



Mastering Effective Communication:

A Path to Stronger Connection

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Picture this: you've just attended a presentation packed with exciting insights and ideas. Yet, as you talk with others you realize what you took away isn't what others in the room heard. How did the same message lead to such different interpretations?

Despite the critical role communication plays in any successful organization, research paints a troubling picture:

- **87%** of employees don't feel that their employer communicates effectively
- **70%** of managers acknowledge difficulty communicating with employees
- **42%** of missed deadlines and extended timelines stem from miscommunication
- **30%** of employees report poor communication as cause of project failure

What Did You Hear?

Many communications fail to deliver their intended message or obtain the desired effect and impact.

Sometimes listeners are eager to hear new ideas and embrace change, while others need time and repetition. Still, there are some who simply tune out, unwilling to accept the message at all.

This mirrors [Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory](#) and [Geoffrey Moore's Crossing the Chasm](#), which categorize audiences into different "adopter groups":

Innovators & Early Adopters: Those eager to embrace new ideas.

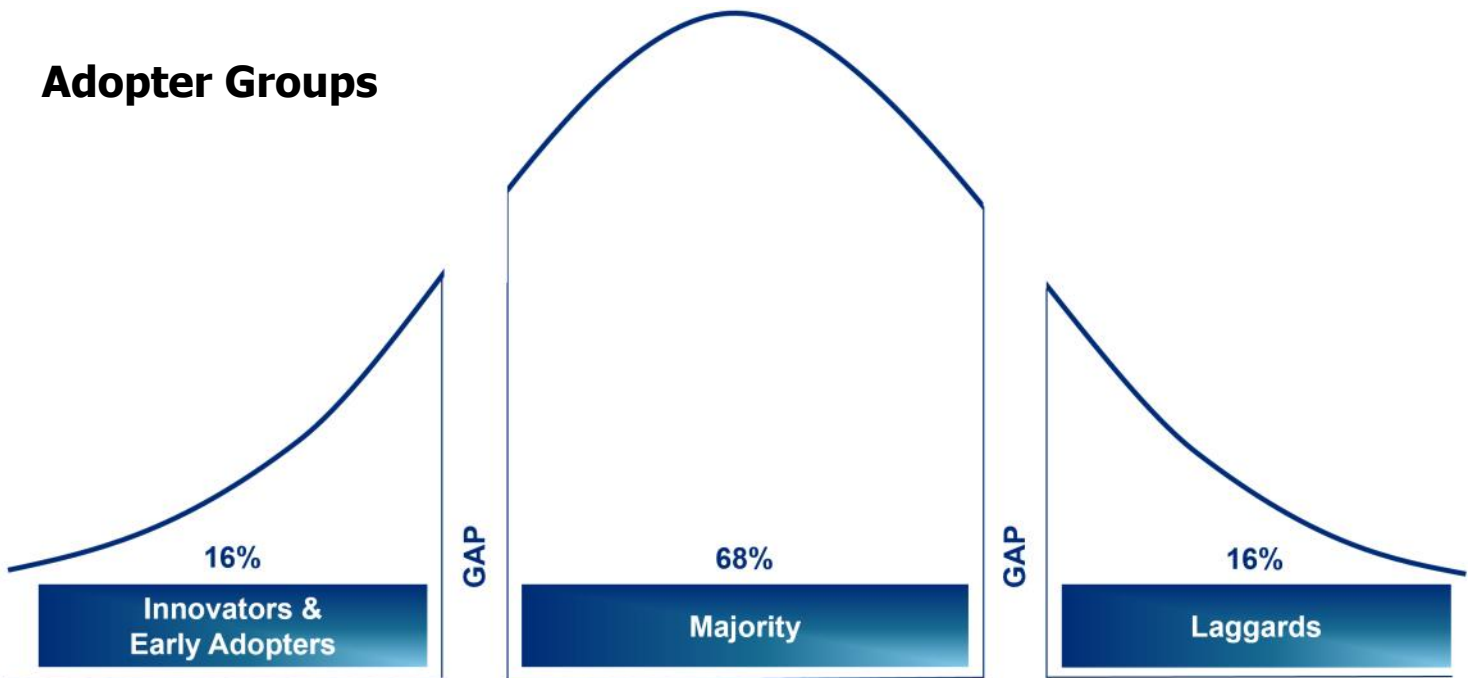
The Majority: Those who need context and repetition to buy in.

Laggards: Those who resist change and often ignore the message altogether.

Within an audience there is a gap between these "adopter groups" that creates communication challenges. Because of this gap, communicators must target each of these groups individually for the message to be effective.



Adopter Groups



Understanding these adopter groups helps communicators tailor and target messages that resonate within these different groups. Tailoring messages to the needs of each group, whether through excitement for early adopters or reassurances for the apprehensive, ensures your communication reaches its intended effect.

