

Good communication—The basics

Before you communicate

Know what your audiences want from you.

Know what your program needs from them.

Strengthen the areas where these two meet.

Plan when and how frequently to best connect with your audience.

Set goals and regular ways to measure your efforts.

Determine when it's best to join forces with other program areas.

As you create your content

Use the best voice and medium to reach your audience.

Use a warm and friendly tone.

Use lively and active language, as well as humor—when appropriate.

Be clear in message and purpose.

Be concise, accurate, and organized with your information.

Be creative, within constraints.

Make sure you are offering something valuable.

Make sure you are offering something actionable.

Create an outline. Write the draft. Edit. Revise.

And proofread, proofread, proofread!

After you've created your content

Measure your communications against your predetermined goals.

If necessary, gather more feedback (qualitative and quantitative).

Note areas to improve.

Improve.

Things to avoid

Monotony (Have some healthy variation.)

Inconsistency (Avoid variation where it conflicts with AAD guidelines.)

Slang, jargon, and clichés

Passive voice

Excessive punctuation ("!!!!")

Overuse of figurative language and rhetorical devices

Breaking rules of grammar with no strong reason and for no real gain

Unjustifiably complex sentences

Unnecessary repetition

Jokes at the expense of others (including our Ivy peers)

Fawning or condescending tone

Didactic or “preachy” tone

Biased language

Narrow cultural references

Divisive, partisan language

Content with very narrow appeal and very short shelf life

Content that is too static

Questions?

Linda Copman at lsc49@cornell.edu

Kait Provost at kp472@cornell.edu

Angie Giammarino at amg297@cornell.edu