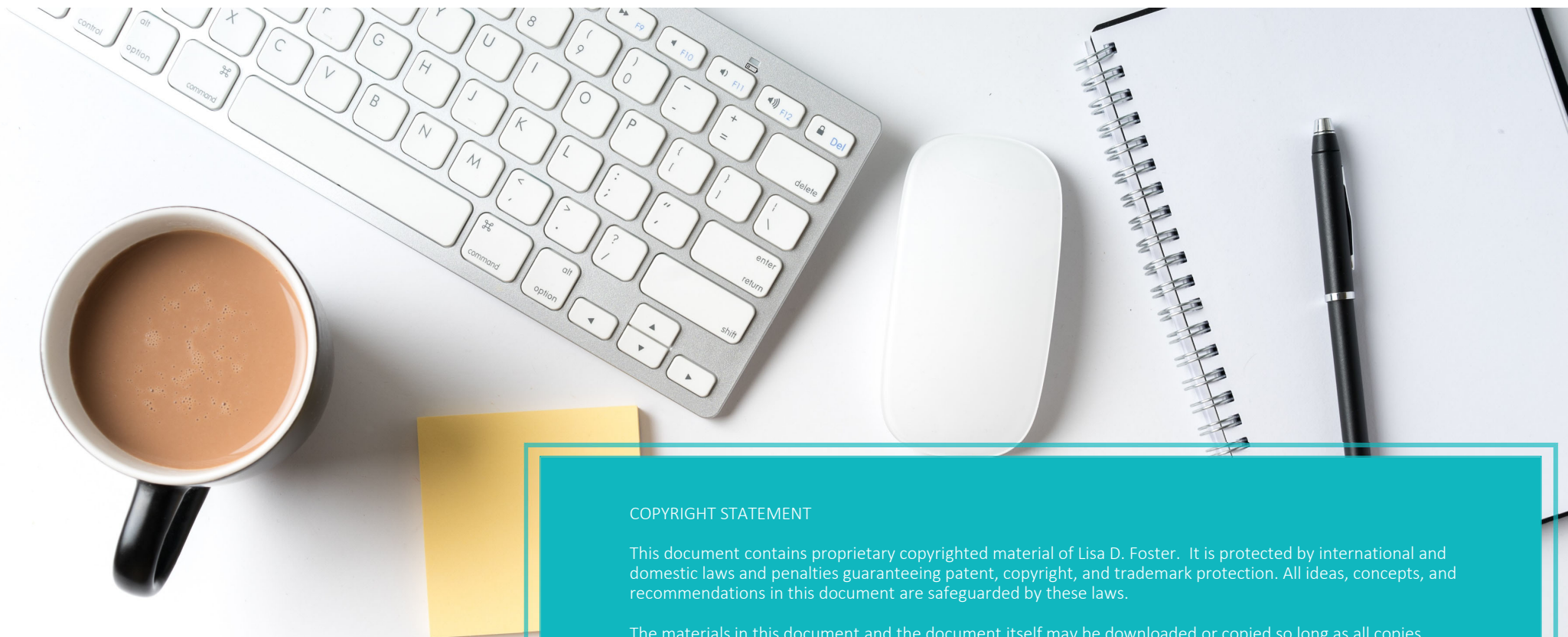




How to Communicate Anything

A Process for Effective Communications

A Just-In-Time Learning Project from
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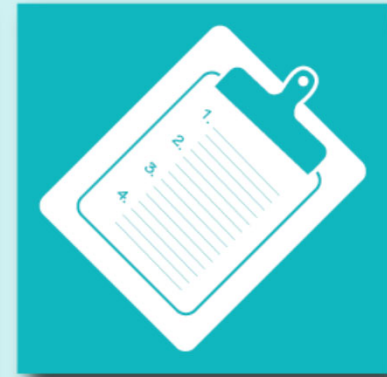
Why You Need a Communication Process

Communication is an intimate act.

When it's done right, we hear or read another's words as the voice inside our head. Good communicators get right inside our brains, our minds, our hearts.

Everyone can learn to become a better communicator. For over 20 years, I've use the process you'll find here to help people craft clearer and more effective messages in less time.

Use my process and you, too, will know how to communicate better.



