Nordic Council of Ministers

Environmental communication to consumers

a Nordic manual

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This guide has been prepared at the request of the Integrated Product Policy group under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMRIPP). NMRIPP is an intersectoral working group of representatives from the environmental, business and consumer sectors in the Nordic countries, and it assists in implementing the Nordic sustainable development strategy, with particular focus on green commercial development and green consumption.

NMRIPP is an umbrella organisation for a number of working groups which focus on various aspects of the overall strategy. Working group 5 focuses on promoting communication of environmental information to consumers. The objective of the group is to promote the development and use of environmental communication targeted at private consumers, which can encourage consumers to act in an environmentally responsible manner when they purchase, use and dispose of products and services. The work of working group 5 involves charting, analysing and reporting Nordic experience with effective environmental communication.

Working group 5 has commissioned this guide. The group is composed of the following members and has acted as a steering group for the preparation of the guide:

- Riitta Jalkanen, Consumer Agency, Finland, chairwoman of working group 5
- Helena Bergström, Consumer Agency, Sweden
- Bente Næss, Ministry of the Environment, Norway
- Kjersti Larssen, Ministry of Children and Equality, Norway
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- Taina Nikula, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

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Nordic cooperation
The Nordic cooperation is one of the oldest and most comprehensive regional cooperation programmes in the world. It includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, as well as the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and Aaland. The cooperation strengthens solidarity between the Nordic countries through respecting national differences and similarities. It improves opportunities to foster Nordic interests throughout the world and promote good relations with neighbouring countries.

The cooperation was formalised in 1952 with the establishment of the Nordic Council as a forum for parliamentarians and governments in the Nordic countries. In 1962 the Nordic countries signed the Helsinki agreement which has since laid the foundation for Nordic cooperation. In 1971 the Nordic Council of Ministers was established as a formal forum to manage the cooperation between the Nordic governments and the political leaders in the self-governing areas, the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and Aaland.

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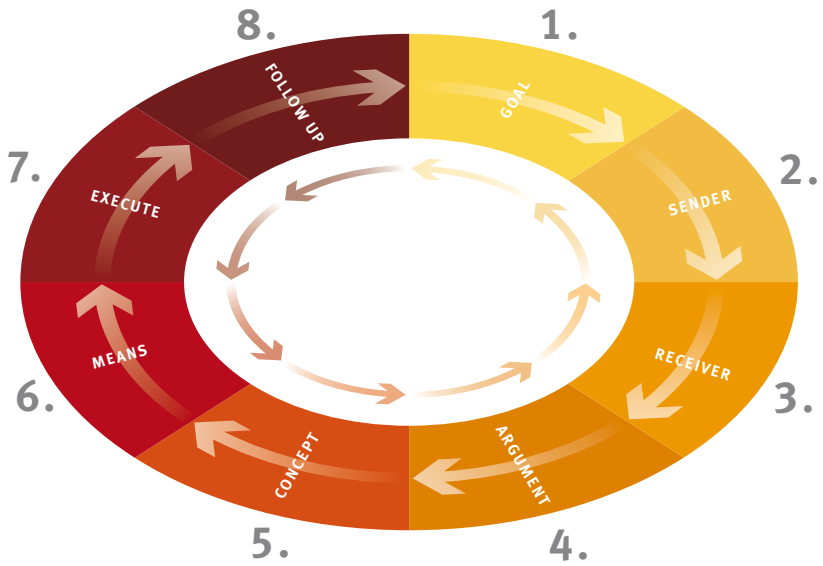
PREFACE

■ This guide is for those who want to communicate effectively to consumers about the environment and sustainable consumption. Perhaps you work for a public authority and have to communicate about an ecolabel. Perhaps your company wants to promote an environmentally friendly product. Or maybe you come from an NGO which is trying to encourage more people to use other means of transport than cars. The guide is intended to help and inspire all those who work with environmental communication, but it aims particularly at those whose professional background lies primarily outside communication.

Environmental communication can be managed with large and small budgets. We have decided to keep to a level corresponding to the reality facing most communicators of environmental messages. This means a budget large enough to produce good materials, place small advertisements, and hire external assistance, but too small to place large advertisements in newspapers and run television campaigns. However, the guide will also be useful if you have more or less money.

The guide builds on examples, experience and analyses of environmental communication to consumers in the Nordic countries. The initiative behind the guide came from the working group on integrated product policy (IPP) under the Nordic Council of Ministers. IPP is a product-oriented strategy which, on the basis of a lifecycle perspective, aims at reducing the environmental impacts of products. The IPP strategy takes into account all phases of the lifecycle of a product – design, production, distribution, use and disposal – and through a range of tools it aims at improving environmental performance in each phase. The strategy originates from the Nordic countries and has since



The manual is built around eight fundamental questions to be addressed when planning environmental communication to consumers. The figure illustrates that environmental communication is both a progressive process (the bold arrows), and a process in which it is necessary to go back and adjust earlier decisions (the small arrows). Furthermore, the figure acts as a signpost in the manual which makes it easier to locate where you are in the process.

been taken over and further developed by the EU.[1]

Environmental products only take effect once they are preferred to traditional products. Therefore, IPP highlights communication to consumers as the pivotal locomotive in promoting green demand. Nordic experience is especially good in this area, and this is one of the reasons why we in the Nordic Council of Ministers' IPP working group have focussed on developing and sharing knowledge on environmental communication to consumers. The group has done this through a number of surveys which have identified examples of good environmental communication in Nordic countries (published in Danish as Oversigt over information om forbrug & miljø i Norden, TemaNord rapport 2001:518) and analysed environmental communication as a tool (published in Swedish as Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie TemaNord rapport 2003:540). In spring 2004, in cooperation with the Swedish Consumer Agency, we arranged a Nordic conference, Greencom 04, at which more than one hundred practitioners exchanged their experience with environmental communication to consumers.[2] As an extension of the reports and the conference, we are now publishing Environmental Communication to Consumers, which reports on these and other results in a practical and easy-to-read format.

How to use the guide

The guide is divided into eight chapters, which together make up the most important tools to organise, execute, complete and evaluate environmental communication to consumers. The guide is based on the idea that you have an overall goal, for example to enhance the market for environmentally friendly cleaning agents or to reduce the use of pesticides in gardens, and that part of this goal can be achieved through communication to one or more target groups.

Planning environmental communication to consumers is both a linear and a circular process. It is linear because some issues must necessarily be clarified before others. For example you must know your goal before choosing the means of achieving it. It is circular because all the elements in communication are interconnected and influence each other. For example an analysis of the knowledge and opinions of the target group may indicate that you have to reconsider your goal.

We have attempted to illustrate this in the figure. The large circle describes the process as it advances. The small circle illustrates that it is important to regularly go back and adjust. The eight phases around the circles are the basic questions to be addressed during the process. They also represent the titles of the eight chapters in the guide.

