

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTORY LEVEL

MANUAL FOR NATURA 2000 MANAGERS IN EUROPE

Draw by Frits Ahlefeldt
*The **HikingArtist***

LIFE+ Information and Communication Project:

EFFICIENT MANAGERS FOR EFFICIENT NATURA2000 NETWORK

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1 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

2. WHAT IS NATURA 2000?

2.1 UNDERSTANDING N2000

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. **The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats**. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and also incorporates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which they designate under the 1979 Birds Directive. The establishment of this network of protected areas also fulfils a Community obligation under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

With a growing awareness amongst the countries of the European Union a common legislation was needed to protect European natural heritage. The Habitats Directive was adopted in 1992 and combined with the earlier Birds Directive from 1979. Together they created a network or sites designated by the individual countries, based on scientific criteria, to provide a network of protection of nature across Europe. Today, **Special Areas of Conservation**, **Special Protection Areas** and **Marine Protected Areas make us the Natura 2000 network.**

The purpose of each designated site is to improve the conservation status, of the species or habitats that have been protected. Countries are expected to monitor and report on this to the European Commission.

Currently **around 18% of land in the EU countries** (787.767 km² in 2013) **is protected as part of the N2000 network**; these are on both publically managed and privately owned land. 251.564 km² had been designated as Natura 2000 in the marine environment in 2013. The network in marine areas needs particular attention as it is not complete and acknowledged by the Commission as a "key challenge for EU biodiversity policy in the coming years".

NATURA 2000'S CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

The Natura 2000 Network came into existence in 1992 through the adoption of the Habitats Directive which, together with the Birds Directive[1], forms *the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It responds to the commitment made by Europe's Heads of State and Government at their Spring Summit in Gothenburg in 2001 to 'halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010' and is an important part of Europe's response to conserving global biodiversity in line with international obligations under the Biodiversity Convention.*

Is Natura 2000 a network of parks and reserves?

Natura 2000 is not a system of strict nature reserves where all human activities are excluded. Whereas the network will certainly include nature reserves most of the land is likely to continue to be privately owned and the emphasis will be on ensuring that future management is sustainable, ecologically, economically and socially.

How are Natura 2000 sites selected?

The selection of NATURA 2000 sites is based exclusively on scientific criteria, such as the size and density of populations of target species and the ecological quality and area of target habitat types present in the site. The directive does not lay down rules regarding the consultation process to be followed in selecting the sites. This is for the Member States to determine.

Who manages Natura 2000 sites?

The Member States are responsible for the management of Natura 2000 sites. However, it is recognised that marine sites where management activities may involve regulating fisheries activities would benefit from action at Community level. The Commission has consistently promoted the development of management plans for this purpose.

Is development restricted on Natura sites?

There is not any a priori prohibition of new activities or developments within Natura 2000 sites. These need to be judged on a case by case basis. There is a clear procedure in the Habitats Directive for assessment and subsequent decisions relating to development proposals that are likely to have an impact on designated sites.

How much of their territory must Member States designate as an area protected under NATURA 2000?

The nature directives do not say how much land and water need to be included in NATURA 2000. This will depend on the biological richness of the different regions. If, for example, a Member State is particularly rich in specific species and habitats, it is expected to designate sites in proportion to this wealth in bio-diversity.

How is Commission involved with Member States?

The Commission works closely with Member States and key stakeholder groups on implementation issues. This is ensured through the Habitats and Ornis Committees, which have a statutory role in implementation of the nature directives, and a more recently established biannual meeting with Nature directors. Regular meetings are also held with the European Habitats Forum and Habitats Users Forum, which represent the different key stakeholders. These contacts are invaluable for discussion of issues including the financing and protection of the Natura 2000 network. The Commission is also developing guidance documents on a range of topics to promote better implementation.

How is the network funded?

Current EU policy measures, in particular those under Rural Development Policy such as the agri-environment regime, as well as the dedicated LIFE Nature fund, are already providing substantial support to the establishment of NATURA 2000.

Discussions are ongoing concerning future financing of Natura 2000. An independent report on financing NATURA 2000 has recently been finalised and is available on the web site of the Commission's web site here.

Do Member States have to ensure compliance with NATURA 2000 legislation to receive structural funds?

Member States should ensure full compliance with the legal requirements of NATURA 2000 regardless of whether or not they are in receipt of Structural Funds. However, it is particularly important to ensure compliance in situations that involve Community funded programmes. In light of this concern the Commission previously indicated to Member States that a failure to present lists of NATURA 2000 sites could result in the suspension of payments under certain structural fund programmes. The threat of suspension of payments from such programmes was a precautionary measure to ensure that Community funded programmes would not

contribute to irreparable damage to sites before they have been proposed officially for the protection under the Natura 2000 regime.

At present the main sources of information available on NATURA 2000 are to be found in web sites of the Member States. The Commission's website provides a link to these.

The Commission intends to provide information on the overall sites in the NATURA 2000 network once the Community lists of sites have been adopted.



CHECK ANNEX I NATURA2000 QUIZ

2.2 COMMUNICATING N2000

The European Commission published in 2004 **LIFE-Nature: communicating with stakeholders and the general public - Best practice examples for Natura 2000**. It describes adequately what is the N2000 network and the policy and legislation behind it. It also indicates some of the challenges that often face the acceptance of N2000 sites in many parts of Europe as a result of poor or inadequate communication. It presents some example of solutions, where improved communications have unearthed better relations and benefits for both the management of the N2000 site and for the communities and stakeholders associated with it.

This manual builds on that early work and brings some new thinking to addressing the communication skills needed for N2000 managers.

We use the term N2000 managers throughout, referring to anyone with a responsibility for the implementation of sites designated under the birds and habitats directives. This could be local authority planners, rangers, local community representatives, private landowners and managers, and site managers.

What the European Commission have to say about communicating N2000

The earlier publication LIFE-Nature: communicating with stakeholders and the general public - Best practice examples for Natura 2000, addresses the importance of communicating N2000 and we reiterate that here.



DOWNLOAD THE FULL DOCUMENT HERE

Why is it important[1] to communicate on Natura 2000?

There are many good reasons for communicating on Natura 2000:

Natura 2000 is a direct response to public concerns over the rapid loss of nature in Europe and people should be informed of what is being done to meet their concerns. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, **over a third of Europeans are worried about species extinction and loss of natural areas.** Often, though, they will know more about wildlife in Africa than the nature that exists on their own doorstep. Thus, Natura 2000 also opens up opportunities for the public to discover and enjoy Europe's own wealth of natural heritage.

Yet, Natura 2000 remains largely unknown to the vast majority of Europeans: Those who have heard of it tend to think it is simply another layer of protection or 'red tape' on top of existing national and international initiatives (nature reserves, Ramsar sites, National Parks…). They are not aware of the issues that make Natura 2000 different from previous conservation initiatives in Europe and that it **is** about **'people and nature' and not 'nature without people'.**

Natura 2000 is a European initiative – for the first time all countries are working together to conserve nature using the same strong legislative framework. There is an important learning process in cooperating at a European level and many advantages in administrations, NGOs, stakeholders and site managers sharing their experiences and knowhow. Not only does it avoid 'reinventing the wheel' but it also creates a more coherent and effective approach towards the management of this Network. LIFENature projects, in particular, are ideally placed to help achieve this exchange of experience.

Much of Natura 2000 will be on private land and will be used for economic purposes. It is clear, therefore, that the owners and users must be informed and involved in discussions over the future management of their land (they are also often best placed to do this work). That way the different land-uses can be made compatible with each other and sustainable development can be allowed to continue whilst respecting the areas' natural values. By the same token there also needs to be some recognition that public influence over private land for nature conservation purposes is as legitimate an undertaking as other over-riding public interests (e.g. landscape and visual impacts, infrastructure development, cultural heritage, health and safety, etc.).

Many myths and misconceptions have built up around Natura 2000 which need to be corrected. For instance, there seems to be a general view that economic land-use practices have, in principle, a negative impact on nature. Often it is just the contrary, conservation is highly dependent on the continued active management of sites and much can be learned from the stakeholders' own practical experiences in this respect. People should also be aware that Natura 2000 does not systematically imply restrictions.

Where change is required, the aim is to work with the stakeholders concerned so that the areas are managed sensitively, while at the same time introducing a degree of protection that recognises the social and economic uses of the site.

[1] *European Commission LIFE Focus / LIFE-Nature: communicating with stakeholders and the general public – Best practice examples for Natura 2000 Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2004 – 72 pp – 21 x 28 cm ISBN 92-894-7898-5 ISSN 1725-5619*

Greater communication and cooperation can lead to new opportunities for rural areas

The rural economy in Europe has seen many changes over the last 50 years. An increasing number of rural areas are showing signs of economic struggle, especially those that practice extensive land uses in so-called marginal areas. This in turn has had serious social consequences, such as rural depopulation, which risks spreading to the new Member States.

Recent reforms of the CAP and Rural Development Programme (RDP) aim to address this problem by de-coupling farm payments from production and by introducing additional measures to diversify the economy and encourage greater inward investment. Natura 2000 is ideally placed in this respect.

It is a European policy in its own right covering an extensive part the territory, often in exactly those marginal rural areas. As such, Natura 2000 can become a powerful ally in attracting inward investments to help maintain existing land use practices or encourage new ones (e.g. tourism). Indeed several RDP measures are now specifically geared to Natura 2000 in recognition of its important role in maintaining rural diversity.

Communication leads to joined up thinking at policy level

In most Natura 2000 areas, various public bodies and governmental departments have an influence on the way the different land-uses within that area are practiced. Consequently, their actions can directly impact on Natura 2000 and influence the way a site is managed. It is vital therefore that these different public authorities are made fully aware of Natura 2000 so that it can be taken into account in their daily work.

And finally, communication is the only way to bring the discussions over Natura 2000 into the realm of an informed debate and away from some of the more instinctively negative reactions that are often seen today which are caused by misunderstanding and lack of information. Establishing a dialogue between different interest groups and conservationists can help root out unfounded fears about the impact of Natura 2000. This will not only pave the way for a more constructive discussion on the future management of these sites but also help identify those areas where Natura 2000 really does present a problem for those involved. Efforts can then be focused specifically on these difficult areas in order to find a way forward without bringing the whole Network into question again.

So the conclusion is clear**: communication is essential if the Natura 2000 network is to succeed and everyone needs to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for conserving our rich natural heritage.** Ultimately, we are all its stakeholders in this important task – whether conservationists, government officials, land owners and users or individual members of the public.

2.3 TEN GOOD REASONS TO COMMUNICATE ON NATURA 2000

1. The vast majority of Europeans have still not heard of Natura 2000

2. It is a European initiative requiring exchange of experiences and networking

3. It involves mainly private land

4. It is currently shrouded in misconceptions

5. It can help create new opportunities and partnerships for rural areas

6. It leads to joined-up thinking at policy level

7. It informs the public of the governments' response to their concerns

8. It Increases people's possibilities to enjoy their natural heritage

9. It brings the discussion on Natura 2000 into the realm of an informed debate

10. It encourages everyone to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for Natura 2000



Draw by Frits Ahlefeldt
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3 COMMUNICATIONS THINK TANK BRINGING EXPERTISE TO COMMUNICATING N2000.

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following Communications for N2000 manager's course and manual were prepared based on the advice given by the expert Think Tank. It is aimed at an introductory level to communications.

EUROPARC brought together a group of communications experts who kindly shared their knowledge and expertise and advise on Communicating N2000 and the content and focus of the communications course for N2000 Managers.

3.1 THINK TANK: WHO WAS INVOLVED?

- Ed Gillespie from Futerra www.futerra.co.uk
- Sandra Hails from Ramsar www.ramsar.org
- Frits Hesselink from HECT Consulting. www.hect.nl
- Sean Kirby sean.p.kirby@hotmail.co.uk
- Janice Burley Down2Earth
- Staff from EUROPARC and ProParks

The Think Tank considered the following aspects of Communicating N2000 sites and the needs of N2000 managers.

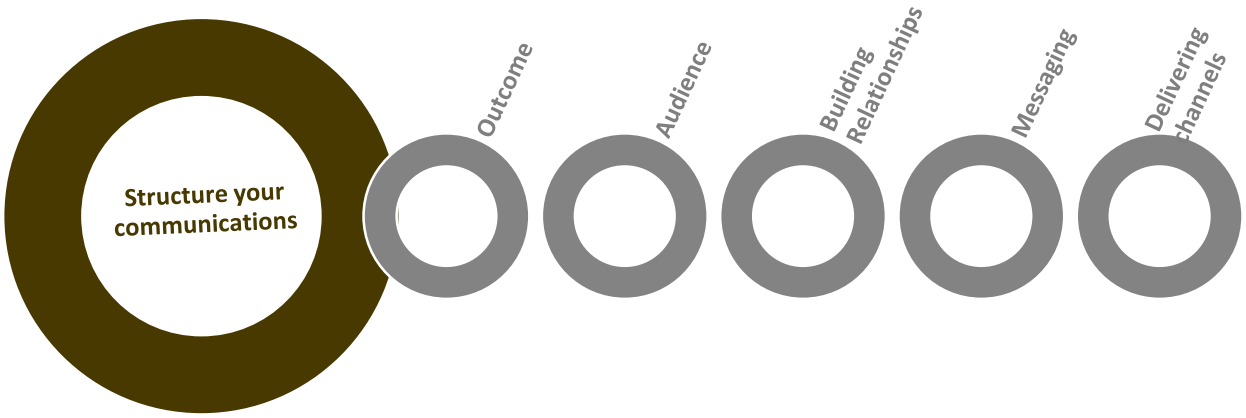
3.2 WHY DO WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE NATURA 2000?

- Because regular conflicts about the management of N2000 sites arise
- To celebrate achievements *think about positive not negative facts!*
- Connect to Nature for our "own" reasons. Connection to nature can be considered in different ways. Understanding these motivations is important for successful communications.
  - *Bio centric - Intrinsic (it has a right to exist.)*
  - *Utilitarian - Instrumental (the use/purpose of its existence)*
  - *Egocentric - (What's in it for Me?)*
- To win support from people
- To ensure how we manage N2000 sites more effectively
- Highlight the added value (ecosystem services) that N2000 provide for society
- Relevance - Why is it Natura 2000 site relevant to the whole society?
- Point out National / Local importance of a N2000 site such as showing the financial value on Nature / PA / site) - as highlighted in the TEEB report

- Cultural importance / Heritage / Storytelling i.e. love and belongingness – to highlight how people identify and can relate to a N2000 site
- To show the importance of biodiversity in our lives i.e. Love not Loss campaign by Futerra)
- to identify the political relevance of the designation of a N2000 site
- Combine rationality and emotion to achieve understanding and support for the benefits and values of the N2000 site

3.3 HOW DO WE STRUCTURE OUR COMMUNICATIONS?

We can think of 5 aspects, getting each one right should lead to effective communications and ongoing positive relationships.



Our think tanks experts gave us some tips on what they believed should be covered in the communications course for each of these 5 areas of communications. These are summarised here, but were developed and incorporated into the course programme content and delivery.

OUTCOME (vision)

What do you imagine will be the conclusion of the communications.

- Individual / Organisational Learning. The N2000 manager will have new skills and new processes and thinking brought into the organization.

- Develop sense of ownership and control between the different stakeholders involved in N2000 site

- Feeling group change. More positive, constructive relationships can be built, which will ensure coherent and effective communications.

WHO DO WE TALK TO? (Audience)

- Identify and analyse who the various audiences are. These should be more specific than “general public” and “stakeholders” each audience needs its own considered message and channels.

- **There can be technical audiences** too such as funders, planners, scientists,

- Internal communication is also important as all involved in the management of the N2000 site must have consistent and coherent communications.

- **Team work** - problem with lack of motivation of N2000 management. Personal communication skills crucial, as without this use of tools and channels and messages will be less effective

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Much of N2000 communication is personal between staff and stakeholders.

- Use emotional arguments, psychology of loss (national interest/local importance)

- Use some kind of hard arguments: May be irreplaceable (e.g. Forests in Bulgaria), loss can not be compensated

- Empathy with whom you are communicating - "It's not Boxing it's T'ai chi".

- **Echoing to understand what is the other side hearing** - echoing thoughts back. Requires good listening!

- Active listening - Improve listening skills and understanding

Initial impressions are important, so be aware of how you come across.

- Assumptions - about the purpose and management of the N200 site can arise with a gap between staff and managers: Internal communication fails and communications are contradictory and ineffective

- Bad briefing, poor instructions, lack of planning all lead to poor communications

- How to understand, map and prioritize stakeholders - There is a need for a good technique of prioritisation and stakeholder mapping

- Humour and Aspiration both good qualities needed to diffuse difficult situation. But this can often depend on the local culture.

- Consider cultural issues - i.e. admitting problems may be inappropriate in some cultures.

- "Remember you (the N2000 manager!) are different!" - do not assume, do not talk to ourselves

- Distinguish influence vs. power. **Power:** is the control of resources and decision making. **Influence** means to alter the perception of a situation or persuade others to a point of view.

MESSAGING (Story)

Think carefully about whom is the communications directed towards? Who is undertaking the communications? The message is important but so is the messenger (or channel of the message)

- Give people a "bridge", something that makes sense to people and that they can relate to (e.g. connecting animal behaviour to people behaviour)

- Need for continuity after getting attention for the audience, once you have people's attention**, think about how you keep them interested in your message.**

- Avoid just "shouting louder", put stress on continuity and being constantly present. Drip drip approach.

- Communicate about the site - use experiential feeling i.e. National Trust - specific place everyone loves "a place", - everyone can identify with a "place"

- Make the message more regional / local - play on the local pride card

- It is the behaviour that is important - Acknowledgment of a place and change of behaviour must be understandable. People don't know how to behave.

