation.

→ **Hooking**

Hooking is leaving a little taste at the end of something you have said so that the reporter will want to ask you a follow-up question, such as, “You’d be surprised at what our research indicated...”

→ **Enumerating points**

When you have a complicated message in a broadcast interview, you can carefully extend the sound bite by enumerating your points, making it difficult for the media outlet to separate them, for example, “There are three things farmers facing an avian influenza outbreak should know: ...1 ...2 ...3 ...”



4. Key messages from this session

1. Media interviews are very effective for public health work and for strengthening trust in the service.
2. Basic communication tips apply to all media interviews.
3. The job of the media is to get a story; your job is to tell your story, your way.
4. Use bridging techniques to get back to the safety of your SOCO.
5. Face-to-face communications is **55%** body language, **38%** voice, **7%** words.



Worksheet #6:

Phrases to bridge back to safety (your SOCO)

Reporters' tactics and spokesperson techniques guidance

Question type	Reporter tactic/questions	Spokesperson responses
Speculative questions	<p>"What could happen if _____?"</p> <p>"How do you think this happened?"</p> <p>"Can you offer a guess as to _____?"</p>	<p>"I wouldn't want to speculate on that. The facts are _____"</p> <p>"It is important that we deal with the facts as we know them, and they are _____"</p> <p>"It's too early to tell. We will have a full evaluation and find out what happened."</p>
Hearsay questions	<p>"John Smith from the UK Government told us that _____"</p> <p>A source from within FAO has told us _____"</p> <p>"How do you respond to Mary Jones of XXX who said that _____?"</p> <p>"Our sources tell us _____"</p>	<p>"This is the information I have _____"</p> <p>"I'd like to stick to the facts, and they are _____"</p> <p>"The facts are _____"</p> <p>"This is what I know _____"</p> <p>"I can't speak for Dr XYZ, but what I can address _____"</p>
Negative repeat questions	<p>"Tell us about the Avian influenza outbreak that happened here today?"</p> <p>"Could this have been another BSE crisis?"</p> <p>"Tell us about the _____"</p> <p>"Why is Veterinary Services' surveillance substandard?"</p>	<p>"The truth is _____"</p> <p>"Let me give you the facts as I have them _____"</p> <p>"Once again, let me share with you exactly what happened _____"</p> <p>Note: Don't repeat the negative comment or word!! Correct the inaccuracy.</p>
Putting words in your mouth	<p>"So, low staff morale in Veterinary Services is affecting animal health, isn't it?"</p>	<p>Many organizations are going through tough times _____"</p> <p>Note: Don't repeat the negative. Make the answer collective.</p>



Worksheet #6, continued: Phrases to bridge back to safety (your SOCO)

Reporters' tactics and spokesperson techniques guidance (continued...)

Question type	Reporter tactic/questions	Spokesperson responses
Presupposition questions	Reporter gives you completely false information to put you on the defensive. “Isn't it true that Veterinary Services didn't provide enough training to slaughterhouse technicians because the money was used for office parties?”	Let me give you the correct information _____ Actually this is what happened _____ The truth is _____ Note: Don't repeat the negative comment or word!
False facts and incorrect information	“So you have awarded 75% of your grants budget to carry FMD surveillance programme to one single province ?” Note: If a reporter provides incorrect information, it is okay to correct them with ...	“Perhaps I could clarify that for your (viewers, listeners, readers), [reporter's name], That is not true... the facts are that...” Note: Correct graciously and go to your positive point
Feeding the mike	“You've given good answers to such a controversial issue...(reporter pauses, camera stops rolling...)” Note: When the camera stops rolling, the reporter is still recording	Stay on your agenda. Be aware of nonverbal cues. It's the reporter's job to fill the airtime.

