

COMMUNICATION CLARITY CHECKLIST

Purpose

Ensure expectations are properly conveyed to prevent misunderstandings and align team efforts.

Instructions

Use this checklist when communicating important expectations, directions, or changes to your team.

Part 1: Message Content Preparation

Before communicating, verify your message covers these essential elements:

Context and Purpose

- ☐ Explained why this communication matters
- ☐ Connected to broader goals or priorities
- ☐ Provided necessary background information
- ☐ Clarified the intended outcome of the communication

Context notes:

Clear Expectations

- ☐ Specified what needs to be done
- ☐ Indicated when it needs to be completed
- ☐ Clarified who is responsible for what
- ☐ Described what quality looks like
- ☐ Distinguished between requirements and preferences

Expectations notes:

Constraints and Resources

- ☐ Identified relevant constraints (time, budget, scope)
- ☐ Specified available resources and support
- ☐ Clarified decision-making authority
- ☐ Noted potential obstacles or challenges

Constraints/resources notes:

Questions to Anticipate

What questions might arise from this communication?

1.

2.

3.

How will you address these questions?

Part 2: Communication Method Selection

Choose the most appropriate communication method(s):

| Method | Best For | Selected ? | Notes |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|-------|
| In-person meeting | Complex topics, sensitive issues, building relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Video call | Visual demonstration, reading reactions, multiple participants | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Phone call | Time-sensitive issues, nuanced discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Email | Documentation, detailed information, future reference | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Messaging/chat | Quick updates, simple questions, informal coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Documentation | Procedures, standards, detailed references | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shared workspace | Collaborative work, ongoing projects | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Rationale for selected method(s):

Part 3: Clarity Verification

Review your draft communication against these criteria:

Language Clarity

- ☐ Used plain language, avoiding unnecessary jargon
- ☐ Defined any technical terms or acronyms
- ☐ Kept sentences and paragraphs concise
- ☐ Used active voice and direct statements
- ☐ Structured information logically

Areas to improve:

Ambiguity Check

Review your communication for potential misinterpretations:

| Potentially Ambiguous Statement | Possible Misinterpretation | Clearer Alternative |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |

Completeness Check

- ☐ Answered who, what, when, where, why, and how
- ☐ Addressed likely questions and concerns
- ☐ Included necessary details for action
- ☐ Provided contact for follow-up questions

Missing elements to add:

Part 4: Understanding Confirmation

Plan how you'll verify the message was understood as intended:

Immediate Verification

- ☐ Ask recipients to paraphrase key points
- ☐ Request specific questions to surface confusion
- ☐ Use examples to confirm understanding
- ☐ Have recipients describe next steps in their own words

Verification questions to ask:

Follow-up Plan

- ☐ Schedule check-in to review progress
- ☐ Create documentation of agreed understanding
- ☐ Plan touch points to address emerging questions
- ☐ Establish feedback mechanism

Follow-up actions and timing:

Part 5: Communication Delivery

Timing Considerations

Best time to deliver this message:

Why this timing works best:

Environment Setup

How to create the right conditions for this communication:

Delivery Approach

Key points to emphasize:

Tone to maintain:

Part 6: Post-Communication Assessment

Complete after delivering the communication:

What went well?

What could have been clearer?

What questions or concerns emerged?

How will you adjust future communications based on this experience?

Additional Context:

Clear communication prevents countless problems before they start. Remember:

- **Assumed understanding is the enemy of clarity** - Verify rather than assume
- **Perception is reality** - What matters is what people hear, not what you say
- **Medium affects message** - Choose communication channels thoughtfully
- **Emotion colors understanding** - Consider the emotional context of your message
- **Silence speaks volumes** - What you don't address may become the focus

When expectations aren't met, always check first whether they were clearly communicated rather than assuming the other person failed to deliver.

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