

BSBCRT412

**ARTICULATE,
PRESENT
AND
DEBATE IDEAS**

BSBCRT412

Articulate, present and debate ideas

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1



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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBCRT412 Articulate, present and debate ideas*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at:

www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates ideas and requirements clearly and creatively using techniques appropriate to audience and environment Participates in a verbal exchange of ideas and elicits the view and opinions of others by listening and questioning Uses a range of persuasive responses and makes comparisons which show an understanding of topics and concepts
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents clearly written formats, drawing on a range of communication practices to achieve goals
Initiative and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies opportunities to develop and apply new ideas and select ideas for implementation Identifies key themes and ideas to be explored and identifies ways to respond to and use diverse perspectives
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses features and functions of digital tools and technologies to store and present information

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Establish a framework for communication	1A Identify the audience and purpose for communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Evaluate methods of communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify organisational and legislative requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Develop ideas for communication	2A Use persuasive communication techniques	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Provoke and encourage a response in others	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Mitigate communication challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Document ideas for presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Debate and discuss ideas	3A Present a substantiated position	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Challenge and explore new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Refine ideas based on feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1 | Establish a framework for communication

- 1A Identify the audience and purpose for communication
- 1B Evaluate methods of communication
- 1C Identify organisational and legislative requirements

1A Identify the audience and purpose for communication

To determine the purpose of your communication, clarify who your audience is as well as what and why you want to communicate to them.

To communicate a message clearly and concisely, you must first clarify why you are presenting the idea. A well-defined purpose will help focus your ideas. You should explain to the audience why you want their participation and involvement.

There are many reasons for presenting and exchanging ideas with others. Here are some of them.

To inform

To give someone facts or information – that is, to tell them something they may find beneficial. For example, you may be asked to announce a colleague's promotion or retirement; or to let existing customers know about an improvement to a service. This type of presentation is usually short, to the point and concentrates on the facts of the situation. The information presented should be simple, and the audience should fully comprehend the subject matter just by listening to you speak.

To instruct

To instruct others on how to do something. For example, you may need to instruct employees on how to use a new record management system in the workplace. This may involve opportunities for the audience to practise the new skill during or after the presentation. You may need to explain why a new procedure has been introduced or how it works, and to answer questions from the audience or group.

To inspire

To inspire or motivate others. For example, you may present a new staff fitness program in your workplace that motivates workers to adopt healthy lifestyles. This type of presentation should be delivered in a way that engages the audience to respond positively. When new ideas are introduced, expect some debate and encourage people to speak up and voice their concerns and questions.

To stimulate

To stimulate an audience to take action. You may be asked to present ideas, suggestions and arguments in such a way that the audience believes and accepts the information. For example, a fundraising presentation to potential donors to convince them to contribute to a cause can emphasise a call to take action. For this type of presentation to be effective, the audience needs to be firmly convinced that the course of action is the right one. They may want some background information or a story that highlights the need for the action.

To persuade

A persuasive presentation offers a solution to a controversial problem, presenting sufficient logic, evidence and emotion to convince the audience to accept your idea – for example, launching a new product that solves a customer’s problem more efficiently and effectively than any other product on the market. These types of presentations should persuade the audience to willingly accept your proposal.

Consider the following examples of communication tasks.

Example 1: Introduce a new service to customers

- Purpose: To provide customers with information and persuade them of the benefits of the new service being offered to them.
- Outcome: The customer will want to purchase the new service offering.

Example 2: Introduce a proposal for change to your team

- Purpose: To convince the team of the need for change and the benefits to them.
- Outcome: The team will want to hear more and be willing to work with you to implement the change.

Understanding your audience

Consider the diversity of your audience and ways of meeting their needs and requirements.

Your audience may include a collection of people who already know one another, or it may be people coming together for the first time. It may be made up of colleagues, community members, friends, customers, investors, mentors, peers, students and/or managers.

Each person in the audience will interpret the information you provide in a different way. To communicate in a way that is meaningful and engages as many people as possible, you need to think about the characteristics of the group. Find out as much as you can about the people you will be communicating with in the planning stages. This will help determine:

- how to structure and deliver your ideas, such as the method of communication, and the length of time and the resources required.
- how to involve and engage them in debates or discussions.

For example, if your audience is a small group of older people, a face-to-face group discussion may enable the participants to ask questions and contribute to the discussion.

Some of the characteristics to consider in relation to your audience are explained below.

Size	<p>The number of people attending, accessing and responding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It might be just one individual, a small group of colleagues or a large group. The size may affect the tone, formality, style of delivery and choice of technology.
Age	<p>The age range of your audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An audience of young people is quite different from one of older people. The age of the audience may affect the language you use, cultural references, level of formality and choice of technology.
Communication needs	<p>The communication needs of your audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations that include skills practice, participation in simulations or operation of equipment or technology, may require consideration of the communication needs of participants. Some individuals may require assistance with English, help understanding technical jargon or slang, or they may prefer visual presentations. Communication aids such as adaptive equipment and various types of technology can ensure everyone has access to information and can respond and contribute ideas. In a physical environment, the suitability of the venue or facility needs to be considered so everyone can participate.
Interest level	<p>Requirements for participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If participants are reluctant to be involved, they may be harder to persuade or more difficult to engage. There will be differences in the interest level among people attending. Some may be required to attend; others may be attending voluntarily.
Knowledge level	<p>Prior knowledge or new information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pitch of the information needs to meet the information needs of the audience. It is boring to listen to basic information you have heard before. Consider the prior work experience, qualifications, existing skills and knowledge, and general life experience of your audience. These factors influence understanding and participation. If the audience's knowledge is high, be prepared to answer questions at that level.
Cultural considerations	<p>The cultural requirements of your audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View your group as unique individuals, each with their own individual preferences, culture, and values and beliefs. Be sensitive to stereotypes and using terminology that may not be suitable, such as technological jargon or offensive language.

Example

Tailoring communication for a specific audience

Joanne's manager asks her to prepare a presentation for all staff members on the latest sales results. Joanne has chosen a PowerPoint presentation, has found last month's sales results and knows her audience (all staff). The data Joanne used for past presentations was only shared within the marketing team. She realises that this audience is different and she will need to make adjustments for the variety in existing knowledge and experience with sales data.

Joanne re-works her slides. She removes some as they are too detailed for the audience. She adds graphs and coloured tables to represent the sales figures. She thinks about some interesting ways to engage the audience and inserts some images into the slide pack.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

You want to convince a potential investor to help you launch and sell a range of T-shirt designs.

Which of the following statements on the audience is correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) You will be addressing a large audience. | » Yes | » No |
| b) You should prepare to present to a male audience. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Your audience is unlikely to know much about the specifics of textile design. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Your audience is likely to be quite young. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Your audience might be reluctant and need to be persuaded. | » Yes | » No |

Question 2

Draw lines to match each purpose for exchanging ideas on the left to its definition on the right.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| » Activate | » To give someone facts or information |
| » Inform | » To demonstrate or explain how to do something |
| » Persuade | » To convince the audience to accept your idea |
| » Instruct | » To stimulate the audience to take action |

1B Evaluate methods of communication

Communication techniques must be appropriate to your audience and objectives.

The method of communication you use with an audience needs to suit the information being presented. For example, you might need to demonstrate a skill, allow time to answer questions, prepare by doing some pre-reading, allow for an exchange of ideas, or elicit the views and opinions of others. Each of these provides the audience with a different experience.

Whichever method of communication you use, the message must be clear and succinct. It must also:

- hold the audience's attention
- enable the audience to understand the information and retain it
- provoke a response and reaction
- allow opportunities for contributors to discuss and debate.

Identifying methods of communication

Communication methods are varied and each method has advantages and limitations.

Examples of communication methods include:

- face-to-face communication
- over the phone or teleconferencing with an individual or group
- streaming audio or video, or live streaming
- video or web conferencing in real time with an individual or group
- webinars: web/seminars that can be watched live or at any other time
- chats or posts: sending messages using a phone or messaging service
- podcasts: audio files that can be received automatically
- slideshows
- social media for creating and sharing content to a group via websites and apps.

Here are some advantages and limitations of a few of these communication methods.

Method	Advantages	Limitations
Face-to-face meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearest communication method • Can pick up non-verbal communication cues • Doesn't have to rely on technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has to be conducted in a single venue at an appointed time
Conference call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common messaging apps include Microsoft Skype, Apple FaceTime and Google Hangouts • Can be conducted between two person in separate locations, or between several people in one location and one or several people in another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May inhibit difficult conversations • Requires reliable phone access for all parties • Requires everyone to be available at the same time and needs to be arranged in advance • Require all users to have hardware such as a telephone with a speaker or separate speakers
Video conferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides 'face-to-face' communication between two people in different locations • Allows real-time communication • Enables users to see the other person's facial expressions, body language and gestures • Most apps enable typed messages as well as verbal communication • Enables live audio/video communication between two or more locations • Useful for meetings or presentations • Cheaper than a phone call once apps are set up • Examples of web conferencing platforms are Skype, Slack, Zoom and Microsoft Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs stable internet connections or participants may experience poor audio/video quality • Communication can be difficult if multiple people want to speak at the same time • Requires everyone available at the same time and needs to be arranged in advance • Requires a moderator for larger groups • Both parties need the correct software and latest version installed • Requires all users to have hardware such as a microphone, speakers and a camera • Easy to be misinterpreted when posting typed comments because of the absence of visual cues such as gestures and facial expressions, so avoid jokes and sarcastic comments

Method	Advantages	Limitations
Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically one-way, i.e. the speaker is watched by a remote audience Allows audience members to submit questions to be addressed by the presenter Allows the presenter to switch between screens so they can use slideshow or graphic presentation as well as their oral presentation Can be watched at any time if there is a login that allows for flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has to be viewed at a specific time Poor quality presentations limit engagement Limited interaction
Live streaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A live or on-demand presentation Streamed over the web via audio and/or video presentation Can reach large audiences Immediate and engaging Useful for demonstrations, launching products and hosting live events Allows the presenter to answer real-time audience questions Strong method for building relationships with customers or followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has to be viewed at a specific time Poor quality presentations limit engagement Requires a moderator for larger groups
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables users to create and share information and content Allows users to reach a large audience instantly Attracts like-minded people Works in real time and is constantly updated. Provides opportunities to reach global markets Cost-effective method of sharing ideas, launching products and services, persuading and informing audiences Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and LinkedIn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not effectively moderated, so can be affected by trolls and offensive commenters Only reaches like-minded followers Tends to be dominated by the most engaged users, so not representative

Choosing the best communication method

Your choice of communication method depends on the audience, purpose and type of information you are presenting.