- To make the message understandable **avoid jargon and too many designations**

- Phrasing the problem in the right way - "It will save you money."

- Role playing the "opposition" (i.e. 4 photos montage meme often seen on internet "What I think I do, what I actually do, what my parents think I do, What society thinks I do, etc ". A good way for N2000 managers to consider how they are perceived.



- Important to generate goodwill, good personal communications and values important such as honesty and trust

- How to work with media → How to get attention how to keep attentions / journalist's interest → how to keep the intimal interest sustained. Bear in mind **-**

Identifying what <u>is</u> a good story and distinguish from what we think is a good story. May very well different from the journalists perspective!

- Storytelling - guidance on how to structure/frame it, give the right story to the right audience (e.g. Case study in the 1st person always good so that people can relate to it)

DELIVERY / CHANNELS (Techniques)

It is important not just to examine success stories but the failure examples as well, in order to learn and improve communications.

- **Learn how to use the right tools/channels for the right audience**

- **Good planning,** developing strategies and plan are important. It underpins all your work.

- **Connect theoretical and applicable information** for each situation

- **Communications channels** → Identifying key contacts, such as technical expertise, graphics, web, translation as all needed to get your final communication out professionally

- Setting up objectives → *What makes a good story? What does our intended audience currently feel and do? What do we want them to feel and do?*

- Testimonials are also a good technique, personal stories

- Imagine future + identify milestones exercise (i.e. cover of newspaper in 20 years' time) remove constraints of present

- Deliver positive messages about the N2000

- Brand endorsement - Use of a champion / ambassador for the N2000 site can be an option - must have integrity

- Interview techniques for extracting information from people - Teach people to get/ extract the right information in interviews, asking the right questions!

- Putting spoken stories into writing is a skill in itself.

- Writing instructions for Power Point and **how to create Press release**, are also valuable skills for the N2000 manager

- Visual Aids - Sensory connection to nature, very useful in visitor centres.

- Facilitation techniques: Important that a N2000 site team has 2 or 3 techniques to help them lead workshops or meetings, learn by doing i.e. world cafe, open space, helicoptering - **make it fun**.

3.4 OTHER COMMUNICATION TIPS AND TRADE SECRETS FROM THE EXPERTS:

1 KNOW YOUR MARKET

2 COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

- Good communications should be not only be about techniques and tools but also on **interpersonal** skills
- Consider **language barriers**
- **Use of logo** *make more prominente*
- **Desire to change** *People tend to change when they want to, not when they need to* - ***need for identification of the "buttons to push"***
- Simple replication of messages, clearly digestible works.
- **Guidance should be brutally simple and elegant, reduced to bare essentials** → material for toolkit
- **Back pocket action** *send something after a week to get a feedback i.e postcard - future basing technique*
- Use personal experience in training sessions, admit painful situations, *honesty at 1st place*
- **Need for a positive reinforcement, encouragement** *"You are not alone"*
- When talking with stakeholder: *Echoing words "Is this what you mean?"*
- **Communicate in inclusive way** *avoid jargon!* Need to move from Park language to Public language

3 MONITORING AND MEASURING

Monitor always what you are doing. That way you learn what works! *What will really give the result? How to measure if the communication was effective?*

4 HOW CAN MANAGERS SPOT GOOD STORIES?

i.e. new project announcements, unusual, quirky species, photographs ("Man bites a dog")

5 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- Important to **supply good quality, interesting and relevant photos**. *A picture tells a thousand words! People in the picture!*
- **First 50 words are the most important** when writing to journalists
- Need to have ready a **set of good phrases** to go out through all the media - set phrase with every
- mention/publication "Drip Drip effect"
- **Give consistency** of message
- **Make sure the communications is a proper story not just advertising**
- **Collect a list of media**, create mailing lists of local *(within 40 miles range)* and national media
- Subscription to online access of contacts of media for specific subjects - specialists

6 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

but not the only tool in the toolkit!

- Need for **more input on social media when going international**
- With social media it can be less about the text but an accent on visual i.e. *WWF daily photo "Isn't our world wonderful? Or NASA screensaver - cuddly animals never fade*

7 NATURA 2000

- **What does it mean?** *Make sure YOU know first before communicating to anyone else.*
- Negative connotation of EU causes difficulties in connecting with an EU brand, European
- initiatives are not always perceived positively. *Bear this in mind!*
- Question of overlapping Natura 2000 sites visuals and branding with the PAs one. This can be tricky and will depend on local situation.

3.5 KEY COMMENTS AND IDEAS PUT FORWARD BY THE THINK THANK



We need to communicate to celebrate achievements, **so think about positive not negative facts!**

Figure 1 Connecting with Nature, By Frits Ahlefeldt

We connect to Nature for our "own" reasons. These may be:

- **Bio centric** *Intrinsic (it has a right to exist…)*
- **Utilitarian** *Instrumental (the use/purpose of its existence)*
- **Egocentric** *What's in it for Me?*

Branding for Wild Team as part of a Tiger campaign by Futerra in Bangladesh. See http://www.wild-team.org

Communication should link to Cultural importance

i.e. love and belongingness

Love not Loss campaign by Futerra. See www.futerra.co.uk/work#go=branding-biodiversity-2-3074

Importance of biodiversity in our lives

Use Humour and Aspiration to build relationships

"Remember you are different". We need to move from Park language to Public language.

Do not assume, do not talk to ourselves. Not everyone is fluent is "conservation-speak", so use a language people can understand. You need to keep continuity after getting attention from the audience. Charities do this well – they have a drip, drip approach. Avoid just "shouting louder", put stress on continuity and being constantly present.

To get a message across effectively, and communicate about the site **use experiential feeling**. For example, the National Trust in the UK emphasises places -everyone loves "a place" and everyone can identify with a "place". **It is the behaviour that is important,** so acknowledgment of a place and change of behaviour must be understandable. People don't know how to behave. To make the message understandable avoid jargon and too many designations.

***//* Identify what is a good story** and learn to distinguish from what we think is a good story

What will really give the result? How do measure if the communication was effective? Do we care if people can name 10 butterflies, as long as they are willing to care for their habitats?

Do people have a desire to change? People tend to change when they want to, not when the need to. So we need to identify the "buttons to push".

We need positive reinforcement and encouragement. People need to know they are not alone.

Negative connotations of EU may cause difficulties in connecting with an EU brand. European initiatives are not always perceived positively

Use visual images more. Such as the use of logos – make them more prominent. Use of signs, pins. Visually – media prefers people pictures. But cute animals always get attention

Celebrate success!

4 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND PLANNING

4.1 GETTING STARTED

N2000 managers need to learn or "relearn" communications if the acceptance and management of sites is to be improved, nature conservation enhanced and biodiversity loss reversed. N2000 managers need to enter the **learning cycle!**

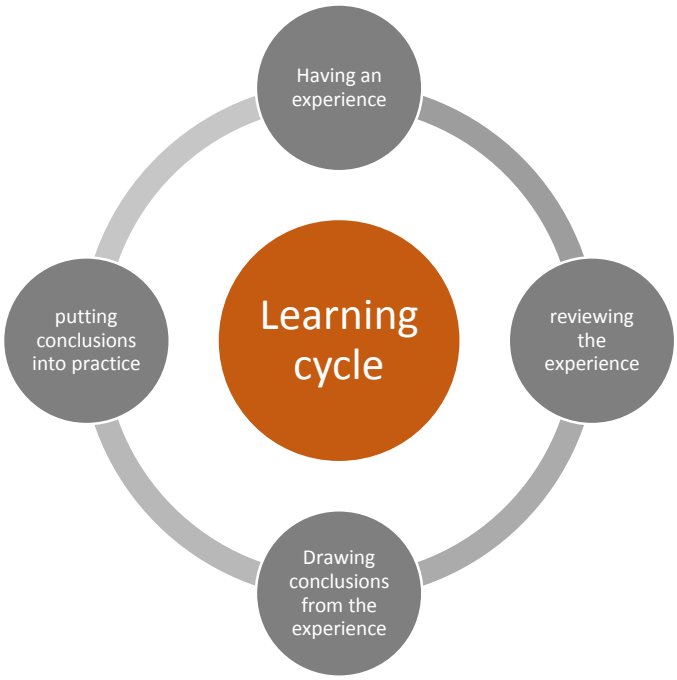


Figure 2 Learning Cycle

The learning cycle is a recognised pattern for how we learn. We all start by having an experience (could be the course, could be a session on the course), and then reflecting on it (maybe that evening). We then draw conclusions from that and put those conclusions into practice (maybe back at work). This is then giving us a new experience, which we need to reflect on. We will draw new conclusions and, hopefully, put them into practice… and so it goes on. So learning is not just confined to this course.

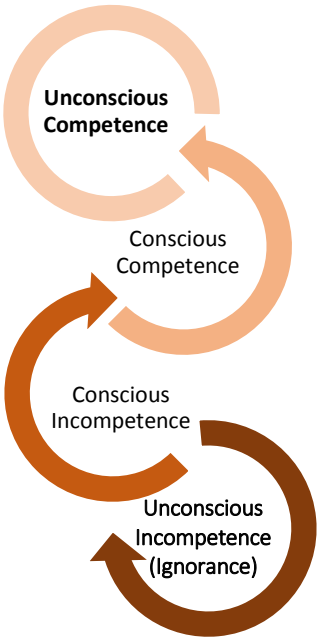


Figure 3 Spiral of Understanding Skills

*The **Spiral of Understanding Skills** explains how our learning develops. We start from the bottom at a stage of Unconscious Incompetence, also known as Ignorance. Whenever we learn a new skill we start at this point and move up the spiral from there. A good analogy is learning to drive a car or ride a bike. At the start we don't know what we are ignorant of, then we learn what we are ignorant of (Conscious Incompetence). Eventually we are able to do the task, but it takes a lot of effort to do it (Conscious Competence). As when we first learnt to drive – we couldn't have music on at the same time as dealing with a complicated junction.*

In time, we can successfully deal with complicated things automatically (Unconscious Competence), such as driving with music on while talking to your passenger. But this is where we start to make mistakes.

This may be where you are now with your communication skills – we all think we can do it, but unless we take time out to re-learn and practice we could be getting it wrong. Think how many car accidents there are – probably every driver involved thinks they're a good driver and it was the other person's fault. Communication is the same really. **We make mistakes, but they can be corrected and amended.**

4.2 WHAT IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?

According to the **Collins Essential English Dictionary** *(2006, 2nd edition)*, communication is a noun meaning:

The exchange of information, ideas, or feelings
Something communicated, such as a message
Communications means of travelling or sending messages

To be effective means that a message given and received has the desired or intended result. So what is being communicated is clear, relevant and reaches the intended audience or person through the appropriate channels, using the right tool and is understood and acted upon!

It's an art as much as a science, but does need to be practiced!

In reality there are many potential influences that make communications more or lese effective including:

- Body Language/ Non-Verbal Communication
- Language used
- Existing knowledge
- Assumptions
- Context
- Memory
- Attitudes
- Stress
- Clarity
- Culture
- Listening skills
- Writing skills

This manual and course will look at a number of these issues and, hopefully, develop your skills.

4.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Effective and successful achievement of the mission and goals of a N2000 site requires bringing together the best available resources enhancing the N2000 human capabilities, building capacity and investing in people and constantly measuring and managing the results delivered .

To fulfil the aims and objectives across all management of the N2000 site, needs effective communications throughout the entire organisation not just the communications officer! To deliver effective communications needs a well thought through communications strategy and a detailed plan.



Figure 4 Strategy, by Monica Taher - http://www.monicataher.com/

A good communication strategy will relate the N2000 site's image, mission, values, and goals to all who work for the N2000 site be they employees, volunteers or stakeholders. A strategy should consider informing what the N2000 site has been designated for, the benefits the N2000 site offers and the issues it solves. A good strategy describes communication channels that facilitate the exchange of information and ideas among all stakeholders. It is a strategic discussion about the very core of a what the N2000 is there for, how it functions , what it stands for and what it delivers. This discussion must be robust enough so that everyone related to the N2000 site management speaks with one voice, one mind, one purpose: a focused, clear, consistent articulate message.

Does it matter what we say? To whom? When? How?

Yes! So it's important organisations have Communication Strategies. Problems can arise when communication within an organisation is not co-ordinated. Co-ordinating what you say, to whom, when and how you say it are all part of a communication strategy. It is ineffective for different people within an organisation to give inconsistent message.

There are lots of documents on the internet to help you write a communication strategy. Some are clearer and more straightforward than others. Have a look at the **TOOLKIT** for some links to different versions.

4.4 PLANNING A STRATEGY

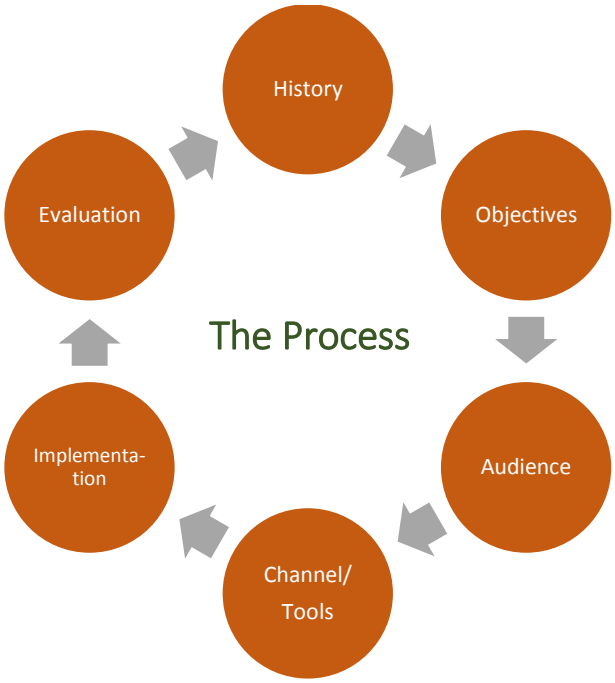


Figure 5 The process of a Strategy Plan

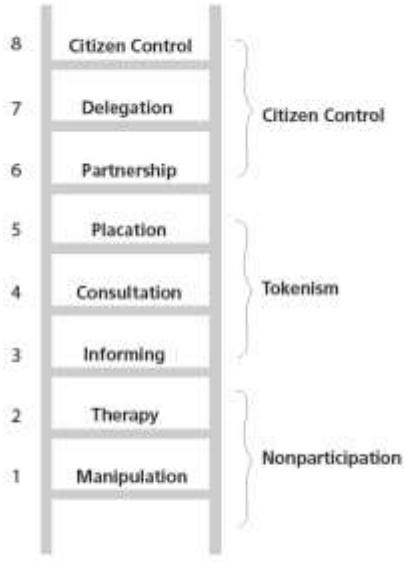


Figure 6 Arnstein's Ladder (1969) – Degrees of Citizenship Participation,

Is the communication part of a project, the development of a strategy, a campaign or an ongoing programme etc? In each case the objectives you consider for the communication will be affected and related to a wider set of objectives.

1) History – Examing where you are now

Have a look at what has been achieved so far. How effective were those communications?

Really examining what has been successful and what has not is useful in planning a campaign and to draw up an overall strategy for the N2000 site.

2) Objectives – What do you want to achieve?

Establish your objectives and message.Consider ***Arnstein's Ladder of Participation.***

Are you trying to inform, educate, change behavior or consult? What are the reasons behind your communications and what degree of involvement does the intended audience have. (e.g. are you merely informing a local community of some news from the N2000 site or is this a participatory consultation in order to decide on a management action?)

It is important to consider this as this will inform the choices you make of message, audience, channels, tools and off course the skills needed to ensure the communication is effective.



Figure 7 SMARTER Objectives

Yet it remains important to be clear what your communication is about, for whom, when and how and writing clearer objectives will help construct your thinking. Some additional input on how to write better objectives is given in the written communication part of the course and manual.

*Create SMARTER objectives (also see **TOOLKIT**)*

This should help you work out how you will actually achieve each of them. All your goals/objectives should link back to your organizational, N2000 site management objectives.

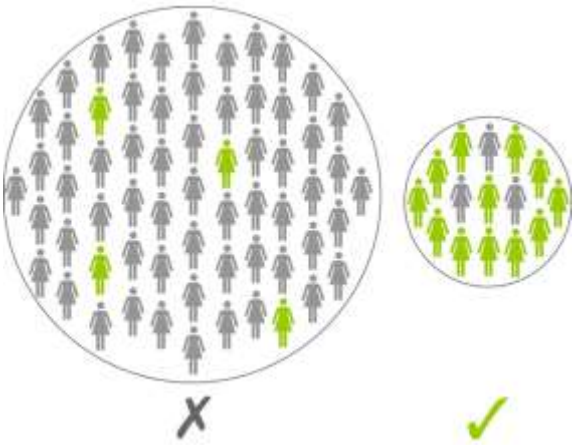
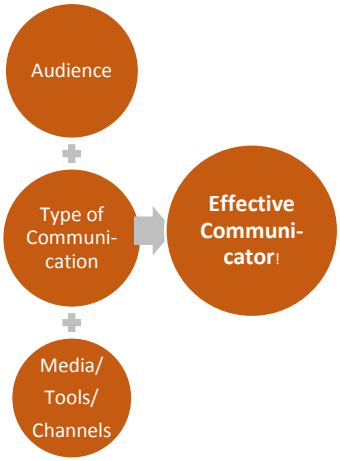


Figure 8 Targeting your Audience - by http://app-economy.com/

3) Audience – Who am I talking to?

Ask yourself, specifically - Who is the message aimed at? What do you know about this target audience?

For example, children would be one audience and we know that many of them are familiar with using technology. This may influence for example the Channel/Tools you use. Use online research to gain some insights into how marketing executives understand the audiences they are speaking to. See toolkit for examples



Public speaker
Report writer
Children's entertainer
Facilitator
Blogger Interpreter
Website designer

… or indeed all of the above …

4) Channels/ Tools - How do I Communicate?