Why Communication is Tough – And How to Get Better

Delivering communication effectively is not easy. Often, we use a one-size-fits-all approach, blasting the same message to diverse stakeholders. In addition to adopter groups, audiences are often made up of diverse stakeholder groups who have different interests and priorities. Therefore, the message and approach may need to be adjusted for each of these groups.

If we don't tailor our messages and manage communication channels properly, audiences can become overwhelmed, mishear, or miss out.





Best Practices for Effective Communication



1. Be Clear and Consistent:

- Define the behavioral changes your communication aims to inspire.
- Stick to your core message with clear talking points.

2. Be Timely and Frequent:

- Start early and follow-up often to ensure your communication reaches your audience.
- Keep your messages short, precise, and avoid overwhelming your audience.
- Identify [change agents](#) within the stakeholder and adopter groups who can support communication delivery and utilize the grapevine to cascade communications.

3. Be Repetitive and Creative:

- Reinforce your message through multiple channels and repeat.
- Use diverse communication channel formats based on how each group prefers to receive communication. Examples of channels include email, meetings, newsletters, intranet, video blogs, bulletin boards, hallway posters, digital notifications, etc.

4. Be Targeted:

- Avoid generic “one size fits all” messaging. Tailor content to appeal to each stakeholder group’s motivations and emotions.
- Keep different adopter groups in mind when communicating with each stakeholder group

5. Be Accountable:

- Establish expectations that those closest to the topic own the process and develop the communication.
- Understand the requirements for using various communication channels.

6. Be Supportive:

- Help your audience by tracking and coordinating all communications to avoid overload and mixed messages coming from different owners.
- Offer tools and templates, guidance, and support to those developing communication.
- Provide opportunities for two-way communication to receive acknowledgements and feedback.



Getting Started: Steps to Improve Your Communication

Start improving communication with these four steps:

1. Identify Your Audience

- Break down your audience into stakeholder groups and consider how the communication affects each one.
- Identify and highlight the benefits and impacts relevant to each group.
- Clarify the behavior change desired when each group receives the communication.
- Identify what will hinder communication and what will help/strengthen communication for each group and determine how to mitigate communication barriers.

2. Make a Plan

- Create a communication schedule that includes early and frequent targeted messages, reinforcing them at key intervals to build understanding and acceptance.
- The timing of communications should start early to cover initial announcements and build awareness, reinforce often with future messages that grow understanding and continue to expose information and reassure.
- Plan reminder and refresher messages to keep the audience up to date and to sustain acceptance and understanding.

3. Develop the Message

- Outline 2–3 talking points for each scheduled communication that clearly explain the "why they should care" and the behavior changes expected.
- Choose the right delivery channels for each planned communication. Using diverse methods (channels) for communication delivery is essential in reaching your target audience groups.
- Specify who will own development and delivery of each scheduled communication and determine if any approvals are required.

4. Deliver and Follow-up

- Release your communications per the scheduled timeline.
- Consider identifying communication advocates or change agents to assist reaching your audience groups.
- When appropriate, partner with the marketing and communication departments to help in communicating with your audiences.
- Seek feedback on your communications to confirm you are reaching your audience. Utilize tools such as surveys and quizzes.



Advance Your Communication Practices

To take your communication to the next level, consider these strategies:

- **Understand why you communicate:** Identify the catalysts that drive your communication.
- **Develop tools and templates:** Streamline communication planning for efficient and consistent execution with templates designed around key communication catalysts.
- **Establish a communication center of excellence:** Form a group that can educate on communication practices, provide consistent support and advice for all communication efforts, and maintain tools and templates.
- **Track and adjust:** Coordinate communications being delivered across the organization, measure communication effectiveness, and continuously refine your approach based on feedback.



Measure Your Communication Impact

Whenever possible, use platforms that provide analytics to track your communications: who engaged with the message, which channels were accessed, who provided feedback, etc. The insights from these tracking and analytical tools can help you refine future communications and ensure your audience is engaged.

Once you identify which messages perform well, adjust future communications tone, timing, and content to replicate that success.



How MAKE Solutions can help

Improving communication within your organization requires a structured approach. [MAKE's operational excellence team](#) offers tools, workshops, and consulting services to help healthcare IT teams optimize their communication strategies.

Explore our free [resources online](#) to discover your opportunities and gain supporting tools for driving improvement. For further operational excellence insights, review other articles on our website under [Assets-Insights](#).

Visit our website at makesolutionsinc.com to learn more about [MAKE's consulting services](#), or contact Tamara Pomerantz, VP Client Operations, Tamara.Pomerantz@makesolutionsinc.com.