Spokesperson bridging techniques & examples

Technique	Explanation	Example
Blocking	Sometimes a reporter asks you a question you don't want to answer. If it is a policy not to discuss certain issues, it is fair to say...	<p>"It's our policy not to discuss XYZ... but what I can tell you is..."</p> <p>...and then bridge on to what you want to talk about. If you can't answer a question, explain why.</p>
Bridging	You will often be asked questions that don't get to the points you wish to make or that you don't wish to answer. You can use bridging to turn the question to your points.	<p>"Let me start by..."</p> <p>"I would describe it differently... (the answer)... "let me explain..."</p> <p>"I don't know...I don't have that information...What we do know is..."</p> <p>"That's the way it used to be... here's what we do now..."</p> <p>"Historically, that was the case. Today, here's what we're doing..."</p> <p>"I've heard that too... The real issue is..."</p> <p>"Yes... (the answer) and furthermore... and in addition to that..."</p> <p>"That's interesting...The fact is (are)..."</p> <p>"That's one view...OIE research shows..."</p> <p>"Yes, but...that speaks to a bigger point..."</p> <p>"... I think what you are really asking is..."</p>
Hooking	Hooking is leaving a little taste at the end of something you've said so that the reporter will want to ask you a follow-up question.	<p>"You'd be surprised at what our research indicated..."</p> <p>"There are three things we've found that are particularly important..."</p>
Flagging	<p>When trying to make your key messages clear quickly in an interview, start with the conclusions and end with the explanations – "flag" or "headline" the issue.</p> <p>This is especially important for broadcast interviews. It helps your audience remember your message by emphasising or prioritising what you consider to be most important.</p>	<p>You can simply make your point and then explain it, or you can draw attention by saying phrases such as:</p> <p>"What's important to remember is...The most important thing to remember..."</p> <p>"I've talked about a lot of things today. It boils down to these three points..."</p> <p>"I'm glad you mentioned that...because..."</p> <p>"What we really want to make clear is that..."</p> <p>"Your readers/viewers need to know..."</p> <p>"But what's really important or what you should take away is..."</p>
Enumerating points	When you have a complicated message in a broadcast interview, you can carefully extend the sound bite by enumerating your points, making it difficult for the media outlet to separate them.	<p>"There are three things a farmer facing unexplained deaths in his herds should know:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) isolate the dead bodies from the herd, 2) wash hands and change clothes , before manipulating the other animals, 3) contact his veterinarian as soon as possible."

Session 7

**Tips for
working with
the media**

Session Notes #7:

Tips for working with the media



1. What is this session about?

This session outlines tips, tools and advice for dealing effectively with the media.



2. Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants are able to:

- › list the 10 golden rules for dealing with the media;
- › know what the media want and do not want;
- › prepare a sound bite.



3. Steps and guidance

3.1 Prepare

A. Have a SOCO (single overarching communications outcome) and be clear about your audience

The media are not your audience, but they need to understand your message and be motivated to convey it to your audience.

B. Practise and rehearse and get feedback

C. Remember the 10 golden rules

1. Never, never, never lie.
2. Never say “No comment”.
3. There is no such thing as, “off the record”.
4. Be short, get to the point and always think of the audience.
5. Stay calm, confident and in charge.
6. Use simple language, avoid jargon.
7. Be human, and smile when appropriate.
8. It is okay to say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out”.
9. Do not speculate.
10. Beware of reporters’ tactics.

3.2 Understand what the media want

A. Today’s reporter

Today’s reporter often covers more than one “beat” and writes for more than one media channel (print/radio/TV/web). Frequently, reporters are on a 24/7 production cycle and can be bombarded with releases, advisories, statements (much of which contains little “news”). It is our job to provide compelling, complete and accurate stories and messages so they grab the attention of the media.

B. What reporters want

Reporters want:

- numbers, numbers, numbers...
(that are “current” and “reliable”)
- what is new
- what is unexpected, surprising, or against “trend”
- to have calls answered promptly
- access to an expert or spokesperson who “gets to the point”
- material in local language
- good quotes, analysis and current information
- photo and video images
- respectful treatment
- human interest stories.

C. What reporters don't want

Reporters don't want:

- lies, half-truths and misinformation
- unanswered messages
- news releases about all of Veterinary Services' activities
- exhaustive and lengthy news conferences
- material only in English

- being kept waiting
- last-minute notice.

3.3 Prepare a sound bite

One way to work with the media and to ensure a clear message is to prepare a sound bite. A sound bite is a short, focused, clear quote that is easy to repeat and memorable when heard.

Creating a sound bite will help to focus your message and reach your audience, as sound bites:

- use plain language – no jargon;
- use bold, positive, active verbs;
- adhere to the ideal 27/9/3 rule:
 - › 27 words,
 - › 9 seconds,
 - › 3 messages;
- speak to a 4th-6th grade level;
- have action and emotion;
- do not use humour;
- contain an analogy or memorable example;
- have been rehearsed and rehearsed so it naturally flows off your tongue.



4. Key messages from this session

1. The only way to improve your media skills is to prepare, rehearse and get honest feedback.
2. Today's reporter is constantly multitasking with multiple stories - we need to ensure our stories are portrayed accurately.
3. Sound bites are useful to get across a quotable quote focusing on your most important message.

SECTION D
STANDARDS
ON OIE
COMMUNICATION

Session 8

**Terrestrial
Animal Health
Code**



Reference document:

Chapter 3.3.

of the Terrestrial

Animal Health Code

Article 3.3.1.