The use of multimedia allows you to combine images, videos, documents and sound to create interactive and engaging communications.

Virtual communication is common in organisations because you can connect from anywhere as long as you have access to the internet and technology. Many businesses prefer online interactions that provide face-to-face interaction because participants can see to communicate in real time. This allows for a more meaningful engagement and exchange of ideas.

For example, to get feedback on a new idea from a small group of colleagues in various locations, a video conferencing session might be appropriate because of the size of the team and the remote location of some team members. Everyone can see and hear each other, and immediate reactions can be gauged and responded to.

Oral presentations are useful for sharing information and engaging with a large group of people at the same time. However, if the discussion is not engaging, the audience can easily 'turn off' and become passive participants. Oral presentations do not work as well for a debate or for gathering ideas from a large group.

Example

Digital communication

Staff at Larger Than Life have a meeting every three weeks to coordinate the marketing promotion for their client, Omega. This meeting involves advertising, sales and media staff in six different locations. The team use Skype for Business to conduct their meetings. Each attendee has a web camera and microphone attached to their computer. They can see each other and speak freely over the internet. They can also share documents and links with other attendees. In cases where it is hard to clearly understand what is being said, they can type information, which then displays on the computer screens of the other attendees.

Team members can later print a transcript of any information that was presented during the meeting and use this to prepare minutes of the meeting. The meeting can also be recorded and shared with other employees using a podcast function.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to methods of communication? Tick all that apply.

- Face-to-face communication means users can pick up non-verbal communication cues.
- Live streaming is useful for demonstrations and hosting live events.
- Social media allows everyone to be represented equally.
- Webinars don't allow questions from participants.
- Video conferencing becomes difficult when multiple people want to speak at the same time.

Question 2

Draw lines to match each method of communication on the left with its most appropriate use on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| » Video conference | » Grievance from a staff member |
| » Webinar | » Sending out an invitation to an event |
| » Social media | » Urgent meeting requiring the attendance of the whole team |
| » Face-to-face meeting | » Training program to be completed in your own time |

1C Identify organisational and legislative requirements

Policies and procedures guide staff on the correct use of online communication platforms.

The way people communicate inside and outside of organisations is determined by policies and procedures. Organisational policies and procedures reflect the legal obligations of a business.

Policies outline specific requirements, processes and rules in keeping with legislated requirements such as privacy laws and discrimination laws. They are written to support the achievement of the objectives of organisations.

Procedures are practical guidelines for ensuring compliance. They often align with policies but provide a step-by-step process for doing a task.

Here is a list of examples of policies and procedures that may be relevant to communicating ideas and conducting debates with others internal and external to your organisation. The policy and procedure names will vary from organisation to organisation.

Policy examples	Procedure examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Code of conduct ▪ Anti-discrimination ▪ Communication ▪ Email usage ▪ Transmission of sensitive data ▪ Confidentiality ▪ Privacy ▪ Copyright ▪ Social media ▪ Telecommuting ▪ Resource acquisition ▪ WHS ▪ Car hire ▪ First aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of social media ▪ Computer use ▪ Customer service ▪ Staff meeting ▪ Training plan ▪ Emergency response ▪ Consulting ▪ Logging in remotely

Policies and procedures

The standards for communication vary, but they will generally aim to ensure that you communicate professionally with others in the way the organisation expects you to, particularly when communicating with people outside the organisation.

Policies and procedures may be in printed form – such as in a policy folder – or online – for example, via the organisation’s intranet. If you can’t locate them, ask someone to show you where they are kept.

When obtaining information on policies and procedures, you should always ask:

- Are you looking at the latest version of the document?
- Do you have permission to access the document? Check with your manager if you are unsure about whether you are allowed to access certain sensitive documents.

Code of conduct

A code of conduct for staff outlines the principles the business wants followed when communicating, researching and presenting information to others. For example, there may be a statement outlining that the business expects staff to demonstrate honesty, fairness and transparency in all interactions. A code may also outline the type of behaviour not acceptable to the organisation, such as threatening, abusive or offensive communications.

Corporate image

A corporate image is important to a business because it creates a consistent and professional image that is instantly recognisable to clients and others outside the organisation. Image can relate to the visual message, sounds, content and tone of communications. All communications must align with the image and create a clear message to the audience about the company’s values.

Logos are used for specific purposes, for a particular audience or for specific areas of the company’s activities, such as marketing and sales.

For example, a logo may be used in emails with a signature that directs customers to a sale item. Or there may be requirements to include the company’s logo in the top left-hand corner of a slide deck and the corporate colours as a theme throughout the presentation.

Organisational style guides

Organisational style guides outline the specifications, instructions and design details for documents.

The purpose of organisational style guides is to ensure consistency in the presentation of an organisation's documents.

Style guides provide rules for the types of words that are used in documents. For example, acronyms and jargon may be appropriate for internal use, but may not be appropriate when used with customers or the general public.

Templates are documents that have predefined styles already set up in the document. Standard templates usually incorporate such things as corporate letterheads or logos that have to be inserted in specific places within a document. Some organisations may produce documents based on examples of ones previously produced instead of having templates.

For example, the design requirements for slides might look something like this:

- The company logo should appear on the top left.
- The date should appear on the bottom right.
- One heading should be used per slide.
- All headings to be Arial and all body text to be Times New Roman.
- All headings to be bold and in font size 24.
- All body text to be in font size 16.
- There should be approximately three bullet points per slide.
- Use square bullet points.
- Images must reflect and promote the content.

Observing legislative requirements

Organisations are required to operate within the law.

Laws outline a system of rules that regulate the actions of a business, organisation or community. Laws are enforced by penalties. They provide a framework for actions that take place, such as communication and interaction with others on products, services, processes or creative works.

Legislative requirements may apply to the subject or topic used in a communication or they may apply to the format or type of communication. For example, the use of someone's personal information will have restrictions under the *Privacy Act 1988*, whereas one of the several Acts that cover discrimination regulate how people are referred to and spoken about.

Area	Legislation	Application
Privacy	<i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handling and reviewing personal information Storing personal information Seeking permission to use personal information <p>There are 13 principles, which can be found at: aspirelr.link/oaic-privacy-principles</p>
Anti-discrimination	<i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> (Cth) <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> (Cth) <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> (Cth).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing all audience members to participate, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> people with disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people people with a language background other than English gender, age, religion, ethnicity, family situations and sexual preferences
Consumer protection	<i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> (Cth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting competition and fair trading and provision for consumer protection – e.g. information must be correct and non-biased and must not mislead the public
Workplace health and safety	<i>Work Health and Safety 2011</i> (Cth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure environments are safe and checked for hazards and risks Participants are provided with information on emergency procedures and the location of exits and facilities
Copyright	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> (Cth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessing someone else's ideas or original work, such as an image or design; the author/owner has the right to determine under what conditions this work can be used by others

Example

Email usage policy

The following is an extract from an email usage policy.

- Allow time for emails to be received and replied to, keeping in mind time differences around the world and other colleagues' busy schedules.
- Do not send abusive or heated messages (flames). If you receive a flame, it is best to ignore it.
- Don't assume any internet communication is completely secure.
- If you are replying to a message, quote only the relevant parts.
- If you want your message to be read, don't make it too long (i.e. no more than 100 lines).
- Ensure the subject line reflects the content of the email.
- Never send chain emails. Notify the system administrator if you receive any.
- Immediately notify the system administrator or IT support person if you receive any suspicious messages that may contain a virus.
- Remember that unsolicited email advertising is unwelcome (and forbidden in many countries).

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Which of the following statements relate to organisational requirements applicable to communication? Tick all that apply.

- Procedures are practical guidelines for ensuring compliance with use of social media.
- Policies reflect an organisation's objectives and legal requirements.
- Corporate image is used to teach outsiders about the company's values.
- Templates have predefined styles already set up in the document.
- If an organisation doesn't have templates, then staff can design their own.

Question 2

Draw a line to match each legal requirement on the left to an appropriate example on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| » Consumer protection | » Seeking permission before sharing someone else's personal information |
| » Privacy | » Accounting for an audience with a range of backgrounds and preferences |
| » Copyright | » Seeking the truth without bias |
| » Anti-discrimination | » Seeking permission to reproduce someone else's content |

Summary

- There are various reasons for communicating – for example, to inform, instruct or inspire others.
- Each person in the audience will interpret information differently.
- To communicate in a way that is meaningful and engages as many people as possible, you need to think about the characteristics of the group.
- Find out as much as you can about the people you will be communicating with in the planning stages.
- Your message must be clear and succinct: it must hold the audience's attention, enable the audience to understand the information and retain it, provoke a response and reaction, and allow opportunities for discussion and debate.
- The communication method you use with an audience will need to suit the information being presented. For example, you might need to demonstrate a skill, allow time to answer questions, prepare by doing some pre-reading, allow for an exchange of ideas, or elicit the views and opinions of others.
- You should choose your method of communication carefully according to the type of audience and purpose of communication.
- All communication methods have advantages and limitations.
- Organisational policies and procedures need to be followed when communicating with people inside and outside of any organisation.
- Several legal requirements underpin policies and need to be considered in the planning and presentation of ideas.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Establish a framework for communication

Read the case study, then and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Carlo has been asked to help coordinate an urgent meeting with the sales team. There has been a spike in customer complaints relating to misinformation about a new product being provided to customers by the sales team. The sales manager is worried about the damage to customer relationships and the company's reputation. She needs to know the extent of the problem, what misinformation is being given to customers and the nature of the complaints they are receiving.

