



Rural Community Cooperative Facilitator (CCF)



Training Course – Module 5 – Effective Communication

<http://www.entcom.eu>

ENTCOM – Entrepreneurship and Community Cooperatives

Project Number: 2014-1-IT02-KA204-003631



5: Effective Communication/Marketing

Skill Topic Area: How to make external and internal, presentations, use of PowerPoint, Chairing meetings, recognizing body language, report writing, project website creation, effective use of media, print, radio, television.



As a CCF communication will be a daily core activity for you and a lot of your success will depend on how efficient your communication will be. You will need to communicate with your cooperative members to come to decisions and to deal with administrative issues but you will also communicate with other external parties. Communication is a very broad topic and we know that you and your cooperative members already have the relevant skills to do a good job. Therefore, we would like to use this module to highlight some aspects that people easily forget as it seems just normal and we try to point out some communication aspects that can make your marketing actions easier and more effective without spending much extra money.

The tools that we will introduce are designed for low budget activities and it is up to you to choose the most appropriate for your purpose or if you already have an efficient marketing and communication plan they might be useful to share them with cooperative members who would like to improve their skills in this area.

But to start with we should be sure that we all have the same understanding of what we mean by “communication”. Firstly, let us be clear about what communication is.

General ‘good to knows’ about communication

In everyday use communication is the process of transferring information from one entity to another.

It is important that there is a division between information and the medium to transfer it, very often it is considered one and the same – they are not. It is possible to distinguish between the information being sent and the medium used to send it.

- Information can be: Words, gestures, drawings, paintings, songs, music.
- The means can be: speeches, emails, blogs, forums, text, messages, voice messages, poems, essays, books, newspapers, ads, articles, and practically anything you can speak through, write on or draw on.

There are also different **types of communication** written communication, oral communication, non-verbal communication, active listening and there are different **types of conversations**. By understanding that there exist different types, you can improve your skills as a communicator.

If you are consciously about what you want as a communication outcome, and the kind of conversation that you want, you will be able to:

- work intentionally to create what you want (with this conversation);
- consider what the other person wants; and
- and finally be a better communicator.

There exist different conversations types; debate, argument, and dialogue. So how you conduct yourself (meaning what you say, how you talk in terms of tone etc, should be differently depending on the type of communication you are involved in.)

If you are clear about your own intention, you can avoid moving into a mode of communication that is ineffective for what you want to create or accomplish with this conversation. For instance if you want to create a dialogue, but are using an argument approach, you will not create an effective dialogue with this.

“One to One”

One to one communication is an activity, in which an individual is communicating with another individual. **Please note** that individual in this context can be both an individual as in a person, but can also be a company, an organisation, etc. It simply just means that one entity is communicating with another and no third parties are involved in this communication action.



For instance when you send out a mail to a person to announce news or other relevant issues related to your project, this is one to one communication.

Some of the benefits of one to one communication are the following:

- Higher impact than by using mass-communication
- Being able to tailor your message to one specific person
- Higher chances of receiving focused feedback

The difficult part of all communication is to get your message out there.

There are several techniques that you can learn in order to insuring that your message gets heard and more importantly understood. In the following section tools, tips and tricks are presented to make the best out of your communication activities. Typical activities will involve some kind of personal contact such as meetings, phone calls or presentations. The ability in which the receiver of the information understands the message will depend largely on your ability to communicate the message in an understandable matter considering your target individual/group and the context.

Be better in expressing yourself and make yourself more understandable!

Message Chunking

The term ***'less is more'*** is essential when trying to understand the meaning of message chunking.

Message chunking can be good, if for instance you are trying to explain your project, and project descriptions can often be quite long because you have objectives, aims, target groups, activities, results, cooperative members, etc., and when you are finished with your explanation, you realize that the receiver of this information is still considering the objectives of the project. If you do message chunking, you will filter the information for your audience according to their interest and benefits. Then make sure that they understand this and ask if there are questions; then perhaps move forward to the next information, and so on. Try to give them the facts that are most interested for them first to keep them attracted to your contents!

Different understanding of the same word

Another tricky aspect of communication is the choice of words that you use, for instance during an interview, or written in an email.

It can be confusing that one thing you say to one person is well understood, while using the same words to another person creates confusion and doubts, why is that?

There are actually two distinct meanings to words and languages, the first one is called the ***denotative meaning***, it is most likely the one that you are most familiar with, it refers to what the word refers to. For instance the word cat's denotative meaning is an animal with four legs, and paws, a tail, whiskers, etc. (of course there are exceptions). There might be differences in the opinion between people on what they believe a cat to be, but normally there is not something that is difficult to agree on. So, when you talk about a cat, most people will understand what you are referring to, this is not the difficult part.

Message chunking involves breaking up the information you have to convey into smaller, well organized and related pieces or chunks. Then, what you do is talk/write about the chunk, check for understanding with the other person, allow the person to reflect, and THEN move to the next chunk, making sure the person is clear about the relationship between one chunk and the next.

The second type of meaning is called the **connotative meaning** of something and has to do with the individual, based on that particular person's experiences and emotional reactions and judgments associated with the word or what it refers to.

The cat example will be used here to demonstrate what it means. Two people might have the same opinion about what the word cat denotes. But then the resembling also stops: because one of the persons may have had lots of cats the whole life and enjoy very much their company. The other person, however, may have had an unpleasant experience with a cat and was attacked when was a child, and thus associate the word cat with unpleasant emotions, thoughts and judgements. In this case, the word cat (in terms of its associations) is very different for each of these people.

Of course with stakeholders that you meet in relation to marketing activities and you do not know very well, it is difficult to guess if they have had a traumatic incident with a cat, but be aware to choose your words carefully, and understand if people react differently; it might be because of their associations with certain words.

Mirroring

Another interesting communication tool is the method 'mirroring'. The main purpose of mirroring is to improve the relation with another person by simply imitating the other person's physical positions and mannerisms and or imitating the other person's verbal approach and style. Physical mirroring is when the person mirroring reflects the body posture and non-verbals of the other person. On the other hand, in verbal mirroring the person doing the mirroring adopts the tone of voice, word use and communication style of the other person. Of course this method is mostly useful in one to one communication but you can also use it by answering questions in a bigger group.

Thereby, you will make the other person more comfortable, and possibly create the perception of having a closer relationship than in reality. Why is this useful? You try to spread the word about your project - if people feel they can relate to you, the chances that they pay more attention and become more interested in the project are much higher. You all know the situation: You might be interested in a product/service, but if you don't feel you can relate to the person offering it, you might unconsciously dislike the product/service. But try to not over-use the mirroring method as it could also turn easily into ridiculous situations.

Group communication

Group communication can be defined as a sender transferring information to more than one individual i.e. group

Group communication can be for example a conference, a workshop or a seminar.

You can enhance the possibilities of a better marketing activity and increase the impact of it, by improving your communication skills with regard to group communications. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages in group communication. The advantage is that you reach much more people more efficiently, than with for instance with one-to-one communication. A disadvantage is that

you only reach people in a more shallow approach and cannot ensure that the participants understand the message.

A communication skill, which will often be useful in group communication, is presentation techniques, in order to ensure that your message does not get lost, when presenting your project at a conference or seminar.

Good and effective group communication is a mixture of a variety of elements:

- You need to know what your audience wants;
- You need to prepare good, interesting and engaging content;
- You also need to be confident when presenting the material;
- You have to know how to manage your environment successfully, and;
- Your message must have maximum impact.

However, to implement all these elements in reality is quite a challenge. But you can with the correct tools and material, reach out and make sure that people hear and understand your message.

Internal/external communication.

In communication there is to distinguish between internal and external communication, and which activities belong to either the internal or external category.

Internal communication is activities that are performed within a closed forum, for instance an organisation or a cooperation consortium. With regards to cooperatives, internal communication could be when all cooperative members need to discuss general issues, make decisions on common topics, and share information among them. You are often performing such activities internally without being really aware of it e.g. sending an email to your colleagues.

Depending of course on the size and capacity of your cooperative, you might work on a project that does not involve all your colleagues to the same extent although they might have a great interest in it. They might have access to interesting stakeholders or important business contacts. Therefore, you need to make sure that everyone involved internally has the same update of information and activities as you might lose potential synergies otherwise. This can actually lead to possibilities and a larger impact for your project.