These must be appropriate for the audience. Consider what kinds of communication media, channels or tools you think there are?

Your Skills

Being able to target your audience, defining the typoe of communication needed and then selecting the media, tools and channels according to your audience and objectives makes you an effective Communicator!



5) Management/Implementation

Your next step is to consider the practicalities of your chosen technique depending off course on the message and audience. You will also have to consider how this communication fits into the overall objectives of the project or N2000 site management plan.

For example a prime-time TV advert may work well, but do you have the budget? Do you also have the time and human resources needed, and if not what alternatives can be considered. And bear in mind your timescales (as identified in your SMARTER objectives).



6) Measurement & Evaluation

Has the communication worked? How do you know? What does success look like? It is a colourful well written brochure, that none reads, or a well attended meeting that generates a positive image of the N2000 site? And how are all the communication objectives contributing to the overall goals of nature conservation of the N2000 site. Differing evaluation techniques and measurements will need to be devised and undertaken. ***Your objectives should have been written so you can check this.***

And finally…

There is lots of information on the internet and in **the toolkit.** This is just a brief outline. Some strategy examples have more detailed stages or place them in slightly different order. Use whichever ones suit your purposes. There is no hard and fast rule, except that a strategy and plan will provide an important fundamental to all N2000 communications contributing to the effectiveness of the work done.

5 PERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Interacting with people is fundamental to all N2000 management. Whether communicating with a staff member, volunteer, politician, funder, local community group, school children or an angry stakeholder how the N2000 manager presents themselves will underpin the effectiveness of all communications. Identifying strengths and weaknesses in personal communication skills, being honest in the need to learn some new techniques and gain some fresh insights and understanding will enable the N2000 manager to develop positive and constructive relationships and should in the process reduce conflict and gain new supporters.



CHECK POWERPOINT IN TOOLKIT

5.1 NON - VERBAL COMMUNICATION

We communicate as much non-verbally as we do with speech.

- Only 7% of meaning is in the words spoken.
- 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said).
- 55% is in facial expression.

(source: Albert Mehrabian)

Non-Verbal Communication need to be aware of:

a) Facial expressions
b) Eye contact
c) Interpersonal distance
d) Touch
e) Body orientation and posture
f) Hand and other gestures
g) Your appearance

Looking at each of those in turn.

a) Facial Expressions

These usually convey emotions. There are 6 Universal emotions common in every culture: Learn to distinguish these to pick up the signals given by those with whom you are communicating. Bear in mind too you will also be exhibiting these signals too.

- Surprise
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anger
- Happiness
- Disgust

b) Eye contact

Eye contact shows interest/attraction.

We look more frequently at someone when we're interested, but staring can be un-nerving.

c) Inter-personal Distance

This is the "bubble" we like to have around us. How close do you feel comfortable standing to someone else? People will have preferences, generally depending on how well they know the other person. Circumstances may sometimes lead to changes in this (e.g. living and working in urban areas).

If we are forced to be closer than this e.g. lifts, trains, etc., we tend to use other methods to increase the distance e.g. turning away, avoiding eye contact, etc.

Generally speaking, the comfort zones of the average Westerner are as follows:

- **Intimate zone** – partners & family (up to 45 cm)
- **Personal zone** – friends and group discussions (45cm to 1.2m – about an arm's length)
- **Social zone** – acquaintances and new groups (1.2m to 2.4m)
- **Public zone** – unknown people and large audiences (2.4m upwards)

d) Body Orientation and Postures

Orientation refers to which way we turn our bodies. We turn to people we are interested in. We turn away from those we dislike or aren't interested in

Our posture and orientation can indicate:

- Aggression
- Defensiveness
- Interest
- Tension

and so on...

e) Hand and other gestures

These can give more emphasis to what is said. Examples include: head nodding, moving your hands when you give directions Some are universal, but some are culture dependent. And not all are polite!

f) Para-language

This is how we say things, and includes:

- Pitch
- Stress
- Timing
- Pauses
- Emotional tone of voice
- Accent
- Speech errors (um, err)
- Speed of speech
- Interruptions

Fast speech often indicates anxiety, and slow speech is often assumed to mean low levels of intelligence (not necessarily correctly).

Interruptions are usually natural, but can be forced (butting in) and there are gender differences. Men regularly interrupt more than females.

g) Appearance

We make instant judgements based on appearance – this process is known as ***Impression Formation.***

An informal or untidy appearance will give people the impression you are informal in your work aspects of life ***(Implicit Personality Theory).*** *So, it is wise to dress accordingly. When you first meet someone, the only thing they have to form an impression of you is your appearance. You can generally start smart and become casual (e.g. remove a tie or jacket), but not the reverse!*

Read the poem below. It shows how we have impressions of older people – but they may not be correct.

When I Am Old (Jenny Joseph)

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat that doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,
And I shall spend my pension
on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals,
and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I am tired,
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells,
And run my stick along the public railings,
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens,
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat,
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go,
Or only bread and pickle for a week,
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats
and things in boxes.
But now we must have clothes that keep us dry,
And pay our rent and not swear in the street,
And set a good example for the children.
We will have friends to dinner and read the papers.
But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me
are not too shocked and surprised,
When suddenly I am old
and start to wear purple!

In summary…

All these will make a difference to your communication as a N2000 manager. Being aware of these as a both a sender and receiver of communication signals will enable you to "read" situations better, whether they be one –to –one or group meetings and respond and adjust the communications accordingly.

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Interpersonal distance
- Touch
- Body orientation and posture
- Hand and other gestures
- Your appearance
- And words of course!

We usually do all this naturally, but think about these if things aren't going according to plan. Fake it if you have to! If you're not a natural communicator, make use of these ideas and pretend if necessary.

5.2 ACTIVE LISTENING AND EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

Often when we consider communications we immediately think of “talking”, when infact listening is the first and most important skill. As a N2000 manager, the ability to really listen to the concerns expressed by stakeholder, or to ideas and suggestions being given by staff and volunteers, will go a long way to develop good and effective relationship. In so doing the whole management of the N2000 site can be built on mutual respect and understanding.

Active listening means accurately listening to what is being said,

and showing we’re paying attention to what is being said.

How do we show we’re listening during a conversation? You created a list as a group, but here are some ideas:

- Concentrate – give the conversation your undivided attention
- Resist the temptation to interrupt
- Hear the tone of the speakers voice as the words being used
- Demonstrate you are listening by making ‘continuity noises’ e.g. em, yes, really, aha, etc.
- Be aware of your own facial expressions
- Face the speaker squarely
- Adopt an open and relaxed posture
- Lean slightly towards the speaker
- Make good eye contact (but not too much!)
- Ask open questions to get the speaker to elaborate on particular issues

Not listening *is far more common in many societies than* ***listening***

What most of us do…

Very often we only listen to part of what other people say. What is heard are often those parts which confirm the listeners own opinion and views. Some of the things that get in the way of accurate listening are:

- Rehearsing in your head what you are going to say next
- Trying to impress the other person
- Judging what the other person is saying as irrelevant, inconsistent, etc.

So Basically, we hear what we want to hear, not what is actually said!

Effective Questioning

In order to progress a conversation or to improve understanding, asking question of the individual or group may be needed. Imagine you are interviewing a landowner, an recreation user, or leading a community workshop, asking the right question will elicit more information about what may be behind an issue or indeed reveal more than was first assumed.

// Use open questions - they get results

Open questions minimise the temptation to make assumptions To understand more precisely what the speaker wants to tell you Reflecting what the person has said can also help

Open Questions begin with:

Who were you working with?

What are you going to do about that?

Where exactly did this happen?

When do you think you could do this?

How do you think this happened?

Why is that important to you?

Which would you prefer?

***//* Reflection is a useful technique**

It allows the speaker to keep talking when you have no specific question to ask, or as an encouragement when the speaker is shy or nervous.

Reflection is where you repeat the statement just made by the speaker, as a question*. For example: Speaker: " Then I went over to check it was working…" - Questioner: "You went over to check it was working…?"*

***//* Closed Questions**

A closed question, at the extreme, is one which can only be answered "Yes" or "No".

Closed questions are useful if you want to check out specific pieces of information, or to check if you have something correct.

In summary

- Listen carefully
- Look like you're listening
- Try to use open questions
- Be careful about interrupting
- Remember Active listeners spend 70% of their time listening and only 30% of their time talking

5.3 PRESENTATION SKILLS

See powerpoint in Toolkit

Moving away from more intimate communication skills the N2000 manager may often have to impart a lot of information to a larger number of people. One way is to get that across is through a speech, or presentation. A presentation can be done with or without images and the length of time, the confidence of the speaker, their skills in delivering the speech and creating imagery through words are all aspects to consider. A good orator painting images with words can be more effective than a poorly presented powerpoint.

Don't let fear put you off doing a good presentation! Many people consider presenting in public to be one of the most terrifying things in life. The fear can be overcome! Start with planning…

Planning

- Why are you doing the talk? Be clear about your purpose
- Find out how big your audience is likely to be & what sort of group
- Make notes about your subject
- Don't write your talk word for word
- Use small pieces of paper and number them
- PowerPoint has a notes & timing feature which may help
- Time your talk & practice it
- Then practice it again

Think of Threes

- Tell people what you're going to say
- Tell them
- Tell them what you've said

5.4 PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

"He was looking up into the sky all the time

he was speaking and Alice thought this decidedly uncivil" (Lewis Carroll)

Don't' forget the personal communication skills. They are just as relevant here! So do look as if you are engaged with the audience.

Some useful technics

- **Pace of Delivery** – not too fast or too slow, and vary it from time to time. Pause sometimes.
- **Vary your style** – don't just stand and talk all the time – get the participants to participate!
- **Move about** – you do not need to be fixed to the spot. Walk up to people occasionally.
- **Vary the pitch of your voice** – as you would in normal conversation
- **Use notes** – write brief notes on cards and number them. Don't write your speech word for word then read it – it won't flow very well.
- **Avoid annoying habits**...jangling keys/coins, fiddling with things, saying um at the start of every sentence…
- **Props can be used to get people's attention**, but should not be heavily relied upon. They

should also be to hand, so you don't have to interrupt what you're doing to use them.

Teaching aids

- Flip chart for diagrams, pictures, key points
- Tranparancies/powerpoint - serve the same purpose (more permanent, better for a large audience)
- Powerpoint – can work for you if you use well.-but can be awful if used badly.
- Demonstration - get your audience involved

POWERPOINT Advantages	Disadvantages
Quick, easy & simple	Can be tedious
Prepare in advance	Not very dynamic
Good for large audience	Easy to overload with information
Can include pictures & graphics easily	Be careful with animations
Something to look at	Tendency to read word for word

Do's

- Take a deep breath
- Speak clearly
- Make small cards to remind yourself of topics (number them!...that way if you drop them…you can reset quickly!)
- Be aware of where your audience is - are you facing all of them?
- Smile, have fun
- Be yourself and project your personality
- Remember - no-one knows how you feel or what you think
- Remember - The audience is on your side!

Don'ts

- 'Don't grunt', said Alice; 'that's not at all the proper way of expressing yourself' "
- Lewis Carroll
- Rush what you're trying to say – SLOW DOWN
- Read off a sheet of paper word for word
- Fiddle with things - its irritating!
- Use inappropriate language for your audience
- Panic

In Summary…

- Most talks go according to plan
- But, you must actually plan unless you are very experienced
- You have the support of your audience
- Most common mistakes are avoidable
- The world won't end if it does go wrong – just correct yourself and carry on

5.5 GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK



Feedback is a way of helping another person to consider changing behaviour. It is communication to a person (or a group) which gives that person information about how he/she affects others. Feedback helps an individual keep behaviour "on target" and thus better achieve goals.

In a N2000 situation a manager may find they need to give feedback to an individual or a group, for example after a consultation exercise, this can be difficult and if done badly can undermine relationships thereafter.

To be effective feedback should focus on:

- Clear and Specific points
- Behaviour that can be changed – allow room for action
- Observed facts, not supposed intentions
- What you saw / felt, not judgement
- The most important points
- Agreed purpose / ground rules
- Good aspects ..... as well as areas for improvement
- Giving value to the receiver, not release for the giver!

In more detail

Feedback is descriptive rather than evaluative. By describing one's own reaction, it leaves the individual free to use it directly or to use it as he/she sees fit. By avoiding evaluative language, it reduces the need for the individual to react defensively.

It is specific rather than general. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that "Just now when we were deciding the issue you did not listen to what others said and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you".

It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

It is directed toward behaviour which the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some short-coming over which he has no control.

It is solicited, rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver has formulated the kind of question which those observing can answer.

It is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behaviour (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.)

It is checked to ensure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind.

When feedback is given in a group, both giver and receiver have opportunity to check with others in the group the accuracy of the feedback. *Is this one impression or an impression shared by others?* Feedback then, is a way of giving help; it is a corrective mechanism for the individual who wants to learn how well his behaviour matches his attentions: and it is a means for establishing one's identity.

Care needs to be taken with offering feedback, so someone is encouraged to change and develop. You are revealing information to someone about themselves which they may not have been aware of, so care needs to be taken

Another helpful model is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (below). The model indicates that the needs at the bottom need to be met before those at the top. So, if someone is cold and hungry, they're probably not in the best mood to hear feedback on their performance. This is also important when planning meetings , workshop and larger scale events associated with the N2000 site, take care of human needs first before expecting to engage in effective and meaningful communications else all your efforts are gone to waste

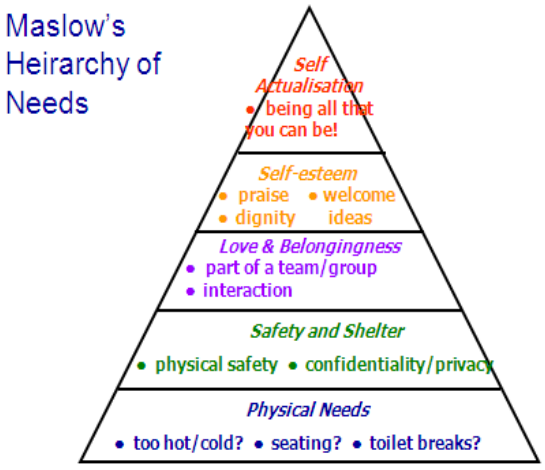


Figure 9 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Asking for feedback

We tend to ask for feedback quite infrequently. It may also be that we often see unsolicited compliments as positive feedback. But they are.

Receiving Feedback

We are often reluctant to receive feedback in case it is negative. It helps though if we can do some planning in advance.

Planning

- Think about your ideas and work beforehand
- Arrange a time/place where you won't be disturbed, and don't leave it too long after the event
- Ask for help/solutions with specific difficulties
- Be clear about the kind of help you want (or don't want!).
- Be open to hearing the feedback – it's pointless otherwise
- Listen actively

In receiving feedback

- breathe!
- listen carefully (remember active listening !)
- ask questions for clarity (remember effective questioning)
- acknowledge the feedback
- acknowledge valid points
- take time to sort out what you heard

Receiving Feedback - Try not to

- Take it personally, or get hurt/angry
- Interrupt with reasons if the feedback is "negative"
- Dismiss the points if you don't agree with them
- If you don't agree – get another point of view
- Remember negative points forever! Remember the positive ones instead
- And don't dismiss positive comments

In Summary

- Feedback focusses on behaviours and actions which can be changed, not personalities
- Learn to give effective feedback
- Learn to receive feedback
- Understand timing is important for both of these
- Weigh up comments sensibly – negatives do not "mean more" than positives There are links to additional information about feedback in the **TOOLKIT.**

5.6 COMMUNICATING ASSERTIVELY

For many N2000 managers there may be a concern that if they assert themselves others will think of their behavior as aggressive. There is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people can still state their opinions, while still being respectful of others

What would you do if:

- Your workmate asked for help on a project when you already had too much to do?
- One of your colleagues was late for a meeting, again?
- You were criticised for some work you had put a lot of effort into?
- You were bullied by someone you regularly crossed paths with?

We tend to adopt one of four behaviour styles, Aggressive, Passive, Passive-Aggressive or Assertive. Most of us fall naturally into one or other of the first three. Most of us have to learn to become assertive. It is something we need to work at and practice.

Aggressive

Putting yourself first, at the expense of others or trying to control other people's behaviour. Aggressive behaviour involves expressing and pursuing your rights at the expense of others, which creates the impression of disrespect for the other person. In effect, you are getting your own way, no matter what other people think. This, in turn, can lead to people having less respect for you, or even being frightened of you.

Passive

Putting others first, at your expense. Passive behaviour (or submissive) is when you allow others to violate your rights by regarding their needs, opinions and rights as more important than your own. This shows a lack of respect for your own needs and can lead to feelings of hurt, anxiety and anger.

Passive-Aggressive

Appearing to put others first, but actually having an underlying aggression. This is when you appear to be calm and detached, and possibly innocent and helpless. Again the person allows their needs to be violated. However, the person also has aggressive tendencies and whose behaviour tends to have a vicious edge. Although they tend not to directly attack, they will find another way of doing undermining the needs, rights and feelings of others. This tends to lead to feelings of guilt and manipulation in the other party.

Assertive

Expressing your feelings, thoughts and needs without threatening others. Assertiveness is the direct and honest communication of your opinions, feelings, needs, and rights in a way that does not threaten the personal rights of others. It involves standing up for your own rights, while acknowledging the rights of others, and working towards a win-win solution.

Assertiveness can help you improve your communication skills, self-esteem, and decision-making ability. Feelings and ideas can be expressed in an honest way, allowing relationships to become much more genuine. The respect you show for other people can lead to others respecting you more. Assertiveness also gives you more control over your environment, reducing anxiety in difficult situations. Being assertive allows you to be yourself.

