COMMUNICATE CHANGE

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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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INTRODUCTION

Change is an inevitable part of life. In Toastmasters, you may deal with changes in club membership, meeting place and time, or club officers, among other things. Those who are affected by change deserve to receive the appropriate information in a timely manner.

When you are responsible for communicating change, you have a unique responsibility. Whether the change is positive or negative, effective communicators explain why the change is needed while remaining empathetic to the audience's needs and feelings.

In this project, you will create a communication plan for which you will:

- Gather evidence to support the need for adopting a change.

- Shape this evidence into a message that is tailored to your audience's needs.

- Communicate the change.

You will focus on the positive outcomes of the change, support those who may not welcome it, and illustrate your plan via clear and actionable steps.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice the skills needed to effectively communicate change to a group or organization.

Overview: Develop a plan for communicating a change to an audience affected by the change. At a club meeting, communicate the change in a 5- to 7-minute speech. You may speak about a real or hypothetical change that affects your club or another group in your life. This speech is not a report on the content of this project, but a speech about how you would or will communicate a real or hypothetical change.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 12.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.

Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.

Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.

Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.

Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

5	4	3	2	1
EXEMPLARY	EXCEL	ACCOMPLISHED	EMERGING	DEVELOPING

Pre-Project	Statement	Post-Project
5 4 3 2 1	I am comfortable gathering and organizing evidence to support the need for adopting a change.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I can clearly and effectively illustrate the need to adopt new behaviors or policies that benefit the whole.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am able to speak honestly and focus on the positive outcomes, while expressing empathy when changes may not be welcome.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I know how to support those affected by the change.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am able to focus on the positive elements of change.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5 4 3 2 1

COMPETENCIES

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Gather and organize evidence to support the need for adopting the change.

- Craft your findings into communications that create logical and emotional arguments for change.

- Communicate the need for the change clearly.

- Focus on the possible positive outcomes of the change.

- Empathize with those for whom this change may not be welcome.

- Support those whom the change affects.

- Follow up with action.

- Illustrate your plan for the change through your communication.

PLAN YOUR COMMUNICATION

In order to develop a communication plan, you must first be clear on the reason for the change. To prepare, begin by acquiring in-depth knowledge of the proposed change. Develop a list of the benefits of change for your audience and prepare to give evidence supporting those benefits.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When presenting to an unfamiliar group, research the demographics before addressing change. Some examples of demographics are:

- Age

- Gender

- Cultural background

- Political or religious affiliation

- Ethnicity

- Ability

- Economic status

- Employment status

Make sure your presentation focuses on points of interest the group may share. Identify anything you have in common with your audience to make a connection on a personal level.

Before you present, make an effort to understand how the change will affect your audience and their day-to-day lives. Some changes are welcome, but not all. Prepare for a variety of responses by making a list of possible questions and concerns.

For example, an officer of your club is moving away and a replacement must be found.

You may choose to focus on how club officers will give more people an opportunity to contribute to the culture of the club. It can also give new perspective to old topics or methods.

COMMUNICATE CHANGE

Deliver the Information
Communicate change in person whenever possible.

Be Present
Expressing empathy for individuals affected by change occurs more naturally when you are present to share important information and hear immediate feedback. It can be difficult to express empathy and concern when communicating electronically.

Communicate with Care
If you must use email or telephone, make sure your message is succinct and clear. No matter what form your communication takes, make sure all content is diplomatic and tactful.

Gather Information
Gather enough information to provide the audience with a comprehensive overview of the change. Choose the most relevant information to avoid overwhelming your audience.

Be Open
If the change is not finalized when you address the audience, an open exchange of information and opinions may be necessary during or after your speech.

Explain Timeframes
Explain all timeframes associated with the change. Giving your audience time to adjust any elements of their day-to-day lives that are affected is essential for smooth transitions.

Develop a Plan
If the change requires a high level of compliance from your audience, you may need to develop a plan for implementation that includes the opportunity for feedback and activities designed to build consensus.

Be Clear

Support the reasons for the change with sufficient research, and present it in a clear and orderly manner. Use inclusive language and examples and remove as much ambiguity as possible.

Cite the Benefits

Cite examples of similar situations where a change had a positive effect. Your objective is to enable those impacted by the change to visualize how the projected outcome benefits them versus the status quo.

Share Sources

Name the sources of your research and share the information with your audience. The more specific you can make your communication, the better.

Inspire Trust

Remain aware of your delivery style. The way you sound and appear to an audience can help or hinder the effectiveness of your message. By being honest, straightforward, and empathetic, you will inspire trust.