In order to organise your internal communication in an efficient way it is useful to set up mailing lists as usually the main communication channel is emails. You can think of setting up different mailing lists for example if you have cooperative members or staff dealing with specific aspects and a general one to keep everyone up to date on important steps and issues relevant for everyone. Don't forget that all your cooperative members are promoters of the initiative themselves and all of them should have the same knowledge and marketing tools available.

Of course it is highly recommended to form a communication/marketing group who prepares contents and key messages for everyone to use. With this activity you make the communication process for

everyone easy and you can ensure that all of them spread the right message in the right format by using the common branding.

Make your choice!

You get a new staff member in the cooperative administration. How to get him/her included in the overall communication procedures?

- **I tell everyone to update the colleague by sending him/her the relevant material.**

Maybe this is not such a good idea as people might send the same things and consider different issues as important to share. The poor new colleague might get overloaded with emails and will have some troubles to get an overview.

- **I organize a meeting with the communication team and they introduce all material and communication procedures to the new colleague.**

Perfect choice! In that way the communication team can explain the whole communication flow, the communication plan and material incl. branding that is to be used. During the meeting examples can be given and the new colleague can ask questions or at least knows the people to contact if there are some aspects to clarify at a later stage.

- **I include him/her in the general email list and assume that she/he will pick up the contents by getting familiar with material and continuous updates and information sent to the entire team.**

It is definitely a good step to include the new colleague in the email list and also "learning by doing" will happen in the process. Still it would be easier for your colleague to get a short introduction first that he/she can understand the emails much easier.

External communication is considered to reach an audience beyond the inner circle - in other words, communication that is directed to someone outside of your cooperative consortium.

External communication can be addressed to specific target groups, to the general public, to funding bodies, to other cooperatives or the communication with diverse media... External communication is for instance, when you send a newsletter to identified stakeholders or target groups or if you release a press release to be published in the regional newspapers.

For external communication there are many different tools available and it is up to you to find out which instruments and channels are the best for you and how to handle them in a practical way.

To give you a better picture let's do a short exercise. You could also do it together with your team in order to find out the best opportunities.

We give you here a list with examples of different communication and marketing instruments/options. Try to rank them from 1 to 28 according to your project/initiative. What is the most important for you to spread your message and to reach your target audiences? Which are the best available options for you? You will find out that big discussions will rise already within your team.

| | |
|--|--|
| Publications (reports, studies...) | Internet forums/blogs/YouTube |
| Specific professional newspapers and magazines | Newsletter |
| Posters | Press releases |
| Cooperation meetings with other cooperatives | Flyers |
| Radio | Project website |
| Informal meetings | Daily newspapers and magazines in general |
| Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...) | TV |
| Emails pools/groups | Formal meetings (round tables, workshops...) with stakeholders and external experts |
| DVD / CD /USB | Promotion Clip |
| Exhibitions, fairs | Pilots /Testing |
| Thematic workshops, conferences, public events | Networking /Lobbing with relevant stakeholders |
| Involvement of a marketing expert | Professional public relation expert/manager |
| Conference papers | Advertisement (paid) |
| Gadgets/ giveaway (pens, calendar, notepads etc.) | Online platforms and networks |

It is difficult to prioritize the different options and some of them also include others or will get more impact by combining them with others. It is all about finding the perfect mix for your specific project. A second issue is also how to implement them in practice and who will do what. Therefore, it might be a good idea to set up a communication plan to build a basis for your external communication activities:

Communication plan

A communication plan can be a useful tool, to help you get the best out of your planned communication and marketing activities.

What should you consider when developing a communication plan?

Determine your goals: It is vital that even before you begin the actual development of the plan that you have decided, which goals and objectives you have you're your communication plan.

Examples of goals can be:

- increase product sales/success, for instance if you have a new product or service, you want to promote;
- To increase awareness; and
- To announce/promote a precise event, communal or political initiative.

Identify target audience: Each goal of the communication should address at least one relevant target audience. When you know your audience in advance, you can better develop and deliver the messages that you want.

Determine your resources: It is very important that you allocate the necessary and even more important the available resources:

- Human resources/time
- Material/financial resources
- Technological expertise and technological means available

Identify key messages: Key messages are the concepts that you want your target group or audience to remember from your communication campaign. These messages should be carefully selected and incorporated into all of your communication (marketing and promotion) materials and activities.

Determine channels of communication: You can select different approaches, for instance the Internet, magazines, events, radio etc.

Prepare a budget: You need to realize your communication plan and thus prepare a budget. Please always remember to include 10% more of the final estimated budget to cover unforeseen changes or activities in the development of the plan.

Evaluation: Each communication activity should be evaluated to measure it against the pre-defined goals. You can measure this through indicators such as visits to the website, direct feedback/comments etc.

Allocate responsibilities: It is almost impossible to cover all communication issues with one person. Therefore, you should think of building a communication team within your cooperative members and allocate the responsibilities according to the expertise and skills of each of the team.

Example of a communication plan:

| Communication plan – EXAMPLE | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Period: DD.MM.YYYY – DD.MM.YYYY | | | | | | | |
| Communication Channel | Purpose of activity (short description, names, titles, web-addresses etc.) | Date(s) Duration Frequency | Place Location | Level L-local R-regional N-national | Characteristics of Target Group and Key message | Responsible party | Feedback, Impact |
| INTERNAL | | | | | | | |
| E-mails | | | | | | | |
| Meetings / Round Tables | | | | | | | |
| Publications / Newspapers / Magazines | | | | | | | |
| Workshops | | | | | | | |
| Presentations / Conferences | | | | | | | |
| Flyers / Posters | | | | | | | |
| Others | | | | | | | |
| EXTERNAL | | | | | | | |
| E Mails | | | | | | | |
| Meetings | | | | | | | |
| Workshops / Round Tables | | | | | | | |
| Flyers / Posters | | | | | | | |
| Conferences | | | | | | | |
| Publications / Newspapers / Magazines | | | | | | | |
| Radio / TV | | | | | | | |
| Intemo: | | | | | | | |
| Lobbying / Networking | | | | | | | |
| Others | | | | | | | |

Make your choice!

You have created a new product/service line with your first product/service. How do you want to inform your customers?

- **I announce this information on my website.**

This is a good idea and you should do this, but you cannot be sure that any customer is waiting for your new announcements. They might not look at your website daily and you want to reach all of your current customers.

- **I make an announcement on the radio.**

You can definitely do this but be aware that not everyone will hear your announcement and it is also depending on your target group if radio is the best communication channel to reach them. A benefit of course would be that you might attract new customers with your activity. Be prepared that this might cost you some publication fees.

- **I use mass mailing (individual mass mailing)**

Very good idea if you do not use mass mailing inflationary. In this case you can reach each current customer with a clear message individually. If you don't want to write too long emails or letters (this is highly recommended), you can refer to your website where information is accessible in much more detail for everyone interested.

Presentations

There are four key elements to a successful presentation:



The peculiar thing about presentations to groups, are that they are the judges, thus you might think yourself that you did a good job, but the responses from the group/audience might imply otherwise. Therefore, it is very important that even before you think about your presentation and what you should say that you think about who your audience is and what they want out of your presentation.

By following the next steps you can ensure that you recognize the importance of your audience:

- a) Determine who the members of the audience are
- b) Find out what they want and expect from your presentation. What do they need to learn? Do they have entrenched attitudes or interest that you need to respect? And what do they already know that you do not have to repeat?
- c) Create an outline for your presentation, and ask for advance feedback on your proposed content.

Preparing the content is the second step towards a great presentation.

What you do before your presentation is perhaps even more important, than what you do during the actual presentation. As a well prepared presentation can help you to reach your audience and your objectives with the presentation.

Try the following:

Identify a few key points – this will make it easier for the audience to understand and receive your message. You can use the chunking principle for example.

Don't include every detail – Effective presentation inspires the audience to learn more and ask questions and share opinions.

Use an outline – At the beginning describe what subjects/areas you intend to cover and generally let them know what to expect. This also facilitates interest from the start.

Start and end strongly – This captures the interest of peoples' interest right away, and also leaves them with a message that they will not forget.

Use examples - Whenever possible, make examples – it is much easier for people to relate to practical examples, perhaps even examples from everyday life that people can think: 'this is exactly like me' etc.