At the most basic level, assertiveness can be a simple expression of your beliefs, feelings, or opinions. For example; “I feel upset”. Sometimes this is all you need to say.

Being assertive

- A direct and honest communication of your needs, feelings and rights
- Expressed in a way which doesn’t threaten the rights of others
- Is focussed on specifics & involves negotiation
- Make use of “I” when speaking
- Increases your level of control
- Tends to earn more respect from others

Tips for being more assertive

- **Deliver your message directly** to the intended recipient.
- Use statements that make what you want, think, and feel as clear as possible. *For example, “I want to…” or “I feel…”*
- **Own your message**. Rather than saying, “You should…” try saying, “I’d really like it if you…”
- **Be specific and objective** when describing the behaviour or situation.
- Avoid “why” questions to further reduce the likelihood of the other person becoming defensive.
- **Avoid becoming emotional** when describing how it makes you feel. It may also be appropriate to give some explanation as to why the situation or other person’s behaviour makes you feel that way.
- **Be specific** about the action required from the other person, taking into account the rights, needs and feelings of the other person. If necessary and appropriate, clearly describe the consequences of the other person’s behaviour not changing.
- **Do not be apologetic about your feelings, rights or opinions.** Say “no” to unreasonable requests, also without being apologetic. Even offering an explanation is strictly optional.
- **Only address one issue at a time**

- **Maintain eye contact** (if culturally appropriate) and use tone of voice and body language to reinforce your message.
- Display confident body language, think about how you stand, walk or sit.

Some known techniques

The broken record

- Keep repeating, in different ways, what you want
- Identify your goal
- Deflect any irrelevant arguments
- Keep repeating your statement
- Match your body language to your statements

Saying No

- If your initial reaction is No, then go with it
- Practice saying No
- Ensure you actually say No
- Ask for extra time if you want to think a bit more
- A direct No is better than someone who doesn't really want to be there
- More known techniques

Disarming Anger

- Acknowledge when someone is angry
- Explain you want address the issue
- Get them to sit, and speak normally
- Listen actively
- Try to solve the problem
- Say what you could do differently

Negative & Positive Enquiry

- Turn a negative into a positive enquiry
- Not, "why do you get at me for leaving work at 5?"
- Try "I need to understand. What is about my finishing time that concerns you?"

In summary…

- Being assertive is a balanced adult approach to communication
- You should try to avoid being passive or aggressive
- Watch out for those behaviours in others, and learn to avoid them
- You feelings and needs are important – and so are other people's There are links to more information about assertiveness in the TOOLKIT.

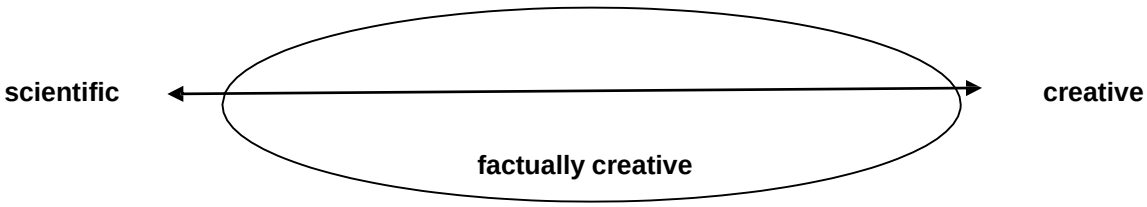
6 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

When considering communication a N2000 manager may concentrate on the spoken and personal communication, but in fact writing, and writing well to express the vision and goals of the N2000 site are equally important. Badly worded communication, overly technical language and poorly expressed writing can undermine all good verbal communications/ N2000 managers need not be poets or prize winning authors but an understanding of the differing written material needed and how to improve is a much needed and important skill

What do N2000 managers write and to whom?

Think through an average working day from the moment you get up until you go back to bed and consider everything you write throughout the day, from the smallest of notes, the many emails, the tweets, the letters, the funding applications to the most complex of scientific reports.

Most written material can be placed along a spectrum of highly legalistic and scientific material through to very creative and poetic. All are used in a N2000 site.



EXERCISE Using the list of written material we generate place them where you think they should be along the spectrum, e.g:

- laws
- scientific abstract
- regulations
- contracts
- funding applications;
- reports
- emails information
- boards;
- press releases;
- newsletters;
- letters;
- scripts;
- interpretation boards,
- nature centre material for children,
- art work



Much scientific and legalistic or technical writing could be considered a more **left brain activity**, whereas the more **creative writing much more right brain**. Differing writing skills will apply for technical writing and creative (interpretive) writing.

A lot of what we write could be defined as **"factually creative"** requiring us to move from left to right brain activity, getting the balance just right. This requires the N2000 manger to take factual information usually biological, scientific or legal and write it in “everyday language”. Much of what is written, especially for stakeholders, does not need to be too technical, despite this technical style being the default of most N2000 managers. Factually creative writing, is quite a difficult form of writing to master and takes time and practise to get right.

As with all communications it is important to understand:

A) What the message is you are trying to convey and being clear is producing it: Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation are the basics of good writing.

B) What is the right media or channel for that message: Who needs to read it? How long is the message? You will need to know this before you decide on what media to use. For example… should we send an emergency message over sms





When we don't need words: words and images

Sometimes however, we need to use few, wellchosen words to get our message across. And off course, a picture is worth a thousand words, so consider if an image is more appropriate than many word.





Consider what words come to mind to describe how you feel when you see these pictures. This is the feeling or thoughts you want to convey to your audience.

Are the words different what people are present in the picture? Make sure they do not contradict one another and are seasonally appropriate.

Give some thought when selecting images, that they do not contradict your words, and vice versa. In N2000 sites, showing pictures of the kind of activities and behaviours you are inviting people to take part in, reinforces that positive images.

Do bear in mind people may have different associations with images than you assume. However even with images we can easily get it wrong!!





Even with "basic images and signs" There can be not enough information confusing and conflicting information and indeed too much information.



So even with simple signage consider carefully the perspective of the visitor or at best someone who is not familiar with your site. IT may seem "obvious" to you... but test your images first for clarity

6.1 HOW DO WE WRITE?

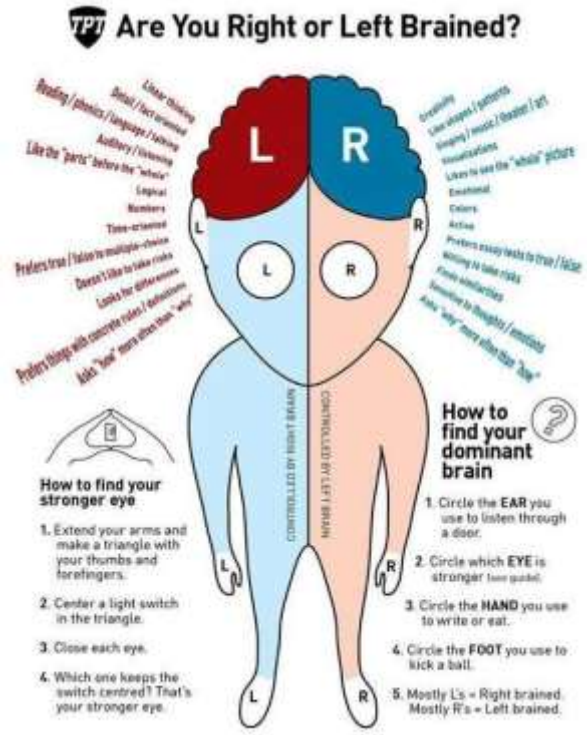
We learned to write as young children, and have no doubt been writing most of our lives, even if nowadays we use a keyboard more often than a pen.

In order to compose a piece of writing it requires us to use different parts of our brain, all elements we already have, but may have a greater tendency or preference for certain styles.

EXAMPLE: Say the COLOUR not the word.



This is a right /left brain conflict where the right side tries to say the colour and the left insists on reading the word. You may find this gets easier as you go on...you rare exercising and training your brain. You can do the same as you practise different styles of writing.



Different types of writing

Having identified earlier the different style of writing a lot of it is a left brain activity using logic detail, language, grammar etc. but as we need to be creative too, especially in interpretation then we do need to access right side brain too through imagination, fantasy, symbols and imagery.

N2000 writing tends mainly at present to be very factual and scientific but it needs still to be well written, clear and understandable. Writing take practise: you made find through natural tendency, or just though education and experience you are better and more comfortable in technical language.

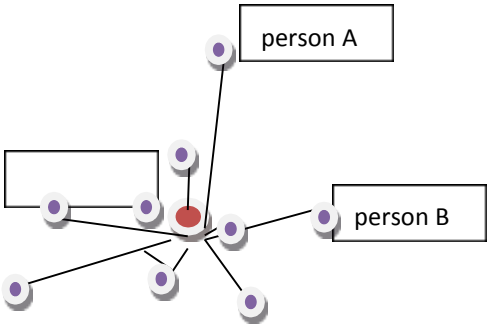
...so do practise using your more creative side.

Whom are we writing to?

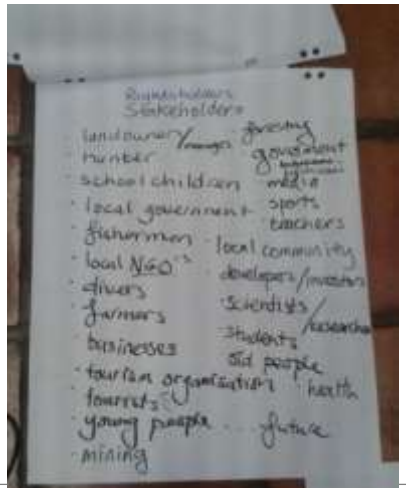
A N2000 contact map

In our lives we interact with many different people. Some on a daily basis, family, work colleagues, other with different degrees of regularity. Make a contact map of people you interact with.

In the centre of a piece of paper make a circle that represents YOU. Draw lines coming out of the centre representing the people you interact with the short the line the closer and more often you are in contact with that person.



Count up the number of people you are in contact with. Add up the total for everyone in the room! It's a lot!! Especially if you then consider the contact maps of these people. The power of word of mouth which is the basis for social media! Think of the effect of you passed positive biodiversity or N2000 information to everyone on your contact map....



You communicate with all of those on your contact map to varying degrees and in different ways. Each of us will have at least 20 regular contacts, much more if you include those on the very edges of our map. Many of these, in a work context, will be stakeholders in our N2000 communications.

Thinking specifically about a work situation, list the different people you engage with either as work colleagues, or stakeholders in your site. Think about how you communicate with these people and groups in the most effective way, in term of

what information they need and in what form they need it in.Share with the group any you think were particularly well received and effective.

CHECK ANNEX II FOR EXERCISES

The Three Essential Elements of Good Writing

This is true whether you are writing a technical paper or a piece of creative writing.

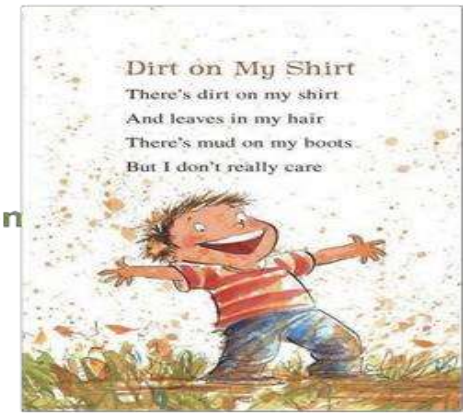
a) The Structure of your writing

This ensures your writing is logical and well presented. In some technical, scientific and legal writing there are accepted structures, however for most writing the writer can use different structures to order and sequence the message.

Structure
way content is presented

Style
way content is written

Content
what you are writing about

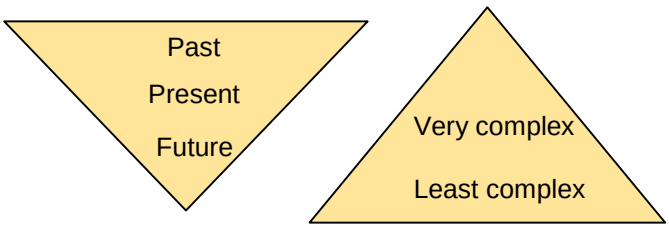


Clarity, Brevity, Simplicity, Humanity, Authenticity

A writer could order their thoughts according **to time**, what happened in the past, what is happening now, and what will come next. Or what is the earliest event --->latest event. This could be used when writing about plant or animal life, weather, life cycles, or any cultural story.

Alternatively the order could be reversed. This structure also work geographically, with degrees of complexity or spatially.

Try varying the structure. See if that improves the information you are trying to impart. People remember more the first and last things they read...So make it worth it!!



b) The Style and Content

Already it has been identified that N2000 manager may write in technical and scientific styles and creative style but mist often in a creative factual style. There are differing "rules" and guidelines for technical writing and creative writing.

Regardless of what is being written - Remember 5 simple test of good writing

- **Clarity** - know what you want to say and say it clearly and well
- **Brevity** - be concise. Less is more
- **Simplicity** - avoid jargon, buzzwords and long sentences and overly technical and scientific language
- **Humanity** – make sure it relates to your audience
- **Authenticity** – **believe in what you are writing**

Be also aware that you may completely understand what you are writing about...but your audience may not. Be clear and avoid dense language, such as the examples shown.

Long complex sentences

Existing is being unique. Existence, reality, essence, cause, or truth is uniqueness. The geometric point in the centre of the sphere is nature's symbol of the immeasurable uniqueness within its measurable effect. A centre is always unique; otherwise it would not be a centre. Because uniqueness is reality, or that which makes a thing what it is, everything that is real is based on a centralization.

Density

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns ; there are things we know we know. We also know knowns ; there are things we know we know. We also know some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones.

Donald Rumsfield

Often N2000 material tends towards technical and obscure language. However all is not lost, as we can learn and practise to rewrite and rephrase to improve the clarity, brevity and simplicity of the writing.

More tips on style and content

- **Avoid writing as you speak.**
  When we speak it tends to be very convoluted and complex with qualifications and various adoring phrases, usually grammatically incorrect to conform to the way the mind listen Also there is tone, emphasis and body language and facial expressions which aid understanding all of which are all lost in writing. The mind reads differently. It needs simple, straightforward sentences.
- **Strive for brevity.**
  Every word is money. Money to write, to print to read and translate. It also makes understanding better. But balance brevity with completeness. Don't reduce so much that meaning is lost.
- **Simple short sentences.**
  If you find you are using a second, or third comma, think if it should become two sentences instead of one long one. Keep it simple. Subject Verb Object.
- **Always check spelling, grammar and punctuation.**
- **Don't rely only on spell check.**
- **Avoid repetition.**
- **Do not be satisfied with the 1st draft.** Redraft and redraft again. GIVE IT A REST.
  Sleep on it. Take a break from the writing. It will always be easier to work on after a break.
- **Read it our loud.**
  If you can't breathe...your sentences are too long, and you will soon notice if it doesn't make sense.

SOME (humorous) Writing TIPS

1. **Do not get side-tracked.** If onions are the most consumed vegetable in the world, why are fire engines red?
2. Avoid starting sentences with a non-specific pronoun. **It is** not a good way to begin.
3. Prepositions are words you should not end sentences **with.**
4. Avoid clichés **like the plague**. Now ain't that the **pot calling the kettle black**.
5. Keep away from ampersands & abbreviations, **etc.** within the body of the text.
6. Parenthetical remarks are unnecessary **(and should be avoided).**
7. It is wrong **to ever split** an infinitive.
8. Contractions should**n't** appear in your paper.
9. Foreign words and phrases are not **apropos or chic.**
10. Like most people, **one should never generalize.**
11. Eliminate quotations. As Mark Twain once said: **"Quoting the witticisms of others only shows the lack of quotable wit."**
12. Comparisons **are as bad as** clichés.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary**; it is very excessive.**
14. Profanity **sucks.**
15. Be **more or less** specific.
16. Understatement is **always** best.
17. Exaggeration **is a million times** worse than understatement.
18. Can I use one-word sentences? **No**.
19. Analogies in writing are like **feathers on a snake.**
20. The passive voice is to be avoided.
21. **Go around the barn at high noon** to avoid jargon or gibberish.
22. Who needs **rhetorical questions?**
23. Be careful to use apostrophes correctly.
24. Do not use **them** pronouns as modifiers.
25. **And** never start a sentence with a conjunction. **And, but, and or will** not get you very far.

6.2 TECHNICAL WRITING

Technical writing is probably the style of writing most people in N2000 and protected areas do most often. Reports, funding applications, scientific papers, plans and strategies are most often written in this style. There are certain styles that are acceptable for the specific audiences who requires this kind of material. Although this may be appropriate in these circumstances it is generally NOT a style that is accessible to the majority of protected area stakeholders or visitors. It is important to be able to distinguish this style and be able to shift from technical to creative and back again!

One of the most common elements of technical writing is writing objectives.

Writing Objectives[2]

The most important questions to ask yourself when writing objectives are:

- Who is involved? Or even who is the action for?
- What are the desired outcomes or immediate outputs?
- When will the outcome occur?
- How will progress be measured?

2 Writing objectives adapted from Heriot-Watt University Performance and Development Review Handbook Version 1.0 August 2008 © Heriot-Watt University.

These form the basis of SMART: Specific -Measurable -Attainable -Realistic -Timebound

Specific

Objectives should clearly state what you are expected to achieve, using action verbs to describe what has to be done. For example:

- *Not specific: Encourage more people to visit the Park*
- *Specific: Increase park visitation*
- *Not specific: Conduct research....*
- *Specific: Formulate plans for research on.....*

Measurable

Objectives should include a quality and/or quantity reference so that you can measure whether or not you have achieved them. For example:

- *Not measurable: Increase visitation of the Park*
- *Measurable: Increase park visitation by 10%*
- *Not measurable: Formulate plans for research on.....*
- *Measurable: Formulate plans for research on topic X and submit grant application to X Research Council.*

Agreed

Objectives should be relevant and appropriate to the project/plan/strategy.