The plan is to arrange a meeting with sales staff from all the states using a video conferencing app. Up until now, the sales team has communicated by dialling in by phone to a regular conference call. Before the scheduled meeting, Carlo will email the team an invitation, an outline of the purpose of the meeting and an explanation as to why the meetings are moving away from conference calls to video calls.

1. How will Carlo describe the purpose of the meeting?

2. What would the sales manager see as the intended outcome of the meeting? Suggest three outcomes.

3. Provide three reasons Carlo could give to the team for moving to video conferencing.

As a result of the meeting, the sales manager asks Carlo to put together a slide presentation on the features of the new product. The presentation will be used by the sales team at their meetings with customers. The slide deck will need to be placed on the business's intranet and also sent via email as a PDF attachment.

4. Give three examples of organisational guidelines Carlo needs to follow when preparing the slides.

5. Provide two examples of legislation that Carlo will need to keep in mind when sending information by email and via the intranet.



Topic 2 | Develop ideas for communication

- 2A Use persuasive communication techniques
- 2B Provoke and encourage a response in others
- 2C Mitigate communication challenges
- 2D Document ideas for presentation

2A Use persuasive communication techniques

Using persuasive language when communicating helps you to connect with your audience.

The way you connect with your audience depends on the complexity of your idea, the size of the group, and their individual needs, expectations and differences. Different types of persuasive techniques will work better with certain communication methods.

The communication techniques you use to engage and involve an audience need to align with the objectives or purpose of your communication. As we saw in Topic 1, the objectives of your communication may be to inform, instruct, inspire, activate to action or persuade. The objectives are what you are working towards and must be your focus as you plan your communication.

Techniques to persuade

Persuasion is about convincing an audience that what you are offering is what they are looking for.

Whether you are launching a new product, promoting a service or appealing for donations, your message needs to be memorable and provoke a response from the audience.

Persuasive technique	Details
Appeal to the needs of the audience	Some theories suggest people are motivated by unfulfilled needs, such as a need for financial security, success or belonging. Targeting the specific needs of individuals and groups will provoke a desired response or behaviour.
Point out the benefit of your solution/ idea	The audience needs to hear how they can benefit from your solution or idea, compared to the current situation. They need to make a connection between what you are suggesting and the benefit to their daily lives or their job. Use motivating factors such as the benefits of leadership, pride, self-respect, recognition, security and reward. For example, a new work process could be sold on its greater efficiency, leading to a reduced workload for employees. In a team, when one member is convinced of the benefits of a change this can impact others in the team.
Make concessions and negotiate	When suggesting a big change, it may be necessary to make concessions on certain points. In preparation for a negotiation, you need to identify the aspects of the proposal or idea that are not essential for achieving your objective. These can then be 'traded' for other aspects that are essential to the success of your idea.

Here are some more persuasive practices to incorporate into your communication:

- Research, edit and rehearse your communication to ensure technology is working and is professionally produced.
- Deliver your information with confidence.
- Handle questions authoritatively.
- Give clear and straightforward instructions.
- Create a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable in making a contribution.
- Make the audience the focal point for your references and examples.
- Incorporate innovation by saying what others are afraid to say or using language that surprises.
- Discuss problems and ask the audience to provide a solution.
- Be consistent and repeat key messages.
- Tell stories that create suspense or that the audience can relate to.

Do some research to uncover resources that offer persuasive techniques for selling, marketing and other aspects of a business.

Look at the website for *Creative Content Australia* – it has educational resources for teachers and students on the use of persuasive language. You can find it here: aspirelr.link/creative-content-australia

Using storytelling to communicate ideas

Storytelling is a persuasive communication technique for conveying a powerful message.

Stories can give products, services and ideas an identity. They take the audience on a journey where they can share an experience that communicates your idea or message. Storytelling can create an emotional connection where people feel moved and inspired because stories typically contain personal, emotional experiences that others can relate to. Telling a story, rather than merely listing the features and benefits of an idea, relaxes the audience and puts them in a state of attentiveness.

Key storytelling techniques

When developing a story, be yourself and draw on your personal experiences. Keep your stories short and simple. Your audience may not need all the background to understand the problem or message.

Stories are everywhere and have been used for thousands of years to convey messages. There is no real formula for a good story, but there are some useful guidelines. For example:

- The beginning sets the scene and introduces the main character or hero.
- The middle introduces a problem or obstacle that must be overcome, a challenge or a difficult decision.
- The end resolves the problem, presents a solution and leaves a strong message.

Here is a simple story with a beginning, middle and end.

The adopted son of a machinist showed an early interest in electronics and gadgetry. While in high school, he boldly called Hewlett-Packard co-founder and president William Hewlett to ask for parts for a school project. Impressed with him, Hewlett not only gave him the parts, but also offered him a summer internship at Hewlett-Packard. It was there that he met and befriended Steve Wozniak, a young engineer five years his senior with a passion for tinkering (Steve Jobs, Apple co-founder).

Storytelling tips

Make it about people

Focus your story on its characters to give people someone to connect with. Even if your presentation relates to changing a process or helping an organisation to be more productive, people are still driving the action.

Give the characters a voice

Stories should be relatable for your audience. Give distinctive voices to your characters and make them interact with one another so the dialogue is believable and sincere. Provide enough detail to bring your characters to life.

Make it interesting

Find ways to grab the attention of your audience and keep it for long enough to communicate your message. Say it quickly and say it well. Begin your story with the end in mind. Decide what you want the audience to take away from your presentation so you can tailor your story accordingly. Try to engage the audience and make them wonder what will happen next. As the characters in your story pursue their goal, they must run into opposition, surprises or something that makes the audience pay attention.

Harness emotions

Your story should stir the audience's emotions to break through the white noise of information and deliver the key message: that your idea is worth listening to. If you can harness imagination, you can get your audience to react the way you want them to.

It is not just the words and characters that give a story power; it is also the connection between you and your audience. Work to solidify that emotional connection and you will open their minds to receive your message.

Develop a conflict

Your story must have a conflict to encourage the audience to continue listening so they discover the outcome. The main character of your story should be struggling to do something, or have a problem they need to overcome. Make sure the conflict is relevant and relatable to your audience.

Stories should represent the problem they face, and your idea should be the solution.

End with a positive takeaway message

The most effective presentations not only have a conflict and a climax, but also a positive resolution. The 'moment of truth' is when the conflict of the plot is resolved.

The key takeaway message should be packaged into a short, memorable phrase. There is no point to a story that leaves the audience feeling the same after listening to it as they felt before. The moment of truth is the part that convinces the audience to accept, agree with or invest in your idea.

Use multimedia

If possible, use multimedia to keep your audience interested. Use videos, images, graphs and other visual forms in your presentation. Novelty, which is the presentation of something that is new and unexpected, is a key element of grabbing and maintaining your audience's attention.

Example

Tailoring communication

Steven works for a local university and is presenting a talk to a large group of potential students about why they should study at the university. The university's goal is to recruit students from diverse populations and to make the setting and curriculum welcoming and equitable.

To emotionally connect with his audience, Steven uses a professional cinematographer to create six short, powerful and inspiring films about real students who have overcome personal challenges to succeed, both at university and in life.

Steven asks the students to use their first language in the short films, then inserts the English translation in subtitles. He wants to demonstrate to potential students and their families that language differences are celebrated and encouraged at the university, and that people have the right to express themselves in ways that suit their individual needs and preferences.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Draw a line to match each persuasive technique on the left with an example on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| » Making the benefits clear | » This will make your job easier and save you time. |
| » Using data and statistics | » This helped me when I was at my lowest point. |
| » Appealing to needs | » How much time do you normally spend doing this? |
| » Creating an emotional response | » 70% of people prefer this method. |

Question 2

Which of the following statements promote the benefits of storytelling? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) People feel moved and inspired by stories that contain personal, emotional experiences they can relate to. | » Yes | » No |
| b) People don't like to hear about conflict; they have enough things to worry about in real life. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Multimedia such as videos, images and graphics distract the audience from key messages. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Stories should end with a positive message and resolution. | » Yes | » No |

2B Provoke and encourage a response in others

Audience members will respond to your message in different ways.

In Topic 1 we discussed how to understand the characteristics of an audience. Researching and analysing your audience helps you to better understand:

- their basic level of understanding about your subject
- who they are as a collective group
- their individual needs, expectations and communication preferences.

Researching your audience

People receive information differently and have different learning preferences so it is important to know as much as possible about your audience before communicating with them.

Each person's reactions and responses are filtered through their own culture, life experiences, knowledge, personal beliefs and values. Audiences bring with them expectations, knowledge and attitudes about the occasion, the topic and the speaker.

Audience members will have different preferences for the way they like to receive information. The way information is understood will affect engagement and preparedness to contribute to a discussion or ask questions. This is one reason why researching your audience is so important. Finding out the background of your audience may involve:

- speaking to others who are familiar with the team or group
- asking for information about the audience from an organiser who is familiar with the background of the audience participants
- conducting a small survey asking participants a bit about themselves and what they want to 'take away' from your communication session.

You will need this information to be able to tailor your message and the way it is delivered to make it meaningful to as many people in the group as possible.

Learning preferences

Much research has been performed on different learning preferences. Learning styles influence how an audience receives and processes information. Remember, many of us have a preference for one or more learning styles. Here are some examples.