When your audience is satisfied, it does not matter, if your actual delivery was not perfect. The primary goal of the people listening to your presentation is to get the information they need – Mindtools

Numerous studies have already proven that your body language means more than the actual words you are saying - that is why you should always deliver confidently. You might have the best presentation in history, the most interesting content to describe – but if you cannot get a word over your lips, when you are standing there – all the rest does not matter.

Here are some steps to act more confidently:

Practice to build confidence – If you just memorize your presentation, when you are performing, it will sound very rehearsed, however, you can practice the key elements and be familiar with the overall setting and content, so you feel comfortable about speaking, because you know that you KNOW the presentation.

Be flexible – This is much easier if you are comfortable with the material. This cannot be done with material that you saw for the first time the day before. You need to know your material well enough to answer questions and it is always much better, if you do not know the answer, to admit it and say that you will find the answer.

Welcome statements from the audience – This clearly states that the presenter knows what he or she is talking about. It builds audience relation and it is much more likely that the audience will like you and your presentation. An example of this could be that a person in the audience has another opinion or further knowledge than you, however it may be a bit intermediating as you cannot know in advance what the person will say/do, (i.e. you may not have the answer to the question etc.) but this can turn out to be a great interaction and drive more participation from the audience, which will only improve the situation.

Use slides and other visual aids – These items can help you to deliver a confident presentation. But note that there is a balance between providing visual information as a support to the audience, and at the same time not distract them from what you are actual saying.

Thus communicating to a group requires some planning of activities and skills, if you want to ensure that they remember your messages. Group communication has the advantage that you can inform many people at the same time about your objective.

How good are your presentation skills?

Take the Quiz at https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_96.htm and get some nice hints and tips.

Using PowerPoint

In most presentations you might use PowerPoint to visualize your presentation. Be aware of a few issues by doing that following the principal 'less is often more':

- Avoid writing every word that you say on the PowerPoint slides as it is boring for your audience to read the same text that you are telling them.
- Use key words to give a “red line” and to support your talking
- Use pictures, graphics or clip arts to make your presentation more attractive
- Make sure to use a font style and size that is easy to see and read – also for someone sitting in the last rows in the room

- Be careful by using animations as you might “over-animate” your audience or you forget to click to get it started because you are so focused on your talking.
- Avoid mixing too many different colors and font styles. If you have your own layout template it should fit with the overall design.
- Be careful with hyperlinks directly from the PowerPoint to a video or website as it requires a good internet connection at the location. Especially with a video you also might need speakers and sound system. It can be of very positive impact for your presentation but if you decide to use those features please make sure to check the technical requirements before you start.
- If you make your presentation at an event organized by others make sure that you send them the presentation in the right format in advance and also take it with you on a USB – just in case. It is also useful to save it in different versions of PowerPoint as you don’t know which system the computer runs with. (e.g. ppt, pptx)
- Create your own layout template following your branding (with logo, colors, giving a website link or a slogan). But be careful to not overload the slides with it as it might take away the attention of the contents you will put in.
- It is useful to include a cover slide, followed by one showing an index that people see what to expect and the structure that you will follow. At the end you could include a slide with your contacts. If you are more a “story telling” person then skip the index and just surprise people with a “wow-effect” in the end.

If you have a presentation in a smaller or internal meeting or the use of PowerPoint that requires a computer, beamer and screen is difficult or not available you could also consider using the flipchart to underline your presentation. Furthermore, the flipchart is also a good tool to document questions, results and agreements during a meeting or to note newly emerging topics that you do not want to forget.

A few things to consider by using flipcharts:

- How well the medium is received depends significantly on the quality of the handwriting
- Use upper and lower case, font size approx. 3-4cm
- Write letters close together as it makes the optical impression more attractive and saves space
- Leave one to two finger-widths of space between lines
- Try do not use more than two font sizes and or more than two colors
- Each sheet needs a heading
- Record as few units of information on one sheet as possible

No matter if you use PowerPoint or flipchart there is one main rule for both of them:

DO NOT look at your presentation on the screen or speak while writing on the flipchart as you should ALWAYS face the audience when speaking and not turn your back towards them.

Make your choice!

Your cooperative offers services for entrepreneurs to improve their image by supporting them in developing a professional branding and layout. Your customer is looking for some nice animations

to be used for promotion clips and will meet you in your office to take a look at your suggestions. Which presentation tool do you choose?

- **I will prepare a flipchart.**

Good idea if you have good skills in sketching. Flipchart is impressive and you could prepare parts of it and then complete things together with the customer. If you are not a second "Picasso" you should not decide to do this.

- **I will take an ordinary standard template for PowerPoint.**

You should think once more about this decision. Have a look at your customer and what he is looking for. He is expecting design and your ability for special effects and animations. I think you can present your work better, don't you?

- **I will take PowerPoint with some heavy animations and special effects.**

At normal circumstances you should not use animations and special effects heavily as told in this module before. But in this case it is your core competence to show your abilities in this field. You should always think of the entire context of your presentation, your customer's expectations and sometimes there are reasons for changing the game.

Make your choice!

You are giving a presentation. When do you allow questions from the audience?

- **I don't allow any questions because everything will be clear for them.**

Might be... But even if it is, it would be a nice way to involve your audience and give them the opportunity to either ask questions or make some statements. Actually you would show them respect by giving them this possibility.

- **I will tell them to ask questions in the end after my presentation.**

This is the way many presenters choose. First they deliver the contents and if there are still some open issues to be clarified the audience can ask questions. It is also a good opportunity in case people have very complex questions to refer to the coffee or lunch break to go into further details.

- **I will motivate them already in the beginning to ask questions before I even started.**

To ask for questions in the beginning will require a good start from your side. You might ask a question to the audience yourself e.g. to find out about their expectations from your presentation. It works also well if you present results from a survey for example and let the audience guess about the findings before you present them.

- **I will tell them to interrupt me anytime if they have any questions.**

If it does not bring you out of focus it is also nice to allow the audience to interrupt your presentation with questions. The disadvantage is that you might bring the audience a bit out of focus or you need to answer: "I am coming to that in a few slides", which is not so good if it happens more than once.

Chairing a meeting

Chairing a meeting does not only mean welcoming the participants. It is a very demanding and important task. Usually a meeting runs through different stages:

1) Introduction

Examples for stage 1 could be:

- Greeting of participants
- Familiarization with the subject matter
- Introduction of participants (if necessary)

With an attentive introduction, you make an important contribution to creating a positive discussion climate for the meeting. In general the introduction should be kept as brief as possible.

2) Clarification of topics, objectives and organizational matters

Examples for stage 2 could be:

- Clarification of the agenda and if necessary the roles of people in the meeting (e.g. speakers, experts...)
- Clarification of organizational matters such as breaks, time schedule
- Explaining methods if you use any for decision making procedures or the elaboration of outcomes in group works for example

3) Working on the topics

- Stage 3 is the heart of each meeting as here objectives, problems, opportunities and risks are specified. Solutions must be sought, alternatives assessed and decisions made.

Examples for stage 3 could be:

- Familiarize participants with specific topics (make sure that everyone has the same standard of knowledge)
- Stay with a topic until a result has been reached that can realistically be achieved
- If you have regular meetings you should start by reading the meeting minutes from the last meeting. Participants should share steps that have been implemented or measures taken since the previous meeting.

4) Compilation of the results

Examples for stage 4 could be:

- Reviewing what has been accomplished and ensuring that results can move into implementation.
- Checking if anything is missing.
- Set up the time frame when and how meeting minutes will be accessible for participants.

- Set up a new meeting date if necessary.

5) Conclusion

Examples for stage 5 could be:

- Summarise the results.
- Expression of thank you to all participants.
- If useful you could get the participants to briefly state what they liked and what could be improved in a short feedback round.
- Bidding farewell to the participants.

Make your choice!

You are chairing a meeting and one participant does not stop talking during a discussion. What will you do?

- **I stop him/her after a while by interrupting him and move on to the next topic.**

This works sometimes but you have the risk that the “speechmaker” feels devalued and begins to explain his conduct or even worse seeks a conflict with you as moderator.

- **I will simply allow it in order to not being impolite.**

If you are unlucky you might invite the “speechmaker” to talk even more as there is no objection towards him/her. In this case you will lose the other participants and definitely minimize your authority as chairperson and moderator. If you are lucky the “speechmaker” has said everything after this speech so there is nothing left for him/her to express furthermore.