Realistic

Objectives should be challenging but achievable i.e. they should not be unrealistic. For example, it might be realistic to plan to lose 10 pounds in weight but it would be unrealistic to plan to lose 10 pounds in one week. Objectives should also take account of the skills, knowledge and resources needed to achieve them.

Timebound

Objectives should include a time reference, such as a specific deadline. *For example:*

- *Not timebound: Increase membership of the Sports Centre by 10%*
- *Timebound: Increase membership of the Sports Centre by 10% over the next six months;*
- *Not timebound: Formulate plans for research on topic X and submit grant application to X Research Council.*
- *Timebound: Formulate plans for research on topic X and submit grant application to X Research Council by 1 June 2015.*

The time reference for other objectives might be in terms of frequency or turnaround time. For example:

- *Timebound: Once a month, update all library web pages and printed guides*
- *Timebound: Circulate minutes of Committee Y within five days of the meeting*

If there is a particularly long timescale involved, you may need to break your objective down, identify the steps you need to take to achieve your overall objective and work out how long each step is likely to take so that you can agree a target date.

However we are often stuck for the right combination of words to describe what we are trying to achieve .For this the **Thesaurus** is your FRIEND! Use liberally! The table below gives you some example of verbs you can use in most objective writing.

Knowledge

Count, Define, Describe, Draw, Enumerate, Find, Identify, Label, List, Match, Name, Quote, Read, Recall, Recite, Record, Reproduce, Select, Sequence, State, Tell, View, Write

Comprehend

Classify, Cite, Conclude, Convert, Describe, Discuss, Estimate, Explain, Generalize, Give examples, Illustrate, Interpret, Locate, Make, sense of, Paraphrase, Predict, Report, Restate, Review, Summarize, Trace, Understand

Analyse

Break down, Characterize, Classify, Compare, Contrast, Correlate, Debate, Deduce, Diagram, Differentiate, Discriminate, Distinguish, Examine, Focus, Illustrate, Infer, Limit, Outline, Point out, Prioritize, Recognize, Research, Relate, Separate, Subdivide

Synthesize

Adapt, Anticipate, Categorize, Collaborate, Combine, Communicate, Compare, Compile, Compose, Construct, Contrast, Create, Design, Develop, Devise, Express, Facilitate, Formulate, Generate, Incorporate, Individualize, Initiate, Integrate, Intervene, Invent, Make up, Model, Modify, Negotiate, Organize, Perform, Plan, Pretend, Produce, Progress, Propose, Rearrange, Reconstruct, Reinforce, Reorganize, Revise, Rewrite, Structure, Substitute, Validate

Evaluate

Appraise, Argue, Assess, Choose, Compare & Contrast, Conclude, Criticize, Critique, Decide, Defend, Evaluate, Interpret, Judge, Justify, Predict, Prioritize, Prove, Rank, Rate, Reframe, Select, Support

Apply

Act, Administer, Articulate, Assess, Change, Chart, Choose, Collect, Compute, Construct, Contribute, Control, Demonstrate, Determine, Develop, Discover, Dramatize, Draw, Establish, Extend, Imitate, Implement, Interview, Include, Inform, Instruct, Paint, Participate, Predict, Prepare, Produce, Provide, Relate, Report, Select, Show, Solve, Transfer, Use, Utilize

Technical Writing - General Tips

- do not adopt a "personal" style. Writing a technical paper is not fiction
- always write in the passive voice
- do not use possessives (mine. ours theirs)
- be consistent. If you capitalise nouns then do so throughout
- do not use contractions (e.g. don't)
- use agreed structures and order, especially in research and scientific papers
- in project proposals, write the introduction LAST
- leave the Title until the end. it should be the objective of the project "rearranged"
- methods should be written in the future tense results in the past tense.
- Check correct for of singulars and plurals....g data, media
- avoid starting sentences with prepositions... to, in, on, in order to , during
- avoid the use of / , instead use and , or
- never use superlatives
- never use very
- be careful using "via".... it means by way of, e.g. Munich to Madrid via Amsterdam. Not by means of i.e. a mode of travel. Munich to Amsterdam via plane.
- be careful using "due to", it means attributable to or caused by, never because of.

6.3 CREATIVE WRITING

Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

Freeman Tilden

Interpretation is primarily a communication process that helps people make sense of and understand more about the N2000 site. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation. Interpretation is most often used in nature centres, interpretation boards, given during guided walks, talks and presentations, displays,arts work and many other events and means of sharing information. The art of interpretation is fundamental to sharing positive information about N2000 sites and to inspire those visiting to feel allegiance to the place and act positively, constructively and sustainably.

Writing Interpretation

"Too often writing is seen as unimportant, something done in a spare half-hour. Writing which commands attention and is memorable is hard work."[3]

The best text tells a story and uses a range of creative techniques to bring a site or object to life. Writing interpretive text is a skill that requires thought and practice. The following guidelines will help you with this.

Amount of text

There is nothing more off-putting than too many words on a panel or a leaflet As a guideline, an interpretive panel should contain a maximum of 200 words. Publications can contain more text, but no page should have more than half its space taken up with writing.

Word and sentence length

Interpretation must help visitors find interesting stories and ideas quickly. Try writing in shorter sentences, and use short, everyday words. This makes text easier to read. Keep it short and simple!

Writing style

It is very important that your text relates to your audience. This is one of the key things that differentiates interpretation from visitor information. There are a number of writing techniques that will help your text relate to your audience:

- Address the reader in the first person - This mean referring to them as 'you', for example:

'You can see the lichen clinging to the trees, taking in water and nutrients from the air'

Use active rather than passive verbs

This makes the text sound more natural and lively.

For example, *'we manage…'* is far better than *'this site is managed by…'***Use metaphors, analogies and comparisons**

These help people relate what you're telling them to something else they know about.

For example: *'Loch Ness is so deep it could fit in 100 Nelson's Columns, one on top of the other'* And

'Jays are a bit like us. When we're hungry, we pop to the fridge for some food we bought earlier. When Jays are hungry, they dig up an acorn they buried earlier

3 J Carter [1], 1993) http://www.jamescarter.cc/

Use humour

Humour can be a very effective way of relating to and engaging your audience, but be careful: not everyone finds the same thing funny. Use humour, but with care.

Ask questions and engage your audience's imagination

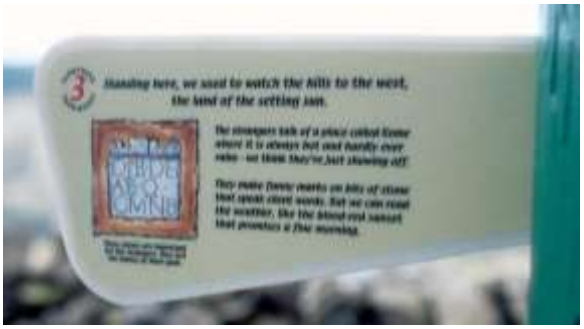
Your text can ask specific questions and get your audience to imagine things.

- For example: *'What famous drink comes from this innocent looking bush?'* And
  'Can you imagine living here during the Clearances when your whole village was thrown off its land?'

Use first person narrative

It can be very effective to adopt a character to narrate your story. This means your interpretive text is written in the first person. *A good example of this is given below and comes from a cycle trail in Glentress Forest near Peebles:*

The swingpost is parto f a trail exploring iron-age site. The interpreters developed characters to narrate a story to help visitors explore and enjoy the trail.



Design and Illustration © Ross Associates

Write in short sentences and paragraphs

Long sentences and paragraphs that go on ando n are so off putting that most people won't even bother to begin Reading them or will be so bored halfway through they will find something more interesting to do instead.

Avoid jargon and technical terms

Jargon and technical terms will confuse or alienate the reader. Please use plain English.

Illustrations

Pictures are often far better at communicating than words.

For example, *how would you describe an ammonite? Well, it's a fossil cephalopod of the order Ammonidea with a flat spiral shell…1 Don't be silly! It's far better to draw one.*

Reading age

The concept of 'reading age' can be a useful way to check how easy your writing is to understand. In general, a 'reading age' of about12 is a good level at which to write your text, but it is not an absolute standard.

This does not mean that all your visitors are about 12 years old – it's simply a standardised measure for how complex a text is to read. School teachers sometimes use reading age measures to match texts to their students' abilities The reading age of tabloid newspapers is around 9-12. Their writing uses very few technical or scientific terms, and is easily understood by the great majority of older children and adults.

You can find out more about reading age and how to measure it in the A Way With Words edition of the Environmental Interpretation bulletin. See A Way with Words journal, CEI, 1993

Other points to check

- Only use one idea per sentence. If you have two ideas, use two sentences.
- Vary the length of sentences for better rhythm.
- Read your sentence and if you're in doubt, punctuate it. When you're happy with your punctuation, don't use more.
- Look out for potentially loaded words. These show bias and can make the reader take a contrary stance on principle. For example, 'people' and 'we' is far better than 'man', 'woman', 'him' or 'her'.
- Clichés make people switch off as they think they know what the sentence will say before they finish reading it. There are 'far reaching consequences' of using clichés

6.4 EDITING

Whatever sort of writing you do, it's important to revise and edit your work. However much time you took over the piece on the first draft, you'll always find a few mistakes to correct and improvements that can be made. An editing exercise can also be found in Annex II.



CHECK ANNEX II FOR EXERCISES

Editing tips

- **STEP AWAY...** Leave it Alone. Do nothing . Leave your work, overnight at least, for a day if possible. It will read and "feel" completely different and enable you to look with fresh eyes. This is THE most important editing task you can do!
- **Read over** your whole piece on one sitting. This will enable you to check that it has a good "flow", is logical and can be understood in its entirety.
- **Print out** the first draft, and read through the whole thing. Circle any typos or mistakes that you notice.
- **Look out for:**
- Typos and misspellings READ BACKWARDS...You are forced to go slowly, focussing on every individual word.
- Reading your work our loud as this will soon identify clumsy sentences and confusing or misleading phrasing.
- Unnecessary words, repetition, overuse of words etc check for Five Words You Can Cut. http://www.dailywritingtips.com/five-words-you-can-cut/
- **Rewrite any parts** that don't make sense or can be made clearer, shorten long phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Subject. Verb. Object. Be ruthless. Less is MORE.
- Depending on what is being written, think if bullet points, illustrations or tables can be used to elaborate or clarify the text.

After you've done this, ask a colleague to read the piece either for understanding or for proofreading. Proofreading requires a detailed look at the work, checking for spelling,typos spacing and formatting.

Some tips do edit your work – spell check and save



CHECK ANNEX III FOR EXERCISE

However online spell check is not full proof. Read aloud the following. It "sounds" correct and spell check will pass it as "correct"…but is it.?

The Spelling Chequer (or poet tree without mist takes)

Eye have a spelling chequer It
came with my pea sea
it plainly makrs four my revue Miss
steaks eye cannot see

Each thyme when I have struct the quays Eye
weight four it two say
if watt eye rote is wrong or rite It
shows me strait a weight

As soon as a misct ache is maid It
Nose bee fore too late
And eye can out the error rite
Eye
Really fined it grate

I've run this poem threw it I'm sure
Your policed to no it's letter
perfect in its weight My chequer
tolled me sew.
Author Unknown

Editing Summary

Categories	Things to Look For	Examples
Content	- Accuracy - Weak arguments	- Outdated information - Points with little supporting data
Structure	- Poor organization - Support for your thesis - Sentence order	- Points that aren't in a logical order - Insufficient evidence - Points that fit better in a different paragraph
Style	- Tone - Inconsistencies - Clarity	- Too formal or casual for the audience - Changes in point-of-view or tone - Awkward wording or lengthy sentences
Citations	- Proper accreditation - Proper format	- Failure to cite a source when needed - Sources cited in the correct style
Misspellings	- Misspelled words - Wrong word choice	- Commonly misspelled words - Words spelled correctly, but used incorrectly
Incorrect grammar	- Improper use of homophones - Pronoun use	- To, too, two - Who and whom
Punctuation	- Correct usage - Appropriateness	- Quotations and citations - Contractions do not belong in formal writing

7 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

TWO - WAY COMMUNICATION

No communication of one way There is always a sender and receiver and in any interaction these roles will be simultaneous and changing. N2000 managers must communicate with differing individual and groups with many different interest, views and opinions. This can sometimes lead to difficulties and conflict. Appreciating and understating how these interactions work will help the N2000 manager modify and manage such situations.

You may need to

- Facilitate group activities & find out your group's opinions
- Negotiate

And if that fails,

- Resolve conflicts.

We will look at these in turn.

Firstly, looking at group behaviours…

Which do you think you are?

Do you think you are **task centred** or **people centred**?

And of course, some people are self-centred.







At some point, have a look at the Questionnaire on Group Skills and Behaviours, below. If you are brave, ask someone back in your office to fill it in for you based on how you behave during meetings!

7.1 GROUP BEHAVIOURS

	Category	Description	✓	Should do more or less?
1	Supporting	Reinforcing ideas, adding strength		
2	Building	Develop/explores other peoples' ideas		
3	Proposing	Puts forward new ideas/ course of action		
4	Blocking	Raising difficulties without providing alternatives or reasons		
5	Acknowledging feelings	Aware of and stating feelings/emotions		
6	Attacking	Negative criticism (usually personal)		
7	Diverting	Joking, irrelevant comment to distract		
8	Seeking Information	Asks for facts/opinions		
9	Clarifying/ summarising	Checking, understanding, pulling together what has been said		
10	Speaking for others	Speaking for "others" to cover what you think		
11	Defending	Protecting personal position/ideas		
12	Giving information	Offering facts, opinions positively		
13	Bringing in	Involving others directly and positively		
14	Shutting out	Attempting to exclude contributions		
15	Assertive Conclusion	Asserting own conclusion to over-ride others		

The following skills and behaviours are quite common in individuals when they are in meetings or group situations. Firstly, please tick those which apply to you. Are they positive or negative responses to have to working in a group?

If you think you ought to do more of a particular behaviour, then write "more" in the right-hand column, likewise for "less".

Use this to increase your awareness of your own behaviour in groups, and realise how that can affect others.

7.2 FACILITATION SKILLS

Facilitation is a means of helping groups generate ideas and problem solve. A N2000 manager may need to run a consultation exercise, a public meeting, or a workshop, so having some basic techniques to help such event run more smoothly and ensure the communication is effective would be useful.

The facilitator should ideally be independent and not influence the discussions in anyway apart from helping to keep them on track. This can be difficult to achieve when this is being undertaken by the N2000 manager who will be associated by a particular point of view. However facilitation can be very useful where there is trust and open and transparent communications

For sensitive issues, it is advisable to use an independent facilitator rather than someone in your team, but an understanding of the techniques involved, to assist the facilitator to understand the audience and context is useful for the N2000 manager.

Facilitation can be grouped into a series of events:

- generating ideas
- organising and categorising them
- voting and prioritising
- generating solutions
- action planning
- And evaluation

Top Ten (ISH) Facilitation Techniques

Facilitation is a means of helping groups generate ideas and problem solve. It can be grouped into a series of events – firstly generating ideas, then organising and categorising them, voting and prioritising, and generating solutions, and finally action planning. You may also want to include some kind of evaluation at the end – either of the facilitation or the event itself.

The facilitator should ideally be independent and not influence the discussions in anyway apart from helping to keep them on track. In many instances facilitating things for your own team should be fine, but for sensitive issues you may want to use someone unconnected with your team.

Here are a few basic ideas for facilitating your own events.

a) Generating Ideas

1. An obvious one to begin with – Brainstorming or Quick Thinking. Each person writes down their ideas. This can be done individually onto post-it notes or scrap paper, or in small groups onto flip chart paper.

NOTE: nothing is ever wrong with brainstorming – no ideas should be rejected at this stage.

2. Generate ideas in pairs, and write them down. Join with another pair in the group to compare what you've come up with and make any additions. This group of four should then join another and do the same again. If the groups get much bigger than 8 it becomes a bit unwieldy so it's best to stop there.

b) Organising and categorising

3. Having generated ideas, stick them to a wall, white board, or lay on a flat surface. As new ones are added, read those already there and group similar ones. This can be done by the facilitator or the participants. It's better if the participants do it, because they then have "ownership" of the information, and there can be no later accusations of biasing information.

4. If you find the group going off at a tangent, or ideas coming up which are interesting, but not relevant at the moment, then you could use an Ideas Park or Talking Wall. This can just be a sheet of flip-chart with Ideas Park written on it, and a few drawings if you're feeling creative. Write the ideas onto post-its or directly onto the flip-chart with a promise to come back to them later. Make this sincere and make sure you do refer back to them again or people will just think they're being fobbed off.

c) Voting and Prioritising

Having generated ideas and grouped them, you need to start doing something with them. You may also want to use some of these techniques once you get to the action planning stage.

5. Lay the ideas, on post-its or pieces of paper, out in a straight line. People work their way along the line, moving them forward one place if they think it's a good idea. The ones which have progressed forward the most are the ones people feel should be focussed on now.

6. Alternatives to this include drawing a large target, on a cheap piece of material is good, placing the ideas around the edge and moving them towards the centre. As an alternative to the long line you can allow people to move the ideas backwards if they think they're a really bad idea.

d) Generating Solutions

7. An effective way of generating solutions is to use a dilemma board. On a flip-chart draw lines to split the sheet into four quarters. Place, or write, the issue in the centre and the first group offers suggestions in the top-left quarter. The sheet then passes to group 2 who add to the solution or offer a new one. Then it's onto group three and four.