General considerations

In general, communication entails the exchange of information between various individual, institutional and public groups for purposes of informing, guiding and motivating action. The application of the science and technique of communication involves modulating messages in accordance with situations, objectives and target audiences.

The recognition of communication as a discipline of the Veterinary Services and its incorporation within it is critical for their operations. The integration of veterinary and communication expertise is essential for effective communication.

Communication should be an integral part of all the activities of the Veterinary Services including animal health (surveillance, early detection and rapid response, prevention and control), animal welfare and veterinary public health (food safety, zoonosis) and veterinary medicine.

Objectives of this chapter on communication for the Veterinary Services are to provide guidance for the development of a communication system, strategic and operational communication plans and elements to assess their quality.

Article 3.3.2.

Principles of communication

1. Veterinary Services should have the authority and capability to communicate on matters within their mandate.
2. Veterinary and communication expertise should be combined, and have established linkages with relevant agencies, particularly for management of disasters which could have impact on animal health and animal welfare, and for exotic disease control.
3. Communication should be targeted and follow the fundamental criteria of transparency, consistency, timeliness, balance, accuracy, honesty and empathy and respect the fundamental principles of quality of Veterinary Services (Article 3.1.2.).
4. Communication should be a continuous process.
5. Veterinary Services should have oversight of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and revising their strategic and operational communication plans.

Article 3.3.3.

Definitions

Communication: means the discipline of informing, guiding and motivating individual, institutional and public groups, ideally on the basis of interactive exchanges, about any issue under the competence of the Veterinary Services.

Crisis: means a situation of great threat, difficulty or uncertainty when issues under the competence of the Veterinary Services require immediate action.

Crisis communication: means the process of communicating information as accurately as possible, albeit potentially incomplete, within time constraints in the event of a crisis.

Outbreak communication: means the process of communicating in the event of an outbreak. Outbreak communication includes notification.

Article 3.3.4.

Communication system

In addition to the Principles of Communication the following elements should be used in conjunction with Chapter 3.1., when planning, implementing and assessing a communication system:

1. Organisational chart indicating a direct link between the communication personnel and the Veterinary Authority, through the chain of command, such as dedicated communication unit or communication officer
2. Human resources
 - a. Identified and accessible official communication focal point
 - b. Job descriptions of communication personnel identifying roles and responsibilities
 - c. Sufficient number of qualified personnel with knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities relevant to communication
 - d. Continuous training and education on communication provided to communication personnel.
3. Financial and physical resources
 - a. Clearly identified budget for communication that provides adequate funding
 - b. Provision or access to appropriate material resources in order to carry out roles and responsibilities: suitable premises or accommodation that is adequately equipped with sufficient office and technical equipment, including information technology and access to the Internet.

4. Management of the communication system
 - a. Roles and responsibilities of the communication personnel
 - i. Report to the Veterinary Authority
 - ii. Engage in decision-making process by providing guidance and expertise on communication issues to the Veterinary Services
 - iii. Be responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the strategic and operational plans for communication and relevant standard operating procedures
 - iv. Function as contact point on communication issues for the Veterinary Services with established linkages to relevant Competent Authorities with which Veterinary Services collaborate
 - v. Provide and coordinate continuous education on communication for the Veterinary Services.
 - b. Strategic plan for communication

A well-designed strategic plan for communication should support the Veterinary Services strategic plan and have management support and commitment. The strategic plan for communication should address all high level organization-wide long-term communication objectives.

A strategic plan for communication should be monitored, periodically reviewed and should identify measurable performance objectives and techniques to assess the effectiveness of communication.

The strategic plan for communication should consider the different types of communication: routine communication, risk communication, outbreak communication and crisis communication, to allow individuals, affected or interested parties, an entire community or the general public to make best possible decisions and be informed of policy decisions and their rationale.

The key outcomes in effectively implementing a strategic plan for communication are increased knowledge and awareness of issues by the public and stakeholders, higher understanding of the role of the Veterinary Services, higher visibility of and improved trust and credibility in the Veterinary Services. These will enhance understanding or acceptance of policy decisions and subsequent change of perception, attitude or behaviour.

c. Operational plans for communication

Operational plans for communication should be based on the assessment of specific issues and should identify specific objectives and target audiences such as staff, partners, stakeholders, media and the general public.

Each operational plan for communication should consist of a well-planned series of activities using different techniques, tools, messages and channels to achieve intended objectives and utilizing available resources within a specific timeframe.

Session 9

**Aquatic
Animal Health
Code**



Reference document:

Chapter 3.2.

of the Aquatic Animal Health Code

Article 3.3.1.

