

Communication Tactics

- **Direct/Verbal** – This includes face-to-face communications in the form of commander’s call, briefings, speeches, meetings, etc.

Advantages

Most credible

Instant feedback

Disadvantages

Uncontrolled

Closed loop

- **Face-to-face** communication is considered the most credible form of communication because feedback is a natural byproduct of the communication process.

The disadvantages of face-to-face communication include misspeaking or say something different at similar venues. Additionally, you do not have total control of what is said by members of your audience. Finally, this form of communication is considered to be a closed loop in that there is no new input from outside the group.

- **Print** – Newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, etc.

Advantages

Genuine credibility

Low cost

Storable

In-depth reporting

Disadvantages

Slow

Bulky

Distribution challenges

Outmoded?

Print products are generally considered to have high credibility and are relatively inexpensive to produce. Such projects are portable, reach a wide audience and have a long shelf life. A more complete and in-depth message can be conveyed with a higher degree of quality control.

The physical bulk and awkwardness of print products can be a hindrance to their effective use. Additionally, because of the print medium’s relative long production time the facts or circumstances of an issue may often change by the time it reaches the reader. Finally, with the advent of modern technology, e.g. computers, sophisticated cell phones, etc. some people perceive that the print medium is becoming outmoded.

- **TV/radio** – Public service announcements, advertisements, videos, etc.

Advantages

Disadvantages

Immediacy

High cost

Perceived credibility

Shallow coverage

High impact

Minimal context

Medium of choice

Transient

The fact that messages can be sent very rapidly and with high impact to a large audience is clearly an advantage to for the electronic media. Furthermore, its perceived high credibility and “ease of use” by the audience make it the medium of choice for many people.

High startup and maintenance costs, shallow coverage and the transient nature of electronic media constitute some of its disadvantages. While the electronic media can create a large initial impact on a story it does tend to fade rapidly. If the intended audience did not see or hear the message early, it could miss the story entirely.

- **Displays** – Marquis, billboards, posters, bumper stickers, etc.

Advantages

Disadvantages

Powerful symbols

Overload

No time constraint

Can be manipulated

Portable

Background

Displays such as marquees, posters, bulleting boards and static displays can present powerful symbols that are relatively permanent and low in cost. Displays are easily understood and the concepts and messages are retained longer.

In the area of mass advertising it is difficult for us, given military budgets, to establish a new symbol people will accept and retain. Because of sensory overload of too much to see, a potential audience might not even look at some displays and those that are at first highly visible quickly fade into the background. While displays are relatively easy to change they do require frequent update.

- **Computers** – E-mail, Internet Web sites, chat rooms, etc.

Advantages

Fast

Wide and growing audience

Detailed information

24-hour accessibility

Disadvantages

Requires equipment

Expensive

Accuracy of information?

Computers are revolutionizing the communication environment. Not only are they fast, they are also becoming smaller, more portable and capable of retrieving larger amounts of information.

While the price of computers is continues to come down, they do require a sizeable investment to purchase and maintain not to mention the need to be computer literate. If you intend to use the Internet to target your audience it is important to remember that not everyone is computer literate or has access to a computer. Additionally, few people or organizations police the Internet for accuracy so it is important to double-check the information you decide to use. Also keep in mind that the Internet is a passive medium; the audience must seek out the information.