- **I will try to tactfully block him/her.**

You should definitely intervene – this is your role as moderator. But by no means should you embarrass the overly enthusiastic speaker. Therefore tactful blocking is the way to go! For example you could say: “the participant has just raised some important aspects and that it makes sense to reflect on them with the entire group”. Then ask the group for comments and try to move slowly towards the next topic.

Make your choice!

You have organised an important meeting and one day before you are notified that participants important for the subject of the meeting cannot attend. What are you going to do?

- **I inform everyone that participants XY are not able to participate and give the choice to all participants if the meeting should take place or be rescheduled.**

This is a very good way to give the responsibility to others and you can always say it was the decision of the group. But you need to be careful if you already know that without those participants no moving forward in the meeting would be possible or if there are conflicts between participants and some of the group might even welcome their absence. In this case it will be up to you to take a decision!

- **I will cancel the meeting and start looking for another date.**

Even if this is not very convenient it might be the best solution as participants don't like spending their time in meetings without any outcomes. Everyone is busy and rather prefers the effort of finding a new date instead of wasting time without any sense.

- **I will still organise the meeting.**

If you have the feeling that you can compensate the absence with further inputs and still come to decisions you can go for this option. You would need to prepare in more details and you should try to write down all issues that need feedback from the missing participants. Make it clear to the audience in the beginning that you will do it and then inform the missing participants and get their feedback that you will include in the meeting minutes.

Recognizing body language

Body language impacts a great deal of how we communicate, and can reflect quite accurately what's going on inside us.

It includes body movements and gestures (legs, arms, hands, head and torso), posture, muscle tension, eye contact, skin coloring (flushed red), even people's breathing rate and perspiration. Additionally, the tone of voice, the rate of speech and the pitch of the voice all add to the words that are being used.

It is important to recognize that body language may vary between individuals, and between different cultures and nationalities. It is therefore essential to verify and confirm the signals that you are reading, by questioning the individual and getting to know the person.

Still there are some attitudes that can help you to "read" your audience and use your own body language to improve your presentation and communication skills.

Signs for being confident:

- Posture – standing tall with shoulders back.
- Eye contact – solid with a "smiling" face.
- Gestures with hands and arms – purposeful and deliberate.
- Speech – slow and clear.
- Tone of voice – moderate to low.

Signals of people not being engaged:

- Heads are down.
- Eyes are glazed, or gazing at something else.
- Hands may be picking at clothes, or fiddling with pens.
- People may be writing or doodling.
- They may be sitting slumped in their chairs.

Signals of people reflecting on something:

- Eyes look away and return to engage contact only when answering.
- Finger stroking on chin.
- Hand to cheek.
- Head tilted with eyes looking up.

Get a full table with body language analysis at: <http://www.businessballs.com/body-language.htm#body-language-signals-translation>

Some examples are also shown in the video about gestures and body language: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czFBARHgp68>

How you can use body language for your own confidence? – watch this video from TED Talks by Amy Cuddy and you will be surprised!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d2WLGkBtvI>

10 Powerful tips to increase your non-verbal impact at work by Carol Kinsey Goman, PHD

1: To boost your confidence, assume a power pose

Research at Harvard and Columbia Business Schools shows that simply holding your body in expansive, “high-power” poses (leaning back with hands behind the head and feet up on a desk, or standing with legs and arms stretched wide open) for as little as two minutes stimulates higher levels of testosterone—the hormone linked to power and dominance—and lower levels of cortisol, a stress hormone.

Try this when you’re feeling tentative but want to appear confident. In addition to causing hormonal shifts in both males and females, these poses lead to increased feelings of power and a higher tolerance for risk. The study also found that people are more often influenced by how they feel about you than by what you're saying.

2: To increase participation, look like you’re listening

If you want people to speak up, don’t multitask while they do. Avoid the temptation to check your text messages, check your watch, or check out how the other participants are reacting. Instead, focus on those who are speaking by turning your head and torso to face them directly and by making eye contact. Leaning forward, nodding, and tilting your head are other nonverbal ways to show you’re engaged and paying attention. It’s important to hear people. It’s just as important to make sure they know you are listening.

3: To encourage collaboration, remove barriers

Physical obstructions are especially detrimental to collaborative efforts. Take away anything that blocks your view or forms a barrier between you and the rest of the team. Even during a coffee break, be aware that you may create a barrier by holding your cup and saucer in a way that seems deliberately to block your body or distance you from others. A senior executive told me he could evaluate his team’s comfort by how high they held their coffee cups. It was his observation that the more insecure individuals felt, the higher they held their coffee. People with their hands held at waist level were more comfortable than those with hands chest high.

4: To connect instantly with someone, shake hands

Touch is the most primitive and powerful nonverbal cue. Touching someone on the arm, hand, or shoulder for as little as 1/40 of a second creates a human bond. In the workplace, physical touch and warmth are established through the handshaking tradition, and this tactile contact makes a lasting and positive impression. A study on handshakes by the Income Center for Trade Shows showed that people are two times more likely to remember you if you shake hands with them. The trade show researchers also found that people react to those with whom they shake hands by being more open and friendly.

5: To stimulate good feelings, smile

A genuine smile not only stimulates your own sense of well-being, it also tells those around you that you are approachable, cooperative, and trustworthy. A genuine smile comes on slowly, crinkles the eyes, lights up the face, and fades away slowly. Most importantly, smiling directly influences how other people respond to you. When you smile at someone, they almost always smile in return. And, because facial expressions trigger corresponding feelings, the smile you get back actually changes that person's emotional state in a positive way.

6: To show agreement, mirror expressions and postures

When clients or business colleagues unconsciously imitate your body language, it's their way of nonverbally saying that they like or agree with you. When you mirror other people with intent, it can be an important part of building rapport and nurturing feelings of mutuality. Mirroring starts by observing a person's facial and body gestures and then subtly letting your body take on similar expressions and postures. Doing so will make the other person feel understood and accepted.

7: To improve your speech, use your hands

Brain imaging has shown that a region called Broca's area, which is important for speech production, is active not only when we're talking, but when we wave our hands. Since gesture is integrally linked to speech, gesturing as we talk can actually power up our thinking. Whenever I encourage executives and others to incorporate gestures into their deliveries, I consistently find that their verbal content improves. Experiment with this and you'll find that the physical act of gesturing helps you form clearer thoughts and speak in tighter sentences with more declarative language.

8: To learn the truth, watch people's feet

When people try to control their body language, they focus primarily on facial expressions, body postures, and hand/arm gestures. Since the legs and feet are left unrehearsed, they are also where the truth can most often be found. Under stress, people will often display nervousness and anxiety through increased foot movements. Feet will fidget, shuffle, and wind around each other or around the furniture. Feet will stretch and curl to relieve tension, or even kick out in a miniaturized attempt to run away. Studies show that observers have greater success judging a person's real emotional state

when they can see the entire body. You may not know it, but instinctively you've been reacting to foot gestures all your life.

9: To sound authoritative, keep your voice down

Before a speech or important telephone call, allow your voice to relax into its optimal pitch (a technique I learned from a speech therapist) by keeping your lips together and making the sounds "um hum, um hum, um hum." And if you are a female, watch that your voice doesn't rise at the ends of sentences as if you are asking a question or seeking approval. Instead, when stating your opinion, use the authoritative arc, in which your voice starts on one note, rises in pitch through the sentence and drops back down at the end.

10: To improve your memory, uncross your arms and legs

Body language researchers Allan and Barbara Pease report a fascinating finding from one of their studies: When a group of volunteers attended a lecture and sat with unfolded arms and legs, they remembered 38% more than a group that attended the same lecture and sat with folded arms and legs. To improve your retention, uncross your arms and legs. If you see your audience exhibiting defensive body language, change tactics, take a break, or get them to move—and don't try to persuade them until their bodies open up.

Make your choice!

You are having a presentation and you notice in the audience a person who has clearly checked out of your presentation. Everything is leaning away from you, glasses taken off, and notepad abandoned, staring into space... What should you do?

- **I try to somehow get in contact with this person.**

Good decision! Don't give up on him/her! Eye contact is the strongest connection you can build and keep trying hard. You can also try to slightly move towards the person by going on this side of stage or if no stage try to remove all kind of barriers between the audience and you e.g. step in front of the table or the speaker's desk. Keep trying but be prepared that you could have lost this one for different (personal) reasons. Don't let yourself down!

