

Communication Streamlining Workshop

Optimizing Communication Volume, Channels & Effectiveness

Facilitator packet

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Workshop Purpose

Effective communication isn't about more—it's about better. This workshop helps teams assess whether they're drowning in communication or starving for it, identify what's working and what's noise, and create streamlined systems where people feel truly heard and understood.

Assess Volume

Too much or too little?

Measure Impact

Are people actually heard?

Streamline Systems

Create clarity & efficiency

Part 1: Your Communication Profile

Anonymous responses welcomed

Your Name (Optional)

Your Role

On average, how many emails/messages do you receive daily about work?

How many meetings do you attend per week?

Part 2: Communication Volume Assessment

Rate: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Volume & Overload Evaluation

I receive too many emails/messages to keep up with daily

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I'm CC'd on emails that don't require my input or action

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I spend more time managing communication than doing my actual work

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Critical information gets lost in the volume of messages

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I have too many communication channels to monitor (email, Slack, Teams, etc.)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Meetings take up so much time that I can't complete my other responsibilities

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I attend meetings where I'm not needed or don't contribute

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

The same information is communicated through multiple channels unnecessarily

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I feel overwhelmed by the constant flow of communication

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I have to work outside normal hours just to catch up on communication

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Decision-making is slowed down by too many people being involved

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Communication feels like 'busywork' rather than productive exchange

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Volume Score: ____ / 60

⚠ Critical Overload: Communication volume is severely impacting productivity. Immediate intervention needed.

⚠ Moderate Overload: Communication volume is problematic. Streamlining required.

i Manageable Volume: Some areas for improvement, but generally sustainable.

✓ Healthy Volume: Communication volume is well-managed. Focus on maintaining quality.

Part 3: Communication Effectiveness Assessment

Quality matters more than quantity

Impact & Effectiveness Evaluation

Communications have clear purpose and expected outcomes

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I receive information through the most appropriate channel

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Messages are concise and easy to understand

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

I know who needs to be included in communications and who doesn't

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Follow-up and action items from communications are clear

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Important information reaches me in a timely manner

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

The right people are involved in decision-making communications

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Communications are organized in a way that I can find information later

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Response expectations (timeline, format) are clear

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Communication doesn't create more confusion than clarity

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Effectiveness Score: ____ / 50

✓ Highly Effective: Communication systems are working well. Minor optimization opportunities.

ⓘ Moderately Effective: Solid foundation but significant room for improvement.

⚠ Low Effectiveness: Communication systems need major restructuring.

⚠ Dysfunctional: Communication is creating more problems than it solves. Complete overhaul needed.

Part 4: Identifying Communication Problems

Check all that apply to your team

Common Communication Issues

Volume

- ☐ Too many emails/messages daily
- ☐ Too many people CC'd on emails
- ☐ Meetings that could be emails
- ☐ Same info communicated multiple ways

Effectiveness

- ☐ Communications without clear purpose
- ☐ Using wrong communication channel

Being Heard

- ☐ Feeling like input isn't heard
- ☐ Feedback provided but disregarded
- ☐ Leadership doesn't understand issues

Understanding

- ☐ 'Can't' confused with 'won't'

Process

- ☐ Too many people in decision process
- ☐ Critical info delayed by approval chains

Part 5: Feeling Heard & Understood

The human element of communication

Voice & Understanding Assessment

When I share concerns or ideas, I feel:

Examples of times my input was disregarded:

Can't vs. Won't: Times when leadership misunderstood "can't" (unable) as "won't" (unwilling):

Does leadership understand the realities of your day-to-day work?

- ☐ Yes, they get it
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ No, disconnected

What would make you feel more heard?

Part 6: Email & Channel Management

Taming the inbox beast

Email & Digital Communication Analysis

What percentage of emails you receive actually require your attention or action?

Examples of emails where you're unnecessarily CC'd:

How many people are typically on email chains in your organization?

Is this too many?

