



Module 4

Tools for communication



Introduction to the module

As presented in Module 0 – What is communication, we categorized communication based on the way of expression, which can be:

- Oral Communication
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Written Communication
- Visualization

In this module we will explore different tools for communication for oral, written, and visual communication. The choice of these tools depends on the aim of the communicator, his/her personality and style, on the audience, on the situation, on the communication channel used etc.

(If you want to know which tools to use for which channel, after this module please continue with Module 5 – Communication channels.)





Tools for Oral and Written communication

You can use various methods to structure the way you convey your message to the audience. We propose you some of them, first for oral and written communication; make sure you follow their guidelines for effective communication!

Aristotle's rhetoric triangle

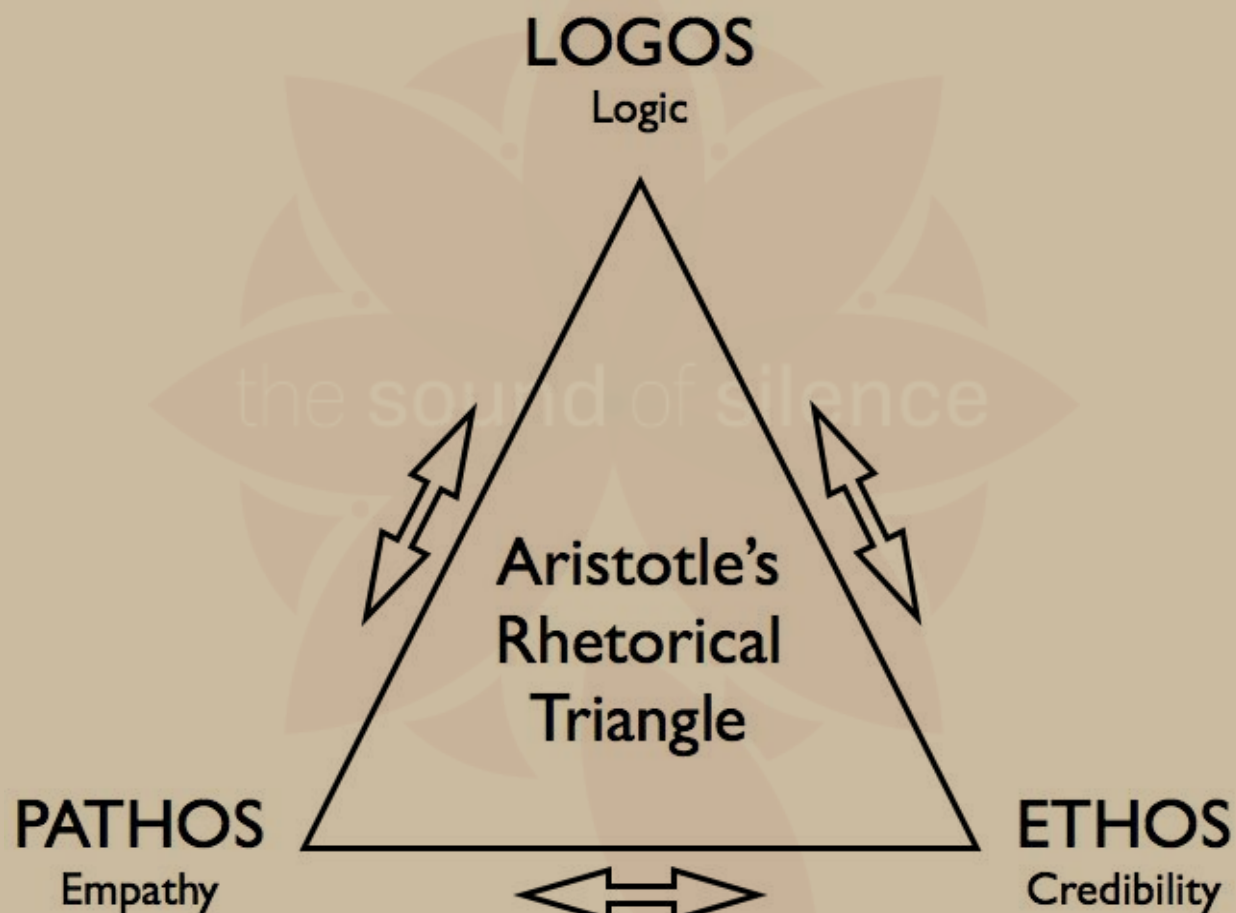
Aristotle's rhetoric triangle is composed by three elements:

Ethos – means building trust by establishing your credibility and authority.

