For Restricted Circulation

Writing for Print Media

Reading Material

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Role of Print Media in Development Communication

The vital role of communication in the development process has long been recognised. Effective communication with various stakeholders within and outside an organization is a key factor for organizational success. It is a fact that specialized knowledge is not enough to guarantee success; communication skills are also vital. Research, spanning several decades, has consistently ranked communication skills as crucial for managers.

Communication is an exchange of words and meanings, a two-way process of sending and receiving messages. It is the process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in a way that each gains a common understanding of the message. Communication is a two way process where the message sent by the sender should be interpreted in the same terms by the recipient. Effective communication is a part and parcel of any successful organization. A communication should be free from barriers so as to be effective.

Effective communication

Effective communication occurs when there is shared meaning. The message that is sent is the same message that is received. There must be a mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver for the transmission of ideas or information to be successful.

Effective communication may be defined as:

- Using language that is appropriate to others' levels of understanding.
- Making sure others receive the information or knowledge intended.
- Developing relationships with others.
- Talking with others in a way that facilitates openness, honesty and cooperation.
- Providing feedback.

Communication can be either Oral or Written. Oral communication can be formal or informal. Generally business communication is a formal means of communication, like: meetings, interviews, group discussion, speeches etc. An example of Informal business communication would be the Grapevine. Written Communication would include - agenda, reports, manuals etc.

Basic Communication Skills

From the sender's perspective, one needs to have the following essential skills:

- Skills to compose the message
- Skills to send the message

From the receiver's perspective one needs to have the following essential skills:

- The skill of receiving a message
  - Without assumptions
  - Placing biases aside
  - Actively listening

Thus, the elements of effective communication are: Listening; Verbal skills; Non-verbal skills.

The characteristics of effective communication are:

1. **Clarity of Purpose:** The message to be delivered must be clear in the mind of sender. The person to whom it is targeted and the aim of the message should be clear.

2. **Completeness:** The message delivered should not be incomplete. It should be supported by facts and observations. It should be well planned and organized. No assumptions should be made by the receiver.

3. **Conciseness:** The message should be concise. It should not include any unnecessary details. It should be short and complete.

4. **Feedback:** Whether the message sent by the sender is understood in same terms by the receiver or not can be judged by the feedback received. The feedback should be timely and in personal. It should be specific rather than general.

5. **Empathy:** Empathy with the listeners is essential for effective verbal communication. The speaker should step into the shoes of the listener and be sensitive to their needs and emotions. This way, the speaker can understand things from their perspective and make communication more effective.

6. **Message to be modified according to the audience:** The information requirement by different people in the organization differs according to their needs. What is relevant to middle level management might not be relevant to the top level of management. Use of jargons should be minimized because it might lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretations. The message should be modified according to the needs and requirements of the targeted audience.

7. **Multiple Channels of communication:** For effective communication, multiple channels should be used as it increases the chances of clarity of message. The message is reinforced by using different channels and there are less chances of deformation of message.

8. **Make effective use of Grapevine (informal channel of communication):** The employees and managers should not always discourage grapevine. They should make effective use of grapevine. The managers can use grapevine to deliver formal messages and for identification of issues which are significant for the employees. The managers can get to know the problems faced by the employees and can work upon it.

Communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in development activities. Knowledge and information are essential for people to respond to opportunities and challenges of social, economic and technological changes. However, in order to be useful, knowledge and information must be effectively communicated to people.

7 Cs and 4 Ss of Communication

In any business environment, adherence to the 7 Cs and the 4 Ss of Communication helps the sender in transmitting his message with ease and accuracy. The 7 Cs are as follows:

Credibility: If the sender can establish his/her credibility, the receiver has no problems in accepting his/her statement. Establishing credibility is a long-drawn out process in which the receiver, through constant interaction with the sender, understands his/her credible nature and is willing to accept his/her statements as being truthful and honest. Once the credibility of the sender has been established, attempts should be made at being courteous in expression. Much can be accomplished if tact, diplomacy and appreciation of people are woven in the message. Courtesy implies taking into consideration both viewpoints as well as feelings of the receiver of the message. A courteous message is positive and focused at the audience. It makes use of terms showing respect for the receiver of message and it is not biased.

Completeness: The communication must be complete. It should convey all facts required by the audience. It is cost saving as no crucial information is missing and no additional cost is incurred in conveying extra message if the communication is complete. A complete communication always gives additional information wherever required. It leaves no questions in the mind of the receiver. There should be enough information to be useful to enable the reader use the technology or practice successfully after following the instructions. Important items should be included and all the steps in a process covered in enough detail. Complete communication helps in better decision-making by the audience/ readers/ receivers of message as they get all desired and crucial information. It persuades the audience.

Clarity: Clarity of ideas adds much to the meaning of the message. The first stage is clarity in the mind of the sender. The next stage is the transmission of the message in a manner which makes it simple for the receiver to comprehend. As far as possible, simple language and easy sentence constructions, which are not difficult for the receiver to grasp, should be used. Scientific terms can be made simpler and jargon should be avoided. Clarity in communication enhances the meaning of message. A clear message makes use of exact, appropriate and concrete words.

Correctness: If the sender decides to back up his communication with facts and figures, there should be accuracy in stating the same. The information must be truthful and accurate and the statements should be scientifically justifiable. A situation in which the listener is forced to check the presented facts and figures should not arise. Finally, the usage of terms should be non-discriminatory. In correct communication, the message is exact, correct and well-timed; a correct message has greater impact on the audience/readers; it checks for precision and accuracy of facts and figures used in the message and makes use of appropriate and correct language in the message.

Consistency: The approach to communication should, as far as possible, be consistent. There should not be too many ups and downs that might lead to confusion in the mind of the receiver. The level of the language should be the same throughout. If a certain stand has been taken, it should be observed without there being situations in which the sender desires to bring about a change in his understanding of the situation. He should ensure that the shift is gradual and not hard for the receiver to comprehend.

Concreteness: Concrete and specific expressions are to be preferred in favour of vague and abstract expressions. It should say when a particular technology or policy is appropriate? When it should not be used (eg: on which soils, at what altitude), and give an indication of costs and benefits. Abstractions or vague statements can cloud the mind of the sender. Instead of stating "There has been a tremendous escalation in the sales", if the sender made the following statement: "There has been an escalation in the sales by almost 50% as compared to last year", the receiver is more apt to listen and comprehend the details. Concrete message is supported with specific facts and figures; it makes use of words that are clear and build the reputation and concrete messages are not misinterpreted.

Conciseness: The message to be communicated should be as brief and concise as possible. As far as possible, only simple and brief statements should be made. Excessive information can also sway the receiver into either a wrong direction or into inaction. Quantum of information should be just right, neither too much nor too little. Concise communication is both time-saving as well as cost-saving. It underlines and highlights the main message as it avoids using excessive and needless words. Concise communication provides short and essential message in limited words to the audience. A concise message is more appealing and comprehensible to the audience and is non-repetitive in nature.