A large part of your delivery style will be based upon your tone. Tone is a particular quality or modulation of the voice to express a specific meaning or feeling.

Determine your tone based on what you know about your audience and the situational aspects of the change. Here are some examples of possible tones and when to use them:

Light-hearted

For presenting a new amenity or benefit

Stern

For speaking about the new commitment to enforcing rules

Professional

For formally announcing a new person in a leadership role

Comforting

For supporting those who have experienced a loss

Provide your audience with a plan or set of next steps to follow in relation to the change. Clearly explain what you want and outline actionable steps.

An actionable step is an activity you can accomplish. An actionable step can be simple and practical, such as reviewing a map for the route you will take to the new venue for your Toastmasters club meeting. It can also be complex, such as creating a list of new goals based on your changed environment. By asking for participation, you provide the opportunity for those affected by change to feel more invested in the change process.

Offer support and be available to audience members affected by the change. Your presence and willingness to assist others will help to smooth transitions during the change process.

FOLLOW UP ON COMMUNICATION

Once you have delivered your message, keep in mind that your audience may have follow-up questions or comments.

- Keep the lines of communication open, both immediately after you have delivered your message and throughout the process.

- Allocate time to seek out and support those whom the change will affect, when appropriate.

- Demonstrate your empathy and understanding by remaining an active presence in the lives of your audience members.

DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

The Communicate Change Worksheet provided on page 16 can help you develop a plan for communicating change. It will assist you in defining your audience, your timeline, and your approach.

REVIEW AND APPLY

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What strategies can you use to gather and organize evidence to support the need for adopting the change?

- How can you craft your findings into communications that create logical and emotional arguments for change?

- Why is it important to communicate the need for the change clearly?

- How will you identify the positive outcomes of a change you must communicate?

- Why is empathy important when communicating change?

- What methods will you use to support those whom the change affects?

- What is the value of following up with action?

- How will you illustrate your plan for the change through your communication?

COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report.

Review: Return to page 3 to review your assignment.

Organize: Use the Project Checklist on page 12 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

Schedule: Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.

Prepare: Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 13-15 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice the skills needed to effectively communicate change to a group or organization.

Overview: Develop a plan for communicating a change to an audience affected by the change. At a club meeting, communicate the change in a 5- to 7-minute speech. You may speak about a real or hypothetical change that affects your club or another group in your life. This speech is not a report on the content of this project, but a speech about how you would or will communicate a real or hypothetical change.

This project includes:

- Developing a plan for communicating change
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

☐ **Schedule your speech with the vice president education.**

_____

_____

☐ **Write your speech.**

_____

_____

☐ **Rehearse your speech.**

_____

_____

☐ **After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.**

_____

_____

Member Name _____   Date _____

Evaluator _____   **Speech Length:** 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title

Purpose Statements
- The purpose of this project is for the member to practice the skills needed to effectively communicate change to a group or organization.
- The purpose of this speech is for the member to practice speaking about change.

Notes for the Evaluator
The member completing this project spent time preparing a plan for communicating change to groups affected by the change. Check with the member to understand the change and the audience your club represents.

Listen for: A well-organized speech about a real or hypothetical change. The speech may be humorous or informational, but must reflect an understanding of the audience. For example, if the member is announcing the departure of a company's CEO, it would likely be inappropriate to give a humorous speech. Focus part of your evaluation on how effectively the member communicates the change, both in tone and with ample information about the impact of the change.

General Comments
You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5	4	3	2	1
EXEMPLARY	EXCELS	ACCOMPLISHED	EMERGING	DEVELOPING

Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Communication: Effectively communicates the need for change

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

Tone: The tone and content of the speech are appropriate for the change described

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

Clarity
5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety
5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact
5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures
5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness
5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice

1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level
5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest
5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Communication
5 – Explanation of the need for change is exemplary
4 – Gives a clear and highly effective explanation of the need for change
3 – Effectively communicates the need for change
2 – Provides a vague or unsatisfactory need for change
1 – Does not effectively communicate the need for change

Tone
5 – Uses tone and content to enhance an exemplary speech about a change
4 – Makes excellent use of tone and content to effectively deliver the speech about change
3 – The tone and content of the speech are appropriate for the change described
2 – The tone and content of the speech seem somewhat disconnected from the change described
1 – The tone and content of the speech are inappropriate for the change described

COMMUNICATE CHANGE WORKSHEET

Change	Stakeholder group	How does the change affect this group?	Who will communicate with this group?	Communication dates	Follow-up/notes
Timeline and Action					