Pathos – means appealing to emotion by connecting with your audience through their values and interests.

Logos – means appealing to intelligence with well-constructed and clearly argued ideas.





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ETHOS – or why should people listen to you?

The way in which the identity of the writer (or speaker) affects the argument is known as ethos. The audience wants to know who they are dealing with. So make sure you clarify:

- Who you are
- Why you are competent to speak on the issue
- Where your authority comes from
- Your audience will also be trying to figure out what your motives are and what you believe, value, and assume. This information helps them determine your credibility and decide whether you are being sincere.
- If you don't make it clear why you are presenting information, some people will assume that you are not being totally candid, or that you are hiding something.

Members of your audience may ask themselves:

- Are you providing information?
- Are you trying to educate?
- Are you making a call for action?
- Are you attempting to persuade others to change a perspective or firmly held belief?
- Are you presenting ideas for problem solving or analysis?
- Are you just trying to entertain?



PATHOS – how to connect with your audience?



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The audience needs to be moved by what you are saying. Ask yourself:

- What emotion do you want to evoke? Fear, trust, loyalty...?
- Do you have shared values you want to draw on?
- How do your audience's beliefs fit with your message?

Connecting with your audience through pathos is a strong means of gaining support. When you communicate, in writing or verbally, you need to understand your audience. Knowing who you're speaking to helps you avoid using technical terms when speaking to lay people, or "dumbing down" the content if your message is intended for professionals.

Things to consider here include:

- What are the audience's expectations?
- How will they use the information you provide?
- What is the audience hoping to take away after reading/listening?
- Why are you communicating to this audience in the first place?



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LOGOS – what is the logic behind your argument?

Your audience needs to be able to follow what you are saying for it to be believable.

Ask yourself:

- Have I presented a logical, well-constructed argument?
- How do I support my claims?
- What evidence do I have?
- What are the counterarguments?
- You should use facts, statistics, data, and examples to support your argument.

the sound of silence





The Seven 'C's of effective communication

1. COMPLETENESS

The message is complete when it contains all facts the reader or listener needs for the reaction you desire. As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Provide all necessary information
- Answer all questions asked (or might be asked)
- Give something extra when desirable

Answering the five W's helps make messages clear:
Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

2. CONCISENESS

Conciseness is saying what you want to say in the fewest possible words. A concise message is complete without being wordy.

To achieve conciseness, observe the following suggestions:

- Eliminate wordy expressions
- Include only relevant material
- Avoid unnecessary repetition





3. CONSIDERATION

Preparing every message with the message receivers in mind; try to put yourself in their place. Do not lose your temper, do not accuse and do not charge them without facts. Thoughtful consideration is also called “you-attitude”.

- Focus on “You” instead of “I” and “We”
- Show audience benefit or interest in the receiver
- Emphasize positive, pleasant facts

4. CONCRETENESS

Being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general. Often it means using denotatives (direct, explicit, often dictionary based) rather than connotative words (ideas or notions suggested by or associated with a word or phrase).

- Use specific facts and figures
- Put action in your verbs
- Choose vivid, image building words

5. CLARITY

Getting the meaning from your head to the head of your reader/listener (accurately) is the purpose of clarity.

- We all carry around our own unique interpretations, ideas, experiences associated with words.
- Choose precise, concrete and familiar words
- Construct effective sentences and paragraphs





6. COURTESY

Being aware not only of the perspective of others, but also their feelings. Courtesy stems from a sincere you-attitude.

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful, and appreciative
- Use expressions that show respect
- Choose non-discriminatory expression

7. CORRECTNESS

At the core of correctness is proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. However a message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer. The correctness, as applied to business messages, also means the following characteristics:

- Use the right level of language
- Check accuracy of figures, facts, and words



Storytelling



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Stories make us “experiencing” information, instead of just “consuming” it.

Stories always have a lesson to learn, which, in the non-profit sector, is rather important. You don't transmit only facts and figures, but you also call for an action and sensitize your audience. And stories are much more memorable than facts are, and they can create an emotional connection with the audience.