4 Ss : An understanding of the 4 Ss is equally important.

Shortness: It is often said "Brevity is the soul of wit.". If the message can be made brief, then transmission and comprehension of messages is going to be faster and more effective. Flooding messages with high sounding words does not create an impact. Often, the receiver has to spend his time trying to decipher the actual meaning of the message.

Simplicity: Simplicity, both in the usage of words and ideas, reveals clarity in the thinking process. Using simple terminology and equally simple concepts would help.

Strength: The strength of a message emanates from the credibility of the sender. If the sender himself believes in a message that he/she is about to transmit, there is bound to be strength and conviction in whatever he/she tries to state.

Sincerity. A sincere approach to an issue is clearly evident to the receiver. If the sender is genuine, it will be reflected in the manner in which he communicates.

Development Communication

Development is about change. It could be about social or economic change for improvement or progress. It is about using communication to change or improve something. Different types of messages are used to change the socio-economic condition of people and are designed to transform the behaviour of people or for improving their quality of life. Development communication can be defined as the use of communication to promote development.

According to Everett Rogers “Development communication refers to the uses to which communications are put in order to further development.” It can be said to be an approach to communication which provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives. Development communication has two primary roles, i.e. Transforming role, and a socializing role.

Development Communication using Print media

Media plays an important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forum for discussion of issues, teach ideas and skills for a better life. The history of development communication in India can be traced to 1940s when radio broadcast was done in different languages to promote development communication through various programmes like—Programs for Rural Audience, Educational Programs and Family Welfare Programs. As far as the print media is concerned, after Independence, when the Five-Year Plans were initiated by the government for planned development, it was newspapers which focused on development themes. They wrote on various government development programmes and how the people could benefit from them.

Print media and electronic media play a significant role in development communication of the country. Even after the advent of electronic media like radio and television, print media has not lost its charm or relevance. Print media has the advantage of making a longer impact on the minds of the reader with more in-depth reporting and analysis. The contribution of print media in providing information and transfer of knowledge is remarkable. Technological advances have made print media faster than before.

Professional Communication

The ability to communicate effectively is essential for success. To communicate effectively you need to be familiar with the process and the variables involved. The basic communication process includes

a source -> a message -> a channel -> a receiver

The source is you, including your communication skills, your attitudes and your purpose, as well as your knowledge of the subject, your audience, and the context in which you are communicating.

The message includes the code or language you are using as well as the message's treatment, that is, what content is selected and how it's organized.

You can think of the channel as both the senses and the medium of communication used.

Receivers are the final link in the communication process. They must accurately receive and decipher your message. How well your audience understands the message, you intend, will depend not only on the previous factors but also their own knowledge, attitudes and context.

The process of communication is on-going and dynamic, is irreversible, requires perception of meaning, and occurs in a situational context. There are many barriers to effective and accurate communication. These can be mechanical (such as static), involve differing perceptions or values (not having the same understandings), or be a matter of semantics, that is, the use of words, images, or examples that are beyond the receiver's intellectual or cultural ability to understand.

General principles

A. Know your purpose

Why are you preparing this communication? What is your purpose – are you analyzing? evaluating? assessing feasibility? describing? advocating? What outcome are you looking for – to create awareness? to increase the level of information and knowledge? to change attitudes? to stimulate action? The first two are general educational purposes. The next two, however, go beyond education to include communication for influencing. What message do you want your audience to take away?

B. Know your audience

Identify who you are trying to reach with your message – your professors? your peers? your employers? a diverse group with differing knowledge, perspectives and interests? the general public? concerned citizens?

What is their background? Will they understand technical material or professional jargon? What is their point of view? How large is your audience? What do they expect from you? What are their information needs? What do they already know? What do they want to get out of it? Their purpose may be quite different from yours. Understanding their collective and individual needs and backgrounds – and adapting your content and approach accordingly – will help you ensure that your intended message is received. Put yourself in your audience's shoes.

C. Be clear and concise

You need a clear, concise and easy to understand message. Keep It Simple and Straightforward! Keeping it simple doesn't mean that it is elementary or trivialized. It means that you use plain language or explicit images effectively to convey your message. You should be able to summarize your main point or message in two or three concise sentences.

Maureen Garland and David Shackleton http://www.library.ubc.ca/ereserve/agsc250/Comm.doc

Process Documentation in Development Projects

The word ‘Document’ comes from Latin ‘documentum’ and ‘doceo’ which literally refers to teach, both for giving instructions and for warning purposes. A “document” is a collection of data, regardless of the medium on which it is recorded and can include both paper and electronic. Documentation is the process of systematically collecting, organizing, storing, retrieving, and disseminating information; a process used for the purpose of learning or sharing or for recording intellectual property. Output of documentation process can be written, visual and audio information about, for example, an object, a practice, a product or an event.

There are different types of documentation and include Annual Reports; Books; Case Studies; Digests; Guides; Handbooks; Journals, Magazines; Newsletters or Bulletins; Occasional Papers; Pamphlets; Policy Briefings; Position papers; Reports; (Project Reports, Research Reports, and Technical reports); Working Papers; Success Stories etc.

Documentation is any communicable material that is used to describe, explain or instruct regarding some attributes of an object, system or procedure. Good documentation can serve several very important functions and can make it easier to use and thereby save users’ time and money. It can enhance the perceived quality of the product. The value of documenting for self-reflection and sharing of learning is often not recognized or does not figure prominently on the agenda of development organizations.

Process Documentation

In order to understand what Process Documentation is, we also need to understand what is ‘Process’?. A Process is a series of steps and interrelated work activities, characterized by specific inputs and tasks which add value, and make up a procedure for a set of specific outputs. Thus the word ‘Process’ refers to the steps and work activities a transaction follows through an organization's systems, applications, and people. The word Documentation – refers to a narrative, or some description of the way the process works.

Process Documentation is a systematic way of capturing what happens in a process of change and how it happens, to reflect and analyze why it happens and to organise and disseminate the findings. It helps to reflect, analyse and discover patterns that help or hinder change. The purpose of process documentation is to improve the quality and impact of a project. Process documentation allows internal project learning and joint learning with direct stakeholders. It looks beyond the project – into the context and may help projects to break through their sharp boundaries in time and space – enabling projects to raise issues of general interest and stimulate reflection and debate in wider society. (Grouppe Developpement South Asia Regional office 2008.

There has been growing acceptance of the need to consider the development process in addition to simple development inputs (technology, knowledge, capital). While development inputs are necessary ingredients to development, serious attention to the process (the approach followed), and structuring positive and negative outcomes, is required.