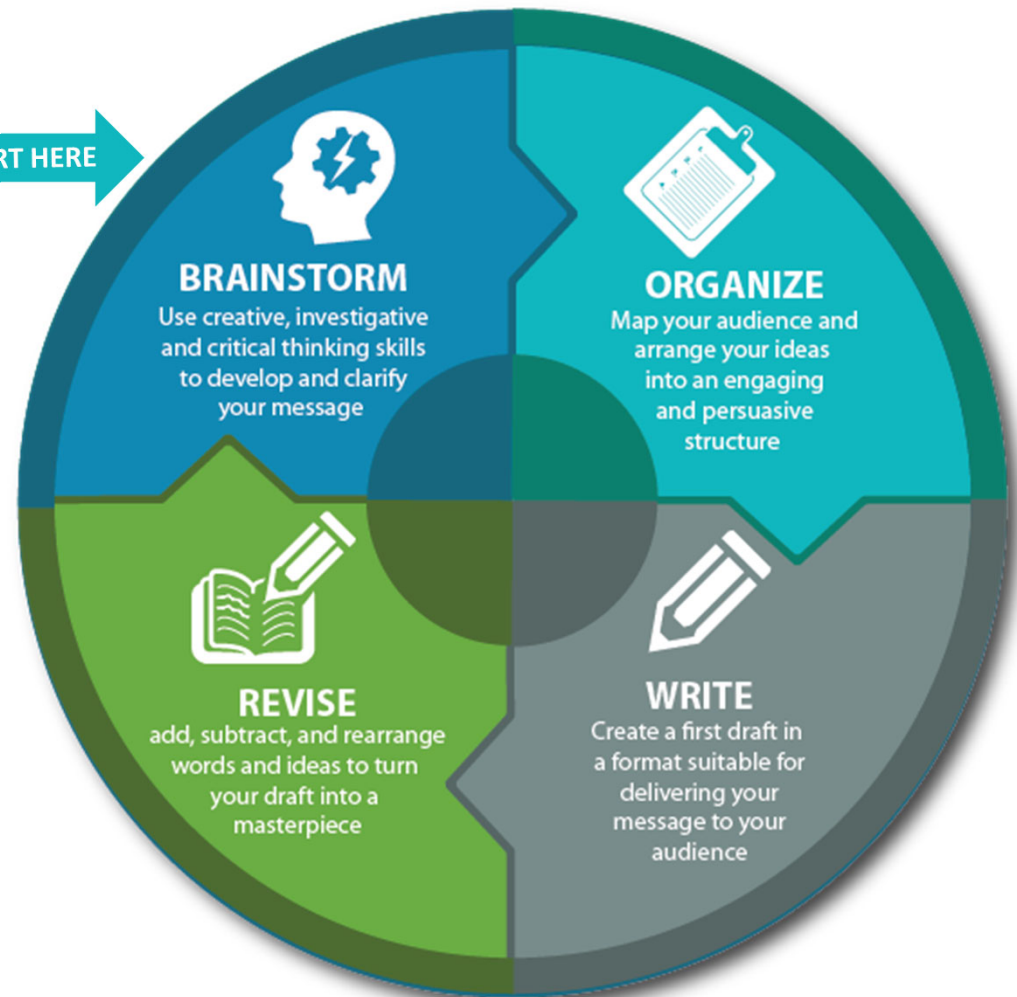
What you communicate is unique. How you get there follows a universal process.

I break down communication planning into four separate creative steps.

To some extent, we all use these steps whenever we communicate. By examining the goal of each phase and learning how to focus on one task at a time, you'll become more focused and strategic. You can create more effective results in less time.

I'll explain how to approach each step here. Just scroll down.

START HERE



Step 1: Brainstorm

To communicate effectively, you need to figure out what you want to say before you figure out how you want to say it.

Clarifying your ideas before you write will help you discover the most compelling essence of what you want to say.

To find inspiration for something unique, interesting, or relevant, let ideas flow randomly. Write without judging. All ideas are good at this stage.