8. If you want the facilitator to do the writing, you could split a flip-chart in two, with a line, & write the issue on one side, and write solutions on the other. Work in small groups to ensure everyone has a say. The group call out suggestions which the facilitator writes down, these can then be expanded upon, or new ones suggested as appropriate.

e) Action Planning

You could use some of the prioritising activities again to decide which ideas to go ahead with, or you could use a traffic light system.

9. Each person has one vote per suggestion/solution and should stick a red, amber or green sticky dot on it, depending on whether they think its "stop", "caution" or more research needed, or "go!". You may want to use different shaped stickies as some people are red/green colour-blind.

10. As an alternative, you could issue each person with just three sticky dots (any colour) and they should stick these on the three they think are the most important.

f) Evaluation

11. A quick and easy version is to, again, use flip-chart paper. Draw a smiley and sad face at either end and people tick according to how they thought it went.

There are additional links to facilitation ideas in the TOOLKIT.

In Summary

By using techniques like the ones we've done, you should be able to help groups come to a decision Facilitation can also help with prioritising, action planning and generating solutions

Ideally the facilitator should not influence the groups thinking. They can point things out, but it should be a balanced perspective.

7.3 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Often in a N2000 site an agreed conclusion is needed between parties who may have differing needs and opinions about how the site is to be used and managed. Finding agreement between disparate parties requires negotiation skills. Use of all good personal , two way and even group communication skills will be needed!

Definition

Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties, it is intended to:

- reach an understanding,
- resolve points of difference,
- gain advantage in the outcome of dialogue,
- produce an agreement upon courses of action,
- bargain for individual or collective advantage,
- gain outcomes to satisfy various interests of two or more people/parties involved in a negotiation

Negotiation is not…

- Coercion: meet my demands, or else
- Persuasion: our services are good value
- Arbitration: who has the fairest proposal
- Giving in: ok, I'll cut my prices by 20%

Outcomes of negotiation

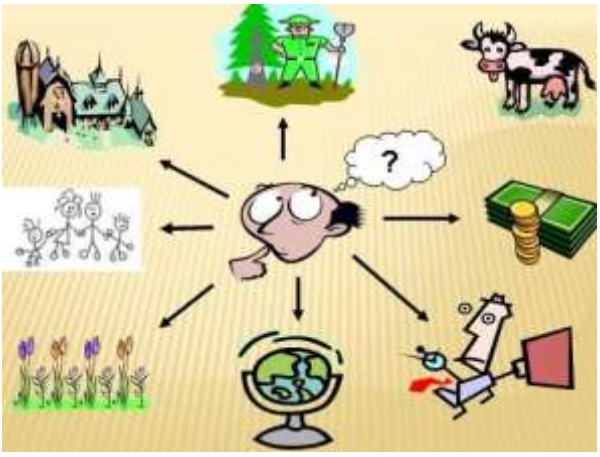
Win/Win	Win/Lose
• **Parties aim to agree** • **Collaboration and Compromise** • **Acceptable outcome is more likely**	• **Parties are in conflict** • **Need to "beat the opposition"** • **Tactics are negative & Parties are confrontational**

When would you need to negotiate?

Usually when there are areas of conflict and different people want different things. A mind map is one way of displaying and thinking about this information.

If the site manager is in the middle of the situation, this is how different things & people could appear to him/her.

From top, going clockwise:



Worker – represents his staff who he has to manage on a day-to-day basis

Cows – representing management policies for the site and site management planning

Money – as he is responsible for finding the money for all this work and balancing the budget!

Manager/ government officer/ anyone he has to answer to for his work and report to

The world – he has to think wider than just this site. He may be working on projects with others, possibly from other countries

The flowers – nature conservation is likely to be the key reason for him doing his job

The family – represents all the visitors to his site that he has to manage, inform and educate

The old house – represents any property on the site he may be responsible for maintaining

Preparation for negotiation

Draw up a negotiating strategy. Be clear what you priorities are and alternative solutions that can be considered. Do the same for others involved in the negotiation.

Before entering a particular negotiation, it is important to do some preparation. Essentially, you need to have a basic but flexible strategy worked out. A Principled negotiation focuses on achieving a lasting, win-win outcome by:

- separating the people from the problem
- focusing on interests not positions
- generating a variety of options before settling on an agreement
- basing the agreement on objective-criteria[4]

4 Queensland government. www.business.qld.gov.au. October 3, 2014

Key negotiation points

• Information

Gather the information you need about the negotiation and what information you are going to disclose. Consider ways of strengthening your case - eg. getting more facts to back your case, comparisons with similar issues in other areas.

• Goals

The outcome you want - the upper lower limits or what you must get and what you would like to get. What do want and what do you think the other person wants?

• Trades

What do you each have that the other wants? What are you each comfortable giving away? Think about the outcomes and concessions the other party might be considering. Trade things which cost you little but which the other person values in exchange for things that are valuable to you but which are cheap for them to concede. Consider the concessions you might make - and what you might require in return for making any concessions.

• Alternatives

What alternatives do you have if you can't agree? What are the advantages and disadvantages of that?

• Expected outcomes

What outcome do you and others expect from this negotiation? What has the outcome been in the past, and what precedents have been set?

• Relationships

Is there any sort of prior relationship? Is this likely to affect the negotiation? Are there any hidden issues that may influence the negotiation? How will you deal with these? This may influence the style and approach you will take(eg. relaxed and friendly, confrontational), as may the number of people involved and their roles, where it will take place, the seating arrangements, etc.

• The consequences

What are the consequences for you of winning or losing this negotiation? What are the consequences for the other person?

• Power

Who has what power in the relationship? Who controls resources? Who stands to lose the most if agreement isn't reached? What power does the other person have to deliver what you hope for? What are the relative strengths that you and the other party have? e.g. their arguments, the emotional case, the possible sanctions.

• Possible solutions

Based on all of the considerations, what possible compromises might there be?

6.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts in N2000 site management are sadly not uncommon. A conflict can arise through a disagreement which may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. It is important to understand what is really behind the disagreement that is being presented. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is discussion and negotiation to resolve the disagreement. Resolving a conflict will need all the good personal, two way and facilitation, negotiation and group communication skills you have!

Consider what non-verbal strategies you can employ

Remember all the things we talked about previously:

- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Interpersonal distance
- Touch
- Body orientation and posture
- Hand and other gestures
- Your appearance

Consider what verbal strategies you can employ

These include:

- Effective Questioning
- How you say things (para language)
- Being assertive, not aggressive
- And active listening of course

Potential Influences leading to conflict situations

We have looked at	Win/Lose	
• **Body Language/ Non-Verbal Communication Language used** • **Listening skills**	• **Attitudes** • **Stress** • **Clarity** • **Culture**	• **Existing knowledge** • **Assumptions** • **Context**

There are a few theories which may help us understand this a bit more.

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

It is proposed that all aggression is caused by some kind of frustration

Usually assumed that frustration always leads to aggression Try to determine what is behind the frustration to defuse the conflict and aggression.. Put forward by Berkowitz. The idea has some support from comparative studies of overcrowding in animals (& studies of people)

Implicit Personality Theories

Assumptions people make that two or more personality traits are related so that, if a person has one of the traits, it is believed that he or she will have another one as well.

This may happen at first meeting and may be referred to as impression formation. It can refer to what people are like and what they may do. If this is extended to a group, it becomes stereotyping.

Impression Formation

How do we make initial judgments of others? What sorts of information do we use?

Note: We often form impressions rather quickly, sometimes without any direct evidence. Impression formation…

We all make assumptions about people (mental stereotyping), but it's how you get beyond with them that matters.

In summary

There is a lot of information you can draw on to manage a conflict situation. Think about these ideas and theories, and remember the assertiveness techniques, which may also help.

You can also try to analyse what is happening within the group. The table below may help you to do that.

	What to Observe in Groups	*Thoughts/Notes*
Leadership	Who is doing the influencing? Who are they influencing? Need clarity of task **and** process to be effective. Is the leader appointed or emergent?	
Communication	Who is actually participating? i.e. who is actually in the room physically and mentally? Who talks to whom? Is anyone left out?	
Group Climate	The tone or feeling of the group. How does it feel? Pleasant? Awkward? Constructive?	
Decision Making	How are decisions made? By the majority? The noisiest? The most experienced? By the leader? Consensus?	
Conflict	It's almost inevitable, but how is it resolved? Avoidance, Compromise, Competition, Collaboration?	
Problem Solving	Not the same as conflict. Involves identifying problems and how to deal with them, including generating ideas, action planning, evaluating etc.	
Norms	Expectations and assumptions held by the group. They govern what is considered to be "acceptable" and "normal" behaviour.	

8 SPECIFIC INSTANCE OF COMMUNICATION
INTERPETATION

8.1 WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT INTERPRETATION

"Interpretation is primarily a communication process that helps people make sense of, and understand more about, your site, collection or event".

Association for Heritage Interpretation

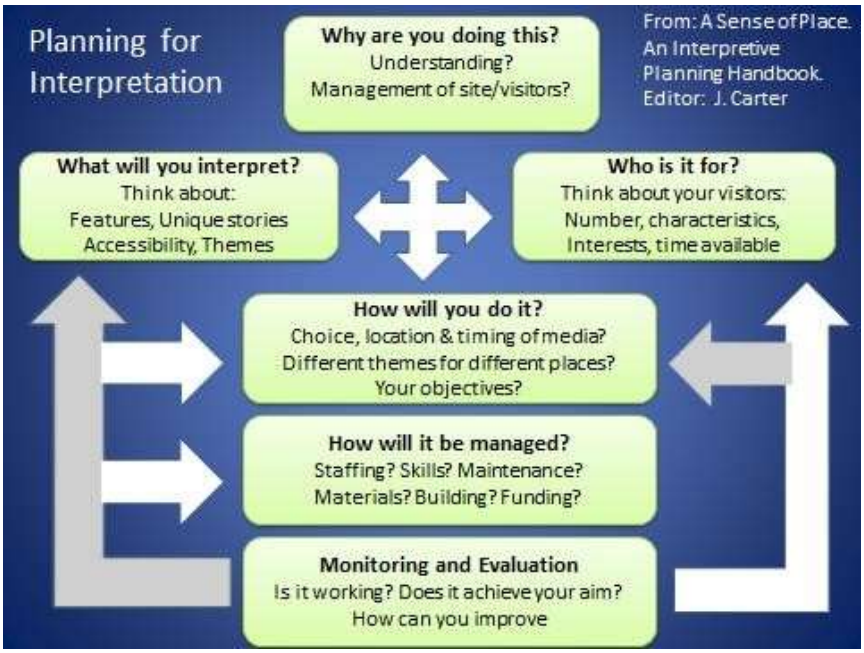
"The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile".

Freeman Tilden

Planning for Interpretation

- **Why** is interpretation needed?
- **Who** is it for?
- **What** are you going to interpret?
- **How** are you going to do it?



Why are you doing it?

- This is really important, it can be part of heritage management, tourism and community development (for example)
- **Define your aims at the start and agree on them** *For example, visitor management aims may be about where your encourage people to go, at what time, and what services they will find there*
- Don't forget there must be something of interest though!

Who are doing it for?

- In groups, think of possible groups coming to a site, and what they might want from that site. *Think of at least 2 in your group*
- Remember most people are just there to enjoy themselves, not to learn
- Think about:
  - Who they are – children? Locals? Grandparents?
  - What they are expecting? All these will want something different.
  - What do they already know about your site?
  - How long will they stay?

What has my site got to offer?

- **General Features** *What's special or stands out?*
- **Physical Features** *Views, geology, accessibility?*
- **Built envirnoment & human activity** *Any interesting buildings? What have people done here?*
- **Flora and Fauna** *Species, habitats, seasons?*
- **Folklore** *Any old legends/myths?*
- **History** *Old maps, photos, drawings?*
- **Here and Now** *What's happening now?*
- **Fragility and Safety** *for visitors and the site*

NOTE

- Research fully but regard it as panning for gold dust – you will not use the great majority of what you find out.
- Follow your interest and enthusiasms.
- Review in the light of management objectives e.g. in relation to visitor dispersal around the site.



CHECK ANNEX III FOR A CHECK LIST ABOUT WHAT YOUR SITE HAS TO OFFER

How do I Choose what to Interpret?

Choose a theme! A theme will help you to narrow down the focus of your interpretation.

Themes

- Provide the main focus for the interpretation
- Contain one key concept
- Are stated as a short, simple, complete sentence
- Reveal the overall purpose of the exhibit, experience, program or activity
- Should be interestingly worded and give an indication of the behaviour, learning or feeling you want people to come away with.

Examples of themes

- We manage our habitats to benefit both people and wildlife
- Garden wildlife needs your help to thrive
- Tropical forests around the world have plants that heal people
- We need to preserve wetlands for five reasons
- Steam engines changed our lives in three ways

To write a theme

- Brainstorm relevant topics
- Then write themes about what your topics stand for
- Finish this sentence to create a theme
- "When it comes to this visitor experience, it is really, REALLY important that visitors leave here understanding or thinking or feeling that…"
- It gets easier the more you do it.

How do I Choose what to Interpret?

Theme: helps to organise your interpretation. *For example: When people leave they will know that…*

Objectives: SMART ones

Media: techniques you could use

Means: your budget and resources

8.2 TECHNIQUES OF INTERPRETATION

Interpretation Techniques	Which include
Person to Person	Guided walks, talks, activities Lectures, talks, demonstrations Storytelling, performance theatre
Panels	Maps and information
Publications	Leaflets, posters, guidebooks
Multi media	Audio Visual, Podcasts, PCs, Models
Art	Sculpture, Structures, Music
Visitor Centres	Exhibitions, Display, Information, Museums

Advantages and Disadvantages

When assessing the relative advantages and disadvantages of various techniques consider the following criteria:

• **Impact** The overall impact and degree of stimulation provided by the medium.

• **Flexibility** How far the medium is adaptable to changes in emphasis, design or layout (e.g. to make it possible to cater for a range of interests of visitors or for those of varying ages).

• **Encouragement of participation** The extent to which the medium enables the visitor to become actively involved in some way, or encourages him or her to do so.

• **Provocation** How far curiosity is aroused and how far the visitor is provoked to discover more for him or herself.

• **Relationship to visitor space** How far is it possible to cope with visitors of varying comprehension or physical pace and capability.

• **Visitor Safety** How far the visitor is protected from any significant risks.

• **Links with surroundings** How far the visitor is encouraged to explore immediate surroundings e.g. to seek out examples described on boards or in the centre.

• **Cost** Relative indication of low capital and operating costs

• **Relationship to adjacent media** The degree to which the medium may intrude, or require to be isolated from the media.

• **Minimum visitor effect** The degree of effort required in the first instance, in order to capture attention.

• **Simplicity** The ease of installing or introducing the medium without excessive preliminary research or design.

• **Use by groups** The extent to which the medium is suitable for simultaneous use by large groups of visitors.

• **Appearance** The degree of visual intrusion by the medium

• **Effect on resources** The extent to which the medium may cause damage to the habitat.

• **Durability** How resistant the medium may cause damage to the habitat.

• **Resistance to vandalism** The degree to which the medium is vulnerable to wilful damage.

• **Reliability** How far the medium is prone to failure or breakdown.

• **Expendability** The ease of maintenance, repair or replacement.

Implement the project

- Manage it
- Is it sustainable?

And afterwards

- Monitor
- Evaluate
- Were your objectives met?

How can you improve?

In summary

You need to plan carefully before launching into interpretation Consider Why, Who, What and How

Not everything needs interpretation. A beautiful view may be best left as just a beautiful view!

Check out the creative writing section of the manual for tips on writing for interpretation.

9. TALKING TO THE MEDIA

Prepared by Sean Kirby (sean.p.kirby@hotmail.co.uk)

This manual has been designed to supplement your **Talking to the Media** training session. It is designed to expand on the themes discussed in the session and **provide practical examples** of how communicating with the media can aid in **raising the profile of your Natura 2000** site and of the wider Natura 2000 network.



Why should you talk to the media?

Learning how to engage with the media is not just a useful skill for an organisation and its members to develop but a vital one. If you are not telling the media about what your organisation stands for, what its values are and what it is doing, then other people or agencies will do it for you – and not always to your advantage.

Examples

In the training session we referred to a number of recent news items relating to Natura 2000 sites facing challenging circumstances:

- *Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) approving a 'memorandum of understanding' for a 50 million Euro hotels complex in the Karadere area, on the Black Sea coast. The area falls within the Natura 2000 network.* **Story web link**
- *Precious metals development company, Mawson Resources Ltd, drilling 600 to 1,200 metres in the Hirvimaa glacial area, in Finland, just outside a Natura 2000 area*. **Story web link**
- *Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) informing police of illegal finch trapping inside the Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park, near Manikata, Gozo – a Special Area of Conservation (SPA) of international importance within the Natura 2000 network of sites.* **Story web link**

The managers of these sites face different issues but, in all cases, their ability to talk to and use the media to get their message across to the public is important. Other agencies, particularly commercial ones, will use the media to convince the wider world that their point of view on an issue is the correct one. It is for the Natura 2000 site manager (and the network) to make sure a reasoned alternative argument – in the above examples, against development or exploitation, and for environmental protection – is also heard.

Remember!

You cannot compete with the advertising and marketing budgets of large corporations but (if approached correctly) gaining greater media coverage for your side of the argument can be done **for FREE.**

Media coverage for your Natura 2000 site can also be an aid to:

- **recruiting volunteers** to help with work
- creating a **sense of ownership** and pride in local residents about the site
- **encouraging sustainable business** interests to go into partnership with the site.

