



“The problem with communication...is the illusion that it has been accomplished.”
-- George Bernard Shaw

Communications Audit

What is a communications audit?

A communications audit is a management tool that helps organizations determine how effectively they are communicating with various audiences. It involves the collection and analysis of in-depth information about perceptions individuals have about the organization. In essence, a communications audit is a snapshot of a company at a given time. An audit may be broad or narrow, focusing on a particular audience or a variety of audiences. Likewise, the audit may address a single issue or a wide range of issues affecting an organization. The bottom-line goal for any audit, however, should be to improve the effectiveness of an organization's communication.

Why should an organization have one?

A communications audit can help organizations understand how well their messages are being received and accepted by audiences. While people may *think* that others understand and accept their messages, the fact of the matter is that we are often unaware of how the messages we send are received or understood. Equally important as sending a message is listening for feedback. A communications audit also can help identify barriers to effective communication and provide practical solutions.

How is a communications audit conducted?

The best way to conduct a communications audit is through an independent, third-part individual who thoroughly understands the communication process. Audits typically include a review of formal and informal communication processes; one-on-one interviews with community leaders, influencers and members of the organization; focus groups; and sometimes surveys.

An audit will review the facilities (e.g. signage, displays and lights), publications, public relations activities, telephone voice messages, videos, direct mail, electronic communications (Web site, e-mail lists, etc.), meetings and programs.

What are the expected results?

An audit gives an organization an opportunity to find out what it is doing well in its communications and where it needs to improve. The audit also may uncover important issues or perceptions that need to be addressed, and in some cases it will significantly alter the way an organization operates. ABC&D Communications provides a written report of findings, along with recommendations for improving communication.