The basic aim of Process Documentation is to learn from implementation experience and in the light of this modify the strategy and ultimately, policy (Mosse,1998). *(Ref: Mosse, David, 1998, "Process documentation research and process monitoring", in David Mosse, John Farrington and Alan Rew (Eds) Development as Process: Concepts and Methods for working with Complexity, London: Routledge, pp 31-53).*

Process documentation is

- a detailed description and analysis of the different activities undertaken during the course of study
- it describes stakeholders' participation; the process by which specific issues, concerns and interests are articulated, addressed or resolved; significant activities undertaken; the process by which resolutions were arrived at and

how conflicts were resolved; the stakeholders and key players who participated; the outcome of the activity.

- It analyses significant concerns, questions and issues articulated and addressed at different stages of the study
- It serves as a tool for decision making
- It helps identify problems and bottle necks, identify deviations to tackle corrective action and institutional learning.

Process Documentation is a planning and evaluation tool that can help the project team and stakeholders track meaningful events and discern what is happening, how it is happening and why it may be happening. Process documentation involves a structured, focused way of capturing the change process; organizing the information and disseminating the information quickly enough to be the most useful.

How do we document: Tools and Methods in Process Documentation

Process documentation uses qualitative research methods to capture information from different sources in a variety of ways:

- Participant observation and analysis: eg: understand the way farmer groups are performing, quality of participation
- Regular field notes and diaries
- Focused Group discussions
- Reviewing written communication and records
- Team meetings on issues: periodic intervals

Data collection methods can include interviews with individuals, review of meeting minutes and other documents, observation of meetings and photography or video.

Outputs in Process documentation

- Case studies on specific issues;
- M & E reports: qualitative descriptions on how outputs are achieved and used
- Newsletters
- Reports
- Discussion Notes

Major steps in Process Documentation

Step 1: documentation prior to the start of any task: involves documenting the objective of the activity and approach; steps to be taken; why; who will be involved

Step 2: Documenting immediately following the Process task: what was actually done; modifications made on the approach and why; successes; what worked well; indicators used to gauge success; factors contributing to the success; actual achievements; progress; level of participation etc.

Step 3: Synthesis of findings and insights. Feedback may be obtained from stakeholders involved in the activities to find out factors which determined success; factors leading to failure; what worked well; what did not work well and needs to be adjusted; capacity building needed;

Step 4: Communication of findings and insights to stakeholders for obtaining feedback.

Process Documentation is an invaluable tool in effective project management and governance. It aids action research, learning alliances and multi-stakeholder platforms that recognize the impact of cultural traditions and power constellations on development.

References

Grouppe Developpement South Asia Regional office 2008 at www.gd-southasia.org

Mosse,1998). *(Ref: Mosse, David,1998,'Process documentation research and process monitoring", in David Mosse, John Farrington and Alan Rew (Eds) Development as Process: Concepts and Methods for working with Complexity, London: Routledge, pp 31-53).*

Report of IMAWESA joint learning workshop on 'Institutional process documentation for reporting M&E and knowledge sharing for agricultural water management' held in November 2006 at Kampala by SWMNet and ASARECA.

Process Documentation

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Process Documentation systematically looks at the context, history and traditions rather than being confined to what is going on during the limited time of the project. It looks beyond the project into the real world that the project aims to change into history, culture, patterns of power and decision making. Hence, it is important for projects and also developments. Most of these projects have the ambition to change traditional patterns, attitudes, relationships, approaches and ways of thinking. They should therefore try to understand the context and the background of these attitudes, relationships, approaches and explore the impact on project objectives.

While capturing the process of change or development, the process documentation also organizes, analyzes and disseminates findings in ways that make them useful. It involves (a) a structured focused way of capturing the change process that a project aims to bring about by way of activities and interactions between stakeholders, issues and contextual factors, (b) organizing information in such a way that stakeholders have an opportunity to reflect and learn about the process, (c) analyzing information by looking at common themes, trends, patterns and placing the findings in the context of the project and its theory of change, (d) disseminating information quickly enough to be useful.

Application of process documentation requires a clear understanding of the theory of change. This provides direction and focus in deciding what is important or less important to observe. All the projects oriented to social change have a theory, most of them implicit but not explicit. It could be that concerted action of all stakeholders results in sustainable development or empowerment and help improve access of poor people to the benefits. By understanding the importance of the theory of change and making it explicit, allows stakeholders to participate in the discussions on the basic assumption of the project and to react positively or negatively.

The theory of change may be that a project will lead to integration between departments or sectors improve coordination between stakeholders, increase joint decision-making and participation and lead to changes in attitude and empowerment. Key indicators of these changes need to be expressed in project goals to give a better understanding of what to document. A well articulated theory of change encourages project leaders to explain what is meant by words that are often used too easily. For example, what is empowerment? How will it look when people or groups are empowered? How does it show, if they are not? What is meant by sectoral integration and how does it look like? What attitudes you are seeking to change? What are the indictors for concerted action? The theory of change provides a lens to observe the process, and process documentation provides a systematic way to capture what happens in the process of change and how it happens and to organize and disseminate the findings.

Why Process Documentation:

The first aim of process documentation is to improve the quality and impact of the project. This is done in three ways. (a) It allows those most closely involved to step back far enough to reflect on trends, patterns, opportunities and warning signs. (b) It contributes to the collection of qualitative information on results that are not easy to capture quantitatively and so fills our story behind the figures. (c) It encourages learning from the states and offers opportunities to lead towards positive impact of the project.

Secondly, it also helps to challenge assumptions by bringing the theory of change in touch with field reality, ultimately leading to the theory being adapted where necessary and to have a deeper understanding of the crucial processes in society.

Thirdly, process documentation sets a project in its local context, helping the actors to see the bigger picture rather than having their horizons limited to their own interventions. It provides a voice for the people and shows their life holistically, capturing significant and unique local background including environmental and political factors. As such, the projects are likely to interact with the people's realities rather than seeing them as project beneficiaries.

Fourth, process documentation helps to bring into the public arena, the hidden factors relating to politics, power and relationships in the developmental scenario for a larger debate and Public discussion.

Fifthly, the process documentation helps to build up a synergy among the project work teams by intimate relationships between themselves and the stakeholders, thereby enriching their own knowledge and understanding of the development process apart from empowering them with the experiences of development over the years.

What should be documented?

Process documentation involves recording both formal and informal events, taking minutes, watching what happens in meetings, and also talking to people outside meetings, listening to them etc. The main indicators for documenting the process can be derived from the theory of change being promoted by the project of the assumptions the project envisages. However, key areas of process documentation normally included are as follows:

A The Decision making process

- Who is a part of the decision making and who is not?
- How are decisions taken – formally or informally?

- Are there conflicts in decision making? If so, what are they?
- Is there resistance to change in the decision making? If so, why and about what?
- Does every stakeholder have the same access to information?
- Do stakeholders consider shared decision making to be a better way of doling things?

B. The process of concerted action:

- How do stakeholders organize themselves formally and informally?
- How stakeholders traditionally communicate with other stakeholders, formal and informal networks.
- Are there dependency relationships? If so, what they are and how do they manifest themselves?
- Do all stakeholders have the same objective and what are the differences?
- Do stakeholders follow up on agreed actions?
- Do stakeholders communicate with their constituencies?