Visual
<p>Some people memorise and learn by seeing images, and are less distracted by noise than others. Visual learners may have difficulty remembering things they hear and become bored listening to long verbal presentations.</p> <p>Visual learners are interested in how your presentation looks, and like it when you use words such as 'see', 'look', 'imagine' or 'picture' in your presentation, as these words encourage them to visualise what you are trying to say.</p>
Auditory
<p>Some people learn by listening and are easily distracted by any noise during a presentation. Your vocal tone and quality are very important when communicating with these learners.</p> <p>Auditory learners respond when you use words such as 'listen', 'hear', 'sounds like' or 'resonate'.</p>
Auditory digital
<p>Some people memorise and learn by using words and language to process logical steps, procedures and sequences. They want to know that your presentation makes sense.</p> <p>Words that are effective with these people include 'sense', 'experience', 'think', 'decide', 'understand' and 'motivate'.</p>
Kinaesthetic
<p>Some people learn by physically doing a task and are much more oriented towards their feelings than people in the other three categories. They learn by actively doing something and getting a feel for it. They are more interested in a presentation that instinctively 'feels right'.</p> <p>Words that are effective with these audience members include 'feel', 'touch' and 'grasp'.</p>

Use the information on learning styles to influence your choice of communication method. For example, a visual learner may ask questions in a video conference but may become bored or disengaged during a presentation where there is no visual stimulus such as images or graphics. A person who prefers doing a task does not want to listen to a description of *the way to do a task* – they want to practise and ask questions after they have 'experienced' it.

Types of audience

Here are some different types of audience you may encounter and tips for how to respond to them.

Uninformed audience

These people are unfamiliar with the topic being discussed.

To respond to an uninformed audience:

- Try to identify their level of knowledge or understanding so you know how much information you should provide them.
- Provide the audience with everything they need to know about the topic.
- Pick and choose key points to help the audience understand the topic.
- Don't provide an overwhelming amount of new information.

Neutral audience

These people might be interested in your idea but are often uncertain and ambivalent. They usually don't intend to take any action in response.

To respond to a neutral audience remain positive and optimistic that they will accept your idea.

Hostile audience

These people are in strong disagreement with your idea and you will need to build trust in order to change their mind.

To respond to a hostile audience:

- Find common ground or a starting point to relate to your audience.
- Think of reasons why people may not agree with your idea or point of view and decide on ways to overcome their points of disagreement.
- Aim to build rapport with the audience.

Expert audience

These people are already very familiar with what you are telling them.

To respond to an expert audience:

- Avoid giving detailed background to the topic – it can make people feel irritated, bored and patronised.
- Appeal to their expertise by encouraging contributions – this will help them get on board with your idea.
- Try to provide them with something new and interesting that they didn't know.

Business audience

A business audience will be used to listening to presentations and may also be an expert audience but may be short on time.

To respond to a business audience:

- Keep your presentation short and to the point.
- Make sure they understand that you are providing a solution to their problems, not yours.
- Acknowledge any experts and people with experience and involve them if you can.

Encouraging involvement and response

When communicating with an audience, you want their input and response to be meaningful and to reinforce your message.

Emotional triggers can be used to provoke involvement and response from an audience. A mix of emotions can make people want to respond and react. Positive and negative emotions – such as surprise, anxiety, anger, fear, joy and amusement – can lead to audience engagement. For example, adding in an element of joy by including a cheerful story can evoke feelings of hope.

- Sometimes the response you expected is not what you planned. This can throw you off topic and upset the flow of an interaction with the audience.
- Here are some tips for encouraging an audience to contribute and respond to your communication.

Choose your technique

Audience involvement incorporates a broad range of activities – from a simple show of hands, to requests for personal contributions, to role-playing and small group exercises. Choose a technique that fits your objective, audience size and the allotted time for your presentation.

Use inclusive framing

Ask your questions in a way that allows most audience members to respond. For example, 'Tell me about your last experience as ...' is something that most audience members can respond to. Make people feel valued, competent and encouraged to contribute. Inclusive questions are useful for building a shared identity among the audience.

Allow time for a response

Be clear about whether your questions are real or rhetorical. Sometimes audience members are unsure, so it helps to use phrases such as 'Who here ...?', or 'Who in this room ...?' to elicit real responses. Even if your questions are rhetorical, allow time for audience members to consider the question and think about how they would answer. You could pause for a moment to let the audience digest your point.

Acknowledge contributions

Always recognise an audience member's contribution before moving on to the next point or participant. Simply saying 'thank you' shows gratitude for their contribution and makes them feel valued in the experience. As you become more comfortable with audience participation, you can frame the responses to fit your point and refer back to participants' contributions later in your presentation.

Example

Encouraging involvement and seeking input

Helen manages a team of customer service staff at her organisation. Helen and her team are responsible for managing the relationship between the organisation and its customers. They provide sales support to customers, and handle complaints, requests for refunds and other feedback. The senior management team has asked Helen to implement a new process for receiving and handling customer complaints. It is a difficult topic to address as some of Helen's team members don't like dealing with conflict.

Helen wants to present the new process to her team in a calm and positive way so that they respond with optimism and a willingness to change. Helen chooses to use video conferencing and prepares by thinking about how the new process will help staff to resolve customer complaints promptly and effectively, bringing satisfaction to both the team member and the customer.

During the meeting, Helen sets the ground rules by telling the team the value of their insights and suggestions. Helen schedules a question session at the end where each member takes a turn to provide their own ideas regarding how the new process can be improved or adapted.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following techniques provoke a response in an audience? Tick all that apply.

- Letting the facts, figures and charts speak for themselves.
- Using a mix of emotions such as fear, joy and amusement.
- Appealing to a variety of different learning styles.
- Discouraging interruptions and suggesting questions be emailed.
- Telling jokes to engage people with humour.

Question 2

Select true or false.

The following statement is an example of inclusive framing: 'When was the last time you had a good experience with this product?'

» True

» False

2C Communication challenges and strategies

You may need to adapt how you communicate depending on your audience or environment.

Body language provides non-verbal communication about what you are thinking. Facial expressions and body movement can express emotions or reactions to what is being said. Cues such as these are important tools in communicating effectively with others. These tools are just as important when communicating with a virtual audience as they are with a physical one.

Virtual and physical communication challenges

Whether your audience is virtual or in the same room as you, there can be communication challenges.

The limitations of various communication methods were discussed in Topic 1.

Here are some specific challenges that may arise when communicating with a virtual audience.

Technical difficulties	A weak internet connection, mismatched audio, lagging video or total loss of video or audio can have a negative impact on how you and your ideas are received by your audience. If possible, have a back-up plan and the contact details for technical support.
Weaker personal connection	When you present to small audiences, you can interact closely. However, with a larger audience you will need to work harder to make a personal connection with everyone. If the audience can't see you, they are less likely to trust you and believe in what you are saying.
Divided attention	Some audience members may try to multitask or become easily distracted during a web or video conference. They may miss important information that could compromise their understanding. It is difficult to prevent this as your audience may be working remotely where there are distractions. Asking for interaction may help to bring their attention back to you.
Gauging the response	During an online presentation, you might like to pause at certain points and ask for audience feedback, contribute to discussions and feel actively involved. It can be difficult to gauge how well you are being received. Encourage the use of the chat feature and keep an eye out for questions and engagement in the chat stream at various points.

When communicating with an audience in a face-to-face setting you might face some of the following challenges.

Distractions

It's very hard for people to focus on a speaker when they are not physically comfortable. Ensure the environment is at a comfortable temperature, and that it has adequate lighting, appropriate seating and access to facilities so the audience members feel relaxed and ready to receive your message.

People in the audience can also distract others, e.g. by using their phones, whispering to each other, walking in and out of the room or fidgeting. If someone is acting inappropriately you may need to address it. Address each occurrence sensitively and reasonably.

It may be appropriate at the beginning to ask for phones to be turned off, and to let people know at what point you will be taking a break.

Visibility

Make sure every audience member can see you and your multimedia presentation clearly from their seat. If people can't see you, they are less likely to listen or fully understand what you are saying. The audience needs to connect with you in order to connect with your ideas.

Being able to make eye contact and see your body language and facial expressions helps the audience to make that connection.

When you are delivering using technologies such as a PowerPoint with a computer and screen, avoid facing the screen to read directly from it. If you need to refer to it, have notes or a laptop in front of you so you face the audience.

Pause and re-arrange equipment or ask the audience to move their seats or allow time for the adjustment of computers and so on.

Overcoming communication barriers

Communication barriers can result in your audience not understanding your message the way you intended.

You can make adjustments to your communication style to meet the individual needs of audience members.

Here are some common barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome them.

Educational barriers

Educational barriers include:

- literacy or numeracy problems

- lack of knowledge about the subject, or an expert audience.

Don't assume a certain level of knowledge in an audience, as you may inadvertently discourage them from listening to you. However, at the same time, don't over-explain concepts that people have already grasped, as this could indicate a lack of respect and seem patronising. For an expert audience, adjust the script or ask the audience to give responses rather than simply telling the information.

Psychological and physical barriers

Psychological barriers may make audience members resistant to change or fearful of consequences.

Psychological barriers include:

- fear of rejection or failure
- anxiety about asking a question in front of others
- lack of confidence
- fear of public speaking.

Physical barriers relate to the physical abilities of your audience. For example, you may be presenting to people who have a hearing loss or visual impairment. Ensure you have the necessary tools and resources to communicate effectively with people who have disabilities. You might even make contact with these individuals ahead of your presentation to see if they require communication aids.

Emotional constraints

Emotional constraints include differences in what people perceive to be acceptable levels of emotional display. While people find certain displays of emotion unacceptable, others may consider them to be a natural part of their communication process. Again, learn what is and is not acceptable to your audience before you present your ideas to others, and adjust your communication style accordingly.

Information barriers

Providing too much information can overwhelm your audience. Providing too little information can confuse them and leave your message uncommunicated. Be well informed and equipped to answer any questions, or at least know where to source the information. Don't try to present any information to the audience that you do not fully understand yourself. The audience may be less likely to trust what you say from then on. Confusing the audience only causes them to tune out and stop listening.