General considerations

In general, communication entails the exchange of information between various individual, institutional and public groups for purposes of informing, guiding and motivating action. The application of the science and technique of communication involves modulating messages in accordance with situations, objectives and target audiences.

The recognition of communication as a discipline of the Aquatic Animal Health Services and its incorporation within it is critical for their operations. The integration of aquatic animal health and communication expertises is essential for effective communication. Communication between the Aquatic Animal Health Services and Veterinary Services (particularly where Aquatic Animal Health Services are separate from, and independent of Veterinary Services) is especially important.

Communication should be an integral part of all the activities of the Aquatic Animal Health Services including animal health (surveillance, early detection and rapid response, prevention and control), aquatic animal welfare and veterinary public health (food safety, zoonoses) and veterinary medicine.

Objectives of this chapter on communication for the Aquatic Animal Health Services are to provide guidance for the development of a communication system, strategic and operational communication plans and elements to assess their quality.

Article 3.2.2.

Principles of communication

1. Aquatic Animal Health Services should have the authority and capability to communicate on matters within their mandate.
2. Aquatic animal health and communication expertises should be combined.
3. Communication should be targeted and follow the fundamental criteria of transparency, consistency, timeliness, balance, accuracy, honesty and empathy and respect the fundamental principles of quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services (Article 3.1.2.)
4. Communication should be a continuous process.
5. Aquatic Animal Health Services should have oversight of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and revising their strategic and operational communication plans.

Article 3.2.3.

Definitions

Communication: means the discipline of informing, guiding and motivating individual, institutional and public groups, ideally on the basis of interactive exchanges, about any issue under the competence of the Aquatic Animal Health Services.

Crisis: means a situation of great threat, difficulty or uncertainty when issues under the competence of the Aquatic Animal Health Services require immediate action.

Crisis communication: means the process of communicating information as accurately as possible, albeit potentially incomplete, within time constraints in the event of a crisis.

Outbreak communication: means the process of communicating in the event of an outbreak. Outbreak communication includes notification.

Article 3.2.4.

Communication system

In addition to the Principles of Communication the following elements should be used in conjunction with Chapter 3.1., when planning, implementing and assessing a communication system:

1. Organisational chart indicating a direct link between the communication personnel and the Competent Authority, through the chain of command such as dedicated communication unit and communication officer
2. Human resources
 - a. Identified and accessible official communication focal point
 - b. Job descriptions of communication personnel identifying roles and responsibilities
 - c. Sufficient number of qualified personnel with knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities relevant to communication
 - d. Continuous training and education on communication provided to communication personnel.
3. Financial and physical resources
 - a. Clearly identified budget for communication that provides adequate funding

- b. Provision or access to appropriate material resources in order to carry out roles and responsibilities: suitable premises or accommodation that is adequately equipped with sufficient office and technical equipment, including information technology and access to the Internet.
4. Management of the communication system
- a. Roles and responsibilities of the communication personnel
 - i. Report to the Competent Authority
 - ii. Engage in decision-making process by providing guidance and expertise on communication issues to the Competent Authority
 - iii. Be responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the strategic and operational plans for communication and relevant standard operating procedures
 - iv. Function as contact point on communication issues for the Aquatic Animal Health Services
 - v. Provide and coordinate continuous education on communication for the Aquatic Animal Health Services.
 - b. Strategic plan for communication

A well-designed strategic plan for communication should support the Aquatic Animal Health Services strategic plan and have management support and commitment. The strategic plan for communication should address all high level organization-wide long-term communication objectives.

A strategic plan for communication should be monitored and periodically reviewed, and should identify measurable performance objectives and techniques to assess the effectiveness of communication.

The strategic plan for communication should consider the different types of communication: routine communication, risk communication, outbreak communication and crisis communication, to allow individuals, affected or interested parties, an entire community or the general public to make the best possible decisions and be informed of policy decisions and their rationale.

The key outcomes in effectively implementing a strategic plan for communication are increased knowledge and awareness of issues by the public and stakeholders, higher understanding of the role of the Aquatic Animal Health Services, higher visibility of and improved trust and credibility in the Aquatic Animal Health Services. These will enhance understanding and/or acceptance of policy decisions and subsequent change of perception, attitude and/or behaviour.

c. Operational plans for communication

Operational plans for communication should be based on the assessment of specific issues and should identify specific objectives and target audiences such as staff, partners, stakeholders, media and the general public.

Each operational plan for communication should consist of a well-planned series of activities using different techniques, tools, messages and channels to achieve intended objectives and utilising available resources within a specific timeframe.

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For any further information, explanation, feedback and training, please contact the OIE Communication Unit in writing to: communication@oie.int and write “OIE Communication Handbook” in the subject line.



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