C. The process of behavioural and attitudinal change:

- What are stakeholders' beliefs, norms and values in relation to the project?
- What are stakeholders' beliefs, norms and values in relation to working with each other?
- How do stakeholders describe each others attitude and behaviour?
- How are stakeholders known in the community?
- Are there signs of stakeholders known in the community?
- Are there signs of stigma, prejudices etc.?
- Is there any easy contact between stakeholders or a larger social and cultural gap?
- Which attitudes hamper or promote concerted action and shared decision making?

D. The process of empowerment:

- Which stakeholders consider themselves powerless and why?
- Who has the power and who has none?
- Are there any power conflicts about how to use the benefits?
- Which natural or social traditions and patterns block the empowerment of groups?
- Are all stakeholders represented in the decision making process?

4. How to document the process?

Process documentation involves three stages such as capturing the process, organizing and analyzing the material and sharing or disseminating the findings.

A. Capturing the process:

The Process documentation specialists may use different methods for capturing the process. However, some of the common aspects relate to observing the field actions, interacting with stakeholders and getting their responses, reviewing the diaries of project team and collecting information by way of anecdotes, stories relating to the project and its implementation The use of various techniques and tools for process documentation necessarily depends on the skill and resources available with the documenter. However, some of the common methods which are used in the documentation process are: Observation, Interview, Focused group discussion, Case studies, Success stories, Review of reports, diaries etc.

Apart from this, the documenter can also use some of the aids such as video recording, audio recording and still photography for capturing the processes in the development projects.

B. Organizing material:

The next step process documentation personnel follow, after capturing the process, is to organize all the material that is available in different formats. This would help the project team to step back from daily business and reflect on issues, trends and patterns at certain points of time. Organizing information has two major components; the first is to file the captured information such as interview notes, video cassettes, audio cassettes, still photographs in a simple filing procedure based on the sequencing of the events, so as to access it at any point of time. All these materials must be described and put into a file with dates, names, subject etc.

Secondly, information and material should be organized into articles, photo books, video films, case studies, success stories etc. These documents should be simple to produce and easy to distribute for a wider audience.

C. Analyzing findings:

It is necessary to build in a process of analysis of the findings by the project staff after documenting the material. The project staff, when starts reflecting on the results of analysis, will be able to understand the linkage between their own interventions and its effect, and response from the stakeholders, apart from factors leading to success or failure of the projects. The process of reflection with the documented information helps them to recheck their own assumptions and provide a feed back for their actions, so as to assist in proposing further interventions in the project. This step necessarily has to be undertaken by the process documenter along with the project team.

D. Disseminating information:

Documentation of the processes in developmental management is aimed at helping the project team that has implemented the project, the planners who will have planned the projects, the policy makers who were involved in supporting the projects apart from the funding agencies and the public at large. Hence, it would be helpful and necessary to disseminate the lessons from the projects to various categories of personnel, depending on their role. Various methods of dissemination may include short briefs, case studies, success stories, video films, audio cassettes, articles in newsletters etc.

5. Who documents the process?

There is no single answer to who documents the process. A process documentation specialist is essential, while stakeholders themselves play a critical role in learning, and outsiders too can become part of the documentation process.

Insiders – the project team

There are good reasons to put overall responsibility for process documentation into the hands of the project team, so that it becomes an integrated project activity, and so that reflection and learning become more systematic. However, it is still sensible to appoint someone to do the job of process documentation, someone who is not involved in daily project work, but can concentrate on capturing the process, organizing information, stimulating reflection and analysis, and disseminating information products. Combining process documentation with project work is likely to be counterproductive. Process documentation requires some distance from the project objectives, since the role of the documentation specialist is not in the first place to achieve project objectives, but to discover why the project is achieving its objectives or why it is failing to do so. The process documentation specialist must be able to go her/his own way. Process documentation should be done both as part of the project and in parallel to it. That may sound as if it has the potential to be tense and conflicting; and that is just as it should be. If the process documentation specialist does not challenge the work and assumptions of the project team and create some tension, then she or he does not have sufficient distance from the daily work. However, if the specialist becomes too distant from project objectives, then the project team will not learn and adapt the project as needed. The process documentation specialist has a double role in the team: to follow the project process at some distance, and to organize and stimulate internal learning and analysis, which may involve challenging the project team to have a critical look at its own assumptions.

Direct stakeholders:

It is not only project team members who are involved in action research projects, learning alliance and multi-stakeholder platforms, but a much wider group of stakeholders. Involving these stakeholders in process documentation stimulates opportunities for learning and reflection. When a district engineer goes to a community to interview people about loaning water service delivery, they are bound to become more aware of community realities and perspectives and this triggers personal reflection. However, means and procedures are needed to feed this personal learning back into the learning alliance and multi-stakeholder platform. Experience shows that these techniques give shape to activities in action research projects and that those taking part in learning alliances or multi-stakeholder platforms appreciate being given and learning from these concrete tasks.

Outsiders

Involving outsiders in process documentation has a big advantage as they already have some distance from the project objectives. That helps them to observe the process of the project more clearly and more critically. Involving an independent documentary film maker, journalist or writer will give good results, so long as they can work in freedom. Such professionals want to look behind the well-phrased project objectives, to know what others think of the project and to read between the lines so that they can produce good information products.

However, the relationship between the project and the outsider must be well organized. Projects not only have the objective of documenting the processes they set in motion, they also want results. There is a delicate balance between achieving project results and looking behind the scenes to reveal power constellations and factors that hamper change. An outsider should not stretch the balance between the two objectives to the extent that the project results or even the continuation of the project are endangered.

6. Qualities of a good document specialist:

- Is curious and does not take every answer for granted
- Independent thinker who appreciates working on his/her own and takes his/ her own decisions
- Is non-Judgmental and can listen to many perspectives without an expert hand on
- Can ask questions that stimulate critical thinking and dig below the surface

- Is able to stay objective while also seeing the big picture and placing learning in the concept of larger vision
- Is trusted by the community but can reform findings without bias
- Can synthesize large volumes of information to identify key learning points
- Is skilled on communicating messages in a positive way
- Has Conceptual understanding, writing and analytical skills

7. Planning for process Documentation:

- Identify the purpose of process documentation. This helps to identify the target groups, indicators to be documented and so on.
- What is the project theory of change?

  Who will the indicators and criteria derived from?

  What processes are to be traced? which individual or group to be followed through the process and where and when this will take place?
- What tools are needed to capture the process information, analyze and disseminate?
- Who will document process?
- Will extra skills be needed (Writing, video, audio etc.)
- What outputs for internal learning and common strategy?
- How will the process documentation be monitored? What would constitute success?

