

five ways to influence



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balancing act



If you've an audience that doesn't agree with what you want to do, then issuing communications saying how great you are won't help.

In your view, demolishing six empty homes may benefit people - but if they don't agree, issuing statements and newsletters pushing the benefits will only rub them up the wrong way. Instead consider why people might feel the way they do, include the advantages and disadvantages of your proposal and explain why that's influenced the decision you've made.



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reach out



Don't ignore the dissenters.

They have a right to be heard as much as you and by keeping the communication channels open, resolution is made far more likely. Consider the best method of communication - your opponents might have picked the media as a forum, but you don't have to use that tool to respond. Write a letter directly, hold a meeting or perhaps have a phone conference.

In some cases, there will be different groups of dissenters - people you can win over and those you can't. Know the difference and act accordingly.



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mind the gap



Thinking silence is golden won't help you shine.

You might not have wanted or expected a battle, and might think that you know better than the audience in question - but by not communicating, the problem will only get worse. The human mind plugs gaps in communication, with interpretation. Put a spanner in the rumour mill by being consistent with your message.



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stay positive



An audience reacts better to positive messages than negative ones.

So rather than telling people 'if this doesn't happen then 600 people will lose their jobs', say if it does 'we can safeguard 600 jobs'. Negative messages can seem like threats, and that means the general public as well as your direct opposition will be against you.



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monitor



If you're using communication to achieve an objective, then it's important you monitor who is saying what and when.

Ensure you keep a record of media coverage, but also test what people think about the issue. If you know that 56% of people were against your plans to close a local office in March, then test in April to see if it's changed. If not, consider what communication options are available to you to ensure your message is getting through.



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mark my words

If you want to boost your communication, we can help. The Bridge Group offers the following communication services:

- Pro-active PR
- Interview skills training
- Presentation skills training
- Crisis PR

For more information on these services, please contact Jonathon Bright on 024 7656 0440. Or you can e-mail us at marketing@bridge-group.co.uk

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