A good story is composed by four general elements:

The Lead Character – His/Her Ambition – Conflict – Resolution

LEAD CHARACTER(S)

Explain who they are, what's their back-story – it can help to understand better their personality, their actions and their decision-making process.

AMBITION

What is the goal of the lead character(s)? What is their desire, determination, motivation? I.e. what is the change you want to achieve? Ambition gives the communicator a purpose to transmit a message and the audience a purpose to listen to it.



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CONFLICT

Which are the obstacles the lead characters face? Who are their opponents and supporters? I.e. what is the thing you want to change, who is helping you and who obstacles you?

RESOLUTION

How the lead character resolves the conflict and overcomes the difficulty? I.e. what is the strategy you propose, how you imagine to reach your objectives?

If you want to learn more about specific methods of storytelling, we suggest you to research “The Hero’s Journey” method, based on Joseph Campbell’s work, “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”!





Monroe's Motivated Sequence: The Five Steps

Alan H. Monroe, a Purdue University professor, used the psychology of persuasion to develop an outline for making speeches that will deliver results. It's now known as Monroe's Motivated Sequence. This method is mostly used for oral communication.

STEP 1 – Get attention

Get the attention of your audience.

Use storytelling, humor, a shocking statistic, or a rhetorical question – anything that will get the audience to sit up and take notice

STEP 2 – Establish the need

Convince your audience there's a problem. This set of statements must help the audience realize that what's happening right now isn't good enough – and it needs to change.

Use statistics to back up your statements.

Talk about the consequences of maintaining the status quo and not making changes.

Show your audience how the problem directly affects them.

Remember, you're not at the "I have a solution" stage. Here, you want to make the audience uncomfortable and restless, and ready to do the "something" that you recommend.





STEP 3 – Satisfy the need

Introduce your solution. How will you solve the problem that your audience is ready to address? This is the main part of your presentation.

Discuss the facts. Elaborate and give details to make sure the audience understands your position and solution.

Summarize your information from time to time as you speak. Use examples, testimonials, and statistics to prove the effectiveness of your solution. Prepare counterarguments to anticipated objections.

STEP 4 – Visualize the future

Describe what the situation will look like if the audience does nothing. Your goal is to motivate the audience to agree with you and adopt similar behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs. Help them see what the results could be if they act the way you want them to.

You can use different methods:

- Positive method – Describe what the situation will look like if your ideas are adopted. Emphasize the positive aspects.
- Negative method – Describe what the situation will look like if your ideas are rejected. Focus on the dangers and difficulties caused by not acting.
- Contrast method – Develop the negative picture first, and then reveal what could happen if your ideas are accepted.





STEP 5 – Action/Actualization

Your final job is to leave your audience with specific things they can do to solve the problem. You want them to take action now. Don't overwhelm them with too much information or too many expectations, and be sure to give them options to increase their sense of ownership of the solution.

the sound of silence





Tools for Visual Communication

“When people hear information, they’re likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later.” (John Medina, Talaris Research Institute)

Visual content marketing is a powerful approach to get through the jungle of information and to reach your audience. Here are some tools and methods you can use for successful communication:

Picture and image (photo, graphic, illustration)

You can support your message (written or oral) with an image for a greater effect. The image (photo, drawing, graphic illustration etc.) has to meet some requisites in order to be efficient support for your communication.

Here are some tips on how to choose the right image:

1. Try to choose the image with the best quality
2. Use images that evoke emotions and help to convey the desired feeling to your audience
3. Choose the right image to the right message: more official ones for more formal communication, less official ones for informal communication
4. Try to use images that you have taken – they are more personal and help you gain more confidentiality from your audience (people want to know who they are dealing with)
5. Use images of people that represent your target group; even better if they are using your product or service on the picture (with this method you can activate the peer-effect: people more likely to give attention to things that someone similar to them uses)
6. Try to use images that can transmit your message without the support of a text.