Writing a Case Study

Case study is termed as a method, a technique, an approach to social reality and a mode of organizing data in terms of some chosen units. The case study method is a popular form of qualitative analysis and involves complete observation of a social unit, whether it is a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. It is a method of study in depth. The case study places more emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelation. It deals with the processes that take place and their interrelationship. Thus, case study is essentially an intensive investigation of the particular unit under consideration. The objective of the case study method is to locate the factors that account for the behavior -patterns of the given unit as an integrated totality.

According to Pauline V. Young, case study is “a comprehensive study of a social unit, be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community.” Thus, case study method is a form of qualitative analysis wherein careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done ; efforts are made to study each and every aspect of the unit in detail and then generalization and inferences are drawn. Thus each situation, whether it is an entire life cycle or a particular process of the cycle, forms part of the case study.

Case study is a method of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied. It is an approach which views any social unit as a whole – *Goode and Hatt.*

Case study method may be defined as a small inclusive and intensive study of an individual in which the investigator brings to bear all the skills and methods or as a systematic gathering of enough information about a person to permit one to understand how he/she functions as a unit of society - *Yang Hsin Pao*

The case study is a form of qualitative analysis involving the very careful and complete observation of a person, a situation or an institution- Biesanz and Biesanz.

A case is a factual description of events that actually happened at some point in the past.

Why case study

- to improve practice
- to forge close links between the academic and the practical
- to offer practitioners suggestions about appropriate ways to act
- to inform practitioners about a single case as a way of understanding others (that is, generalization)

The attraction of case study

- it resembles detective work
- or investigative journalism
- the methods used to investigate the case will relate closely to the nature of the case

Objectives of Case Method

- Helps one to acquire the skills of putting textbook knowledge about management into practice. Managers succeed not so much because of what they know but because of what they do.
- Gets one out of the habit of being a receiver of facts, concepts and techniques and get into the habit of diagnosing problems, analyzing and evaluating alternatives, and formulating workable plans of action.
- Trains to work our answers and solutions for ourselves, as opposed to relying upon the teacher/counselor or a textbook.
- Provides exposure to a range of organizations and managerial situations (which might take a lifetime to experience personally), thus offering a basis for comparison.

Characteristics of a Case Study

1. It should create interest while reading and thus attract attention of the participants.
2. Case study is a deep, detailed and intensive study of a social unit.
3. It is a method of qualitative analysis.
4. It is a comprehensive study
5. Real life sample
6. All the variables and traits are linked with one another
7. It aims at studying everything about something, rather than something about everything.
8. Unit of study may be an individual, a family, an institution, a cultural group or an entire community.
9. Case study covers sufficiently wide cycle of time. According to P.V.Young, case data may be gathered exhaustively on the entire cycle of a social unit or a definite section of it.
10. As the study is more detailed and extends over a wider expanse of time, the number of units has to be small. The number may vary from a single unit to a few dozen or even a few hundred.

There are different kinds of case studies. Four types of case studies are: Illustrative (description of events); exploratory (investigative); cumulative (collective information comparisons) and critical (examine a particular subject with cause and effect outcomes).

Merits of a Case:

- Close to field realities
- Digs out specific facts
- Helps take decisions on specific situations
- Provides data in depth
- Develops skills in appraising situations

Case studies provide an excellent opportunity for triangulation; that is, using a number of research methods to complement and confirm findings. For instance, using observation, interviews and questionnaire.

Organizing/writing the case

Structuring in a narrative style: Narrative style lays out a sequence of events that develop the story. It covers:

- What happened
- Who were involved
- When it happened
- Why it happened
- How it happened (processes involved)

A narrative writing should be organized chronologically, in the order in which the events occur.

- Problem statement / key issues : Start with a statement of the problem / key management issues you have identified through your analysis. We have to concentrate on the critical issues facing the case

- Supporting argument: Sufficient explanation should be given why this is the key issue (s). This conclusion should be carried out with the help of the data / information gathered and comparing it

- Alternative strategies: Lay out the alternative strategies available to the organization. Three or four alternative strategies are enough. With the help of theoretical models or information show why these strategies are viable by explaining the cost and benefit of each strategy proposed.

- Recommendations: Explain the recommendation suggested. This recommendation should emanate from our earlier discussion of the case.

- Implementation plan: Present an implementation plan for the recommended strategy.

A Case Study should have Objectivity, Clarity in purpose, Use real names, events and written in sequence of time.

References:

Hayes, Denis (2006). Case study. University of Plymouth

Inside story- process documentation: experiences from EMOWERS Project co funded by European MEDA water programme.

Mustafa A (2008). Case study method and practice, research and management approaches. Atlantic publishers and distributors.

Success Story

A 'success story' is known as a snapshot of reality, a slice of life and facets of development, which ushers in an understanding of the situation with analysis, and offers a set of recommendations that can be used as a template for replication.

A success story shows an initiative making a difference in people's lives. It describes a positive change and shows how that change benefits people. A good success story uses evidence from evaluation to show the value of Extension. A success story can be written about an entire program or part of a program that is particularly noteworthy and significant. It may be about an innovation, emergency response or outstanding effort. The program may be complete or in an early stage of development but with important accomplishments to describe. One could even write a success story several years after a program's completion after collecting evidence of long-term impact. For a multi-year initiative, a series of success stories could be written that describe significant but different changes that occur over the years.

'Success Story' is not just a 'story' but the art and science of description of real events. It must be based on factual information, with provision of corroborative evidence to support the facts. It is a "microcosm" of reality that has already happened. The principal qualification of a qualitative success story is the systematic documentation of experiences that sets it apart from the rest. The distinguishable feature of a success story is the set of practices and processes that have helped to bring in optimal 'change' and it must clarify three basic dimensions viz.

What is different?

How is it different?

Why is it different?

The ultimate mission of documenting a success story is to "cascade the effect of success from one to many". The objectives are:

- To recognize and communicate a message of 'uniqueness' (success).
- To analyze the reasons for 'uniqueness' (success)
- To provide a set of guidelines (practices and processes) to replicate the 'uniqueness' (success).

The satisfaction that is obtained from observing direct success among our clients or community as a result of our Extension program efforts is most gratifying. These successes may take many forms and may be focused on a single individual, group, or larger population. However, the underlying theme in any success story is the positive result on an individual or society that occurred as a result of our program efforts.

Importance of the success story:

- By understanding the complexity of the process, it is possible to assess and better diagnose the nature of the problem and the efficacy of the development interventions.
- A simple story seeks to show a direct causal relationship between a single activity and a single outcome.
- A more complex story shows that there are many influences on outcomes and that the outcomes themselves are usually only a point on a process.

Writing a Success Story

What goes into a success story?
Situation: What prompted the program?
Response: How did Extension respond? (Inputs and outputs)
Results: Who benefited? What resulted? (Outcomes)
Evidence: What is the evidence? (Evaluation)

Situation: should make the case for why the program was initiated. Why Extension started the program. What problem, issue or concern needed addressing? Who are the key stakeholders?