How this works in practice / *Case Study 1*

Let us imagine that a Natura 2000 site manager wants to encourage more walkers to visit their site. There is a rich history in and around where the site now stands and the manager has the idea of working with local History Societies and 'battle re-enactment' groups, to map trails to take people through areas of historical interest (former battlefields, etc), complete with information notice boards along the walks.

Our Natura 2000 site manager and these history enthusiasts need volunteer help to map the trails, and also want to publicise it so walkers will visit when they are complete.

The manager informs the local media of the story and over one day:

- s/he is interviewed on the local radio station's Morning Show (audience **25,000** listeners)
- spends two hours walking a TV news crew around the site, where s/he and a member of the 'battle re-enactment' group describe its (evening news audience of **100,000** viewers).
- talks to a journalist from the local daily newspaper for half-an-hour and emails them some relevant photos of the site to use with the article (newspaper readership of **60,000**).

For a morning's work the manager has 'told' a potential audience of **185,000 people** about the project, that it needs volunteers and when visitors can expect to come and use the site's new history trails. This is not including other media (weekly newspapers, magazines, bloggers and social media users) who may also take up the story, spreading the message further.

Why people don't talk to the media

We've seen that the media can be a useful tool to enable you to achieve your objectives as a Natura 2000 site manager but there are a number of reasons people give for not engaging with journalists and news organisations.

'I don't know anybody in the media I can talk to'.

As a Natura 2000 manager you will spend a lot of time travelling around the area where your site is. You will know:

- the newspapers people read
- the radio stations they listen to
- the local TV news stations
- if there are local interest websites, listing 'What's On' and upcoming events.

→ **Make a list of these media** outlets and find their phone numbers and email addresses. Nearly all news organisations today have their own website, where you will find a contact number or email address for a 'News Desk' or 'News Editor', or a number to 'Call us with your story'**. When contacting them, make a point of finding out the name of the journalist/editor you speak to for future reference.**

'If I do speak to someone, they won't be interested in what I've got to say'.

Every day newspapers have to fill many blank pages, radio and TV news stations hours of air time, even websites and social media pages have to be regularly updated to remain fresh and interesting. Media organisations try and do all this with as few staff as possible, which means their journalists are very busy people.

Anyone calling up to offer them an interesting story – complete with lively speakers and the potential for good photos/filming opportunities – is making their life easier and should be listened to.

It may be that, on the day you contact the media organisation, they are genuinely too busy to cover your story or feel it's just not for them.

DON'T give up after one setback.

Keep going back to them whenever you've got a new story about your site – the next one might be just right for a front page or top news item.

'The media is only interested in bad news'.

Wrong. The media is interested in interesting news – whether it's good or bad.

Media organisations work in a very competitive environment, constantly trying to keep their own readers/listeners/viewers and steal a share of their rivals. They do this by covering stories which will appeal to their existing audience and new ones. So, if a journalist is doing their job properly, they will judge a story's worth on how interesting it is – not whether it will show the organisation or people involved in a good or bad light.

For example, here are two hypothetical news headlines about a Natura 2000 site:

- Nature site to receive 500,000 Euro investment. Jobs to be created.
- Government report criticises nature site's management. Future uncertain.

Both would be considered valid stories by the media – because they are of interest to its readers/listeners/viewers.

****NOTE The key here as a Natura 2000 site manager is to make sure you build a good relationship with local media and supply them with a steady flow of stories about the positive work your site is doing.**

'All journalists have a hidden agenda. If I tell them about my site's project they'll twist my words for their own purposes'.

Yes, journalists can be lazy, incompetent and cause you trouble – but what profession doesn't include at least a few people like that?

Most of the journalists you'll meet will be hardworking and professional. In most cases they are just looking to help you tell them an interesting story, so they can tell their audience.

BUT you must accept that the journalist will want to present the facts you give them their own way, to make the story as interesting as it can be.

I wouldn't know what to say to a journalist.

This is the main reason people avoid engaging with the media – it can seem scary. But as a Natura 2000 manager you have a secret weapon – you.

How this works in practice / *Case Study 2*

A Natura 2000 site manager invites a TV news crew to their site, to cover a story about a serious science research project looking at the courtship rituals of a rare and endangered bird.

In the course of an interview, one of the scientists tells the reporter that the research has so far shown that – unusually – in this species the male birds are subservient to the females, and that the females actually 'date' a number of males before making their choice.

When it is broadcast the TV news item about the site's project gets all the facts right but makes it into a humorous piece, mainly talking about the female birds 'ruling the roost' over the poor males. While the Natura 200 site manager would have wanted a more serious approach, the media outlet chose this way of presenting the news item because it thought it would be more interesting for its viewers.

BUT – It is still a positive news item which raises awareness of the Natura 2000 site.

NOTE – There's a difference between a media organisation deciding to present a news item a different way and simply getting facts wrong, accidentally or deliberately.

IF a story about your Natura 2000 site is mis-represented and factually inaccurate, you should always address this with the media organisation involved.

News stories – whether written or recorded – are used as source materials by other journalists, for official reports and by politicians, so it is important they are challenged if inaccurate.

You can always speak to the journalist who contacted you or, if they are not helpful, their Editor, and explain clearly what was inaccurate, before asking for a correction or an apology.

Accuracy is very important to media organisations. Audiences will cease to trust them – and perhaps cease to read/listen/watch their news items – if they feel they are routinely not being told the truth. Journalists who regularly get their facts wrong do not last long in media organisations.

9.1 MEDIA SKILLS

Media skills you already have

You may not know it but you've already got the most important skills and knowledge you'll need to speak to the media:

• **Expertise** – Journalists are not (in the main) environmentalists, flora and fauna specialists, or scientists. Their skills lie in helping people who are those things to tell an interesting story. You will always know more about your site and the news connected with it than the journalist does, which means you can get over the message you feel is important.

• **Passion** – When you listen to someone who is committed to and enthusiastic about what they are doing you can get carried along too, even if you know very little about their field. That's you. Don't be afraid to show your (controlled) passion for what you're doing in an interview, to engage the media audience it's aimed at. If you're looking for them to take action (volunteer or visit your event, perhaps) you will need to enthuse them.

• **Experience** – You've probably had to describe what you do to someone who knows nothing about the Natura 2000 network, many times. You keep the explanation simple, tell them all the most exciting bits first, and try not to throw a lot of jargon and organisation names at them. This is exactly what you need to do when talking to media outlets and the audiences reading/listening/watching them.

Now what we need to do is add the skills and knowledge to help you use that Expertise, Passion and Experience to gain good media coverage for your Natura 2000 site and the wider network.

Media skills we need to work on

• Knowledge of the media and how it works

In the training session, everybody was asked to help list as many different types of media as they could think of.

<u>We can divide types of media up in terms of the way they transmit news:</u>

- **Printing it** – newspapers, magazines, newsletters.
- **Broadcasting it** – TV and radio.
- **Posting it online** – websites and blogs.
- **Using social media** – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and many others.
- Sometimes news is not put out by a news organisation but just one individual. **Citizen journalists**, with access to a computer and smart phone, have become a big generator of news now.

<u>Or, media can be listed in terms of the areas they cover:</u>

- Local and regional
- National
- International

<u>Or, the kinds of story they cover:</u>

- General media – news and current events aimed at a broad audience with no specialised knowledge.
- Specialist media – subject specific and aimed mainly at a smaller audience with that special interest. *(e.g. a monthly magazine for environmental/conservation professionals.*

If you have a good news story about your Natura 2000 site, think about how you can use as many different news channels as possible – newspapers, radio stations, websites – and talk to both the local outlets (general media) as well as environmental/conservation press (specialist media).

You worked hard to identify your news story, so you want it to go as far as possible for all your efforts. If it is a strong news story, it will 'travel' quite far anyway. Different parts of the media watch and listen to each other all the time, and will often pick up on a news story they like.

How this works in practice / *Case Study 3*

A story's 'journey' through the media could go something like this:

Specialist & Print – Monthly conservation magazine runs serious article on research at a Natura 2000 site, looking at a rare male insect's courtship rituals.

Online & International – Story goes on magazine's website.

Social media – Web link to the story is picked up by Twitter users. A Twitter user remarks on the male insect's 'cute' habit of giving a 'wrapped' gift of grubs to the female its pursuing. A short video with the tag line 'world's most romantic insect' begins to rapidly trend on Twitter.

National & Broadcast – TV news station follows Twitter and picks up on the story. It contacts Natura 2000 site manager, asking to come and do a feature item on it for that evening's news.

9.2 NEWS SENSE AND NON SENSE

What is a story?

News should be 'new'

- **Fresh** – something not known before, just announced.
- **Immediate or very recent.**
- **Surprising or unusual** – a unique or rare occurrence. 'Man bites dog' is unusual, so it makes for a better news story than 'dog bites man, which is commonplace.
- **Relevant** – People pay more attention or are driven to action if there's a chance something will affect them. If you want news about your Natura 2000 site to get someone's attention, explain how it affects them or their environment.
- **Available** – The media needs your help to cover a story. Reporters need to know about it in good time, get to interview the right people and have access to photograph/film or record.

What isn't a story?

- **Repetition** – Asking a news organisation to re-run a story they did on your Natura 2000 site project six months ago, without offering them a new twist or 'news line' about it. They won't do this just because you need the publicity.
- **Out of date** – If you've got a fantastic event that's just happened a journalist will need to be told quickly. Telling them a month later, once the photos have come back, is no good.
- **Irrelevance** – As we said before, newspapers and broadcasters have to run stories that are relevant and interesting to their audience, or their audience will stop reading/ watching/ listening.

A visit from EU officials may be exciting for those on the Natura 2000 site itself but the media won't be interested, unless you can tell them why it's relevant to them and their audiences.

- **Lack of access** – It's not unusual for a big project or event to keep people so busy they only think of getting publicity for it right at the end, when those most involved may no longer be available. Plan ahead. If journalists are told everyone's "too busy" to speak to them, they will quickly lose interest and move onto someone else's news item.

9.3 DIFFERENT MEDIA AND THEIR NEEDS

So far we've talked about all media needing:

- something interesting to report on
- someone to interview who has in-depth knowledge about the story and is willing to be quoted/recorded/filmed
- images, video footage or photos to illustrate the story (this even applies to radio stations, most of which now have their own website).

But a newspaper reporter will approach a story differently to a radio presenter, who will in turn have different needs to a TV journalist or an online 'special interest' blogger.

Let's take a brief look at how these different media operate.

Print



Newspaper and magazine journalists will come to you to do an interview but it's not unusual for them to do a lot of their interviews over the phone. This is not (usually) because of laziness but is due to the time pressures of working to a deadline. On a daily paper they might have only an hour to 'file' a story.

Freelance journalists (who work for themselves, finding stories to sell to media outlets) often take their own photographs. A newspaper reporter might interview you over the phone and send a photographer out to get the photos afterwards.

If you can shoot your own photos or film footage for a story, and offer it free to media, this is often appreciated and might mean your story gets better coverage.

Radio



Radio like their listeners to feel the immediacy of the story. They will often ask an interviewee to come into the studio or will send a presenter out into the field, so they can interact directly with the person speaking.

They can, however, also interview over the phone.

A Natura 2000 site is always going to have background noise but this is fine. Some background noise adds to the atmosphere for the listener.

This sounds obvious but remember the radio audience can't see you. If you are doing an activity you might have to describe your surroundings and your actions – but the presenter should talk you through this.

Television



Even more obviously, television news is all about pictures.

If a TV news crew is coming to your Natura 2000 site to see you about a project or activity, you will need to be available to take them to the location and demonstrate the activity.

If the news item is being pre-recorded it might mean many 'takes' before the journalist/cameraman is satisfied.

Be warned – This can take a long time. It is not unusual for it to take two or three hours to film a story that lasts only a minute onscreen, on that evening's TV news.

Digital/Social Media



This sector of the media is growing more rapidly than any other.

There are far too many different types of digital/social media to address in-depth here – with new ones coming online all the time – but here are two general rules for organisations using it to put out its news:

Invest the time – Many organisations set-up websites and social media channels with enthusiasm and the best of intentions, then lose interest after six months or just run out of things to say.

A weekly online column might sound like a great idea – until you're desperately trying to think of a fresh topic on week 15.

Be realistic on how much you can regularly do online. A website news section or Twitter account that's been inactive for months reflects poorly on an organisation.

Prepare to be criticised – Putting news online means your organisation can be criticised (often unfairly) by anyone with a laptop or mobile phone. It's important for organisations to monitor their social media channels, to respond to queries and also to answer criticisms. This is particularly important where those criticisms contain the wrong information.

For example – "The EU just takes land off farmers to create new Natura 2000 sites and doesn't compensate them."

Unchallenged, these become accepted 'truths' that other media may also use.

Five key points to remember when talking to the media

- **You're the expert**
  Knowing more about the subject than the journalist puts you at an advantage.

- **Show your enthusiasm**
  It will engage the reader/listener/viewer.

- **Keep answers short and simple**
  The audience or readership you're talking to may know nothing about the subject. Using unexplained acronyms and professional jargon will lose their interest.

- **Correct poor questioning**
  Don't be afraid to politely correct a journalist/presenter, who gets their facts wrong. You can use your answer to correct them.
  Example: Journalist – "How do you think local people will feel about paying the costs of the new project on this Natura 2000 site?"
  You – "Actually 100% of the costs will be covered by the European Union, local people won't pay anything, but they'll benefit from the project because…"

- **Assume nothing is 'off the record'**
  unless you have a good and long established relationship with the journalist.

10 ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Love it or loathe it, social media is here to stay and should form an essential component of any N2000 site communication strategy. Despite the apparent simplicity and accessibility of most social media channels, using them wisely and effectively can provide excellent opportunities to connect with many existing and new stakeholders and supporters for your N2000 site. Social media however can also bring challenges and like any communication tool its use requires careful planning.

10.1 SOCIAL MEDIA FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND NEWSLETTERS

http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/Tools/guidelines/pdf/GuidetoWritingforSocialMedia.pdf

Why going viral? Why connecting online? Why use online networking?

In the past several years, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of online and other electronic tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, and texting) for sharing and creating content, which in this document are collectively called social media. Companies, government agencies and protected areas are discovering how to harness the power of social media to expand the reach of their marketing and communication messages

For those of us in the nature protection communication, social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging allow us to expand our reach, foster engagement, and increase access to credible, nature - based messages. Social media can help organizations achieve the after goals.

Disseminate information in a timelier manner:

- Increase the potential impact of important messages.
- Leverage networks of people to make information sharing easier.
- Create different messages to reach diverse audiences.
- Personalize health messages and target them to a particular audience.
- Engage with the public.
- Empower people to make safer and healthier decisions.

When integrated into communication campaigns and activities, social media can encourage participation, conversation, and community—all of which can help spread key messages, influence decision making, and promote behaviour change. Social media also helps to reach people when, where, and how it is convenient for them, which improves the availability of content and might influence satisfaction and trust in the health messages delivered.

Social media is also a key tool in building awareness and credibility. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project report in 2011, "Social Networking Sites and Our Lives," nearly half of adults (47%) used at least one social networking site in 2010. That number is growing quickly, nearly doubling from 2008 (26%). Social networks are places where people gather information from experts and peers to help them make decisions. [i]

10.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Keep in mind that social media is one tool in a larger communication strategy. Always consider your overarching communication goals when developing social media activities.

As with all media outreach, the keys to an effective social media presence are to

- Identify your target audience.
- Determine your objective.
- Select the appropriate channel for your message.
- Decide upfront how much time and effort you can invest.

Target Audiences, Literacy and Plain Language, and Social Marketing

Social media presents a particular challenge for communicators because the users don't focus on a single document. A reader often sifts through an onslaught of information, skims topics, and browses sites to determine where to focus his or her attention. If content is dense, long, and jargon-filled, the reader probably won't find it appealing. To ensure that the reader does take the time to read your messages, social media writers should:

- Understand the audience they are trying to reach.
- Apply literacy principles.
- Follow plain language best practices.
- Use social marketing concepts to improve communications

Know Your Target Audience(s)

One benefit of using social media is audience segmentation. You can develop messages that are specific to the concerns, needs, and desires of a particular demographic. Understanding what is important to your audience will increase the effectiveness of your social media efforts.

The Importance of Plain Language

Using plain language helps to correct these problems. Studies show that when writers use plain language, readers discover information more quickly, understand it better, and find it more compelling. When you think plain language, think everyday language, and you will help your readers.

Tools of Social Marketing in Communications

Social marketing is the use of marketing principles to influence human behaviour to improve health or benefit Society. **Social marketing is about identifying the specific target audience segment(s), describing the benefits, and creating interventions that will influence or support the desired behaviour change.**

Social marketing **planning requires understanding and incorporating the "The Four Ps of Marketing"** (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) into program planning. Social marketing looks at providing health services from the viewpoint of the consumer. Research can help to describe what an audience is now doing or thinking, which will help shape realistic goals for behaviour change.

Below are some guidelines for incorporating social marketing into your communications.

- Highlight the positive aspects of your message.
- Answer the audience's question, "What's in it for me?"
- Respect your audience.
- Encourage your readers to take a particular action or to learn more.
- Tie messages to specific products or services when possible (such as "Find out where to get tested" or "Know your status").

10.3 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA WRITING - CREATING CONTENT

Social media content should be:

- Relevant, useful, and interesting
- Easy to understand and share
- Friendly, conversational, and engaging
- Action-oriented

Social media is most effective when the content relates to a particular interest or desire of a specific group of people. Because your target audience can receive multiple messages from multiple sources leaevery day, try to make your messages relevant, useful, and interesting so your audience will interact and be engaged.

Easy to understand and share

In social media channels, your message competes fiercely with others for your readers' attention. That is why it's important to use plain language and craft your message so the information you present is easy to understand. Also, consider how easy your message is to share or "like" on Facebook or "retweet" on Twitter. If users must modify your message to share it, they might get frustrated and quit or change the message so it's not as accurate as the original.

