

The Needs Analysis

The Needs Analysis follows an “ABCDE” communication process model:

- Audience
- Behavioral Objectives
- Content
- Design
- Evaluation Techniques

This “ABCDE” mnemonic may help in remembering the steps involved.

Audience. Who needs to receive the message? Where are they located? As in all situational leadership applications, communicators need to understand their audience's skill and will levels. What do they already know? How willing are they to change their behaviors?

Behavioral objectives. What should this initiative accomplish in terms of changing or reinforcing audience behaviors? Does the audience need to accept a decision or participate in decision-making? Objectives for the audience might be gaining new information or learning new skills; increasing motivation; getting involved in an existing effort; or raising awareness of a new strategic initiative.

Content. What are the key messages you need to deliver? Who are the people best qualified to provide the content and what is the best way to access their knowledge?

CRITICAL NOTE: As leaders and communicators, it is your responsibility to have clarity on steps A, B and C *before* committing resources and *before* making any decisions on step D. Often, a good up-front Needs Analysis leads to the question of whether to generate a new communication effort or integrate your message into existing vehicles. Only after Step C is completed should you move on to design.

Design. What is the most effective and efficient way to package the message? Are there existing vehicles to appropriately carry the message rather than design a new way to package it? What approaches have worked in the past?

Evaluation Techniques. How will you measure the effectiveness of the communication? Was it received and did it have the desired impact? Are there lessons learned that should be passed along and shared?

Once you have completed the Needs Analysis and have decided on the appropriate approach for your communication need, you are ready to implement your project.

Needs Analysis Worksheet

Following the “ABCDE” model will help you organize your thoughts for any message you wish to deliver.

A. Audience

Who are they? Where are they located? How much information do they already have? What is their will/skill level with reference to this message?

1. Descriptors: _____

2. Readiness: Will: _____
Skill: _____

B. Behavioral Objectives

What is the desired change in behavior? What is the desired outcome? What action do you expect?

C. Content

What content will you include? List each point.

D. Design

What approaches have worked in the past? What ideas do you already have about this communication?

E. Evaluation Techniques

How will you measure the success of your communication?