Response: Extension's response including inputs (staff, funding, research, expertise) and outputs. Outputs include activities (teaching, facilitation, product development) and people reached (number of people and demographics), Partnerships and external funding sources.

Results: Quantitative and qualitative data to describe important outcomes. Who benefited and how? Outcomes include changes in knowledge, skills, motivation, behaviour, decision making, practices, policies, social action, social, economic and environmental conditions.

Evidence: How the program was evaluated to attain the reported evidence? The data collection method (pre or post-test surveys, interviews, testimonials), sample (number and how selected), response rate and the date of data collection. Credible information is needed for a good success story.

What makes a good success story?

A good success story:

- Describes results that are valued by clients
- Contains compelling, significant facts
- Catches attention
- Tells who benefits
- Is easy to read and understand
- Identifies key partners and funders

Writing tips

- Use active voice.
- Use short, complete sentences.
- Be concise.
- Choose simple words.
- Avoid jargon.
- Avoid acronyms.
- Use your name, program name

Writing Effectively

Audience and Format:

The first step to writing clearly is choosing the appropriate format. Do we need to send an informal email? Do we need to write a detailed report? Or write a formal letter? The format, as well as the audience for whom it is meant, will define how formal or relaxed the tone should be. One needs to start by identifying who will read the message. Is it targeted at senior managers, the entire human resources team, extension officers or a small group of farmers? The readers or recipients, should define the tone as well as aspects of the content.

Composition and Style

Tips for composing and styling your document:

- **Start with your audience** – Remember, your readers may know nothing about what you're telling them. What do they need to know first?

- **Create an outline** – This is especially helpful if you're writing a longer document such as a report, presentation, or speech. Outlines help you identify which steps to take in which order, and they help you break up the task into manageable pieces of information.

- **Try some empathy** –What's the benefit for your audience? Remember your audience's needs at all times.
- **Use the Rhetorical Triangle** – If you're trying to persuade someone to do something, make sure that you communicate why people should listen to you, pitch your message in a way that engages your audience, and present information rationally and coherently.
- **Identify your main theme** –What do you want to say? This is likely to be your main theme.
- **Use simple language** – Unless you're writing a scholarly article, it's usually best to use simple, direct language. Don't use long words.

Structure

Your document should be as "reader friendly" as possible. Use headings, subheadings, bullet points, and numbering whenever possible to break up the text.
It is easier to read a page that's broken up into short paragraphs, with section headings and bullet points rather than a page full of lengthy paragraphs.

Headers should grab the reader's attention. Using questions is often a good idea, especially in advertising copy or reports, because questions help keep the reader engaged and curious. In emails and proposals, short, factual headings and subheadings can be used.

Adding tables, graphs and charts is also a good way to break up your text. These visual aids can communicate important information much more quickly than text. It is easier to understand a graph or a table rather than all the data within a lengthy paragraph.

Grammatical Errors

Errors in a document can make us look unprofessional. It's essential to avoid common mistakes that spell check may not find.

Example of commonly misused words:

Affect/effect

- "Affect" is a verb meaning to influence. (Example: The economic forecast will affect our projected income.)
- "Effect" is a noun meaning the result or outcome. (Example: What is the effect of the proposal?)

Key Points

It is important to know how to communicate your point quickly and professionally. Many people spend a lot of time writing and reading, so the better you are at this form of communication, the more successful you're likely to be.

Identify your audience before you start creating your document. If you feel that there is too much information to include, create an outline to help organize your thoughts. Learning grammatical and stylistic techniques will also help you to write more clearly; and be sure to proof the final document.

Know why you are writing

Before one starts the actual formal writing, it helps to think about and identify why we are writing something, and what we are writing.

Answer some basic questions first

Before we start writing a draft, we need to think and answer these questions:

o *Why am I writing this?*
o *What do I want to achieve?*
o *Who am I writing for?*
o *What do I want people to think, feel, know or do after they have read it?*
o *What would be the best form for it to be written in? An article, pamphlet, poster,*

Formatted: French (France)

etc?
Answering these questions will help us to be clearer, more confident and quicker in our writing process.

Reasons for writing

What is the objective of your writing? What do you want to achieve? What do you hope your audience or reader will think, feel, know or do afterwards?

We write for many reasons. It is good to identify a main objective. Sometimes we have additional objectives too. However, if there are too many objectives, it may weaken the piece of writing by trying to achieve too many things at once. It confuses the audience if the objective is not clear, or there are too many.

What is the objective of writing? People write, amongst other reasons, to-

- advocate
- agitate
- educate
- entertain
- evoke certain emotions
- debate
- inform
- mobilise
- persuade
- plan
- promote particular action
- strategise
- raise awareness
- train
- win an argument

What are we writing?
One can think of many different types of writing. They could include:

Short pieces of writing, like:
o banners
o e-mail messages
o fax messages
o letters
o minutes of meetings
o notices
o opinion pieces

o pamphlets
o posters
o press statements
o summaries
o web site information

Longer pieces of writing, like:
o appraisals
o arguments
o articles
o booklets
o case studies
o evaluations
o funding proposals
o newsletters
o plan documents
o policy
o reports of different kinds
o reviews
o speeches
o success stories
o strategy documents
o training materials

What is your objective? And who is your audience?
Your objective and who you are writing for go together.

How to get started?

Too often, we sit down to write and stare at a blank page . Or we try to start writing a first draft straightaway. Starting off with some thinking tools encourages and unlocks your creative and original ideas, helps with planning your piece of writing.

Here are some ideas:

o Think, talk and read about your topic before you even attempt a first draft. It helps to focus your thoughts and to speed up the writing process, if you allocate time before you start writing to think about it, read on your topic and talk to other people about what you have to write. It is an important part of the writing process because it creates fertile ground for when you come to write your first draft.

o Keep a journal for jotting down thoughts. A journal is a good thing to have on hand because it gives you an on-going place to write. It does not matter what you write about so long as you keep practising writing. It is your place for reflecting.

o Use free writing, to get started. Free writing is a thinking tool to use at the beginning of your writing process, and at points where you have blocks, or need to think out some thing. Free writing is private writing. When you free write you throw away the grammar book and dictionary. You concentrate on writing without boundaries. Free writing has many uses. Because you write only for yourself, it helps you to build confidence, unlock creativity, capture your first thoughts, get a flow going, and remove writing blocks. You need to follow some rules!
From Natalie Goldberg's book Writing Down the Bones, Page 8. Published by Shambhala, 1986.

o Use mind maps. A mind map is a thinking tool. It helps to generate ideas, prioritise and lay the foundation for the rest of your writing process. Mind maps are an important way to get started on a writing project. Mind maps help you generate connections around your topic, so that your writing is fresh, and has depth and originality. Mind maps help you to prioritise, organise and structure your writing.

A mind map is a thinking tool. It helps you to come up with wide and rich connections to your topic. The technique allows your mind to be creative and make both obvious and powerful new connections to your topic, and enhances participation and teamwork. You can do a mind map on your own or in a group.