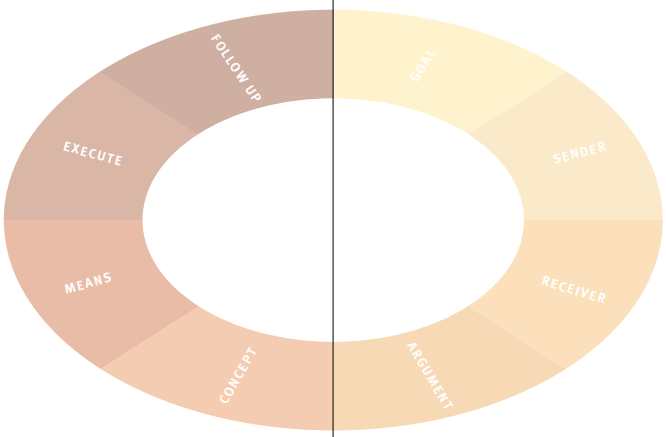
The guide has been designed to be read chronologically. However, it is also possible to find a relevant chapter from the list of contents and start there. Finally, you could also start with the 22 specific examples of good environmental communication spread throughout the guide. ■

Nordic Council of Ministers' Integrated Product Policy group (NMRIPP)

1 The Nordic version of the strategy was called *"Den Produktorienterede MiljøStrategi (POMS)"* and it was adopted in 2001. Today the European term, IPP, is used.

2 The report is available in English at *www.greencom.se*

INTRODUCTION



■ The world changes through the accumulated effect of small actions. This is particularly true for consumption. Each time we consumers take a product from the supermarket shelf we change the world, just a little, either in a positive or less positive direction. In modern life, where the fewest of us are able to take an active part in the green movement, day-to-day shopping is an obvious opportunity for us to contribute to a better world. As the supermarket chain Coop Sweden says to its customers: Moving our hand from traditional goods to environmentally friendly goods is everyone's personal green movement.

Perhaps this is the most important "green movement" of all! The sum of our individual product choices is one of the main reasons for the pollution and depletion of resources caused by our lifestyle. If we do not want to consume less, and this would seem unlikely, then our only choice is to consume in a less environmentally harmful manner. Therefore, enterprises, consumers, the authorities and NGOs are working together to promote green consumption. In the EU, this focus has led to the development of the Integrated Product Policy (IPP), which aims at stimulating supply and demand for green products. In the Nordic countries we have been using the common Swan ecolabel for some time to promote production and purchases of environmentally friendly goods.

Experience shows that the most powerful force in the market for environmentally friendly products is consumer demand. However, demand does not arise just because products are available on the shelves. It will only happen when consumers are convinced that there is a competitive environmentally friendly alternative, and that this alternative is preferable. One of the most important means to persuade consumers is targeted environmental communication.

What is environmental communication to consumers?

This guide is about environmental communication to consumers in general, but there is special focus on communication which aims as changing or maintaining environmentally friendly behaviour. By 'consumer' we mean the individual private consumer.[3] It is primarily communication aimed at the buying phase, for example communication on specific products, the environmental advantages of product groups, ecolabels etc. However, this is not the only phase of significance. For some products environmental impacts are in the use phase, while for others the disposal phase is most important. Therefore communication to consumers on environmentally friendly use and disposal – e.g. energy saving and waste separation – is also covered by the guide.

3 Private enterprises and public institutions are important target groups for communication on environmental friendly products, but they fall outside the scope of this guide.

At one time, environmental communication to consumers meant a leaflet printed on a piece of rough paper with an attractive picture of nature on the cover. Although well meant, this was a little boring and above all not especially effective. Fortunately things have changed a bit since then!

Today, environmental communication to consumers is part of our lives and it turns up in innumerable guises. The most important types are product-related communication, public information campaigns and communication via the media.[4] But environmental communication is also the nature of the range of goods sold from shops, events held by the green movement and the separation symbols on rubbish bins. It is test samples, dialogue between stakeholders, and lessons on the environment in schools. It is the signals we consumers send to producers when we choose a specific product. And it is our conversations at home on the environment and consumption.

Communication is often defined as transmission of a message from one person to another through a specific channel in order to achieve a specific effect. In principle, there are just as many channels available to environmental communication as there are for communication on other issues. Therefore the possibilities are almost endless.

Is it a job for communication?

Of course this does not mean that communication is the right tool in every situation. For example, it is no use starting a campaign about using the car less, if there is no alternative form of well developed public transport infrastructure. Similarly a campaign urging people to recycle glass is useless, if the nearest recycling bin is many kilometres away. The effect of a campaign for ecolabelled products will also be limited, if they are considerably more expensive than unlabelled alternatives.

In short, communication is not the right tool if practical and financial conditions represent a barrier to the intended behaviour aimed at. In the examples above, the solution is not communication, but rather developing public transport systems, setting up more local recycling bins and reducing the price of products to a more acceptable level. Once this has been done, then communication may well be relevant.

What's so special about environmental communication to consumers?

A characteristic of environmental communication is that it tries to influence consumers through persuasion, argument, fascination, education etc. It tries to encourage consumers to accept voluntarily a specific message and act at their own initiative. Consumers are not forced to accept the message, and they are not promised any material reward for doing so.[5]

Environmental communication has a lot in common with other types of communication to consumers, and of course with communication as such. But there are also some important differences. These differences show up because fundamentally the issue of the environment is about something as diffuse and complex as human interaction with nature. It is about the necessity of us, as individuals and as society, behaving in such a way that we do not debase our common natural foundation. It is expressed in the principle of sustainability as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".[6] In other words, environmental arguments build on long-term and collective interests.

4 *A Swedish report: Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540) p. 43

5 A Swedish report: *Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540) p. 35

6 *Our Common Future* (the Brundtland report), FN, 1987.

Ekoisti: Environmental programme with half a million viewers

Ekoisti – in English The Ecoist – is a good example of how communication on environmental and consumer issues has become mainstream in recent years. Ekoisti was a weekly Finnish environment and consumer programme, aimed primarily at the 'thinking viewer' of between 30 and 40 years of age. The programme started in 1999 and was shown at primetime on Friday evenings. In 2001 the programme was moved to Sunday evenings at 5.30 and relaunched with the name Pallo Hallussa (The Planet Under Control). Around half a million viewers saw the programme each week.