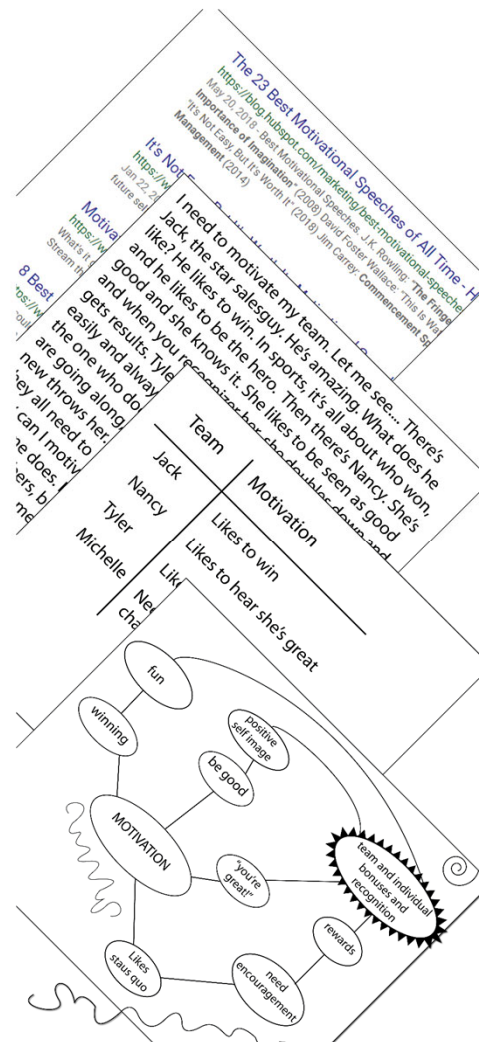
You will find your best ideas at the end of your brainstorming, pushed up against the corners and scrawled in the margins.

How to Brainstorm

Everyone thinks differently.

There are as many ways to brainstorm as there are people and situations.

Still, there are a number of techniques that professionals know they can always try and rely on to get their creative juices flowing.



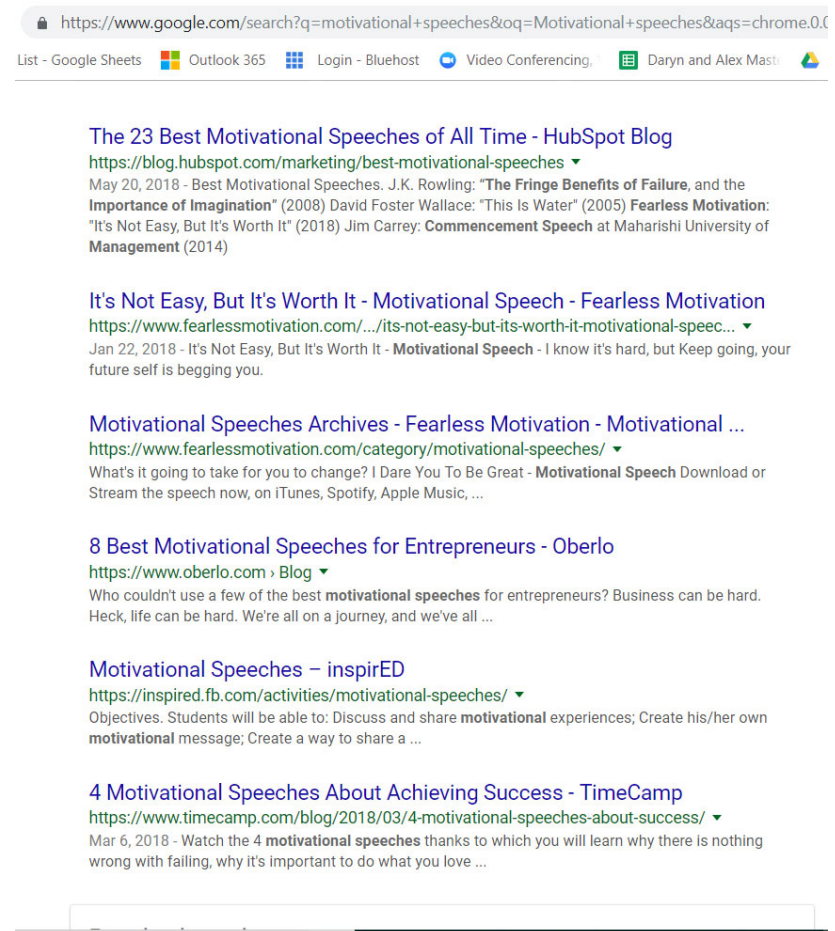
Here are a few brainstorming techniques to get you started.