Asking questions

As a connection to the topic in the middle of your mind map comes up, ask questions to both expand and deepen the connection. Once your mind map is completed, you can then decide what to prioritise, what to put on hold.

Use the basic journalist questions to grow your mind map:

_ Why?
_ What?
_ When?
_ Where?

_ Which?
_ Who?
_ How?

Other questions extend from these, like:
_ What are the implications of this?
_ Where can I get more information?
_ What resources do I need to achieve this?
_ Who can help?

A mind map can help to prioritise, organise and structure our ideas and our writing.

Researching your topic

When you are writing about a topic you know well you will probably be able to write fairly quickly and easily. However, it is always important to ask whether we need to do some research to strengthen the quality of our work.

Gathering information

First, develop a plan before you start gathering information. This makes your task quicker and more effective. When you plan, you decide what you are doing, why you are doing it, what you need to know, how you will do it, and when you have to do it by; then you are ready to start gathering information because you have a clear plan with deadlines to guide you. Even if you do know your subject well, it is always good to ask yourself whether there is something you should read as a part of your writing preparation.

Do you need to do some research?

There is usually something new on most subjects – especially with the advent of Internet. Up-to-date information strengthens a piece of writing, offering your reader something new, interesting and challenging to think about.

Read and use other ways to deepen your understanding of the context around your topic. First develop a broad understanding, and then later go into depth.

Where can you find information? The range of resources one can use to strengthen and enrich the final piece of writing include books, magazines, newspapers, programmes on radio, television, resource centres, libraries, videos, organisations, networks, the Internet and from other people etc.

Acknowledgement and Referencing

As you do your research, make detailed, accurate notes of where you get your information. You need to acknowledge the source of an idea or information, by referencing it. Depending on your source, and what kind of publication you are writing for, this could include to note: author, title of book, article, policy, etc., name of publication, e.g. book, magazine, journal, name of publisher, date of publication, country of publication, page number, title of a chapter in an edited book, web site address, and the date you visited it. If you quote someone, you should acknowledge the source of the quote. When you reference, you are acknowledging the ideas and work of others. And you are letting the reader know where they can find out more, if they want to follow up a reference.

Fact checking

If you give inaccurate information, you will lose credibility. So, do not always take at face value facts that people, or other sources offer. Try and find a way of cross-checking important facts. Do this by finding another source of information, using institutions that store statistical or other information, newspaper, libraries, and experts, amongst others. If you find different sources give different facts, then work out a way of reflecting this.

Copyright

When you use information or images directly from another source, like from a book, it is important to see whether that book (or whatever it is) is copyrighted. Most are. If there is a copyright, you can find out from the source that holds the copyright, and get permission to use what it is you want to copy. If there is no copyright, you can use it directly without having to ask. Just acknowledge the source.

People as a resource

People can be an invaluable source of information. Draw on people in your community and organisation and experts in the field you are writing about. Find people who have resources or ideas about your topic. Find people who have been through an experience related to your topic.

-Before you contact anybody, be clear about what you want to find out. This should be written into a brief that includes your objective, your focus, what you are writing, for whom you are writing, where it will be written, and when it will be published.

-Prepare your questions beforehand.

-Know why you are contacting a particular person.

-Remember whoever you talk to will have a particular perspective and viewpoint on your topic. Depending on what you are writing about and for, you may need to talk to people from different perspectives.

-It is important to cross-check information, and to separate opinion from fact. Even the same facts, like statistics, can be interpreted in different ways, depending on what people want to do with them!

- Ask people if they know of any other contacts for your topic, and about other resources, like people, books, journals, articles, non-governmental and other institutions or organisations, resource centres, web sites, and any source for more information. Be like a detective!

- Take detailed and accurate notes when people offer you information. And it is a vital way of building up your information on your topic. So, for example, keep accurate notes about who said what on your topic.

- If you want to quote a person in an interview for a story, then tell the person that is what you want to do. This means you have to take accurate notes of exactly what the person said, and use his or her exact words in quotes, or summarise accurately what they said in paraphrasing.

The Internet

The Internet is a useful source of information and communication. You can communicate with people via electronic mail (e-mail) and connect to Web sites. One can access a phenomenal variety, quantity and quality of information through the Internet. You can find out more about organisations, institutions, companies, and Government departments that have put up Web sites on the Internet. Along with all its value, however, there is some danger of being overwhelmed by the volume of options and information you can pursue on the Internet.

Style of Writing

To write effectively, you need to consider and carefully choose structure, content and style. Structure and content are largely determined by the objective of the specific writing task. Style consists of words you choose, the sentences you combine them in, and the person you write in (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person). The style you adopt depends on the type of text you are asked to write and your purpose in writing (to persuade, to inform, to entertain). The text may be formal or informal, objective or subjective, rational or emotive etc.

In general, one may use:

- an academic, formal style for essays and technical writing (avoiding slang, generalisations and unsubstantiated opinions); or
- a more descriptive, expressive, evocative language for reflexive/reflective texts.

Some writing forms (such as blogs) require a subjective and reflective approach to the subject matter and here the use of the first person (e.g., I, my) is often appropriate. The kind of language, writing style, and tone you use when you write will be guided by your objective, your audience, what you are writing, and where your piece of writing will go.

You would adopt a different style, for example in a:

- report
- mass media news story
- opinion piece
- pamphlet

An appropriate style will help you to achieve your objective. One of the best ways to reflect on different writing styles is to specifically gather and read different kinds of writings and the range of styles that people have chosen to write in. Reflect on what you think works well and what doesn't. Being sensitive to your audience is of vital importance. Make sure that your language, writing style and tone suit your audience.

Different styles of writing

Two writers may write about the same event in completely different styles. One might describe poverty using lots of statistics and government and economists' comments.

Use an interesting and appropriate style

Your job as a writer is to keep your reader interested. Think about what style will do this, whilst at the same time meeting your objective.

Writing Clearly

Be clear:

- Know what you want to say.
- Only use words you that you are certain of their meaning. Consult your dictionary.
- Use parallel constructions for lists in sentences, or in dot points (e.g., faith, hope, not faith, hopeful).
- Ensure pronouns (he, she, they) clearly refer to their noun.
- Use transitional words to show the relationship between ideas (e.g., firstly, by contrast, furthermore, likewise).
- Place descriptive words or phrases next to the words they describe

Be precise:

- Choose verbs (doing/being words) well.
- Use specialist vocabulary carefully and precisely.
- Beware of words that sound similar but have different meanings (e.g., economic/economical; uninterested/disinterested).
- Avoid tautologies (e.g., red in colour; the month of May; a free gift).

Be concise:

- Choose short sentences (and short words) rather than lengthy ones.
- Choose the active rather than the passive voice (e.g., The women sold the rice; **not** The rice was sold by women).
- Eliminate superfluous words (e.g., today **rather than** at this point in time).

