

The 7 C's of Communication

The 7 Cs provide a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, video calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear – so your audience gets your message.

According to the 7 Cs, communication needs to be:

1. Clear.

When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your goal or message. What is your purpose in communicating with this person? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be sure either.

To be clear, try to minimize the number of ideas in each sentence. Don't waffle or use ambiguous words. People shouldn't have to "read between the lines" and make assumptions on their own to understand what you're trying to say.

2. Concise.

When you're concise in your communication, you stick to the point and keep it brief. Your audience doesn't want to read six sentences when you could communicate your message in three, or be in a meeting for 2 hours when it can be done in 30 minutes!

A good format to use in the 'news at ten' format:

- Tell them what the meeting/discussion//memo is about
- Tell them i.e. provide the information
- Tell them what you've told them i.e. summarise and/or check for understanding.

3. Concrete.

When your message is concrete, then your audience has a clear picture of what you're telling them. There are details (but not too many!) and vivid facts, and there's laser-like focus. Your message is solid. Use POSITIVE and NEGATIVE words, and avoid neutral ones!

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Yes Certainly Definitely Absolutely Can Will I'll do it now Tomorrow morning Good news	Maybe Try Perhaps Hopefully Basically Might Should As I say At the end of the day In a few days Just	No Impossible Problem Can't Won't I'm afraid not Don't worry Bad news But No way Failing that

4. Correct.

When your communication is correct, it fits your audience. For written communication, correct communication is also error-free communication.

- Do the technical terms you use fit your audience's level of education or knowledge?
- Have you checked your writing for grammatical errors? Remember, spell checkers won't catch everything.
- Are all names and titles spelled correctly?

5. Coherent.

When your communication is coherent, it's logical and well structured. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic, and the tone and flow is natural. Preparation is important to make communication coherent: if you aren't sure what you are going to say, think and plan before you start. Otherwise you are likely to end up confusing people.

6. Complete.

In a complete message, the audience has everything they need to be informed and, if applicable, take action.

- Does your message include a "call to action", so that your audience clearly knows what you want them to do?
- Have you included all relevant information – contact names, dates, times, locations, and so on?

7. Courteous.

Courteous communication is friendly, open, and honest. There are no hidden insults or passive-aggressive tones. You keep your reader's viewpoint in mind, and you're empathetic to their needs.