Physical distractions

Physical distractions relate to the environment in which you are presenting. For example, if the environment is too noisy, the information you are trying to present may be lost, misunderstood or not fully received. Move to a quieter and more suitable environment to ensure you can receive the audience's full attention.

Arrange for comfort breaks and refreshments at appropriate intervals. You may also need to check in with your audience occasionally, e.g. to see whether they want a window opened.

Appealing to your audience

As a communicator, you need to understand the reasons why people might oppose or reject your ideas.

Good preparation and planning means you are less likely to have to face rejection.

Poor ideas
<p>Any idea that does not address or deal with the audience's problem effectively, is impractical or does not take into consideration all the relevant factors, may be opposed.</p> <p>If your idea does not fit the problem or has unacceptable side effects, you should not be proposing it.</p>
Poor presentation
<p>Opposition can be created by not presenting ideas and information effectively.</p> <p>Providing inadequate information or not communicating an idea effectively may cause the audience to misinterpret it or be unable to evaluate your solution.</p>
Nature of the problem
<p>When an audience is significantly affected by the problem posed and the solution proposed, they may look at it more closely. Similarly, if the audience have a good knowledge of the problem or aspects of the solution, your idea may also receive close scrutiny. Be prepared to answer questions the audience may ask and have some informed responses ready.</p>
Lack of audience interest
<p>A lack of interest in the idea can create opposition if the audience feel that their time is wasted.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about the idea, or the problem being solved, can also create opposition.</p>
Audience needs and expectations
<p>The individual needs and expectations of audience members can impact how they perceive and react.</p> <p>A person who has a strong need to feel independent may oppose any solution that increases collective responsibilities or encourages group work.</p> <p>A person who has a grievance against an existing work process may oppose a new process if it doesn't align with the way they think things should be done.</p>
Resistance to change
<p>Some people are strongly resistant to change, especially in the workplace.</p> <p>A solution that involves considerable change may meet strong opposition from the audience, even if it is viable and presented well.</p> <p>Emphasise the advantages of any proposed changes and give specific examples to audience members on what can benefit them both individually and as a group.</p>

Mistrust of the solution

Many people are suspicious of ideas that are highly innovative or that yield high rewards as the result of a simple method that seems too good to be true.

Clearly explain how your idea, product, service or process works, and provide relevant evidence to support your reasoning.

Unsolicited ideas

An idea may come as a complete surprise and be received by the audience in a number of ways:

- They may be interested without having any intention of taking action or implementing your idea.
- They may feel that you are interfering with or criticising the way they currently do things.
- They may refuse to listen at all.

Don't force your ideas on others. Be honest and upfront about your intentions at the start of your presentation and invite the audience to participate in the conversation by asking questions.

Interpersonal conflict

Your relationship with audience members and their perceptions of you can have a profound effect on how they react to your solution.

If you have criticised or opposed someone's ideas in the past, that person may still feel resentment and may try to oppose your idea.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence for improving communication challenges on the left to the correct ending on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| » An audience that can't see you | » is a non-verbal expression of emotions or reactions to what is being said. |
| » Body language | » makes it harder to have a personal connection. |
| » Over-explaining concepts | » is less likely to listen or fully connect with what you are saying. |
| » A larger audience | » can appear patronising. |

Question 2

Which of the following are ways to overcome barriers? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Education barriers can be overcome by communicating with the audience on their level. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Display as many emotions as possible to engage the audience and get them on your side. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Don't present information to an audience that you do not fully understand yourself. | » Yes | » No |
| d) No matter the argument presented, some people are strongly resistant to change. | » Yes | » No |
| e) People need to hear new ideas because these introduce new ways of doing things. | » Yes | » No |

2D Document ideas for presentation

A well-planned presentation will make a good impression and is key to success.

To be well prepared for a presentation you need to collect all of your ideas and information into one place. A communication plan can be used to document this information.

A communication plan should answer the following questions:

- What is the objective or purpose?
- What is the key message or theme?
- Who is the target audience?
- What method of communication will be used?
- What information do you need to research and how will it be structured?
- What techniques will be used to engage and elicit responses from the audience?
- What resources are required?
- How will you evaluate the communication?

Key themes and messages

Key themes and messages are essential to communicating your ideas.

The key theme or subject of your presentation is the idea, product, service, process or other creative work you want to express. Too many key themes will dilute your message, so focus on one. A key theme is a specific example of the idea in action; for example, how the product solves the customer's problem.

In a marketing context, key messages are sometimes called the 'takeaway', 'master narrative', 'elevator pitch' or 'essence' of what you want to communicate. They should be succinct, and clearly sum up what you do, what you can offer, how you are different and what value you can bring.

Key messages should be:

Concise	Use statements of one to three sentences or less than 30 seconds when spoken.
Strategic	Highlight the points of difference, benefits and value of your ideas.
Relevant	Balance the amount of information you provide with what your audience needs to know.
Compelling	Provide meaningful information designed to stimulate action.

Simple	Communicate in easy-to-understand language, avoiding jargon and acronyms.
Memorable	Use language and words that are easy for the audience to recall and repeat.
Real	Communicate in an active rather than a passive voice, avoiding the use of slogans and clichés.
Tailored	Communicate effectively to different target audiences by adapting language and depth of information where necessary.
Passion	Show enthusiasm and passion for your idea – the audience can tell if you are unsure or uncertain about any aspects.

Clarifying ideas and key messages

During the planning process it is likely that you will change and simplify your key messages several times before you present them to your audience.

There are several strategies you can use to improve the structure, scope and detail of your communication. Strategies you can use to focus your ideas or refine your key messages include:

- mind mapping
- brainstorming
- researching.

Mind mapping

Mind mapping is a creative, visual and logical means of arranging your ideas.

Ordering your thoughts using an organised diagram of circles and branches helps to refine your presentation's messages and structure your content.

You can make a mind map by following these steps.

1. Draw a large circle in the centre of a page and write the topic of your presentation inside as the central idea; for example, your product name.
2. Identify sub-themes of your main idea, write them around the circle and draw a circle around each one; then draw lines to them from the centre circle. Sub-themes may include your product's purpose, uses or features.
3. Use colour and very short phrases or single words.
4. Add images to evoke thought or to communicate the message.
5. Think of at least two main messages for each sub-theme, write them near the edges of the page and circle them; then draw lines from the relevant sub-themes to these. Main messages might describe how the product is used to solve a particular problem.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming involves listing keywords and ideas that come to mind when thinking about a certain topic.

When brainstorming, there are no right or wrong answers. It can be done on your own or with a group. The brainstorming environment should foster an uninhibited, non-judgmental burst of ideas where all contributions are valid. The key to a successful brainstorming session is to record as many ideas as possible without evaluating them.

Example

Brainstorming

Anna is the marketing and communications assistant at a shopping centre. Part of Anna's role is to organise promotional events and marketing campaigns that attract potential retail tenants to lease a store in the centre.

Anna's manager asks her to prepare a 10-minute promotional video that can be used to target youth fashion retailers. Anna needs to develop a solid elevator pitch to allow her to express exactly what the shopping centre can offer potential tenants. Anna asks five colleagues to attend a creative brainstorming session to come up with some keywords and phrases she can use in the video.

After a two-hour session, the group agrees that repeating the words 'youth culture' in the video should grab the attention of potential youth fashion retailers, as this phrase describes the way young people live, and the norms, values and practices they share. By capitalising on the shopping centre's close proximity to movie theatres and restaurants, Anna believes she can make a compelling presentation to pique the interest of her target audience and convince them to lease a retail space in the centre.

Researching

Strong research will make your presentation more effective by helping you to:

- understand your audience's needs and expectations
- persuade your audience using evidence, facts and data
- provide validity for the information presented
- assess your competitors or alternative ideas and approaches
- anticipate counter arguments.

The type of research you do will depend on your objective and key theme or message. You may be able to do research on the internet to find the information you need. This type of research is called secondary research. It involves collecting data from existing sources to back up your argument or support your position.

Secondary research is using someone else's published ideas and data. Always provide details of the authors and a weblink or website directing people to where they can locate the information you referred to. This gives the author(s) who conducted the research recognition for the work they did.

It is not always easy to determine whether information you gather is trustworthy. To identify a reputable source of information, look for an internet 'domain name'; for example:

- government: .gov
- commercial: .com
- education: .edu
- organisation: .org
- academic: .ac
- network: .net.

The domains .gov, .edu and .ac can only be registered by government and educational institutions. For this reason, they reflect a higher order of authority than .com, .org or .net sites.

Here is a list of other potential sources of information for your communication.

Personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your own reflections and opinions
The experience of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Testimonials and opinions of others ▪ Feedback received from existing users or customers, e.g. surveys
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet research ▪ Social media research
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conversations ▪ Interviews ▪ Meetings
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbooks ▪ Journal articles ▪ Research papers
Non-academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ News media ▪ Magazines ▪ Online articles
Primary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creative works ▪ Statistical data ▪ Eyewitness accounts ▪ Results of experiments

Asking others to contribute

You may need to ask your colleagues or others in your workplace, such as a manager who is familiar with the topic, to direct you to the information you require. Some people can provide you with anecdotes of their own experience that you can use in your communication.

A colleague may offer to read through your notes and provide feedback and comments. It is often good practice to have another person proofread, check spelling and offer ideas for enhancing your communication, such as observing that you have too many graphs.

Research can be conducted by an expert or specialist in their field. You may find people from researching the internet or be given their contact details from someone else. Having someone review your work is a good way to clarify and validate your arguments and proposition. This can help make your communication more focused and make your key message stronger.

When quoting information gathered from someone else you must ask their permission to reproduce or quote them in your communication.

Researching tips

Here are some tips for carrying out research.

Research your audience

Research tactics include:

- basic internet searches
- tracking trends with social media
- gathering feedback from others, such as customers or colleagues
- using computer-generated analytics.

Whatever strategy you use, researching your audience helps you put together a profile, identify their problems and tailor your presentation to their needs.