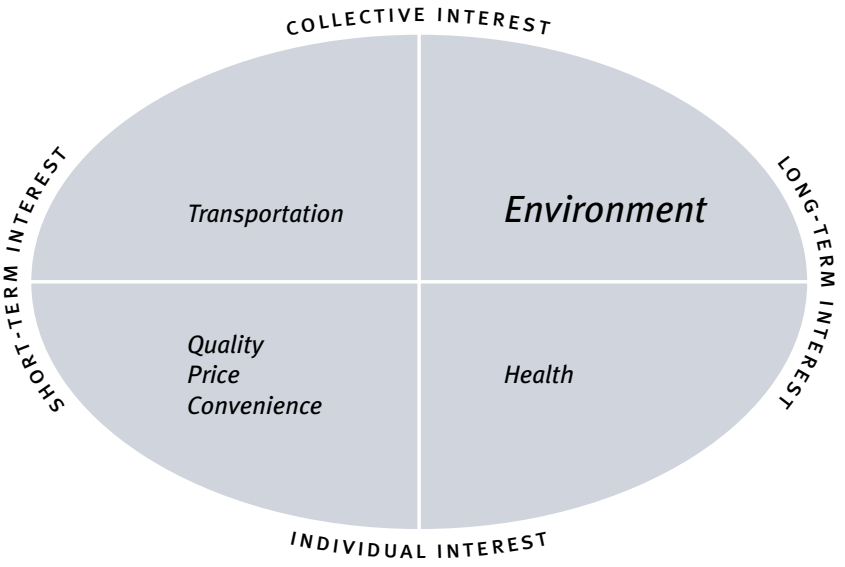
The idea behind Ekoisti and Pallo Hallussa was to utilise a light, magazine format to link environmental and health problems with the everyday lives of consumers. The programme described things consumers could do every day to save the world and, through health tips, themselves. The magazine format allowed for longer factual reports about, for example, brominated flame retardants or chicken farming. There was also a letters section, for example with good housekeeping advice, as well as other regular features for specific target groups.

Further information (in Finnish): www.yle.fi/pallohallussa

At one time, environmental communication to consumers meant an attractive picture of nature on a leaflet printed on a piece of rough paper. Today environmental communication includes a consumer and environment prime-time programme on Finnish TV with more than half-a-million viewers.

The magazine format allowed for longer factual reports on climate change and outdoor recreation.

Purely environmental arguments on collective and long-term interests such as not debasing our common natural foundation. If you are to reach more than the environmentally aware consumer, environmental arguments can be supplemented with other arguments which are attractive to more individual consumer interests such as quality, price, convenience or health.



The long-term and collective perspective affects the clout of the environmental argument. The long-term aspect is typically apparent in the time taken for the effect of a specific behaviour, positive or negative, to manifest itself in the environment. This may take years, decades, even centuries. The collective aspect is apparent in that only through collective efforts can we preserve the environment. Implicit in this, is that the effect of the individual's environmental impact is very marginal, especially compared with the environmental impacts of the whole of humanity.

All this would not present a problem if we all acted on the basis of the long term and collective perspective. However, of course this is not the case, particularly when we are faced with bulging supermarket shelves. Other short-term and individual interests come into play such as time-saving, convenience and material satisfaction.[7] The Swedish professor in environmental communication, Ulrich Nitsch, illustrates the problem using the figure above.[8]

The location of the environment in the collective and long-term section of the figure is the most important challenge for the content of environmental communication. There are basically two ways of overcoming this. One is to appeal to the individual's sense of responsibility for our shared environment and show that the individual's behaviour does make a difference. The purely environmental arguments are relevant here.

However, the clean environment arguments are rarely enough to reach others than consumers who are already environmentally aware. The second part of the answer is to supplement environmental arguments with other types of argument which take other interests into account. The short-term interests of the consumer are to get quality and save money, for example by buying energy-saving products. The long-term interests include maintaining the consumers' own and especially their children's health. The local community may have an interest in developing public transport services so that travelling times are reduced.

In brief, good, consumer-targetted environmental communication is about more than communicating about the environment. It is about identifying a combination of arguments which together can convince consumers about the benefits of environmentally friendly products and therefore get them to make new choices. ■

7 A Swedish report: Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie (TemaNord 2003:540)

8 For reasons of clarity we have included other issues than the environment. The full version of the original model is included on page 37 of the Swedish report *Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540).

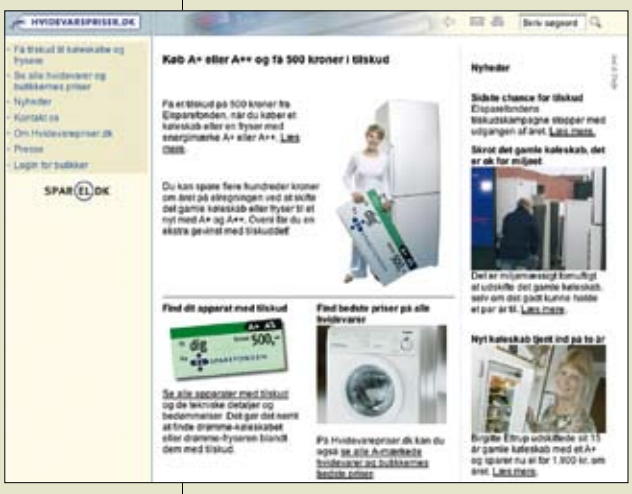
White goods campaign by the Electricity Saving Trust: Financial, environmental and authoritative arguments

An example of an unusually effective combination of financial, environmental, and authoritative arguments is the white goods campaign run by the Danish Electricity Saving Trust in 1999. In 1999 the Electricity Saving Trust ran a campaign in which private households and public institutions received a subsidy of DKK 500 if they purchased 'cold' white goods (fridges and freezers, but not chest freezers) with an 'A' energy label. The preliminary dialogue with the network of retailers made it possible to deduct the subsidy from the consumer's bill at the till. The campaign included TV spots and a limited amount of material in shops. Dialogue with the electricity companies and white goods sector prior to the campaign ensured massive support for the campaign with special offers and manufacturers' own marketing material, such as advertising, brochures etc.

The white goods campaign by the Electricity Saving Trust combined environmental arguments, about using less energy, with arguments on lower electricity bills and a subsidy in the form of a cheque for DKK 500 (pictured here) when consumers bought new energy-efficient white goods. Before the campaign sales of A-labelled products accounted for 10 per cent of the Danish market. Today the figure is almost 75 per cent! The campaign has permanently moved the market. Photo by Claus Peuckert Fotografi A/S.

In parallel with the campaign, the Trust introduced an Internet database of prices (in Danish) www.hvidevarepriser.dk, where consumers and public institutions could see and compare current prices of white goods.

The Trust estimated that it would have to pay about 19,500 subsidies, but the actual figure came to just less than 35,000. Before the campaign, sales of 'A'-labelled products accounted for about 10 per cent of the market in Denmark, during the campaign this figure rose to 50 per cent, while today it is as high as 75 per cent. The last increase has taken place without the subsidy. In other words, the market has permanently changed as a result of the campaign. Since 1999 the Danish website www.hvidevarepriser.dk has been under constant development and today it is used by about 300,000 Danes each year when they want to purchase white goods.



Parallel to the Electricity Saving Trust's campaign, a website with a price-comparison database was launched. Here, consumers could review the market, find A-labelled products, and compare prices. The site has since been used by 300,000 Danes per year before they go out and buy new white goods.

