



Employment and Human Resources Toolkit

Tool 12: Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is important to ensure that all stakeholders understand and buy into an initiative or equity plan because all stakeholders have a role in implementing and ensuring a representative and inclusive organization exists for everyone.

A good communication strategy is more than sending out a few emails or notices about your DEI /EE plan or initiatives. Before developing a communication strategy, you need to know:

- **Who?** Sender and the audience for the communication
- **What?** Key messages and intended outcomes using inclusive language
- **When?** Intentional communication that considers the workplace culture and context in that moment
- **Why?** Purpose for the communication, which can include raising awareness and education; providing information about initiatives and change; managing expectations; fostering support for change and desired outcomes; addressing concerns or resistance; gathering input from stakeholders; increasing transparency; and creating accountability.
- **Where and how?** Ways and places to communicate most effectively in your workplace, including written letters, emails, surveys, suggestion boxes, small group meetings, informal or formal discussion forums, townhalls, presentations, etc.)

Too often, written emails are sent out without the buy-in into the message or initiative. Sometimes, there are inaccurate and damaging rumours that can adversely impact the successful implementation of the initiatives. It is important that one-sided communications are minimized.

More importantly, any communications must be intentional, transparent, consistent, and on-going with concrete timetables and measurables. Messages and actions need to be accessible and appropriate for that moment – stakeholders need to understand what the organization is striving for with clear outcomes and how that will be done. Otherwise, stakeholders may be cynical of any true commitment to DEI/EE.

Lastly, any communications should be engaging with the stakeholders – two-way communication – to foster authentic conversations to not only get buy-in but build momentum to make change.

Avoid statements with undefined or too-specific commitments, objectives, actions, or messages that do not align with the organization's values and cultures. Stakeholders will see through these kinds of messaging quickly when the communication does not fit the actions of the organization. In other words, "walk the talk".