Research

If you're not sure where to begin, start by looking at what others have said about your topic.

Then ask yourself:

- How is your message different or the same as others?
- What is new, urgent, or relevant for you now?



Free Writing

Writing freely without judging or editing is another way to find your most creative ideas. Let ideas flow. Don't worry about logical connections. Write whatever you think and keep your pencil or keypad going.

Don't confuse your free writing with your first draft. It's a creative flow. Random jumps, partial thoughts, and emotional outbursts are encouraged.

I need to motivate my team. Let me see.... There's Jack, the star salesguy. He's amazing. What does he like? He likes to win. In sports, it's all about who won, and he likes to be the hero. Then there's Nancy. She's good and she knows it. She likes to be seen as good and when you recognize her, she doubles down and gets results. Tyler, he's my learner. He gets bored easily and always wants a new challenge. Michelle is the one who doesn't like change. As long as things are going along, she performs great. But something new throws her. She needs encouragement. Actually they all need to be encouraged but in different ways. How can I motivate them all? They all like rewards, everyone does. I want them to work individually hitting numbers, but also as a team sharing ideas. I'll reward team members for hitting numbers, extra rewards for sharing ideas that help others, and team bonus if everyone hits their target. I need a reward system.

Lists and Charts

If you're a linear thinker, lists and charts are a great tool to get ideas going.

Lists and charts can take any form. A simple T chart like this is a simple and effective start.

Using pen and paper will leave more room for new ideas. Push yourself to literally think outside the box.

Team	Motivation
Jack	Likes to win
Nancy	Likes to hear she's great
Tyler	Likes to learn
Michelle	Needs encouragement, change is hard for her

Different motivations for each one

Everyone will be motivated by positive rewards

Mind-Mapping

On an unlined piece of paper, write your topic or main idea in the middle. Write ideas inspired by the topic around it, drawing lines to show connections.

Your most obvious ideas will be in the middle. Your best ideas will be on the margins or in the corners.

Doodle! It helps keep you focused while your subconscious is working.



Brainstorm Long Enough to Find Your Ah-Ha Moment

If you explore your favorite ideas long enough, you will find the key message or messages that you want to communicate.



Your brain will naturally start to organize and group ideas.

Circle, draw lines, and find ways to show the relationships between your ideas.

Keep going and trust your instincts until you know precisely what you want to say.

Step 2: Organize

Organizing your ideas before you write will save you hours of editing later. This crucial step will get you better results faster.

Although everyone thinks differently, we can all think logically. Putting your ideas into a structure that makes logical sense will help you be more effective in communicating your ideas to others.

Here are a few tips to help you organize your brainstorming.



Click here to try my Communication Planning Tool!
It makes this step easy!

Tip: Open the link in a new window or save this PDF to your drive so you can come back to the course more easily.

a. Distill Your Brainstorming



Look over your brainstorming.

Take time to distill it into the most powerful words and phrases.

- Highlight what is best and most important.
- Rework long ideas into shorter sentences with active verbs.
- Be willing to let go of what is not useful.

Some ideas will be more important than others. Mark your primary and secondary focus points.

b. Craft Your Message



It's time to craft your primary message.

Rework the wording of your primary message to clarify and simplify. Make it easy to understand and remember.

Work on it until you have your clearest expression of what you want to say.

c. Map Your Audience



For any given message or presentation, you are likely to have more than one person as your audience.

Segment your audience. If you are communicating with a small team or group, you might consider each person separately. If you are talking to a larger audience, segment the audience into distinct groups with different needs.

For each segment consider:

- 1. Who are they?**
- 2. What do they like?**
- 3. What do they want?**

d. Tell Your Story

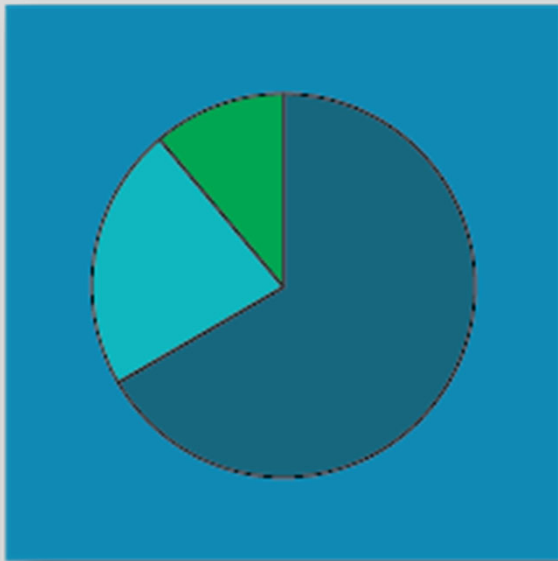


Stories humanize ideas.

