

International insight into business communication

ECCO International Communications has released the top five do's and don'ts trends for best communication practices for businesses, following an international survey conducted in 40 countries.

Effective communication has the ability to take a business from good to great and surpass language and cultural barriers. Creating the right message for the right target market using the correct brand language and tone has an enormous impact on the way its stakeholders view the organisation and ultimately its reputation.



Do's

1. Change your communication approach - it is no longer a 'one size fits all' approach so find out what is important to your target market and adapt your messages to relate directly to them.
2. Tap into your businesses resources - every business has extensive knowledge of its world, so share some of this rich content as an opinion leader with your target market.
3. Build your reputation through the media - credibility is far more important than popularity, so direct your business' key messages to the editorial pages of the media.
4. Local stories work best - building a connection with your geographical area increases the value of your communication. Each story should have a local angle to attract interest from the public.
5. The whole world is online - integrate traditional media and online campaigns for maximum effect. Incorporate social media into your communication strategy and be authentic, honest and transparent at all times.

Don'ts

1. Avoid communication overload - don't try say too many things all at once as it will confuse your audience. Messages must be relevant and focussed.
2. Don't 'shoot in the dark' - quality pays more than quantity. Focus your communication toward the right audience and you will be appreciated for the competence of your content.
3. Don't sell, talk - marketing language should not dominate communication. Avoid an overly promotional and self-celebratory tone as your audience won't respond well.

4. Don't be pushy - overexposure becomes spam. Strategically plan your communication schedule.
5. Don't underestimate the importance of PR - one-way communication techniques are outdated. Communication is well placed in the hands of a PR professional where a dialogue consisting of listening, interpreting and processing messages in a complex scenario is integral to the role.

The survey is supported by South African communications insight from local reputation management company, Reputation Matters, which specialises in building corporate reputation through strategic communication tactics. It joined ECCO in 2012 and represents the network in South Africa.

"Like all countries, South Africa has a unique voice and the way businesses communicate with their audience is different in each country. However, the study shows that we have these top five do's and don'ts communication trends in common, which exceed geographical locations. We are privileged to be part of this global survey," comments Regine le Roux, MD of Reputation Matters.

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