This success can be attributed to the combination of a credible sender (the Electricity Saving Trust), a compulsory product label (the EU energy label), use of financial control tools (the subsidy), targeted cooperation with relevant market players (retailers), a practical and informative net tool for consumers (www.hvidevarepriser.dk) and not least a professionally organised information campaign.

In 2004 the Electricity Saving Trust initiated a similar campaign, this time for A+ and A++ labelled fridges.

Further information (in Danish): www.elsparefonden.dk

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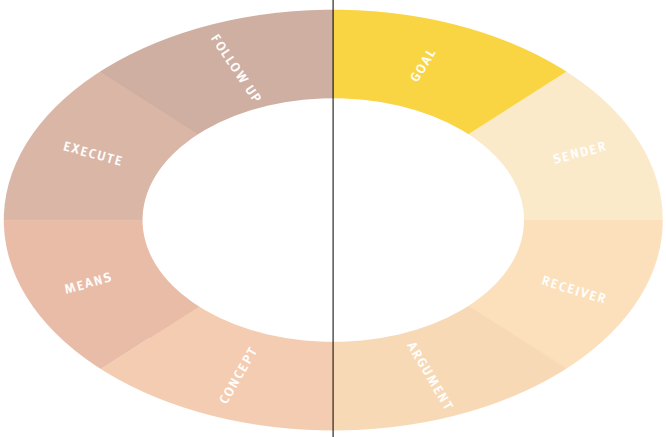
WHAT IS OUR GOAL?



■ The first thing to clarify is the goals of communication efforts. These goals will determine your choices of senders, receivers, arguments, strategy and means. The goals are the very reason for getting the project going. It is possible that you will have to adjust the goals along the way as new opportunities and limitations show up, but if the goals are not clear from the start, you will have nothing to guide you.

The goals should reflect your practical and financial resources. If you set unrealistic goals, you will almost inevitably be disappointed. The problem with unrealistic goals is also that they will not be taken seriously and therefore doubts will arise as to what you are really aiming at.

It is especially important to agree on common goals if you are working with several organisations. Each organisation will usually have its own perspectives, interests and cultures, and this may cause problems later in the process, if the common goals are not sufficiently clear. Allocate time to clarify what the common goals are, and equally what they are not. And take time to formulate the goals as specifically and in as much detail as possible.

What goals can environmental communication meet?
Environmental communication to consumers can have many and very diverse goals. For example, these may be:

- *To create awareness:* there is a political desire to tackle environmentally harmful behaviour and a need to create popular awareness of the problem in question.

- *To spread familiarity:* an ecolabel is not well known so it is necessary to start by developing consumer's familiarity with the label.
- *To establish attitudes:* perhaps that organic goods are quality goods.
- *To change behaviour:* typically to get more consumers to buy environmentally friendly products or use products in a more environmentally friendly manner.
- *To maintain environmentally friendly behaviour:* sales of environmentally friendly products are stagnating and it is necessary to reward consumers who maintain environmentally friendly buying patterns.
- *To improve the sender's profile:* communication about a company's environmentally friendly products can improve its corporate profile as a socially responsible player.
- *To counter negative trends:* the idea has spread that waste separation is futile, making it necessary to communicate that this is actually not true.

The goals listed above are all general goals. That is they describe the general objectives communication can help with, but not realise on its own. The goals specifically for communication are usually defined as communication goals. These are precise numerical statements of the number of people communication is to reach, and the number of these people who are to remember its content and act accordingly. For example, communication goals may be that a campaign is to be seen by 50 per cent of the target group, 30 per cent are to understand the message, 20 per cent are to change their attitudes, and 10 per cent are to change their behaviour.

NVE: Acknowledgement as an incentive to continue environmentally friendly behaviour

A campaign which used acknowledgement as a tool to maintain and expand environmentally friendly behaviour was the "Takk" (thanks) campaign by the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) in 2003. The goal of the campaign was to encourage Norwegians to save electricity at home and at work. The concept was to thank consumers for saving electricity at home and then to ask them to take their good habits with them to work.

An evaluation showed that 76 per cent remembered the campaign and that about 66 per cent felt positively about it. The most important motive to save electricity, but by no means the only one, was not surprisingly financial. The campaign helped many Norwegians to start saving electricity at home and at work – electricity consumption in homes fell by 4 per cent and at workplaces by 9-11%.

Further information (in English): www.nve.no

A goal for environmental communication could be to extend existing environmentally friendly behaviour to cover new areas. The Norwegian water and energy authorities said "thanks" to Norwegian consumers for saving electricity in their homes, and asked them to do the same at work. It worked!

The EU: Campaign for the Flower aiming at greater familiarity

The EU's ecolabel, the Flower, is not very well-known in EU Member States. Therefore, in autumn 2004 a week-long European campaign, Flowerweek was organised in 11 European countries including Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark. Because of the low level of awareness of the label, only the familiarity goal was set for the campaign. For example, the goal in Denmark was to increase awareness of the Flower and what it stands for to 16 per cent, in Austria to 2.5 per cent, in Italy to 2 per cent and in France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden to 5%.

Further information (in English):
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel

The EU ecolabel, the Flower, is aimed at consumers to promote sales of environmentally friendly products. Familiarity with the Flower was low in several European countries. The goal of the EU Flowerweek in 2004 was therefore initially 'only' to increase awareness of the label.

It is vital to note that you can only set the final communication targets once you have thorough knowledge about the target group, otherwise the goals will not be realistic. To start with you can set up a series of preliminary communication goals as a guide. Once you know the target group well enough, you can adjust them and finalise them.

Knowledge, attitudes or behaviour?
When you set up goals and communication goals, it is important to decide whether you want to influences consumers' knowledge, attitudes or behaviour. It may be tempting to make a quick decision that of course you want to change consumers' behaviour. This has the most effect, but it is also the most difficult to realise in practice. It is not often that information efforts alone will be able to change people's habits.

The choice of communication goals must build on your current understanding of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the target group. If the level of knowledge is low, the communication goal may be to raise it by 10 per cent, and the overall goal may be to change consumer behaviour. If knowledge and attitudes are as they should be, the communication goal may be to get 10 per cent of consumers to change their behaviour during the period of the campaign and the overall goal may be to get 30 per cent to change their behaviour in the longer term.

Even though there is a relationship between knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, this does not necessarily mean that one automatically leads to the next. Consumers may well have knowledge and positive attitudes, without these being reflected in new habits and behaviour. For example because a change in habits may involve a change in lifestyle. On the other hand consum-

Overall goal	To create a sustainable market for environmentally friendly textiles based on parents of young children.
Familiarity goal	50 per cent of the target group – women from 30 to 45 – must have seen the campaign.
Knowledge goal	25 per cent of the target group must be able to describe the label for ecolabelled textiles and be able to name at least one of its advantages.
Attitudes goal	10 per cent of the target group must consider buying ecolabelled textiles for their children.
Behaviour goal	5 per cent of the target group must buy environmentally friendly children's clothes
Other goals	To pave the way for a later campaign on bed linen. To enhance cooperation with primary players in the retail sector

It is advisable to formulate an overall or long-term goal which can provoke the specific environmental communication efforts. Next you should formulate precise and measurable communication goals for the communication itself.

ers can also change their behaviour in favour of specific environmentally friendly products but not as a result of knowledge or environmental attitudes. For example it may be because the product reduces electricity bills, or it is regarded as trendy or of exceptional quality.