Narrative is essential to connecting with your audience emotionally. If nothing else, your audience is most likely to remember the story you tell.

Look over your brainstorming and get inspired. What story can you tell that will help your audience connect emotionally to you and your message?

e. Support Ideas with Information



Information, evidence, and data support ideas and help your audience believe.

Information provides a reality-check for your audience. It shows that you are not alone.

Show that your idea is winning, and others will want to be on your winning team.

What information provides evidence that your idea will achieve your goal?

f. Structure Your Message



Put it all together in a clean draft. Use headers for your main and secondary messages.

Decide how you will open, where your narrative will go, where your information will be effective.

Make it easy! Input your ideas into my Communication Planning Tool and I'll send you a clean draft.

**Click here to try my
Communication Planning Tool!**

Tip: Open the link in a new window or save this PDF to your drive so you can come back to the course more easily.

Step 3: Write

Once you have brainstormed and organized your message, writing is easy.

You know what you want to say. Now, focus on how you want to say it.

When you write your first draft, avoid judging and overthinking. Work to be fluent and engaging.

I'll go over a few basic writing guidelines.



Don't worry. It's just a first draft. You can edit later!

Your Format Depends on Your Situation



IF YOU ARE CREATING A WRITTEN REPORT OR PRESENTATION, THIS IS THE TIME TO START WRITING THE TEXT OF YOUR REPORT.



IF YOU ARE CREATING AN INTER-PERSONAL PLAN, YOU MIGHT WANT A PAGE FOR EACH PERSON YOU ARE TRYING TO PERSUADE OR COMMUNICATE TO.



IF YOU ARE PLANNING A SPEECH, YOU MIGHT WANT NOTE CARDS OR A FULL WRITTEN DRAFT OF YOUR SPEECH. THAT'S A PERSONAL CHOICE.



IF YOU ARE PLANNING A HIGH-STAKES PRESENTATION, YOU'LL WANT TO TAKE EXTRA CARE IN PLANNING EVERY WORD, TRANSITION, AND KEY MESSAGE.

A Few Writing Tips

DO

- Stay on topic.
- Support important ideas with narrative and information.
- Spend time finding the most precise words.
- Vary your sentence structures and start sentences differently.

DON'T

- Don't bury your lede. Put important ideas at the top of paragraphs.
- Don't repeat.
- Don't use two words where one will do.
- Don't worry about making it perfect. Editing is next.

Step 4: Revise

This is where good work becomes a masterpiece.

Time spent revising your draft will pay off immensely. Once you have your draft, go over it and over it to make sure it's your best.

As a rule of thumb, I like to reserve about half my preparation time for revising. If I have a week, I need my rough draft by the end of day 3. Generally, the higher the stakes, the more time you want for revision.

After revising, try to elicit feedback from a few people. A different set of eyes is invaluable to making your message as effective as it can be. Revise again after listening to feedback.



You're almost there! Keep going!

Global Revision

Start by looking at the big picture. Do you have everything in the right place to make your case?

Look critically at your draft and ask:

Is there something missing? If so, **ADD IT!**

Is there too much of something? If so, **SUBTRACT IT!**

Is something out of place? If so, **REARRANGE IT!**



If you need to add or clarify, go back and do mini-sessions of brainstorming, organizing, writing, and revision. The process works for large and small writing projects.

Local Revision

When everything is included and in the right place, it's time to focus on the details:

- Check grammar and spelling
- Make sure each word is needed and precise.
- Smooth out awkwardness.
- Make it sound like you at your best.



Leave details for last. Checking spelling and changing formatting is a waste of time when you still might cut sentences or even whole paragraphs.

You're Done!



You're ready to communicate effectively!



Questions? Want help with your presentation?



Click here to contact me! I've been helping people communicate effectively for over 20 years. I'm happy to help.