Research your competition

A competitor analysis involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of current and potential competitors. Establish what makes the idea unique and what needs to be emphasised.

Competition research tactics may include:

- internet searches of your competitors' websites
- obtaining industry analyst reports
- following your competitors on social media
- attending trade shows and conferences
- conducting surveys
- speaking to potential customers or service users.

Assessing your competitors allows you to identify opportunities they may or may not have capitalised on, and any potential threats to your own ideas.

Research market trends

A trend is anything that alters the market or industry you operate in. Understanding how your industry is influenced by market trends is essential to staying competitive and meeting the needs of your target market.

Real-time monitoring of trending topics online is a great place to start if you are looking to brainstorm ideas for new marketing content that are relevant and important to your audience. To monitor long-term trends, refer to reports from industry associations and publications such as industry-specific magazines.

Research the media

A media assessment can be used to identify the top online media and influencers in your industry. It can help you understand how to create the best content for your presentation. With this knowledge, you can choose and amplify content that resonates with your audience.

A media assessment may include:

- analysing relevant industry publications
- recognising the social influencers in your space
- analysing the channels and outlets through which content performs well in your industry.

Organising the structure

Once you have developed your idea, considered key messages and incorporated research, you need to structure your information so the delivery follows a logical format.

A clear structure will make it easy for the audience to understand and retain information. It also means you can build on your message to create an impact on the audience.

A standard presentation structure consists of:

- an introduction (including an overview of the presentation)
- a body (including evidence and arguments)
- a conclusion (including a reminder of the key points you have made).

You will need to work out how to fit the amount of information you have in the time available (e.g. a 30-minute video conference or a one-hour webinar). These decisions need to consider pitching the level of detail of your information to the audience and choosing the quotes, stories and data that will have the most impact and that illustrate and support your message.

Rehearsing the communication

Practise your presentation to improve your communication style and fine-tune your content.

Use a timer to see how long it takes to deliver the message. Make sure to allow for questions and discussion and if it is a long session, a break for the audience.

Here are some other ideas:

- Use a communication plan, notes, palm cards or electronic presentation to guide the delivery of information/ideas
- Rehearse in front of a colleague, family member or friend, and ask for feedback.
- Check your posture by standing tall and straight with your feet apart and your shoulders squared for a presentation. Centre your screen and check the background for video conference.
- Use changes in volume and pitch to prevent your voice from sounding monotonous. Check your and your audience's volume level. Change your volume when you are introducing an idea or an approach, or pause to create anticipation.
- Anticipate questions that the audience might ask and prepare answers for them.

Example

Presenting information

Marcus is the owner of a start-up tech company that is about to release a new app for consumers. The app allows them to compare the prices of one product across a broad range of online retailers. The app is an independent source of information and the company does not receive payment from retailers to endorse one product over others.

Marcus mostly uses social media to connect with his target audience. He plans to launch the new app by live streaming his presentation on YouTube. This enables the public to watch the event virtually, and allows Marcus to reach a large global audience.

Marcus prepares his presentation using anecdotes about his own shopping experiences to engage the audience, and pitches the app as a simple, easy-to-use solution to these problems. He has prepared a range of interesting and comical audio and visual props to reinforce his ideas and solutions.

Marcus delivers an entertaining and informative presentation, which includes a demonstration on how to use the app correctly. He interacts with the audience by answering viewer questions in real time, and refers to each person by name.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Number the steps from 1 to 7 in the order you would follow when planning your communication session.

- Information to include and a structure
- Techniques to engage and elicit responses
- Resources required
- Objective or purpose
- Key message or theme
- Target audience
- Method of communication

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to researching ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Research will validate information.
- Computer-generated analytics are needed when discussing trends.
- Secondary research is using someone else's published ideas and data.
- A colleague or expert can help clarify your ideas and thoughts.
- Social media is a good place to locate primary research.

Summary

- Persuasion is about convincing an audience that what you are offering is what they are looking for.
- Storytelling helps to unite your ideas with emotions. You can weave a lot of information into the story and provoke the audience's emotions and energy.
- Appealing to emotions helps to make your idea memorable and may promote an action or a response.
- Every audience will be different (e.g. uninformed, hostile or expert).
- Each audience member will have a preference for the way they like to receive information.
- Each type of communication method has its limitations and a barrier that needs to be overcome.
- A communication plan maps out the tasks you need to prepare for a communication session.
- A clear and concise key message is essential to a successful presentation.
- A thorough research of the topic means you are well prepared and able to back up statements with facts.
- Seeking a review from a colleague or expert will further refine and improve your communication.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Develop ideas for communication

1. Why is storytelling an effective way to communicate ideas? Tick all that apply.
 - Storytelling resonates with audiences.
 - Storytelling gets attention through shock and insult.
 - Storytelling helps to unite ideas with emotions.
 - Storytelling is more memorable than straight facts and figures.
 - Storytelling appeals to audiences who like to role-play.

2. Which of the following are persuasive techniques that can be used to persuade an audience? Tick all that apply.
 - Content that is engaging and powerful and connects with the audience's emotions.
 - Lots of video or other multimedia tools to keep the audience's attention.
 - Involving the audience in the presentation with physical activities and exercises.
 - Speaking quickly to ensure you get your message out before time runs out.
 - Explaining the benefit of your solution/idea.

3. Draw a line to match each key learning style that individuals use to receive and respond information on the left with its example on the right.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Learn best by listening and responding to sounds and music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Process information best when it is in logical steps and procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Auditory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Are interested in how something looks and respond to images and graphics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Auditory digital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Learn best by physically doing a task or activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Kinaesthetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Learn best by listening and responding to sounds and music

4. Which of the following are reasons for tailoring a communication to an audience? Tick all that apply.

- The audience will be engaged with the topic but hostile towards the presenter.
- The information will be more meaningful and therefore more likely to be retained.
- The expectations of the audience will be met.
- The questions the audience will ask will be known in advance.
- The level of knowledge can be determined to suit the needs of the audience.

5. Give two examples of ways to provoke and encourage a response from individuals or groups.

6. Draw a line to match each challenge that may arise during a communication on the left with its possible solution on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| » Have a back-up plan and the contact details for technical support. | » Ask that phones be turned off, and let your audience know at what point you will be taking a break. |
| » Information pitched incorrectly for the audience | » Pause at certain points, ask for audience feedback and encourage the use of the chat feature. |
| » Unable to see the presenter | » Have a back-up plan and the contact details for technical support. |
| » Distractions like a noisy background or talking among the group | » Adjust the script or ask the audience to give responses rather than simply telling the information. |
| » Determining how the communication is being received by the audience | » Pause and re-arrange equipment or ask the audience to move their seats or allow time for the adjustment of computers and so on. |

7. Which of the following are ways to research ideas for a communication? Tick all that apply.

- Speak to experts or colleagues who you can quote or whose stories you can use.
- Gather testimonials from your friends and family.
- Organise for the audience to provide information about their needs and expectations.
- Conduct secondary research on facts and figures to add validity to your ideas.
- Identify the top media and influencers on the topic and ask them to join you on stage.



Topic 3 | Debate and discuss ideas

- 3A Present a substantiated position
- 3B Challenge and explore new ideas
- 3C Refine ideas based on feedback

3A Present a substantiated position

When you present your ideas to others you need to provide evidence to support them.

A substantiated idea is one backed up or supported with evidence. The research you have conducted and the persuasive techniques you have chosen will help justify your position to the audience. For example, evidence from your research may show how a new product works or how it benefits the end user.

If you want an audience to support your cause, accept your concept or follow your process, you need to back up your position and deter others from theirs.

Substantiated positions may be:

- grounded in appropriate research
- the result of rational and logical thought
- subjected to the analysis of others through peer review
- supported by relevant evidence.

In the preparation and planning phase you will need to:

- gather persuasive information from a range of sources to help you convince the audience that your position is justifiable
- develop a position supported by evidence after researching and developing your own conceptual understanding of the topic
- write your positioning statement
- develop your argument and consider the opinions of others to improve and enhance your own learning.

Positioning

Positioning is the process of identifying an appropriate market niche for a product, service or brand.

Performing a positioning exercise prior to preparing your presentation is very helpful. This part of your presentation must be very clear and to the point. It is often called a positioning statement.

A positioning statement is an expression of how a given product, service or brand fills a particular consumer need in a new, improved or unique way. You can use positioning to capture your audience's attention by defining their problems or needs, and then explaining how you can solve these problems with what you are offering. For example, what is the impact of the problem? Does it affect more than one area? List all the areas affected by the problem and understand how the audience is impacted.

Your position in any argument depends largely on the amount of evidence available to support it.

Once you have completed enough research on an idea:

- determine the range of positions put forward by others
- make judgments about which ones are the most valid
- decide on your own position and write a positioning statement.

Writing effective positioning statements

A positioning statement should be meaningful, important and convincing. To be effective, the wording of your positioning statement must contain:

- the target market
- the idea itself
- the point of difference
- the frame of reference
- reasons to believe in the idea.

Here are some examples of positioning statements:

- For all employees, the new Company Ltd social club will bring staff members together from different departments because it will promote a diverse range of activities.
- Young people aged 15–18 years with a previous criminal conviction will learn new, practical work and life skills when they attend the community service program because the teaching staff have all had similar life experiences.

Developing your argument

Once you have chosen the position you will take, you need to develop an argument using the evidence gathered to support it.

Don't just summarise the evidence you have gathered; use it to back up your position and develop your argument.

When developing your argument, keep the following in mind:

- Base your argument on a logical structure in order to be persuasive.
- Try using a sequence of points that describe your own way of seeing the topic.
- Choose key messages that are useful to support your position.
- Show the inadequacies of other ideas that contradict your position.