How can you set goals?

There are many ways of setting goals. The most important thing is not that you follow a specific model, but rather that you formulate the goal so that it creates common and sufficient clarity. As mentioned above, it is advisable to formulate an overall or long-term goal which can provoke the specific communication efforts. Then you should formulate precise and measurable communication goals for the communication itself. Finally, it is important to remember that communication efforts not only affect the reciever, but also the sender and the world in general. Therefore it may be appropriate to also think about what you want to achieve in relation to, for example cooperation partners, allies, opponents, as well as your own organisation.

You can use the example above as inspiration in formulating your own goals. Of course the goals can also be less ambitious and less detailed. If the overall goal is to stimulate awareness about a local environmental problem, the communication goals could be a specific number of mentions in the local newspaper and on the local radio within a specific period.

Should we measure whether the goals have been achieved?

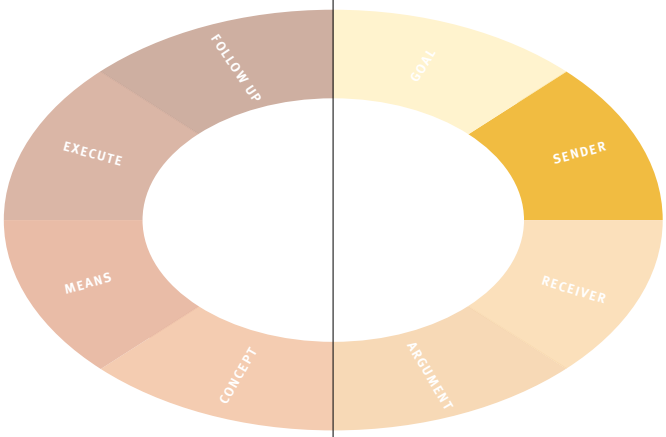
You should decide now whether you want to document the effect of your communication. This is important for two reasons; firstly with regard to formulation of the goals, and secondly with regard to the necessity for premeasurements. Premeasurements are taken of consumers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour before communication efforts are initiated. Premeasurements are required if you want to document a change in relation to an existing situation, for example familiarity with a labelling scheme. If you want to introduce an entirely new product or new scheme, premeasurement will not be relevant.

In order to complete a valid premeasurement process, you will have to find out about the current knowledge and opinions of a representative cross-section of the target group. The best method is to ask a market-research institute or similar to carry out the measurements. This does not have to be exorbitantly expensive if it is done as part of an omnibus survey, that is, a survey where the institute asks consumers questions on behalf of several clients at a time. In return you will receive information about the target group which will provide a better foundation for setting the communication goals and planning communication.

If you do not want to carry out effect measurements on the target group, or if you are not able to do so, you could use indirect effect measurements. Here, you record the number of mentions in the media (e.g. working with a press-cuttings bureau), the number of leaflets distributed, enquiries on a telephone hotline, etc. This will provide you with a good idea of the range of your communication. It is also an obvious thing to do, even if you make effect measurements. ■

2

WHO ARE THE SENDERS?



■ On the face of it, the answer is simple: You are. You are the ones who have a message to the consumers. However, this does not mean that you are best able to communicate with consumers. There may be others who are closer to your target group or who the target group has more confidence in. There may also be someone with better resources or channels for getting the message across. Finally, experience tells us that a message coming from several senders and through several different channels is afforded greater significance and credibility. So, it is important that you consider at an early stage which sender – or combination of senders – will be the best.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Each sender has its strengths and weaknesses. A public authority normally enjoys a high degree of professional credibility, but may be perceived by consumers as being quite remote. An enterprise normally knows its customers well, but may meet scepticism when it comes to environmental messages. An NGO normally enjoys a high degree of moral credibility, but may be seen to lack clout.

By cooperating with other types of organisation than your own, you can compensate for each other's weaknesses and thus strengthen the effect of your communication. Before you consider who you might cooperate with, you should consider your own strengths and weaknesses as senders. This will give you an important indication of which type of cooperation partner you need.

Martha FÖRBUNDET

SLC
För en levande landsbygd

NATUR OCH MILJÖ
Riksorganisation för miljövård

Finlandssvenskt Östersjöforum:
Three very different senders

Finlandssvenskt Östersjöforum (an association of Swedish speaking people living primarely on the Baltic coast of Finland) is an example of fruitful cooperation between three very different senders. The purpose of the organisation is to reduce discharges of nutrients into the Baltic Sea, primarily by inspiring debate and providing people with specific instructions for action.

Östersjöforum comprises three major organisations in the Finnish-Swedish region. Namely the Finnish Society for Nature and Environment (a green organisation); SLC (the central union of Swedish-speaking agricultural producers in Finland); and finally the Swedish Martha Association in Finland (a women's organisation). The three organisations are culturally very different, and together they have ten per cent of the total Finnish-Swedish population as members.

Östersjöforum has agreed on ten practical instructions for action aimed at the general public; such as not to pour dishwater into the sea, not to relieve yourself in the sea, and to ride a bike or row instead of taking the car or motorboat. The environmental effect of different actions is converted to wheelbarrows of algae.

During its first year, Östersjöforum held six panel discussions in different areas along the coast, where members of the three organisations participated in lively discussions. During the summer of 2004, the organisation went on an exhibition tour to 13 localities along the coast, and a sailing tour took place in 2005.

Further information (in Finnish):
www.marthaforbundet.fi/ostersjoforum

The three organisations – the Finnish Society for Nature and Environment, SLC (the central union of agricultural producers), and the women's organisation, the Swedish Martha Association in Finland – together have a wide spectrum of members. Therefore a good cross-section of the local community attended the debate meetings on pollution in the Baltic Sea, which the organisations organised in a number of Finnish coastal towns.

Environmentalists, the agricultural sector and housewives' associations joined in the Östersjöforum, and together they issued 10 instruction leaflets to the public for a cleaner Baltic Sea.

The Danish Road Safety and Transport Agency: Car dealers as co-senders of environmental messages

The Danish Road Safety and Transport Agency campaign "how much does your car do to the litre?" is a good example of a campaign where the players closest to the target group where the ones to communicate the message. The campaign focused on the energy label for new cars and ran from the spring 2003 to the early summer 2004. The dual purpose was to increase awareness of the energy label and the different energy classes and to inspire consumers to buy more energy-friendly cars.

The campaign was based on network communication; that is communication that makes use of the participants' existing networks. Car dealers, car importers, petrol companies and environmental and consumer organisations like the Ecological Council, the Danish Consumer Council and the Federation of Danish Motorists (FDM) participated actively in communicating the messages of the campaign. This was done through newsletters, members' magazines, websites, posters in shops and distribution of campaign material to members and customers.