You can also optimize your images for image search:

- 1.** Rename your image; make sure it contains the value of the image (e.g. if it is a photo of a kid playing, in spite of IMG2005.jpg rename it to child-play.jpg)
- 2.** Use high quality images, but make sure that their loading time on internet is not too much, that can make your users annoyed. Sometimes choosing images with less Kbytes can function better.
- 3.** Use tag and hashtag: tag places, people, products, organisations etc. on your pictures and put a hashtag (#) in their description that can help the search engines to find your images

When using images in your communication which are not yours, it is important to know the basics of copyright:

- 1.** If you are using an image of another member of your organisation, you can ask an oral permission, given that you are working for the same organisation.
- 2.** If you are using someone else's photo or image, you have to ask for permission and cite the name of the author under the image. To protect yourself, it is better to ask them to sign a written permission.
- 3.** If you are using a photo from the internet, cite the title of the photo and its author (if you are in possess of this information), the source (website, link to the image) and the licence code (if relevant).
- 4.** If you make changes to the image, you have to describe the modification (e.g. "Cold winter" by Aaron West / picturama.com / cropped from original image)

For more examples you can visit this useful article:

<http://www.15minutemondays.com/2014/03/10/give-photo-credit-credit-due/>





Infographic

Infographic is a visual representation of information or data, e.g. as a chart or diagram.

Humans are more responsive to visual information than to simple data. It attracts their attention and helps the brain to categorize information, analyse data and get to conclusions. Facts, figures and statistics organised in a way that is easier to understand for your audience can help you reinforce your credibility.

Infographics are “liked” and shared on social media 3 times more than other any other type of content. (www.massplanner.com)

Example of Infographic on “Why we love infographic” (in English):

<https://neomam.com/interactive/13reasons/>

Video

Videos can be created with different methods: filming; animated video; slideshow of photos; stop-motion video. In any case, they are a very good support to your communication, since they stimulate both your visual and auditory senses.





Videos can be created with different methods: filming; animated video; slideshow of photos; stop-motion video.

Here are some facts and statistics we collected for you about using video in your communication strategy:

- 1.** By 2017, video content represents 74% of all internet traffic. (Kleiner Perkins Caufield Byers: Internet Trends 2017)
- 2.** 4 times as many consumers would rather watch a video about a product than read about it. (Animoto)
- 3.** Short-form video (0–5 minutes) dominates share of viewing time on smartphones at 55%. (Ooyala Global Video Index Q2 2016)
- 4.** Facebook users spend 3-times more time watching live videos than traditional videos. (Facebook Newsroom)
- 5.** The most preferred video contents in order of preference are: 1. How your product or service is made and functions; 2. Customer testimonials; 3. About the organisation/company (Animoto)

When designing a video you have to keep in mind:

- 1. The objective of the video:** What is your message?
- 2. Which channel you will use to share the video (social network, blog or website, public projection during an event or in a cinema etc.):** this will also influence the choice of the length of your video.
- 3. What other tools you will use in the video:**
 - Will you use only images and sounds, or also speech in your video?
 - Are you able to transmit the message without explaining it with text or speech?
- 4. Your storyline:** plan the order of your video-shots, the location, the narrative, and the protagonists.





Some tips and tricks to the creation of your video:

1. Good lightning and good sound are very important for your video!
2. Use a tripod to avoid shaky videos.
3. Alternate images: if you are doing an interview, alternate the image of the interviewee with other images he/she is talking about
4. Variety keeps your audience awake. Use a variety of shots, including long shots, medium shots and close-ups. Use shots that show motion rather than just a static image of someone talking.
5. Let the visuals tell some of the story. If you can show it, don't say it.

Example for an interview:

<https://youtu.be/xDzt6HKEDu4>

Example for a documentary:

<https://youtu.be/vYw7xlaUmfE>

Example for a trailer (about something that will happen):

<https://youtu.be/hHklcVKxHyU>

Example for a report (about something that happened already):

<https://youtu.be/hspWL9f5yRE> <https://youtu.be/UTrYw32WH0I>





Publication of visual images of people

When publishing images of people, the subjects' consent is (almost) always necessary (if they are recognizable on the photo and in the video). In some countries there are no laws about the restriction of use of such images; however it is also an ethical question in communication.

In any case, the right to privacy of a person (as part of the Universal Human Rights) has to be always respected – the person can refuse to let the photographer or video-maker publish his/her images, in that case this request has to be satisfied.

In any case, images shouldn't be used for commercial use and must not unfairly ridicule or demean the subject. Where subjects can not give appropriate consent (due to young age, learning difficulties, etc.) their parents or their legal guardians have to sign a written consent.

In some cases consent might not be needed (for example about people participating in a public event), but if a removal request arrives to the publisher, the image should be removed.