- **I will approach him directly by asking a question or for a statement.**

You need to be sure to not scare the person by rushing directly to him/her and at any case try to avoid embarrassing him/her by giving the feeling "got you"! If you ask a question try for example "Did I cover everything that you needed to know?"

In general this option is a bit risky and you need some experience to recognize if this is a good idea or not.

- **I will ignore this person.**

Pretending that you haven't noticed is also a method but be aware that this person might be "dangerous" for your presentation. The other audience could get aware of the attitude and you don't know if your "troublemaker" isn't someone in a leading position or carries a certain influence that

impacts some role-model effect on the others. Sometimes the negative presence is enough to turn the dynamics in the room against you.

Make your choice!

In 15 minutes you will have your presentation and you feel nervous. What are you going to do?

- **I will search for a quiet corner and go again through my presentation.**

NO, don't! This makes you even more nervous and if your audience can see it, it doesn't give a good picture. If you have the feeling this calms you down only write down one key word for each slide (might be the title) that you repeat.

- **I start talking with participants and tell them that I am nervous.**

Ahhmmm....NO, don't! You never tell the audience that you are nervous because this will start them worrying about you. "Oh the poor thing, will she/he make it?" and they will even start searching for signs of your nervousness. They are busy with watching you being nervous that they will not focus anymore on the things you have to say.

- **I will do something that relaxes me.**

This could be having a cup of coffee or chatting with someone you know. If you follow the experts you should try a "power pose" such as superman or superwoman. Try to find something that makes you feel good that you can go on stage full of confidence and positive attitude. By the way: don't forget the fun part of doing a presentation!

Report writing

Each meeting should be documented in form of a report or meeting minutes.

Therefore, it might be the easiest to prepare a general template. The main issues that should be included are:

- Date and location
- Participants
- Topics/Agenda
- Resolutions, to dos and assignments with responsible parties
- Date and name of minute taker
- For a better understanding you can include separate attachments such as presentations, list of participants, pictures of flipcharts etc...

If you chair the meeting it is highly recommended to nominate a meeting minute taker as you are busy with steering group dynamics and handling all topics on the agenda. This person must keep up with all train of thought within the meeting and accurately record the results. If resolutions are unclear it is important to immediately ask for clarifications.

Possibilities to determine the responsibility for the minutes:

- Rotating the responsibility in case of cyclical meetings
- There is someone who volunteers
- There is a person who always does meeting reports very well and has no objection to record the results
- You have an assistant always attending the meeting to cover this task.

Please note that for some documentation e.g. in case you receive funding from EC for your activities you will need to provide a signed attendance list and hand certificates of attendance to your participants. It is recommended to also mention such details and activities in the meeting report.

Make your choice!

You are in the exceptional situation that you have to chair a meeting and there is no one to take minutes for the meeting report. You have to cover both jobs. What are you going to do?

- **I am chairing the meeting as usual and remember all what has been said and decided. When the meeting is over I immediately write the report so that I don't forget any details.**

This is an option if the meeting is not too long and everything runs well without controversial discussions or difficult group dynamics that take a lot of effort for you to solve and guide.

- **I manage to take some key words during the meeting and if necessary I announce it and take a moment to write them down.**

Also an option assuming that the meeting does not challenge you too much in problem solving activities or steering group dynamics... If you choose this option it might be a good idea to use the flipchart and summarise the key points together with all participants at the end of the meeting.

- **I record the meeting and write the report afterwards when I have time.**

What a good idea! In that case you will definitely not miss anything and you don't need to work on the meeting minutes right after a meeting. However, please ask the agreement of all participants and check the recorder and batteries before using it!

Whatever way you find to write a meeting report you should always announce the time frame when the report is distributed to all participants and how (mostly via email). For cyclical meetings it might also be useful to use an archive/storage opportunity accessible for every participant to keep track on the activities or to prepare for upcoming meetings (e.g. by using google drive, drop box or establishing an internal login area on your website)

Project website creation

Having a website is a most common tool today as nowadays it is very close to correct to say that EVERYBODY is using the Internet, and your project should definitely benefit from this.

The objective of a website is to have all relevant information about the project collected in one place so the target group can access it when and wherever they want to. The website also creates awareness

in the general public and is a hit, when searching for selected key words from a search engine such as Google. It is cheap, easy, and reaches a large audience. Another thing that is great about having a website is that you can upload all interesting results so they are always available for the public. You can upload newsletters, brochure, reports, documents and other information.

Before you start to develop the website and think about structure etc., it is important that you consider some practical aspects about having a project website.

First of all, do you have the technical knowledge to create a website and if you don't – does one of the partners in the cooperative have the skills or do you have a budget for subcontracting, etc?

It is not complicated to create a website, but it does require some technical knowledge and experience to create one.

Find below 10 things you should consider:

1. **SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND** - Do a little research on what sites looks like, especially other cooperative websites are interesting for you. What kind of information do they have available, the structure, the possibilities, the level of quality etc. Always remember that user's normally only click through no more than 2 pages to find the information that they are searching for!
2. **BE CLEAR ON YOUR PURPOSE** - Building and developing a website can be a long and tremendously challenging assignment, if you are not clear about your objective and goals for the website. However, if your focus is clear you can be sure that your project will benefit of being 'online'. The purpose could for instance be 'to describe your project in short, so the target audience catches interest' or 'to promote your services and activities' etc., just as long as it is clear for you, what exactly you want to gain through the website.
3. **IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE** – The structure for the site and its content will be affected by who your audience is, for instance addressing adults rather than kids will change the content, also addressing specialists in an area rather than the general public will also imply changes. You might also want to consider how much 'action' you would like the site to have. For instance, if your target group is not very computer minded or has slow internet/computer settings/connections, it does not make much sense to include large, slow loading graphics, animations and video clips. You want your site to be user friendly for the target group that you have selected so they come back to the site. In the opposite direction, if your target group is one of the younger generations, who love action, speed, creativity and innovation – it might be a good idea to develop animations etc. to catch their attention and keep them on your site.
4. **DECIDE YOUR BUDGET** - As previously mentioned, the budget for developing websites may not be very big. You should always look for other possibilities and options to develop your website at the highest quality level and to the best price.
5. **ASSESS THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME** – Creating and maintaining a website can be a very time consuming task. The time taken will of course depend a lot on the site you want to create, the more details, the more animations etc., the longer it will take. The average time for developing a site, (only the technical part is considered here - not developing the information), with few/simple or no animations etc. will take between 35 - 45 hours. Developing the content/information for the website will also consume a rather large part of your time for some days at the minimum.

6. **UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE WEBSITE TEXT** – Your text on the website will be determined by your purpose and your audience. Please be very aware of that online people have very little patience. If the website does not work, or they have to navigate around a lot to find the information that they are seeking, they will quickly move to another site. When you are developing the information/content for the website, please remember who you are writing to and what your objectives about the site are. Also be very objective, when you are writing about your project. Of course you should highlight the positive aspects and outcomes of your activity, but a user does not want to read sentences like: ‘Our service is the best in the world’, this is not very professional and the user will quickly lose interest. Before writing the texts/content to the site, you should consider your writing skills. Mistakes, spelling errors etc. will lead browsers to leave the website. In addition you also want to think about keeping the attention of the user. If they have to read a page filled with text and it is first in the bottom that the objectives/goals of the project are described, you will have lost them much earlier. Go directly to the point and skip too much of the ‘background information’.
7. **HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO LOOK AND FUNCTION** – If your project is addressing some topic about environmental issues, maybe then you want the main color of the website to be green (as green is connected with environment) or another colour(s) that you associate with something that relates to your area. If you are completely clueless, go surfing online and see how other websites are using colors, fonts and layout to address their message.
8. **ORGANIZE AND FORMULATE A LAYOUT FOR THE INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE** - When you have developed your information/texts to the website, you need to assign a page name/title for each ‘chunk’ of information. If the total number of pages is sufficiently high (over 12, as a rule of thumb), then group them into sections. This will make the navigating through your site that much easier for the user. If someone else is developing the website for you, please discuss with them the most appropriate solution for this and ask for recommendations.
9. **CHOOSE A DOMAIN NAME AND FIND A HOSTING COMPANY** - This is very important, in order for your website to go ‘online’. Your website will need to reside somewhere so that others will be able to access it, additionally, you also want to register a domain name e.g. www.environmentcooperative.eu. However, please note that this can cost you (a lot of) money. What can sometimes be a better and cheaper solution is to launch the website through your organisation’s server and domain name. It can be a good idea to choose your project’s title or some abbreviation of this (if the real name is too long) as the domain name of your website. This is also most logical from a marketing point of view. During the last years choosing an own independent domain for finding the website has developed to be standard, other solutions should actually be avoided.
10. **DEVELOP A STRATEGY ON HOW YOU WILL MARKET THE WEBSITE** – Your website is somehow your online business card and you want to market it to attract customers and your target audience. So treating it with the same approach as if you were ‘selling’ the project would help you gain what you want - namely attention to your activities!

