

## Communications

### *Maintaining the flow of information*

#### Consider communication strategies for:

- neighbors
- community groups
- other interest groups
- local officials
- regulatory agencies
- emergency responders



**Pfizer Global Research & Development (formerly Warner-Lambert Parke-Davis)** has hosted local community leaders, state agencies, and federal agencies, to share its environmental activities and programs and to obtain feedback.

The importance of employee involvement in developing and implementing your EMS has been discussed earlier. In addition, there may be parties with an interest in your environmental performance and management efforts outside the organization. Effective environmental management requires effective communications, both internally **and** externally.

#### **Effective communications will help you:**

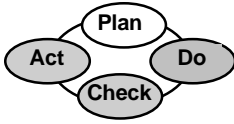
- motivate your workforce;
- gain acceptance for your plans and efforts;
- explain your environmental policy and EMS and how they relate to the overall organizational vision;
- ensure understanding of roles and expectations;
- demonstrate management commitment;
- monitor and evaluate performance; and,
- identify potential system improvements.

Effective **internal** communication requires mechanisms for information to flow top-down, bottom-up and across functional lines. Since employees are on the “front lines,” they can be an excellent source of information, issues, concerns and ideas.

Proactive, two way communication with external parties is also important for an effective environmental management system. Taking steps to obtain the views of these stakeholders, which can include neighbors, customers, community groups, and regulators, will help you better understand how your organization is perceived by others. These stakeholders can also bring important environmental issues to your attention that should be addressed in your EMS. You should also consider ways to get specific advice from these stakeholders when developing critical elements of your EMS such as setting objectives and targets. Involving these parties, however, does not mean you should cede control of your EMS to them, but rather use their input to make your EMS stronger and more responsive to community concerns. Doing so will usually provide long-term benefits to your organization.

Thus, an effective EMS should include procedures for:

- communicating internally (between levels and functions within the organization), and
- soliciting, receiving, documenting and responding to external communications.



**Getting Started:**

The first step in designing a communications program is determining **your key audiences**. Make a list of internal and external audiences.

Once you have identified the audiences, determine **what** you need to communicate to them. (What do they need to know about your products, operations or management efforts? What are their concerns?)

Next, decide **how** you can best reach them. Appropriate communication methods might vary from audience to audience. Start by looking at your **existing methods** for communicating, both internally and externally. These might include:



**Milan Screw Products'** staff interviewed neighbors, customers, suppliers, and employees' family members to obtain the views of external parties.



A sample procedure for external communication is provided in the Tool Kit (see Appendix A)

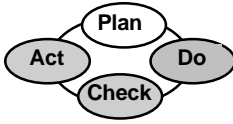
Internal Methods	External Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newsletters</li> <li>• intranet</li> <li>• staff meetings</li> <li>• employee meetings</li> <li>• bulletin boards</li> <li>• brown bag lunches</li> <li>• training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open houses</li> <li>• focus or advisory groups</li> <li>• web site or e-mail list</li> <li>• press releases</li> <li>• annual reports</li> <li>• advertising</li> <li>• informal discussions</li> </ul>

**Hints:**

- Determine how **proactive** your external communications strategy should be. Select an approach that fits your organization's culture and strategy. Consider, for example, whether reporting on environmental performance and progress might give you a competitive edge.
- While a proactive external communications program may require some resources, many organizations find that a proactive communication strategy can be beneficial. Weigh the costs and benefits for yourself, but keep in mind that you might have many interested audiences.
- In communicating with employees, it is helpful to explain not only **what** they need to do but also **why** they need to do it. For example, when describing a requirement based on a regulation, explain the purpose behind the rule and why it is important. Also, make a clear connection between the requirement and how it applies to each person's job.
- Keep the message **simple**, clear, concise, and accurate.
- Managing responses to external inquiries does not have to be burdensome. Use a simple method, such as stapling an inquiry to its written response and then filing them together. The key is to be able to demonstrate that the organization has a process for gathering and responding to external inquiries.



- **Environmental Policy**
- **Environmental Aspects**
- **Objectives & Targets**
- **Structure & Responsibility**
- **Monitoring & Measurement**
- **Management Review**



☆☆ **POLLUTION PREVENTION** ☆☆  
and **Public Involvement**

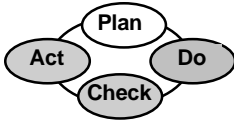
**Motorola has conducted Household Waste Electronics Recycling Days for local residents. Working in collaboration with local solid waste authorities, the Company has collected for recycle a variety of home electronic and entertainment equipment, small appliances and other products. At one of these events, over 21 tons of materials were collected and over 95% of these materials were recycled.**

**For EPA's Performance Track, organizations must commit to public outreach and performance reporting. Specifically, participating organizations must prepare an annual report on their EMS, a summary of progress on performance commitments, and of their public outreach activities. See Appendix B for more information.**



**The community as part of the solution....**

In an effort to involve stakeholders in the EMS process the Town of Londonderry, NH and the City of Lowell, MA engaged residents to collect information pertaining to environmental issues that affect their communities. For example, the Town of Londonderry, NH in conjunction with its household hazardous waste collection day, asked residents to complete a survey to prioritize community related environmental issues. The residents identified the fast pace at which the small community is growing as their top-priority issue. The City of Lowell, MA's wastewater treatment plant asked local residents to assist with efforts to address the plant's odor issues. A number of residents throughout the surrounding area recorded weather information on days the odor was prevalent. This information identified odor patterns which would aid the City's efforts to identify a solution to this problem.



**Capture the Learning: Communications Worksheet**

<p>Who are our <b>key external stakeholders</b>?</p> <p>How were these stakeholders <b>identified</b>?</p>	
<p>With regard to our organization, what are the <b>key concerns of these stakeholders</b>?</p> <p><b>How do we know</b> this?</p>	
<p>What <b>community outreach efforts</b> are we making now (or have we made in the recent past)?</p> <p>How <b>successful</b> have these efforts been?</p>	
<p>What <b>methods</b> do we use for external communications? Which appear to be the most <b>effective</b>?</p> <p>Who has primary <b>responsibility</b> for external communications?</p>	
<p>How do we <b>gather and analyze information</b> to be communicated?</p> <p>Who has <b>responsibility</b> for this?</p>	
<p>How do we <b>communicate internally</b> (as well as with our suppliers and contractors)? What processes do we have to <b>respond to internal inquiries, concerns and suggestions</b>?</p> <p><b>How effective</b> are these methods?</p>	
<p><b><i>Our next step on communication is to ...</i></b></p>	