

Communication

1.1 Brainstormed methods of communication and assessed the strengths, weaknesses and possibilities for each.

Communication Method	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Electronic (e.g. e-mail, intranet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know it's been received (e-mail) • Fast and efficient means of communicating to large numbers of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone has access to a computer at work/ problems with giving everyone access • People are overwhelmed with e-mail – don't know when or if they'll open it • If it's low priority, it'll be deleted • Problems with "tone" of e-mail – easier to misinterpret 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use incentives to get people to use/ read • Catchy subject line • Don't send too many e-mails
Face to face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personable • Quicker • Interactive – you can get immediate feedback • Effective – breaks down language barrier • Easier to clarify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • People may be reluctant to disclose all information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of messenger – perhaps one person is more effective than another (see Nancy Dubois "Power of Presentation") • Calling tree (have each person be responsible for passing the message along) • Meet people where they are at (i.e. scheduled safety and team meetings)
Bulletin/notice boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets attention if strategically placed (e.g. bathroom stalls, punch clock, photocopier, lunchroom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may not pay attention if the location is not strategic, if the board is cluttered or if the information is all old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive employees to the location if not strategic (e.g. contest, free food, etc.) • Perform regular housekeeping on board(s) • Have great visuals (e.g. colour, attention grabbing graphics)
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable distribution (people get them) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may take or receive them, but not use them • Handouts can get lost • Language may be a barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep handouts clutter free with lots of white space

Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great if already made and free! • Colourful • Large • “a picture is worth a thousand words” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language may be a barrier • May be an expense to create or purchase • Time limited – need to be removed after a while (e.g. a month) 	
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get people to take action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be several newsletters in the workplace (competition to read yours!) • Needs to contribute to change in people’s behaviour or it doesn’t work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic vs. hardcopy • Place in lunchroom to increase readership • File for reference (e.g. binder, computer folder) • Make sure there is a “what’s in it for me” • Tag along with an important headline (e.g. something to do with paycheques!)
Pay stub enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone gets it and reads it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space 	
Mailouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People get it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will people read it? • Costly • Time consuming 	

The group concluded that:

- **It makes sense to maximize the effective communication channels the best that you can.**
- **A balanced approach is necessary** (i.e. don’t use just one method of communication)
- **Utilize internal communications support if available**
- **Map out a strategy** (i.e. schedule of targeted meetings, deadlines for publications, space on company website, etc.)

1.2 Brainstormed how we can communicate with employees despite barriers such as shiftwork, outlying areas, no access to computers, etc. We also considered how employees can communicate with the health and wellness committee and how confidentiality can be maintained.

- Drop-off box that is locked
- Voice mail, e-mail (need to identify who employees can call or e-mail)
- Rumour board postings (however, issues include having to respond right away and personal issues may be raised that should be going through existing channels)
- Letter in envelope sent to the committee through interoffice mail
- Face to face
- Needs assessment
- Items brought to attention can be added to health and wellness committee agenda

1.3 We considered how to keep the lines of communication open between the health and

wellness committee and management.

- Depends on relationship for one-on-one communications
- Have a management representative on the committee
- Get a senior executive sponsor to advise the committee re: best approach
- Present to management committee
- Keep management informed through minutes and achievements

2.0 Suggested readings for those looking for case studies on communication in the context of healthy workplace initiatives:

- [Seven Oaks General Hospital, Winnipeg, Manitoba \(see pp. 11-13\)](#)
- [Moose Jaw –Thunder Creek Health District's Wellness Program \(see pp. 8-9\)](#)
- [Healthy Workplace Programs at Rideau Construction, Bedford, Nova Scotia \(pp. 8- 9\)](#)
- [City of Regina's Transfit Program \(p. 9\)](#)

Source: Canadian Labour and Business Centre
http://www.clbc.ca/Research_and_Reports/Case_Studies.asp