How to build a website

You do not need to be a professional programmer, but if you are planning to build the website yourself, you will need some basic knowledge about this subject.

Below is a step by step guide that will provide you with an overview on how to create your own website.

Step 1 Hosting:

Hosting is where you put your entire website and the web pages. Unless you find a hosting provider, no one will be available to see it, and then the work is pointless.

You can choose from different kinds of host options such as:

- Free Web hosts (are free, but require that you display advertising)
- Standard Web hosting
- Dedicated, Virtual, and Shared Hosting
- Collocation.

Hosting causes some costs but usually providers offer good hosting packages including email accounts and other features. It will be the best if you either work with providers you are already cooperating with or do a small research on offers of host providers in your area.

Step 2 Domain name:

Please note that your domain name increases your visibility online. It should be easy to remember. Don't use very long names and avoid too many dots, and underlines. You can also choose the domain related to your country .uk, .it, .tr for example or you prefer a more general ending such as .com, .eu, .org.

At www.domain.com you can also check which domains are available or already in use.

Step 3 Plan your website:

Once you have step 1 and 2 completed, you can start planning your site. You need to decide upon the following:

- Type of site - is the site a news/information site or product site or reference site. You need to decide your focus on the site.
- Navigation - The navigation affects the information architecture (layout) of your site
- Content – Content is the actual pages you will be building, words and images.

Step 4: Create your site:

When creating your site, you can choose one of two paths -creating your site from scratch by learning Notepad (or any text editor) or by learning HTML/CSS. You choose to buy software like Dreamweaver (or similar software) to do this. The advantage of using Dreamweaver or similar editors is that you can publish your pages directly from the software to the web and you see immediately how your page looks like by using the 'preview' feature – WYSIWYG = What You See Is What You Get. There are many tutorials and guides about how to use Dreamweaver, many have it as a favorite choice, because it is easy for beginners to learn, but also advanced enough for more experienced people. Nowadays most

people use Content Management Systems to build and maintain their sites. Still a certain knowledge of HTML/CSS is required. ***If you are not familiar with this it is the easiest to subcontract an expert who takes care of the technical aspects and layout and you develop the contents!***

Step 5 Publish your website:

This step is about transferring the pages that you created under step 4 to the hosting provider in step 1. As mentioned under point 4, if you used Dreamweaver, you can publish the pages right away, but there are also other possibilities. There are also tools included in your hosting service that you can use. It is better to contact your provider, if you have doubts on what to do. If your website is hosted by a server in your organisation, there should be people that you could contact and ask.

Step 6 Promoting your website:

When people say the word promoting, very often highly expensive advertising activities are included in this, and especially at the Internet.

However, cheaper possibilities are also available, when you want to promote your site. Make sure that on all publications that you distribute to your target audience and the general public, there is a reference to the website. It does not need to be big, or in that sense eye catching, just as long as it is visible.

Include it in your email signature and post it on social media etc...

Make your choice!

You would like to have some interaction with your website visitors. Therefore, you decide to...

- **... include a forum on your website.**

Forums are mostly difficult to keep alive and need some moderation raising topics and questions. It is also likely that you need to take care of spam entries or promotion posts of others that you don't want to have there. If you go for this option, be clear that you create some extra work for you and your staff.

- **... link your website to social media profiles.**

This is the easiest option and you have many different opportunities to do it. You can include 'like' or 'share' buttons or even give a short preview of your social media profile. You can also read out twitter feeds or Facebook posts directly on your website. It works very well but you should keep in mind that 'less is more' and only choose a few social media profiles instead of having too many where your target audience is not even present.

- **... establish a newsletter system where people can subscribe on the website.**

If you will send out regular newsletters it is recommended to include a 'subscribe' on your website. You can enlarge your contact list with this activity but you might not be successful in getting active interaction besides of the step that your customer clicks on 'subscribe'.

How to maintain a website

Once you have built the website for your project and it has been published on the Internet, many people make this crucial mistake and think that then the work is done, but NO! Maintaining your website is just as important as creating it. As the project evolves, so should your website.

Maintenance implies various updates of the website, for instance every time that there is a new project outcome or activity, such as newsletters, brochures, reports, and other information it should always be uploaded on the website. Additionally, as the project progresses unforeseen changes may occur. Perhaps you have decided to change your target group a little, or you have the possibility to organise an event. All these changes should be added to the content of the website.

If you have listed names of people and contact details on the website, make sure that these are updated on a regular basis.

Should you need to re-design your website, it is important that you do not take down your website, when you are launching a re-design. Very often, websites have a text that says, "Apologies – we'll be working again within a few days" – this is very annoying for users and it is most likely that they will not be back a few days later.

It may be very useful for your visibility to link your site with your social media profiles. Check out other sites, perhaps with the same or similar target groups, to see what they are doing to attract attention. Use search engines to quickly get an overview of other websites.

Another very important issue is to keep track of your efforts, in other words – who is visiting your site? It is possible for you to track your visitors; it is possible to see which country they are from etc. You can also identify when your website was most visited, and see what kind of activities that had most effect. For instance, did you experience increased activity and more visitors, after you have sent out the newsletter promoting your website? One of the tools that you could use to get a detailed web statistics of your site is Google Analytics.

Make your choice!

You want to update your website and make it more attractive to your customer. What are you going to change?

- **I will work on a new design.**

Are you changing your entire branding and corporate identity? Then this option is the right one as your aim should always be to follow a consistent layout. If your branding stays as it is, then please think again if you really want to have a new design for the website. Maybe some elements or a slight change in the menu structure but in total the site should be recognizable for your customers.

- **I will develop new contents.**

Updating a website with new contents is the way to go! You can easily make your site more attractive by adding or changing contents. Fresh it up with new pictures or graphics and provide interesting

information to your visitors. If you change contents on a regular basis your visitors will also return because they know to expect something new once in a while. There is only one condition for that: you need attractive content!

- **I will choose a new domain name.**

Uuuupppppps... bad idea. Never change the domain name as people would not find you anymore online and you must change all your printed material, email signatures and PowerPoint templates where you include the link to your website. Especially when your site has been established already and people are familiar with the domain this is a very bad idea.

Content Management System Tools

A Content Management System (CMS) is software designed to manage websites. It is software systems set up to manage your content on the website. This software can be very useful for you especially, to have a better overview of your content and website and it will also save you some time. You can use the software both to build and maintain your website.

A CMS tool keeps track of every piece of content on your website; the content can consist of plain text, but also photos, music, videos, documents etc.

CMS tools can include blog software and also a complete content management tool package. The software ranges between open-sources options and high level professional CMS tools. Different extension modules give you the opportunity to easily include additional features such as creating automatic newsletters, establishing internal web areas, maintaining an online web shop etc.

However, there is a variety of CMS tools, which offer different applications depending on what your objective with it is. Think carefully about what your objective is and what the tool should be.

If you are not familiar with this please consult an expert who can help you to choose the right tool and give you an introduction how to work with it to maintain your site. It is not very complicated and if you are able to work with one tool you can also find your way by using the others.

The most used CMS tools are:

- Joomla
- WordPress
- Drupal
- Typo3 (for complex website and database administration)

Effective use of media, print, radio, television

Nowadays, it is common for individuals as well as whole populations and countries to rely on mass media for information, entertainment, news, networking etc.

Mass media aims to reach many people/a large market at the same time. The media industry is a very powerful tool, and greatly influences opinions and people. Therefore, mass media is a preferable channel for marketing and communication, but is normally associated with costs. In order to manage

it also with low budget opportunities you just need to think a little creatively and use the resources available. Are there any **local TV channels** that might involve lower costs than national TV, or could any **local networks** be persuaded to perhaps produce and/or broadcast a short film, which would also benefit them if, for instance, your project is about a theme relevant to the local community.