You can prepare your argument by following these steps:

Identify your position	If you haven't already done so, write a positioning statement that clearly identifies what you are arguing, or the point you are trying to prove.
Know the main points in your argument	Break down your argument into steps. Focus on the various things that led you to deciding on your final position.
Structure your argument	Link the points in your argument by discussing them in a logical order and drawing connections between them wherever possible.
Use evidence	To argue convincingly, draw on the evidence you have gathered to support each of your points. Without evidence, all you have is an unsupported claim.
Consider counter-arguments	Consider the possible counter-arguments. This allows you to address potential objections before they are raised.
Have a clear conclusion	Show how your position is supported by the evidence you have presented. Don't just summarise your argument. Instead, try to explain how each point works with the others to contribute to your argument as a whole.

Presenting and arguing your position

While presenting your argument, you must earn the support of your audience.

Here are some tips for presenting and arguing your position on an idea:

- Clearly state the structure and main points of your argument at the outset of your presentation.
- Articulate your ideas and requirements clearly and creatively using techniques appropriate to the audience and environment.
- Present ideas and information that provoke interest and response from the audience.
- Give the audience enough time throughout the presentation to absorb the information, look at your presentation slides and/or write down notes.
- Don't be afraid to restate or repeat your position, especially when a point is complicated.

- Include some pauses at pivotal moments that give listeners a chance to take in important points.
- Invite your audience to contribute, then listen to and consider their opinions.
- Conclude your presentation with a question if you want to facilitate a discussion on a particular issue.

Responding to questions

Respond to questions about your ideas confidently and with relevant information.

This is useful advice for any situation where you communicate, whether you are presenting your ideas to others, participating in a debate or discussion, or having conversations with interested parties. When people ask you questions – even if the questions appear to be negative or hostile – it is usually because they genuinely want to know the answer. When you have finished answering questions, make sure you have the last word with a strong statement about your key message or point.

Consider these ways of responding to questions:

- Set aside sufficient time for questions during or at the end of your presentation and limit the amount of time available.
- Anticipate the types of questions people may ask and prepare informed responses in advance.
- Treat your audience with respect.
- Listen carefully to the question and repeat it if necessary, to ensure everyone in the audience has heard it.
- If you're not sure you understood the question correctly, rephrase or repeat it back to the questioner to check that you have understood it.
- Answer audience questions directly, honestly and succinctly.
- Use a range of persuasive responses and make comparisons that show your understanding of the idea or topic.
- Never lose your temper or be rude to the questioner; you might offer to talk about their question one on one after the presentation or discussion.
- If you don't know the answer, say so and offer to find out more information. Make sure you follow up with the audience member to ensure they receive the information they require.
- If you are speaking to a well-informed audience, consider asking if anyone else would like to respond.

Example

Developing a positioning statement

Tony is preparing a social media marketing campaign for his client, Bookshelf.com. His purpose is to convince internet users that Bookshelf.com provides the best online retail book experience for customers. Tony does his research and discovers that the website has two main competitors in terms of cost and delivery times. However, what sets Bookshelf.com apart is that it promises to refund customers in full if their order is not fulfilled and received within five business days. This is regardless of whether they receive the goods or not.

Tony develops the following positioning statement:

For avid online readers, Bookshelf.com is a retail bookseller that provides easy-to-access eBooks for over 2 million titles. Unlike regular bookstores, Bookshelf.com provides the perfect blend of convenience and discount prices for an extensive selection of titles.

Tony begins developing his social media marketing campaign, using the positioning statement as the key to attract a new customer base for Bookshelf.com. The campaign will also include video testimonials from real customers who have switched to Bookshelf.com from its competitors.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

- When you present your position on ideas, it is only convincing if you use evidence to support your argument.
- Substantiated positions are the result of rational and logical thought.
- To argue convincingly, draw on the evidence you have gathered to support each point you make. Without evidence, all you have is an unsupported claim.
- When presenting your ideas, you can make up facts and statistics to reinforce your position.
- Evidence to support your ideas is not necessary and only confuses your audience.

Question 2

Number the steps from 1 to 6 in the order you would follow to develop an argument.

- Use evidence
- Consider counter-arguments
- Have a clear conclusion
- Identify your position
- Know the main points in your argument
- Structure your argument

Question 3

Which of the following are ways to respond to questions from an audience? Tick all that apply.

- Anticipate the types of questions people may ask and be prepared for possible responses.
- Avoid questions by not giving the audience an opportunity to ask questions.
- Listen carefully to the question and repeat it if necessary, to ensure everyone in the audience has heard it.
- If you are speaking to a well-informed audience, give an answer that they won't be able to understand.

3B Challenge and explore new ideas

Many people find communicating in front of a group a challenge.

By expressing yourself in front of an audience, you open yourself up to being judged, making mistakes, stumbling over your words, misjudging your audience or having your ideas rejected.

Taking risks

Thinking outside the box reveals creativity and innovation.

We discussed the need for good planning earlier on, but sometimes taking risks results in rewards. Look out for opportunities to take some chances with your communications, such as allowing the discussion to move to an area you did not anticipate, but that is still relevant and helpful to the topic. You may also choose to move away from an exact script to make the interaction more conversational.

Being prepared to abandon a traditional presentation technique or to allow your communication to move in a direction you hadn't planned will create interest and pique curiosity in your audience.

One way to attract your audience's attention is to create something completely original, with your own personal touch. Use your creativity and imagination to involve the audience in ways they wouldn't expect, without making them feel uncomfortable. Taking risks may also teach you something about your skills and build your confidence.

Taking risks may involve:

- acknowledging your own limits and difficulties
- asking for help
- breaking out of accepted norms
- revealing personal information or vulnerabilities
- failing and learning from it
- incorporating humour into your presentation
- taking a fun, light-hearted approach.

Exploring new ideas

Participating in conversations that challenge and explore different ideas is essential for generating new ideas.

It is difficult to come up with an idea if you don't consult the people who will use it or benefit from it. Seek out information from a variety of sources, including those that do not align with your position. Ideas that appeal to one group may need to be adapted to suit the needs of another. Having conversations with interested parties or stakeholders can help you find out about their needs, investigate different ways of doing things, and develop ideas that meet the specific needs of your audience.

Critically analysing new ideas

A critical analysis is a task that requires you to summarise and evaluate an idea.

To effectively debate and discuss ideas with an audience, you must be open to critical analysis of your ideas and know how to review and evaluate other people's ideas.

Conducting a critical analysis involves listening to and understanding an idea in detail and learning about similar ideas so you can present a fair and reasonable evaluation of the idea.

Being critical does not always mean being negative. Critical analysis involves questioning the information and opinions of others and presenting your evaluation or judgment constructively. To do this, you must understand the idea from different perspectives and in relation to reliable evidence.

Analysis requires separating the content and concepts of an idea into their main parts, then understanding how these interrelate, connect and influence each other.

To critically analyse an idea:

- consider the idea in question
- understand its content and purpose
- identify its intended audience
- understand why it is designed or structured the way it is.

Participating in critical debate and discussion

A critical debate is much more than people arguing about something. A debate involves two or more people who are intent on proving their own statements. They may also argue against any statement or assertion they are opposed to.

A discussion is a detailed conversation between two or more people that is centred on a particular topic.

You may need to discuss and debate ideas with colleagues, partners, investors, and existing or potential consumers to receive critical feedback about why your idea does or does not work, and how it could be improved to better meet the needs of the end users.

Engaging in critical discussion allows you to participate in the verbal exchange of ideas and elicit the views and opinions of others by listening and questioning. It provides an opportunity for you to inform yourself and others on an issue, exchange ideas and formulate arguments on an important decision.

The following tables list some ways to actively and confidently participate in critical debate and discussion.

Participate in a critical debate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek out high-quality information from a variety of well-respected sources, including those that do not align with your position. ▪ Use your research to create arguments and use evidence to support your position. ▪ Use reasoning to show how the evidence supports your conclusion. ▪ Acknowledge counter-arguments and explain why you believe your position is stronger or preferable. ▪ Focus on the arguments and issues at hand, not on attacking those who disagree. ▪ Listen carefully at all times to understand the arguments of others. ▪ Share your thoughts and opinions in a non-judgmental way. ▪ Use a clear and logical structure when presenting your arguments.
Participate in a critical discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask questions to start the discussion. ▪ Listen to and actively process what you hear. ▪ Identify the main ideas being discussed. ▪ Pay close attention, focus on what is being discussed and ensure the discussion remains relevant. ▪ Evaluate what is being said and consider how it relates to the main idea. ▪ Have an open mind and be willing to hear new ideas and other points of view. ▪ Check your understanding by rephrasing what other speakers are saying. ▪ Ask other speakers to expand on their points and to give examples or provide more information to clarify a point.

Example

Performing a critical analysis

Kym is an independent fashion designer. She designs and makes children's clothing to sell in boutique kids' fashion retailers across the country. Kym has had an idea for developing a new denim range. She needs to critically analyse the product to determine how fit it is for its purpose, whether it meets the needs of the target market, and how well it is designed and made.

Critically analysing the product involves answering the following questions:

- Does the product measure up to the design specification, based on the requirements of the target market and the manufacturing facilities available?
- Does it address the needs of the target market?
- How suitable is it for use and what are its care requirements?
- What is the quality of the fibres, fabrics and manufacture – including stitching, fastenings and seam allowance?
- What are the product's aesthetic appeal and stylistic qualities, i.e. will people like it and want it?
- Does it provide value for money?
- Does the product meet safety regulations?
- What is its environmental impact?

Kym starts by looking at other designers' work and analysing the choices they have made. She then considers how successfully her product meets the criteria in the above questions and what could be changed to improve it. Kym compares her developing work against the design specifications, and records judgments, improvements and feedback from potential customers.

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) A critical debate means arguing about something in a negative way. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Inviting others to review and evaluate your ideas means you can make improvements. | » Yes | » No |
| c) It is difficult to come up with an idea if you don't consult the people who will use it or benefit from it. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Taking risks can teach you something about your skills and build your confidence. | » Yes | » No |

Question 2

Which of the following statements refer to critical analysis of ideas? Tick all that apply.