Your style should be controlled by why you write, what you write and who you write to.

1: Formulate the main idea

Express the main idea in the form of a topic sentence. The aim is to announce the content of the paragraph. A topic sentence expresses the main idea of a paragraph and tells the reader what to expect about the information that will follow. Most commonly, topic sentences occur at the beginning of a paragraph.

2: Explain the main idea

Provide your rationale or reasoning about the idea. This is where you will need to explain the main idea and discuss it by referring to relevant literature. At this stage you may include definitions, make distinctions, provide details and integrate relevant quotations. These steps can be repeated as needed. If necessary, supply an example to connect the topic sentence with your discussion. The example should provide support or evidence for the idea and the explanation you provided.

3: Close the idea of the paragraph and use a transition to the next paragraph

To consolidate the paragraph, provide a review/recap/summary statement. This is an effective way to draw attention to the relevance of the information you have supplied in the paragraph and link it back to the central idea/topic. Usually, at this stage you will need to direct the reader's attention to the idea that follows. You can do this with a transition.

Using transitions

Transitions come in the form of single words, phrases or sentences. Whilst they are used to establish relationships between sentences in a paragraph, they are also used to create a logical progression of ideas between paragraphs. Transitions or linking words are powerful tools for pulling ideas together. But don't just sprinkle them into your sentences; use them to support your logic. Examples:

To signal a reinforcement of ideas: also, for example, in other words, moreover, in addition, more importantly.

To signal a change in ideas: but, instead, although, on the other hand, yet, nevertheless, however, in contrast, in spite of.

To signal a conclusion: thus, in conclusion, therefore, finally, accordingly, so (informal).

Effective writing checklist

- Have you determined what style of writing to use?
- Is your writing clear, precise and concise?
- Does your writing have coherent paragraphs?

(Andersson, B., & Beveridge, A. (2007). *A guide to assessments and skills in SCCA* (2nd ed.). [Booklet]. Perth, WA: Edith Cowan University.

Rosen, L., & Laurence, B. (2000). *The Allyn and Bacon handbook: Annotated instructor's edition* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon)

Editing for effectiveness

A time comes when our draft is ready to be edited. With a few techniques one can edit the work and strengthen it enormously

Editing tips

Here are some tips to use when you edit to make your writing effective and powerful.

-Use everyday language so you reach more people. Read your piece of writing and highlight words not all your readers may understand. Find everyday words to replace academic words.

For example, instead of *in relation to* write *about*. The election observers were worried *in relation to* cheating. The election observers were worried *about* cheating.

- Avoid jargonistic, academic, abstract language and styles. If the reader needs to know particular jargon then explain it using clear, everyday words and examples. Jargon could include words and phrases like *mass-based umbrella body*, *mass democratic movement*, *globalisation*, and *means of production*. These are abstract words and can turn a reader off. Most people need jargon explained. Put yourself in your reader's shoes. Use examples to help people understand.

- Explain difficult concepts.

-Use short, uncomplicated sentences. One sentence for one idea.

-Check that you have an appropriate language, style and tone.

-Use examples, stories and voices of people that your reader will identify with.

-Try not to mix up your tenses in a sentence because it can be confusing to the reader.

-Use positive, not negative sentences. For example, the negative is: *The committee cannot discipline a member unless it has given him or her a chance to be represented.* The positive is: *The committee can discipline a member after it has given him or her a chance to be represented.*

-So long as it makes sense, put the main point to the beginning of the sentence. This is called a topic sentence. And also put the main point at the top of a paragraph.

-Try to have one topic in each paragraph.

-Use active voice. For example: *The decision to form a gender committee was taken by the User Groups (passive). User Groups decided to form a gender committee.* (active)

- Avoid foreign words and phrases. For example, *vis-à-vis – about/to do with*

- Avoid over-used expressions.
For example: *the bottom line is…, At this conjuncture…, A stitch in time saves nine…*

-Avoid old-fashioned words. For example *do you know his whereabouts?* Rather *do you know where he is?*

-Cut overlapping words. For example: *I've told you time and time again.* Rather: *I've told you repeatedly.*

-Use single verbs, instead of several words. For example: *take into consideration – consider. Make a decision – decide*

-Use single adverbs, not longer phrases. For example: *in close proximity – near*

-Use simple connecting words. For example: *nevertheless – but; provided that – if; on the grounds that – because.*

-Design and layout. Some guidelines:
o Use a friendly typeface (serif for main text, e.g. Times New Roman; sans serif for headings, e.g. Arial).
o Avoid THE USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS EXCEPT FOR PROPER NOUNS. Capital letters are harder to read and "shout".
o *Use italics as little as possible, it is harder to read.*
o Use underlining as little as possible because it can dazzle
o **Use bold as little as possible because it is also rather dazzling**
o Keep the size of the letters comfortable to read.
o Use lots of headings and subheadings.
o Use uncomplicated numbering.
o Allow for uncluttered space, have wide margins, let the text breathe.
o Use boxes to highlight something.
o Use photos, graphics, cartoons.

Write the name of an organisation out in full the first time you use it, and the acronym after. For example, International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Effective Report Writing

A report can be defined as a testimonial or account of some happening. It is purely based on observation and analysis. In today's corporate world, reports play a crucial role. They are a strong base for planning and control in an organization. Reports give information which can be utilized by the management team in an organization for making plans and for solving complex issues in the organization. A report discusses a particular problem in detail. It brings significant and reliable information to the limelight of top management in an organization, on the basis of which, the management can make strong decisions.

An effective report can be written going through the following steps-

1. Determine the objective of the report, i.e., identify the problem.
2. Collect the required material (facts) for the report.
3. Study and examine the facts gathered.
4. Plan the facts for the report.
5. Prepare an outline for the report, i.e., draft the report.
6. Edit the drafted report.
7. Distribute the draft report to the advisory team and ask for feedback and recommendations.

The essentials of good/effective report writing are as follows-

1. Know your objective, i.e. be focused.
2. Analyze the niche audience, i.e. make an analysis of the target audience, the purpose for which audience requires the report, kind of data the audience is looking for in the report, the implications of report reading etc.
3. Decide the length of the report.
4. Disclose correct and true information in a report.
5. Discuss all sides of the problem reasonably and impartially. Include all relevant facts in a report.
6. Concentrate on the report structure and matter. Pre-decide the report writing style.
7. The report should be neatly presented and should be carefully documented.
8. Highlight and recap the main message in a report.

9. Encourage feedback on the report from the critics. The feedback, if negative, might be useful if properly supported with reasons by the critics. The report can be modified based on such feedback.
10. Use graphs, pie-charts, etc., to show the numerical data records over years.
11. Decide on the margins on a report. Ideally, the top and the side margins should be the same (minimum 1 inch broad), but the lower/bottom margins can be one and a half times as broad as others.
12. Attempt to generate reader's interest by making appropriate paragraphs, giving bold headings for each paragraph, using bullets wherever required, etc.