Basically you can divide the mass media into three different types:

- **Print media** - printed media can include newspapers, magazines, brochures, newsletters, books, leaflets and pamphlets. Additionally, visual media such as photography can also be included under this sub-heading of mass media.
- **Electronic media** - electronic media includes television and radio as the main channels in this category, but also films, CDs, DVDs and other new innovative electronic gadgets are included here.
- **New-age media** - this third category involves the new technologies such as the Internet. It is possible to enjoy the benefits of high technology mass media, which is not only faster than the old school mass media forms, but also has a greater range. Mobile phones, computers and the Internet are often referred to as the new-age media. Additionally, within the area of the Internet, new opportunities have arisen, such as email, websites, blogging, Internet TV, social media, mobile and web applications etc.

Print media

Newspapers

Newspapers belong to the mass media, including local, regional, national, and international newspapers. They are good marketing options, because they reach many people and at the same time they also address the content to different kinds of people. Using newspapers as a marketing tool requires reflection concerning the following; at what level would you like to promote - local, regional, national? Additionally what kind of information are you planning to send out?

Make your choice!

You are organizing an event intended for participants in your community. In which newspaper will you publish the information?

- **I choose a regional newspaper.**

People in your region will mostly not have a long way to come to your event and they might even be in your town or municipality at that day for other reasons. Go for it if you have the opportunity!

- **I approach the local newspapers.**

This will be the most beneficial option as you can be sure that people in your local area will read your information. This would be the best medium to reach your target audience.

- **I try to find a newspaper at national level.**

If you are interested in publishing a general notice about your project and the event, then 'the more the merrier' applies – if possible publish the general notice at national level.

Another important aspect is the format of the information you wish to publish. In most newspapers, the possibilities are a press release, an article, an advertisement, a column, interviews and some short notices.

Today, it is assumed that everyone is online and constantly searching for new information and therefore you could contribute with blog posts and online articles on exiting portals. Online articles are also easier to get published in most cases. Please be aware that your choice of media should always be adjusted to your target group and their preferences.

Magazines

Magazines cover more or less anything from scientific journals to gossip columns. It might be a good option to publish an article or other piece of information within a relevant thematic area in a magazine to reach the target group, but again consider who your target group is and if they read the magazine.

Publishing an article/information can involve costs, so you need to consider this before you decide to go ahead. There is a huge range of magazines, so therefore it is important to carry out a little desk research in advance to check out the different magazines. There might also be local associations in a certain area which are of interest to you and your project, so try and explore all possibilities with regard to publishing in a magazine. A magazine does not need to have the circulation of say 'The Economist' - a magazine with a lower circulation can also be effective!

Brochures

Brochures are a nice to have to hand out to people something about your cooperative's activities and services. Often at events you will also find a table to leave material for interested people to pick up. Be aware that nobody wants to read large chunks of text in a brochure and it is important that the document quickly catches the eye and thus creates interest in the reader to seek more information. Brochures can be made relatively quickly, but if you want a high quality result you need to get help from a professional. The printing quality will also be important for the final result. There are of course costs associated with this, but normally they are not too expensive.

As mentioned before, brochures can be a good approach to create awareness amongst the general public. When you deal with specifically communal aspects in your activities, ask in the local supermarket if you can leave some at the entrance or at the check-out. Go to the public library in your town and display it there if you are allowed. Put some in the entrance area of your organisation's building - you never know who enters. Also distribute them to relevant local organisations. There are endless possibilities and it will not cost you much in time or money.

Newsletters

A newsletter is another form of mass media that is also very common. A newsletter has a slightly different format to that of a brochure, as the brochure is meant to give an overview of a project,

whereas a newsletter is more a 'snapshot' of progress to date or announcing events at a particular time.

Newsletters can be very useful, for instance, when you wish to attract attention or recruit participants for an event. Newsletters can be sent (by email) to a very large audience and thus increase awareness. A newsletter can also be printed and distributed to local stakeholders, as with the brochure. It is a good idea when the project is initiated to develop a template which can be used for all newsletters, and then you 'just' need to develop the content for each edition.

Leaflets

Leaflets and pamphlets are small documents, perhaps designed in A5 format or even smaller, and have the objective of introducing your project very quickly to interested stakeholders. Brochures and newsletter are more lengthy and require the person to read some text, whereas leaflets and pamphlets can provide an overview of the project (or when promoting a specific activity within the project) in 30 seconds. Remember to include contact details, and promote your website.

Electronic media

When talking about electronic media, you probably instantly think of the words TV and radio, but there are also other interesting elements within the category of electronic media.

TV and Radio

The main problem with TV and radio is that very often they involve significant resources. But there is no doubt that they are excellent marketing tools. Many countries have local radio and TV channels, and perhaps it could be possible to undertake some kind of collaborative activity with them, or maybe perform an interview with the local radio station about an interesting topic related to the project. This could definitely be an opportunity, especially if your cooperative has links with local broadcasting companies.

However, there are other electronic media forms, such as films or promotion clips (easily published on YouTube), CDs, DVDs, USB sticks and other electronic gadgets.

Films do not necessarily need to be two hour Oscar winning productions. They can be short films, animated films, lasting maybe just a few minutes. But even these kinds of films can also end up being quite expensive. So before you commit to producing a film, please consider your cooperative's technical capacity to develop a short film. It is also possible to create a short film using, for instance, the software "flash", which allows you to create small animations. Sometimes students in the fields film, graphic design, communication or information design are looking for short time work that they can use as reference in their studies. It could be a good opportunity to publish a call at a college or university in your area to find "low cost" opportunities to produce your video clip or promotion film.

In general the story should be told in an informal tone and have a concluding point, so that people remember the film as being innovative, amusing, creative and something completely different. The

most important objective is that people remember the film, and the specific reason why they remember it is not particularly relevant. Key thing is that they do!

The film can be uploaded onto the project website, onto YouTube, or be sent to key stakeholders by email or on DVD.

DVDs and CD ROMs

A DVD or CD is also a form of electronic media, and can be an effective and affordable tool. DVDs and CDs are not expensive to produce, although of course you will need to allocate some time to make them with all the relevant information and documents etc. But otherwise this is not a complicated task.

Make the DVD/CD look even more professional by adding a cover following your branding or perhaps put a sticker on the DVD/CD itself.

How to develop a press release

Perhaps when you hear the term “press release”, you think of a piece of information posted in a printed newspaper. However, with the Internet today a press release has far greater potential to be seen. A press release is therefore no longer solely used in printed media, but also online.

Let us start by defining what a press release is:

A press release, news release, media release, press statement or video release is a written or recorded communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something claimed as having news value. Typically, they are mailed, faxed, or emailed to assignment editors at newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television companies and/or television networks. Commercial press release distribution services are also used to circulate them. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Press_release)

From this definition it is clear that a press release can be in a variety of formats depending on the objective of the information being published, the sender, the media used etc. You can also approach TV and radio with the press release. However, there are some general rules and guidelines that need to be followed in order for a piece of information to be called a press release.

Headline: The headline should be brief, clear and get to the point: basically an ultra-compact version of the press release’s key point.

The headline should be a point of attraction for readers, and with this line you can win them over to read your information. Think of headings in a newspaper.

The headlines are written in bold and typically in a larger font size than the rest of the text but do not capitalize the whole heading, as this will not attract more readers.

A simple method for developing the headline is to take the most important keywords from the press release and form them into a logical and attention-packed heading. Another benefit of using keywords

is that if your press release will be available online, well selected keywords will pop-up when people are using search engines and thus further increase the level of visibility.

Body of the press release: The text should be written as you want it to appear in a news article. The lead (first sentence) should attract the reader and describe exactly what is happening. The following one or two sentences can then expand on what you have said in the lead.

The press release body should be compact, without long sentences and paragraphs. Also avoid repetition and overusing fancy language and jargon.

The first paragraph (two to three sentences) must sum up the press release and then the following text will elaborate further. Always remember that readers will not read the full press release if the start of the article does not generate any interest.

To achieve this there is a simple method, described as follows:

Communicate the five Ws and the H: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Now consider the points below (select all or some according to relevance):

- what is the actual news.
- why is this news of interest.
- the people, products, items, dates and other information related with the news.
- the purpose behind the news.
- your cooperative/project – the source of the news.

Using the above points, try to construct paragraphs and assemble them sequentially: the headline » the summary or introduction to the news » events or achievements » products » people » the concluding summary » the cooperative/project.