Action-Oriented

You can use social media tools to help build awareness and direct readers to take action or find more information. Social media messages should have a call to action, urging people to take the next step.

Use Your Web Content as Source Material for Social Media Content

Writing for social media can be a demanding task. One way to cope is to tweet, post, and text about Web content you have already created. Make Social Media Writing Easier by Repurposing Web Content.

Any kind of Web content can provide the source material for a tweet, Facebook post, or text message, including

- News articles
- Fact sheets
- FAQs
- Outbreak notices
- Research reports
- Event or conference content
- Guidelines

Repurposing Web content for social media communication is efficient, because this content has been developed, edited, and cleared through the appropriate channels. Use social media to promote Web content or start a conversation with community members who have joined your social media channels.

10.4 MEDIA WRITTING CHECK LIST



Length: Posts can be up to 250 characters (including spaces).

Access to more information: Hyperlink to a Web page, photo, or video. Include information available through other social media channels: a short code for texts; a hashtag for Twitter.

Call to action: Invite followers to do something such as watch a video, attend an event, or use CDC resources.

Tone: Write in a friendly, casual style. Avoid jargon.

Tagging: Use the @ symbol in front of a public health partner's name in your post to automatically create a link and display the post on the partner's page.

Abbreviations: Avoid abbreviations, but if they are necessary, use sparingly and only if easily understood.



Length: Tweets should be 120 characters or less, including a shortened URL. Access to more information: Include a hyperlink to a website, an @ mention, or a hashtag #.

Call to action: Start the tweet with a verb if possible: Use watch, read, learn, etc.

Tone: Write in friendly, action-oriented style.

Mentions: Use the "@" symbol in front of a public health partner's name in your post to automatically create a link and display the post on the partner's profile.

Abbreviations: Avoid abbreviations, but if they are necessary, use them only if they are easily understood, do not change the meaning of the tweet, and are not immature or unprofessional.

To find our more on how to write for Facebook and Twitter–please see the example material and external sources in the TOOLKIT.

10.5 DIRECT MAILING NEWSLETTERS

Email is the most cost-effective and highest ROI (return on investment) communication (marketing) medium.

However, take care not to consider email low value just because it is cheap. Failing to take care with your email marketing strategy will be detrimental to your relationship with your audience. Put the same care, effort and focus on your email as if it was a costly direct mail.

Email provides excellent measurability. No longer do you need to guess how people will react to your marketing messages. With email, you can measure who opens and clicks on your email. This not only means you know who in your audience is engaged but also what information is interesting and of value to them. The measurability gives the data necessary to allow optimisation and improvement in your marketing. You can test different messages and improve marketing based on facts. This means no more meeting room arguments as to what might be better - you can do it, test it and find out what works best.

Choosing content for newsletters

Your content is what will keep your customers reading your email. After they sign up, they will read your next two or three emails. If they like the content they will continue reading, but if they do not they will unsubscribe or emotionally unsubscribe. Emotional unsubscribing is when someone will not bother to actually unsubscribe but will continue to receive your newsletter and will simply hit delete without even skimming it

In your content do not talk about yourself and how good your company and products are. Today's readers are skeptics. The most effective newsletters deliver information of interest and value to the reader without being full of marketing and sales speak. If you provide thoughtful, helpful and insightful information that is of value to your readers on its own, then you will build your relationship and trust so that they will become interested in your products, services and spending money with you.

Social Media vs. Newsletters

Social media websites such as LinkedIn, Plaxo, YouTube, Google Plus and Facebook rely primarily on user-contributed content. Newsletters, whether they are sent by email or postal mail, consist entirely of editor-supplied content. For the small business, this is the difference between using a rifle or a shotgun. The target market in social media can range over hundreds of thousands or even millions of individuals, many of whom may have little or no interest in your business model. Conversely, the newsletter intends to reach a far smaller, yet much more motivated, group of consumers, customers or clients. When properly developed, each approach can be effective in building customer base and brand loyalty. When the two are combined, the total effectiveness is noticeably greater than the sum of the two parts.

10.6 OTHER ONLINE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Websites

With millions of internet users across the globe, accessing the web from their computers, phones, and tablets, it is no surprise that the website should be the cornerstone of the race communication plan. It is the strongest marketing tool and often the first place participants go to get information.

For more tips and tricks on how to create, promote and maintain good websites, please see the toolkit.

Blogs

Often referred to as social media, blogs exist on every topic imaginable, and in every industry. Blogs are web logs that are updated on a regular basis by their author. They can contain information related to a specific topic. Blog's give an opportunity to write content that is unique to you and your "practice". While some people are uncomfortable with self-promotion, blog gives you an occasion to interact with your visitors while promoting who you are and what you do. Today blog's are being used for all sorts of purposes. From companies that use blogs to communicate and interact with customers and other stakeholders to newspapers that incorporate blogs to their main website to offer a new channel for their writers. Individuals also created blogs to share with the world their expertise on specific topics.

There are numerous reasons why it makes sense to blog and communicate about N2000 sites and nature in general;

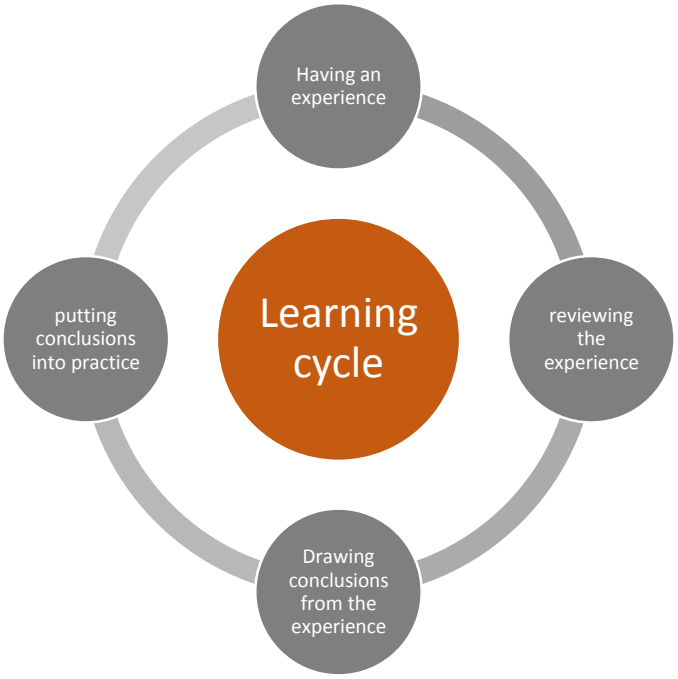
- Establishing expertise.
- Establishing "real" credibility.
- Building a professional community.
- Creating relationships with stakeholders.
- Drive targeted traffic to your main web site.

For more information, tips and good examples of blogs please see the manual.

11 REVIEWING YOUR LEARNING AND ACTION PLANNING

Remember the Learning Cycle from the beginning?

The course and manual may act as an experience, but you need to work through the other stages of the cycle, then adapt your behavior in order to see real development and change and improvement in communicating your N2000 site. This is a continuous process. Some of those changes will be in new skills, ideas and experiences for the N2000 manager. Others will be new tools techniques and thinking embedded in the management of the N2000 site and how it relates to its stakeholders, communities and visitors.



Action Planning – Further Development and Learning

This manual is related to the communications course run by EUROPARC Federation on behalf of the consortium behind the Life project LIFE+ Information and Communication Project: Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura2000 Network.

Additional worksheet powerpoint presentation and exercises can be found the annexe, this will enhance and elaborate what is written in the manual

What are you going to do as a result of what you have learned? What do you think you do well ? What do you think you need to improve? How can you do that?

What are you going to do differently? When will you do it by? What will you need to do it?

Make a note of your thoughts here.

Don't forget - set realistic and achievable targets!

Reviewing your skills and planning where to go next

I'm ok at …
I need to improve at …
I can do this by…

Action Planning – Future Activities

When I get back to work I'm going to…
I will do this by…
To do it I will need…

Thoughts/comments…

Sharing your learning

You may be able to share knowledge you've gained on this course with other people.

- What can you share with others?
- With whom?
- How do you think you can do that?
- By whom?
- When?

On this worksheet, make a note of your thoughts

What information do you think would be useful to share with your team/organisation?
How do you think you could do that? Who would be involved?
When would you want to do it by? Where would it happen?
So, what will be your first action to try and achieve this when you get back to work?

Good luck with your communications!

ANNEX I

QUIZ NATURA 2000

1. **How many biogeographical regions are there in Europe?**
   a. 12
   b. 7
   c. 9

2. **In what year was the N2000 network come into existence?**
   a. 1992
   b. 2000
   c. 1989

3. **What enabling legislation is N2000 network based on?**
   a. life directive
   b. biodiversity strategy
   c. birds and habitat directives

4. **Who designates N2000 sites?**
   a. European commission
   b. member states
   c. council of Europe

5. **How many N2000 sites have been designated to date?**
   a. 170, 000
   b. 18,000
   c. 63, 000

6. **What is the El Teide declaration?**
   a. a declaration to emphasise commitment is promoting greater awareness and understanding of N2000 sites
   b. a declaration to involve stakeholders in decisions over the long term management of N2000 sites
   c. a shift from designation to implementation and management

7. **What is an SAC?**
   a. special area of conservation
   b. scientific area of concern
   c. specific access control

8. **A N2000 site can be designated**
   a. only on private land
   b. only on public land
   c. anywhere

9. **Work to improve N2000 sites is funded through**
   a. private donations
   b. life nature fund
   c. member states

10. **What are the Natura 2000 objectives?**
    a. reconcile nature preservation and socio-economic issues
    b. preserve vulnerable species and their habitats
    c. fully protect a natural area from human activity

1. c); 2. a); 3.c); 4. d); 5.

ANNEX II

EXERCISES - WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

EXERCISE 1: Matching

Thinking of all the stakeholders we have identified and all the differing communications media, most of which will have a written component, match up what you consider to be the most appropriate media with whom you are communicating.

EXERCISE 2: Look at the technical and creative style of this famous quotation →

Can you rewrite in a simpler, more creative style?

Style

Political organisation administered via the populace, intended for the employment of the general community on behalf of each and every one of the citizens of the nation

Government of the people, by the people, for the people

EXERCISE 3: Use some material from your own N2000 site, perhaps an extract from a management plan, or mission and vision statement and rewrite in a more eloquent and creative style.

Technical - Creative

EXERCISE 4: Read the small poem Dirt on My Shirt and consider its structure, its content, who the audience is and where it meet the 5 tests (see page 28).



EXERCISE 5 : Be able to recognise buzzwords and jargon and avoid overusing it! We can write a lot that is meaningless and too dense for non technical people to understand.A N2000 manager needs to be able to recognise buzzwords and jargon and avoid overusing it as these are meaningless and off putting to N2000 stakeholders! We often write a lot that is meaningless and too dense for non technical people to understand.

Buzzword Salad

This kind of writing is easy to recognize. It's full of fashionable buzzwords. Because buzzwords sound impressive and convey no precise meaning, they are very useful in business management, politics...

Current buzzwords of choice include *"team," "process," "interactive," "empowerment," "ownership," "strategic," "assessment," "competency," "customer satisfaction," "validate," "support," "asset," "environment," "parameter," "maximize," "focus," "network" "leverage," "system," "paradigm." And "N2000"*

Combine as many of these words as you like to create meaningless sentences or phrases.

EXERCISE 6 : Editing – Correct the sample Paragraph

Wen I left my house that day I had no idea for that my life was about to change forever. Everthing I had ever experienced was ordinary. My school was ordinary my friends were ordinary even my dog was ordinary. I should have nown that nothing stays ordinary forever. His name was sam and he was the most extrordinary person I had ever meet.

Sample Paragraph, Corrected

When I left my house that day, I had no idea that my life was about to change forever. Everything I had ever experienced was ordinary. My school was ordinary. My friends were ordinary. Even my dog was ordinary. I should have known that nothing stays ordinary forever. His name was Sam, and he was the most extraordinary person I had ever met.

Errors in Paragraph 1

First sentence:

- "When" is misspelled as "wen"
- A comma is missing after the introductory clause "When I left my house that day"
- There is an unnecessary preposition ("for") following the word "idea" Second sentence:
- "Everything" is misspelled as "everthing" Third sentence:
- "My school was ordinary…" is a run-on → Add full stops and fix capitalization to make three sentences

Fourth sentence:

- "Known" is misspelled as "nown" Fifth sentence:
- Sam's name is a proper noun and should be capitalized
- A comma is needed to separate the independent clauses "His name was Sam" and "he was the most extraordinary person I had ever met"
- "Extraordinary" is misspelled as "extrordinary"
- "Meet" isn't the correct form of the verb → Change to the past tense "met"

ANNEX III

CHECK LIST - WHAT DOES MY SITE HAS TO OFFER?

Know your visitors	General features	Physical Features	Built envirnoment & human activity
What do they want to know/do/see? What will strike them on your site What senses can you use? What can they see that's new to them? What can they hear? Get them to touch things – tree bark, soft moss, find something hard and cold… Can you find something for them to smell? What about eating something? If it's safe of course!	What are the special or unique features? What is the 'story' and how is it physically reflected? What are the dominant or eye-catching features? What sensory experiences are offered?	Look for views, vistas, doorways, water (or other things you like) Is the underlying or outcropping geology of interest/significance? Consider relief and terrain – are any areas dangerous or inaccessible to (some of all) visitors?	What people do you know of connected to this site and its history? Are any of the buildings interesting? (Remember to research builders and inhabitants) Can visitors see anyone at work?
Flora and fauna	**Human Involvement**	**Supporting archival material**	**Folklore**
What species are present? Which are the species that relate most people's everyday lives? Which ones do most people see? What habitats and communities are there? Seasonal change	Look for desire lines and patterns of use What do visitors want to know?	Identify documentary resources, artefacts and other materials (Biological Records Centre, Sites & Monuments Records and Records Office) Look for old maps, photographs, prints and drawings, audio tapes, TV and film	Are there myths and legends associated with the place, or with any of the people, plants, animals associated with it?

ANNEX IV

MEDIA CASE STUDY EXERCISE

At the end of the training session you were given a Media Case Study Exercise, aimed at applying what you'd learnt in a hypothetical situation relevant to Natura 2000 managers. **The exercise asked you to imagine you were the new manager of a Natura 2000 site.**

> The site was around 200 hectares in size; and a mixture of woodlands, grassland and transitional habits. It had a high percentage of private ownership – arable and dairy farming, and commercial timber plantations – both in and around it. Our hypothetical site faced a number of challenges, some of which you're likely to have come across in your real roles:
>
> Poor relations with local farmers and agri-businesses, who saw the site and its protected species as a bar to local expansion and development.
>
> A lack of interest in and leisure use of the site from the local population, (despite there being three mid-sized towns within an eight mile radius of it).
>
> Recurring questions from local politicians – acting on criticism from local businesses – as to the value of the site to the region's economy and whether something 'more useful' could be done with it then protecting rare insects and flowers.

The training session (in small teams) was given 45 minutes to come up with one idea to answer each of the three negative issues faced by the site.

As a guide, you were told that the three ideas should:

- engage at least one part of the community – citizens, schools, farmers, businesses, local officials – in the life of your site
- that the idea should be capable of being turned into an appealing news story for the media (print, TV, radio, online, etc).

Example answers to the three issues included

Contacting the local Chamber of Commerce to set-up focus group meetings where you, as the Natura 2000 site manager, could listen to business owners in and bordering the site, to better anticipate problems.

- **Media coverage –** Get this initiative reported in the Chamber's monthly business newsletter and news of the meetings Tweeted on its Twitter account. Get local schools to use the site in pupils' Environment/Nature/Science lessons, as a 'live' course resource, with visits by you to talk to children.
- **Media coverage –** With schools' permission, invite TV news in to film your school visits, showing live flora and fauna to the children. Have a Natura 2000 publicity stand at local councils' civic events, showing the economic benefits Natura 2000 brings to the region and wider EU area – through tourism, subsidies to farming and agri-businesses, etc.
- **Media coverage –** Identify the News or Features Editor of your local daily newspaper. Offer to write an opinion column for them, detailing the economic good the Natura 2000 site does, as told to the public through your publicity stand.

Point of the exercise

At the start of the training session we learnt how Natura 2000 managers should not think of talking to the media as an 'add on' task but as a way of helping them with other parts of their job such as:

- guarding against the commercial exploitation of their site
- recruiting volunteers to help with work
- creating a sense of ownership and pride in local residents about the site
- encouraging sustainable business interests to go into partnership with the site.

Through the Media Case study Exercise you should have been able to use the steps learnt – once you'd decided which part of your (hypothetical) community you wished to engage – to:

- Decide which was the most newsworthy part of the project (using Page 9, News sense – What is a story?)
- Identify which media you want to target (Page 4, Why people don't talk to the media?)
- Think about what the different media might need to cover your story (Page 10, Different media and their different needs)
- Talk to the media (Page 61, remembering our Five Key Points).

Planning a media strategy

For the second part of the Media Case Study Exercise, the training session (led by its tutor) ranked the different groups' ideas into a list of Short and Long Term goals.

Short Term goals were those that could be done in the next few weeks, with minimal time and effort. For example, visiting a local school with exhibits from your site.

Long Term goals would be a series of connected activities leading to a defined target, possibly involving liaison with other partners. For example, supplying the local newspaper with an ongoing monthly environmental/nature column or video blog for its website, to gradually raise your site's profile.

This is called a Media Strategy. You will know about most of the news stories to do with your Natura 2000 site well in advance. They may be connected to a particular season, a species' appearance on the site or a public event. By planning ahead when and how you will contact the media in connection with these occurrences you will create less stress for yourself, and be able to better present your story.