What communication channels does your organization use?

Are there too many channels? Which ones could be eliminated or consolidated?

Part 7: Decision-Making & Approval Chains

Who needs to be involved?

Process Efficiency Assessment

How many people typically need to approve a decision in your area?

Does this slow down necessary action? Give examples:

Who is involved in decisions who doesn't need to be?

Who SHOULD be involved in decisions but isn't currently?

What decisions could be pushed down to lower levels with clear guidelines?

Part 8: Streamlining Recommendations

Evidence-based strategies for better communication

✓ Implement These Practices

Email Management:

- Use "To" for action required, "CC" sparingly for FYI only
- Include clear subject lines with action needed

- Use bullet points for easy scanning
- Set expectation for response time
- Implement "no email hours" for deep work

Meeting Optimization:

- Required agenda before every meeting
- Only invite essential participants
- Start with "Could this be an email?"
- End with clear action items and owners
- Implement "meeting-free" days

Channel Clarity:

- Define which channel for what purpose
- Urgent = phone/text, Important = email
- FYI = shared document/board
- Decisions = documented in single location

Decision Rights:

- Document who decides what (RACI matrix)
- Push decisions to lowest appropriate level
- Distinguish "inform" from "consult" from "decide"
- Set dollar/impact thresholds for escalation

X Eliminate These Patterns

Email Dysfunction:

- "Reply all" when unnecessary
- Lengthy email chains (switch to meeting after 3 back-and-forths)
- CC'ing bosses to force action
- Vague subject lines ("Quick question")
- Sending emails outside working hours

Meeting Waste:

- Standing meetings without agenda
- Meetings that start late or run over
- "Let's schedule a meeting" as default response
- Status update meetings (use async tools instead)
- Meetings without documented outcomes

Information Chaos:

- Same info in email, Slack, Teams, and meetings
- No single source of truth for decisions
- Important info buried in chat threads

- Expecting instant responses 24/7

Hierarchical Bottlenecks:

- Every decision requiring multiple approvals
- Leaders as gatekeepers vs. empowerers
- "Because I said so" without explanation
- Punishing initiative and decision-making

Part 9: Your Team's Action Plan

Concrete steps to streamline communication

STOP (Immediate Changes):

What communication practices should we stop immediately?

REDUCE (Scale Back):

What should we do less of or consolidate?

START (New Practices):

What new communication practices should we implement?

CONTINUE (Keep Doing):

What's working well that we should maintain?

Implementation Timeline

Week 1: Quick Wins

Month 1: New Systems

Months 2-3: Culture Shift

How will we measure improvement?

Part 10: Team Communication Charter

Define your team's communication norms

Draft Communication Guidelines

Email Guidelines:

Meeting Guidelines:

Decision-Making Guidelines:

Feedback & Input Guidelines:

Communication Channel Guidelines:

Team Communication Commitment

We commit to streamlining our communication to be more effective, respectful of everyone's time, and focused on real connection rather than performative busywork. We will implement the changes identified in this workshop and regularly assess whether our communication serves us or drowns us.

Your Signature:

Date:

Team Workshop Facilitation Guide

Preparation:

- All team members complete worksheets individually
- Facilitator compiles anonymous themes
- Schedule 2-3 hours for discussion
- Ensure leadership is present and committed

Discussion Format:

- Opening (15 min): Share workshop findings, set safe space
- Assessment Review (30 min): Discuss volume and effectiveness scores
- Being Heard (45 min): Honest conversation about voice and understanding
- Email/Channel Analysis (30 min): Identify specific overload sources
- Action Planning (45 min): Create Stop/Reduce/Start/Continue plan
- Guidelines Creation (30 min): Draft communication charter
- Closing (15 min): Commitments and next steps

Critical Success Factors:

- Leadership must be open to feedback without defensiveness
- Implement "quick wins" within first week
- Assign accountability for each action item
- Schedule 30-day check-in before leaving workshop
- Make communication charter visible to all