The length of the press release should be no more than three pages (in most cases a half to one page is sufficient).

Include information about your cooperative: it might make more sense to include general information about your project rather than your cooperative, but if relevant you could include some lines about your cooperative too. But avoid advertising yourself and the project too much and focus more on the thematic issues in order to attract the reader. It might be better to include your website.

Linkage: make sure that your press release has linkage between the different sections and that everything included makes sense.

Contact information: add contact details so that interested people can request further information.

Finalisation of the press release: signal the end of the press release with three # symbols, centered underneath the last line of the release. This is a journalistic standard.

Then you can send it to the newspaper and for an agreed price the press release will be published. You can also produce an open press release about a topic and send it to several newspapers in your region or beyond for possible publication.

HINTS & TIPS:

- include the date of writing the press release and if necessary when it should be published
- include your contact details or press contact and further contact information
- write the interesting and more unusual information at the beginning to attract attention and interest. You can also include a date, location or time later in the text
- include who you are addressing the press release to (not the journalist, but the target group for your press release)
- pay attention to the general layout
- include quotations by persons involved
- create a template for different press releases which can be re-used
- internet press release: concentrate on pictures and illustrations
- traditional press release: use multimedia sources
- send pictures, logos etc. including references as separate documents.

HINTS & TIPS for contacting the journalists

- Important whom to inform first
- be careful with competitors – do not reveal all information in order to avoid negative PR
- pay attention to the language you use – do not address the journalist but rather your target group or the public
- consider the journalist's timescales!
- be ready following the press release in case someone wishes to come and attend/see/check/meet...
- send the right people to give interviews on radio and TV (radio: voice is most important and the person must be eloquent; TV: picture and visual is most important). Be prepared to disappoint people sometimes...
- send information only to journalists that actually work with your topic area
- keep up to date with contact details and careers of journalists – it is important to maintain contacts and know about news, job changes etc.

How to develop text, writing style and layout/design

When you develop marketing material and other documents, it is necessary that the written text looks and reads the best it can.

The first thing to do when you need to compose text (it can be text for a brochure, website, blog, report etc.) is to consider the following aspects:

- **Think about your audience** – the readers of the text may not know anything about what you are about to tell them. What do you think they would like to know first?
- **Develop an outline** – this is helpful when writing all types of texts, but is particularly useful if the text will be quite long.
- **Use empathy** – put yourself in the reader's place, and always focus on the audience's needs. By doing so you will develop a text that is fully tailored towards your target group.
- **Identify your main theme** – this is very important and your text should be built around this.
- **Use simple language** – unless you are writing an academic article it is normally better to use simple and direct language. Do not use long words just to impress people, as this seldom works.

A fundamental principle when developing text is to tailor the text towards the intended audience. If you do not write in a way that relates to your audience, then you risk boring them or even worse, they will not understand your message at all.

Writing styles

There are two main writing styles: formal and informal. These writing styles are very useful when deciding how to write for different audiences and purposes.

Formal refers to a more 'proper' style of writing that is governed by rules and regulations while informal denotes a writing style that is more relaxed and is not presided over by strict guidelines. It is most common to see the use of the formal writing style in areas such as the academic and business worlds, and in official government publications and documents.

Whereas, a more informal style is more likely to be seen on the Internet, in magazines, letters and in emails to people you know.

In addition to these two different writing styles, it is also necessary to consider what is typical for a certain type of text and target audience. For instance, are there formalities that you need to consider, such as references and citations with a particular style of writing? Do you need to define some key terms or are you certain that the audience will possess knowledge of such terms?

Also consider whether the text should be written in the first or third person, or if there is a certain structure you should follow. If the target audience has an assumption that text on a website should have a certain structure, it can look very unprofessional if your text does not fulfill these criteria.

Layout/design

The design of the text greatly influences how well the text is received by the audience. Again, in this context it is very important to consider who your audience is. For instance, should you have a few paragraphs with very simple text or can your audience handle more 'heavy' texts? What about

graphics? Would it be an advantage or disadvantage to include pictures, animations or other graphics? If your audience is young or not used to reading long texts, it might be a good idea to include pictures or other 'entertainment', to support the communication of the key points.

Even if your text is produced to a highly professional standard, it is a good idea to consider whether a table, graph or something similar could highlight and reinforce your point even more. The layout should always aim to be as simple as possible.

Layouts or designs can vary greatly. For instance pictures, tables, animations, graphs, formatting (be sure that the text looks nice and is readable with proper fonts etc.). You can add colour. Taking time to consider the correct layout and design can increase the chances of attracting the target audience.

Make your choice!

You are producing a leaflet to display at different places and at a conference. There is not much time to develop it. Where do you put your focus on?

- **My biggest concern is on the text.**

The content is important but if you imagine being at an event with a table full of brochures, flyers and other information material. Will you read all of them to decide which one to take with you?

- **I have a clear focus on the format.**

Well, it might be a benefit to have an innovative format to stick out of many other information material and documents. But this usually takes some time to find a special format and it could also be more complicated in the production process. Keep it in mind as a task with your whole communication team when you take some time to find a good decision. Maybe you come up with a format that can even underline and support your messages or activities.

- **I concentrate on the layout.**

The layout is the first thing that people notice when they look at a document. You may have composed the most brilliant text in history, but if you did not think about the layout or design of the document, it is most likely that the target group will not be interested and just move on to something else.

Aspects to consider when preparing the layout

When you are selecting the format/layout in which your documents will be printed and published, there could be quite a difference in price between one format/layout and another. It might be worth considering if the desired format is really worth the extra cost or whether another cheaper format would be just as effective, and thus reduce the cost. You should keep to the internationally recognized formats such as A4, A5 and A3 – it will certainly be less expensive than creating your own customized format. However, as a general rule the larger the item the more expensive it will be. However, depending on the type of paper and colors chosen, even small formats can be very expensive. You should also contact several printing companies to obtain different quotes, as prices may vary quite considerably.

Another aspect that you also need to consider is the weight of the selected paper. The weight of paper is often measured in terms of grams per square meter (GSM). The heavier the paper is, the higher the GSM number will be. GSM is the universal measurement of all paper types. You will need to decide which weight of paper to use. Lower GSM numbers generally mean lower costs. However, the paper would also be thinner and consequently the quality would be lower. So there is a balance to be struck between quality and cost, and you need to think about what type of paper should be used for the particular task. For instance, is the paper to be used for a leaflet, which will only be distributed once, or is it for a magazine, which will be read repeatedly?

The decision regarding color is also an aspect that requires consideration. Certain colors might be more difficult to print than others. You also need to consider the size and layout when choosing colors, for instance, there might be a color that looks great on the computer screen, but it might not look the same when printed, or the size of the layout might influence the look – such as a large poster.



Further reading

- C-E.N.T.E.R. project (ed.): Toolkit – The easiest way to better dissemination, 2009
- Jochem Kießling-Sonntag : Meetings and Moderation, 2007
- Ron Hoff: I can see you naked, 1992
- Alexander Hiam: Marketing for Dummies, 2012
- Everett M. Rogers: Diffusion of Innovations, 2003 (fifth edition)
- David Meerman Scott: The new rules of marketing and PR, 2010
- Martin Lindstrom: Brandwashed, 2012
- David Ogilvy: Ogilvy on Advertising, 2011
- David Ogilvy: Confession of an advertising man, 1991
- Philip Kotler, 10 deadly marketing sins, 2004

Links to relevant websites

Communication skills

<http://work911.com/communication/>

<http://www.mindtools.com/>

<http://www.goodcommunicationskills.net/>

Body language

<http://www.businessballs.com/body-language.htm>

Marketing

<http://marketingteacher.com>

<http://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/sales-and-marketing>

<http://www.b2bmarketingexperiences.com/>

Website creation

<http://www.webdesign.org/web-design-basics/design-principles/developing-a-website-10-things-to-consider.5610.html>

<http://www.evancarmichael.com/Technology/1093/Things-to-Consider-When-Developing-a-Website.html>

<http://www.2createawebsite.com/books/theperfectsiteguide.pdf>

Mass media

<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-mass-media.htm>

Press release

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Press-Release>

Writing styles

<http://www.resumewriting.net/styles.htm>

Radio

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Commercial-for-Radio>

TV

<http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-TV-Commercial-or-Animated-Video>