Further information (in Danish): www.hvorlangtpaaliteren.dk

The players closest to the target group communicate the message about EU energy labels for cars, as here on a petrol pump. This means high visibility and credibility.

Consider these questions in particular:

- *Resources:* What are our strengths with regard to financial, professional and manpower resources for carrying out this communication? What are our weaknesses?
- *Channels:* What are our strengths as regards communication channels – media, network, ambassadors etc. – that reach the target group? What are our weaknesses?
- *Credibility:* What are our strengths as regards convincing the target group of the message? What are our weaknesses?

When you have an overview of your strengths and weaknesses, you have a basis for assessing which types of co-senders you are looking for. A rule of thumb: it is always a good idea to find cooperation partners with a high degree of credibility that are close to the target group.

What types of sender are there?

The list of possible senders is long. Below are a number of main types for you to use as inspiration for brainstorming cooperation partners:

- *Public authorities and organisations:* – supranational, national, local etc.
- *Companies:* – private and public within production, service, trade etc.
- *Educational institutions:* – schools, universities, night schools, etc.
- *Media:* – national media, local media, subject-based media etc.
- *Experts:* – research institutions, universities, councils and boards etc.
- *Trade organisations:* – industrial organisations, employer associations, trade unions, workplace associations, clubs.

- *Interest organisations:* – associations for car owners, tenants, garden owners, ethnic minorities, patients, pensioners etc.
- *Ideological organisations:* – movements working for the environment, energy and consumers etc.

Being several senders does not necessarily mean that you all have to be equally visible to the receivers, quite the contrary. A public sender could choose not to be the communicator, but to give financial support to, for example, an industrial organisation that could communicate an environmental message to its members. A media channel will typically be an obliging intermediary, but not a co-sender. And an expert might only be included as a reference to journalists for more information about the factual background of the message.

When should other senders be involved?

The central senders – which we could also call cooperation partners or stakeholders – will very likely prefer to become involved at an early stage. This will normally be when you are able to present a draft for the overall goals and framework for the communication, but still well before the strategy, the concept and the plan need to be ready. It is important that you remember this – if you get them involved too late, you risk that they will say no.

Early involvement may make things more difficult in the short term. Your cooperation partners probably have different interests as well as reservations that may take some time to resolve. But it will be worth your time. When you let your cooperation partners become involved at an early stage and thus give them real influence, they will feel a greater degree of ownership. This means greater commitment and closer unity in the longer term. The task will be a common task.

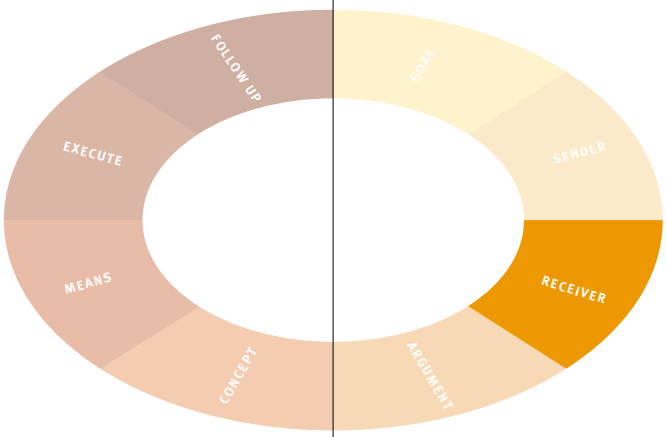
The solution will usually also be better. Partly because your cooperation partners can do things you cannot do because of their position, and partly because they will contribute with good ideas. Obviously everything will not be rosy. If you do not fully face the crucial discussions, more serious conflicts may arise along the way. It is especially important to reach agreement for these three areas:

- *Goals:* As mentioned in the previous chapter
- *Expectations:* Partly for the project in general, and partly of each other. The latter relates to who will do which tasks and on what conditions?
- *Structure:* Who can make which decisions and when? And how will internal communication flow during the project?

Finally, it is important to discuss the resistance and obstacles the project might meet. One cooperation partner may fear criticism from a source that means nothing to you. It is important that you take this seriously and jointly decide how to counter such criticism. ■

3

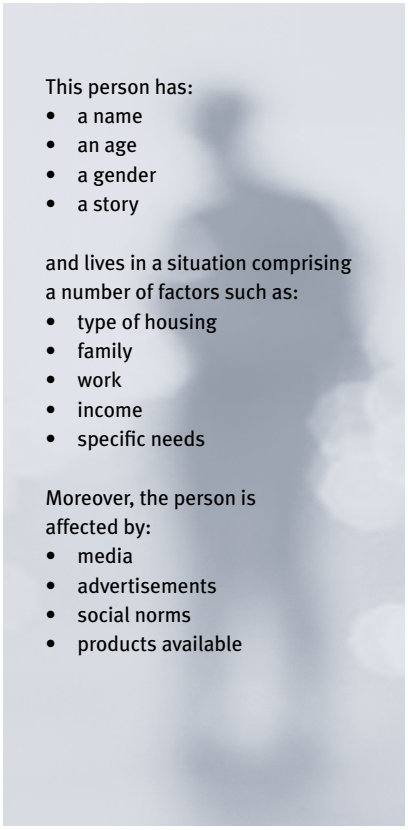
WHO ARE THE RECEIVERS?



■ The receivers are the people you aim your communication at. They are also called the target group. Defining the target group accurately and knowing it thoroughly is pivotal to successful communication. Failed communication is surprisingly often due to a too loose definition of the target group or that the sender has not properly understood the target group's reality, values and habits.

A person in a situation

Groups, including target groups, consist of individuals. This is important to remember. Your communication may be sent to women between 35–55 years of age with medium-length education and humanistic values, but it is received by Catherine, Sarah, Nina and Christina. They live their own personal lives with chores, relations, thoughts and dreams. In short, your receiver is a person in a situation.



This person has:
- a name
- an age
- a gender
- a story

and lives in a situation comprising a number of factors such as:
- type of housing
- family
- work
- income
- specific needs

Moreover, the person is affected by:
- media
- advertisements
- social norms
- products available

Returpack: You do not have to choose the target group easiest to reach!

Of course not all environmental communication has women at the age of 30-50 as the target group. In principle, the Swedish company Returpack, which organises a return system for packaging from beer and soft drinks, has everybody as its target group. Since the Swedes are generally positive towards the system – about 85 per cent of bottles and cans are returned –Returpack decided in 2001 to focus its communication on the part of the target group that uses the system the least, namely the 15-29 year-olds.

This meant that Returpack changed its media strategy from outdoor advertisements and printed media to TV, cinemas, postcards, t-shirts, posters and CDs. The campaign used TV formulas that were well-known to the target group (detective, Band-Aid music, military camp), and the tone was friendly, and fun rather than finger-wagging.