- Critical analysis is like a criticism.
- Critical analysis requires you to summarise and evaluate an idea.
- You must listen to and understand the idea in detail, so you can evaluate it.
- During a debate, you can refuse to review and evaluate the ideas of others.

3C Refine ideas based on feedback

To get the most out of your ideas, you need to consider the views and perspectives of your audience.

Assess the value or quality of other people's contributions to help refine your own ideas, or to embrace new ones. When you listen to your audience and welcome their thoughts, ideas and opinions, they may respond more openly and willingly to what you have to say.

Drawing on a wide range of views helps you consider aspects of your communication from the audience's point of view.

- Listening to and acting on the views of others:
- provides you with opportunities to develop and apply new ideas
- allows you to investigate different, creative ways to express and communicate.

Receiving feedback

Feedback can be collected via survey forms, focus groups, one-on-one interviews or a friend.

Following your communication, you should gather feedback to review how successful the presentation was in terms of audience reaction and the achievement of your objectives.

In the planning stage you should have selected the review method/s you wish to use.

A formal method of collecting feedback may use a list of structured questions that each audience member responds to. An informal method would be to arrange for a conversation and discuss the outcomes and ways you could have done things differently. You could take notes of the discussion.

The audience can be questioned immediately after the communication has finished. This way, the audience can respond with their immediate reactions. In some cases it may be more appropriate to email feedback questions and ask participants to send it in by a due date. You may need to follow up with a reminder as the rate of response can be lower using this method.

Being open to critical analysis

One of the risks you take when presenting an idea is that others may disagree with you and have a negative response or be unmoved by your communication.

View feedback as recommendations and ideas for improving and refining the way you communicate in future sessions.

How to be open to critical analysis of your ideas:

- Welcome feedback and reviews from a variety of people.
- Think of feedback as an opportunity to improve your skills, ideas and relationships.
- Engage in a productive conversation with the people analysing and evaluating your ideas.
- Ask questions to clarify and deconstruct feedback and share your perspective as well.
- Seek specific examples to help you understand the issues and possible solutions to address them.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting or review so you can articulate what you will do to improve or adapt your idea.
- If you disagree with any feedback you receive, develop a well-supported argument as to why you made particular choices or used particular techniques to develop your idea.
- Don't fear failure – if you try something and it doesn't work, learn from the experience and try to do it differently next time.

Evaluating and refining ideas

Use feedback to evaluate your ideas and refine them for a better presentation.

Most people find it difficult to receive feedback. When evaluating feedback and using it to refine your ideas and the way you present them, keep an open mind to the possibilities of new knowledge, techniques and opportunities.

- Some of the feedback you receive may prompt you to refine your communication. This could mean:
 - removing content
 - using a different delivery technique or adding a new technique
 - incorporating images or more graphics
 - making minor changes to content to make the message clearer
 - making the communication more suited to the audience
 - cutting the length of your presentation so it is as short and succinct as possible.

Example

Seeking feedback on performance

Max is a health consultant employed to deliver presentations to organisations. As part of the service and his organisation's procedures, he is required to seek feedback on the presentation to improve the content and delivery for future presentations. At the beginning of the session he tells participants that they will be asked to complete an evaluation when he has finished his talk.

He uses the organisation's feedback form, which asks a series of questions about the expertise of the presenter, the format of the presentation, whether outcomes were achieved, and whether participants were satisfied with the content and the support they received. Responses require participants to select 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' to a range of statements and add comments if desired.

During the question session at the end of the presentation, Max makes note of any additional verbal comments he receives that relate to the delivery of the content, particularly where people have not understood what he has said. Max then distributes the forms, gives people an opportunity to complete them, and collects them for later review.

Practice Task 10

Which of the following statements describe how to evaluate a communication? Tick all that apply.

- Critique your own presentation as you know and understand it best.
- Feedback will reveal the audience's reaction and the achievement of your objectives.
- Ask for specific examples from negative feedback to help you understand how you can improve.
- Feedback can open you to new knowledge, techniques and opportunities.
- Be prepared to argue any negative feedback you receive.

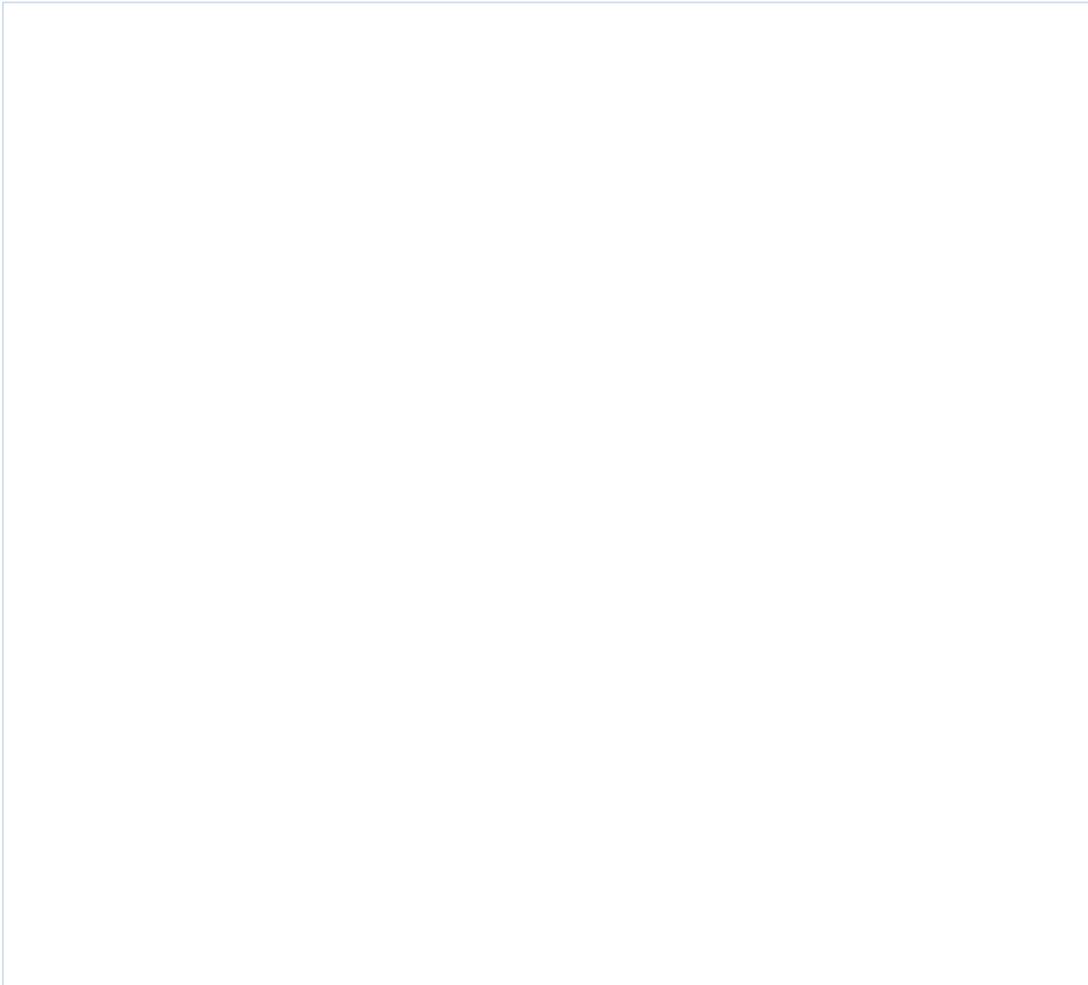
Summary

- A substantiated idea is one backed up or supported with evidence.
- A positioning statement captures the audience's attention by defining their problems or needs, and then explaining how you can solve these problems with what you are offering.
- Once you have chosen the position you will take, you need to develop an argument using the evidence gathered to support it.
- When people ask questions, they genuinely want to know the answer.
- Being prepared to abandon a traditional presentation technique or allow it to move in a direction you hadn't planned can open up the way for new ideas and creative ways to explore new ideas.
- Critical analysis of new ideas involves separating the content and concepts of an idea into their main parts, then understanding how these interrelate, connect and influence one another.
- Critical discussion allows you to elicit the views and opinions of others by listening and questioning. It provides an opportunity for you to inform yourself and others on an issue, exchange ideas and formulate arguments on an important decision.
- Methods of collecting feedback include survey forms, focus groups, one-on-one interviews or a friend.
- Invite others to review and evaluate your idea and make recommendations on ways you could improve your presentation.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Debate and discuss ideas

1. Identify three ways to present and argue a substantiated position on an idea.



2. Which of the following are ways to challenge existing ideas and explore the generation of new ideas with an audience? Tick all that apply.
 - Be open to critical analysis of your ideas.
 - Make a judgment of the information and opinions of others.
 - Try to understand the idea from different perspectives and in relation to reliable evidence.
 - Acknowledge counter-arguments and explain why you believe your position is stronger or preferable.
 - Focus less on the arguments and issues and more on attacking those who disagree.

3. Which of the following statements are correct for responding to questions from an audience? Select yes or no for each one.

- a) If you don't know the answer, ignore the question and redirect the conversation. >> Yes >> No
- b) If you are speaking to a well-informed audience, ask if anyone else would like to respond. >> Yes >> No
- c) If the person takes too long or you don't understand the question, move on. >> Yes >> No
- d) Set aside sufficient time for questions. >> Yes >> No
- e) Respond to every question even though they may be hostile or negative. >> Yes >> No

4. Why is it important to reflect on and appraise the views of others? Tick all that apply.

- When you listen to your audience and welcome their thoughts, ideas and opinions, they may respond more willingly and openly to what you have to say.
- Reflection is only useful if someone complains.
- Drawing on a diverse range of views helps you consider aspects of your idea from the end user's point of view.
- It will help you identify how you can refine your ideas or designs in ways that meet individual needs and differences.

5. Give two examples of constructive ways to use feedback on your communication.