Measurements of the effects of three TV commercials on the target group showed that the target group's level of recognition, understanding the message and sympathy with the commercials was generally at 70-90 per cent, which is very high.

Further information (in English): www.returpack.se

Returpack used templates for TV and cinema advertisements which were well known to young people – detectives, Band-Aid, military camps etc. Young people reacted with high recognition and understanding for the message. The pictures here are from the advertisement "The camp".

The person deals with all this by developing a set of habits. We often talk about habits as irrational and inappropriate, but this is not always the case. Actions controlled by habits are rational because they are simple to perform.[9] It is easier and especially quicker to buy what we normally buy than to deal with a whole supermarket full of products.

How do you define the target group?

Even though communication is received by individuals, you cannot tailor the information individually (unless you do face-to-face communication). Instead you will have to base your communication on some shared characteristics of your receivers. These shared characteristics could both involve the receivers' demographic characteristics – e.g. gender, age, address – and their values, attitudes and personal needs.

The demographic division is normally the easiest. Below are references to a number of Nordic studies of which consumers are most likely to buy, consume and dispose of products in an environmentally friendly manner.[10] The studies cover only individual Nordic countries, they were all primarily carried out in the second half of the 1990s, and they have had different focus:

- *Gender*: All studies indicate that women are more concerned with environmental issues and buy environmentally friendly products more often than men. This is partly due to the fact that women are responsible for the majority of grocery shopping.
- *Age*: There is a trend towards people becoming more environmentally responsible with age. Swedish analyses conclude that middle-aged or older women are the most environmentally responsible. Other factors are involved, however, and therefore a lot of environmental communication is aimed at women between 35–55 years of age. The picture of young people is more varied: young people seem to have the same environmental attitudes as the population in general, but some studies indicate that they are less likely to act on these attitudes.
- *Education*: Here, we see that the most environmentally conscious have an educational level above average. However, there are exceptions. Many older people with a low educational level act in a very environmentally conscious manner due to culture and tradition.
- *Income*: Consumers with a high income are more likely to buy environmentally friendly products than consumers with low income. An important reason for this is probably that environmentally friendly products are regarded as – and often are – more expensive than traditional products.
- *Housing*: A Swedish study shows that consumers living in houses buy more eco-labelled products, than consumers living in flats. The same study shows that people living in villages buy eco-labelled products more often than people in cities. This does not correspond to Danish experience, though. Here, buying organic and environmentally friendly products is very much regarded as a city phenomenon.
- *Family*: As far as we know, there are no scientific studies of the importance of family situation for the choice of environmentally friendly products. However, the general assumption is that parents of small children are more likely to buy environmentally friendly food and textiles.

What are the values and attitudes of the target group?

Demographic data say a lot, but far from everything. There are young men living in flats buy organic – and there are middle-aged women in houses would never even dream of doing so. A Norwegian study shows that attitudes and values are more decisive for environmental behaviour than educational level and income.[11]

There are a number of methods for identifying attitudes and values of consumers. One method used in Denmark is the Minerva model. It divides consumers into four segments – blue, green, violet and rose – and, in a simplified form, it looks like the model next page.[12]

- The *blue* consumers are modern, well-educated, highly paid, live in cities and focus on individualistic and materialistic values. They are critical towards environmental messages, but interested in environmentally

9 A Swedish report: *Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540) p. 59

10 Norwegian, Swedish and Danish studies referred to in *Miljøinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540), chapter 5, and *Knowledge, attitude and behaviour on environmentally friendly and EU Eco-labelled products in the EU*, Valør & Tinge, 2002

11 A Swedish report: *Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540) p.64

12 The Minerva method was developed by Danish sociologist Henrik Dahl and can be found in his book *Hvis din nabo var en bil* (if your neighbour was a car), available in Danish from Akademisk Forlag, 1997. This presentation of the model is extremely simplified.

friendly products to the extent that they regard these as an expression of quality, health and status.

- The *green* consumers are modern, well-educated, have average incomes, live in cities and orientated towards collective and non-materialistic values. They are interested in the environment, animal welfare and ethics, and they are traditionally the primary target group for environmental communication.
- The *rose* consumers are conservative, have low education and low pay, live in rural areas and are orientated towards intimate/domestic values. They are mainly interested in the environment when it is local and visible, and they believe that a person needs to be a good example to others. Moreover, health, including the health of children and grandchildren, may play a role.
- The *violet* consumers are conservative, have low education and low pay, and are orientated towards their own values. They are sceptical towards the unknown, and they believe that environmental problems have been exaggerated. This group is the one that is hardest to reach with environmental messages.

These four types are stereotypes, of course. Not many people will be able to choose just one of the colours. However, it is an important exercise to try to describe the type of people you want to reach with your communication.

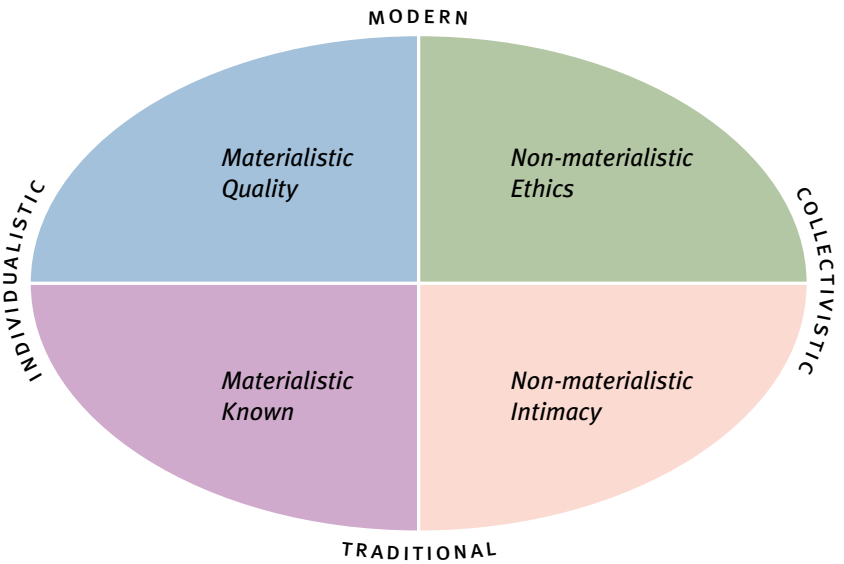
What is the target group's current situation?

The current situation of the consumer – and the needs derived from this – may be a third parameter when choosing target groups. For example, we could be dealing with consumers entering a new phase in life – because they're moving away from home, buying their first home, having their first child – and so have new needs and are open to new impulses. They are adapting to a new life and need new knowledge and new skills. An example of environmental communication with this as a starting point is the Norwegian ecolabelling secretariat's campaign for eco-labelled products aimed at new parents (see p.25). The National Consumer Agency of Denmark also regards consumers in transition between two phases of life as an important target group.

What are the media and purchasing habits of the target group?

Finally, you need to know how the target group receives its information and where the target group moves in their daily lives. This is important for your subsequent choice of media and channels. You could, for example, ask yourself these questions:

- Which newspapers, weeklies, magazines, specialist journals etc. does he/she read?
- When and what programmes does he/she watch on TV and hear on the radio?
- Which supermarket etc. does /he/she use?
- Which specialist shops does he/she visit – for example clothing, home decoration and furniture, do-it-yourself centres?
- Which public institutions do he/she frequent – e.g. the library, the doctor?
- Which societies and associations is he/she active in – e.g. sports, environmental, political?



Attitudes and values are very influential on behaviour and that includes environmental behaviour. The simplified Minerva model illustrated here can be used as a tool to describe common characteristics for the values of a target group.

Demography	Gender, age, education, income, type of housing, geography, family
Values	General values, attitudes to the environment, attitudes and opinions on current affairs
Situation	Transition between phases of life or other situations with special needs
Media, buying and other habits	Preferred media, preferred places for shopping, other frequented places

A detailed and descriptive description of the target group is required to be able to set precise communication goals.

Such information can also be bought from an analysis research company. The more narrowly you have defined your target group and the parameters you would like information about, the more precise a picture the analysis research company will be able to make of the media and buying habits of the target group. However, analyses may be expensive to acquire – especially if the company does not already have the necessary data in their database.

What does a good description of the target group include?

By now you know enough about the target group to be able to identify who exactly you wish to reach. You can use the table as a guide:

It is a good idea to define the primary target group relatively narrowly. This will help make your communication more focused. Broad target group definitions risk leading to diffuse communication which does not hit home. It is better to think of primary and secondary target groups. It is also important to draw a clear line between the target group and the non-target group.

How do you get to know the target group?

When you have defined your target group, it is time to get to know it better. It is important to know about how it actually thinks and feels in relation to the subject you intend to communicate about. And it is important to know their language.

You can get to know your target group in different ways:

- *Conversations*: Talk to your family, friends and colleagues who remind you of the target group. Ask them what they feel about the subject, listen carefully – and do not argue against them.
- *Media*: Watch the TV programmes and read the newspapers and magazines that the target group uses. Notice which values are being emphasised as positive and negative. Notice language and images.
- *Surveys*: Find out if someone has made a survey of a target group similar to yours. This may provide inspiration and save you a lot of work.
- *Interviews*: Interview members of the target group. This could be interviews with individuals or with a group. This allows you to examine the target group more closely and test hypotheses and ideas.

Remember to make your communication goals clear!

Now you know enough about the target group to make precise communication goals. Therefore you should go back and critically revise the original goals. What is realistic and what is not? Look at the goals once more:

Overall goal	
Familiarity goals	
Knowledge goals	
Attitudes goals	
Behaviour goals	
Other goals	

NB: When your communication material is almost done, do not forget to test it on representatives of the target group. This will give you a good indication of whether the communication is being perceived as you intended – and a chance to correct it before it is too late. ■

The Norwegian ecolabelling secretariat: Environmental communication to new parents

In 2003, the Norwegian ecolabelling secretariat decided to target a significant part of its communication to parents with children between 0 and 2 years. The starting point was that parents wish to do what is best for their children, and that new parents are in the process of establishing a whole new set of habits. The campaign "A good start" was intended to provide guidance about choices of ecolabelled products within product groups such as soap, shampoo, nappies, napkins, textiles and toys. The campaign primarily used the existing information channels – including health visitors, mums and babies groups and consumer groups – to spread knowledge and distribute materials.

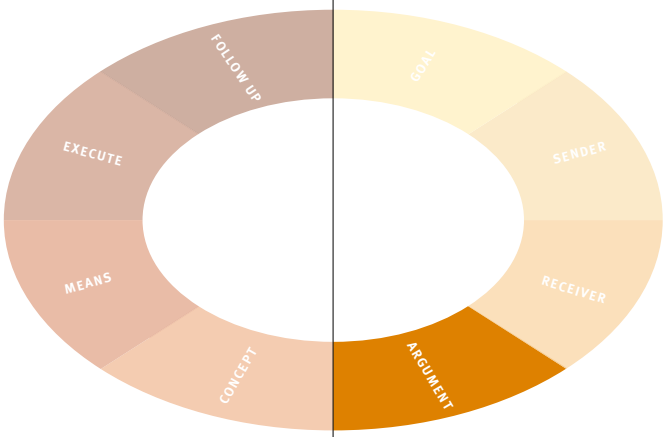
Results of the campaign turned out to be so good that it was decided to keep it active.

Further information (in English): www.ecolabel.no

When we move on to a new phase in life, e.g. become parents, a sudden need arises for new knowledge and we are motivated to receive and search information.

4

WHAT ARGUMENTS DO WE NEED?



■ Environmental communication takes account of the fact that consumers will readily accept a specific message. To present your case convincingly, you need some very good arguments. Therefore it is important to examine systematically the arguments available. The more arguments you have, the stronger your position. And the better the basis for choosing the arguments that are most likely to persuade your target group.

What is an argument?
Before finding the best arguments, it is important to have a common perception of what an argument is. This will make it much easier for you to translate for instance product data into arguments. And what is more, it will make your arguments more homogenous, and easier to work with.

Argumentation is statements by the sender in order to convince the receiver of a specific point of view. An argument consists of three elements: claim, ground, and warrant. This can be illustrated as follows:

- *Claim*: The message which you/the sender wish the consumers/receivers to accept. For instance: "You must buy an eco-labelled refrigerator".
- *Ground*: The information or the foundation used by the sender to support his claim. For instance: "An eco-labelled refrigerator uses less energy".
- *Warrant*: The basic view or the rules shared by sender and receiver. For instance "It is good to save energy".

Benefits	Emotional	Social	Material
Personal			
Locally			
Society			

Environmental communication builds on consumers voluntarily becoming convinced about a specific message – and then taking action. The basic job in argumentation is therefore to translate the properties of a product or action into benefits for the consumer. The "chessboard" is a tool to formulate these benefits.

In practical life, warrant is usually implicit. Still, it is important to be aware that warrant is the foundation of the argument.

What's in it for me?

Basically, environmental arguments are based on our knowledge that, by acting in a specific manner, we can achieve a specific environmental benefit. For instance by avoiding pesticides, we can protect our groundwater. There are, however, also arguments for environmentally friendly behaviour which are not based on environmental benefits. Because of their energy-saving properties, eco-labelled refrigerators hold both environmental and economic benefits. To most consumers, the economic benefits will be most important.

When finding arguments, it is important that you keep focus on the benefits to the consumer. The benefits to be gained from certain behaviour, for instance buying an environmentally friendly product, or separating your waste at the source, should always be greater than the efforts to be made by the consumer in order to achieve the benefit. On the face of it, this may seem difficult, for instance in connection with waste separation. But remember that benefits may take a number of different forms – for instance the "feel-good factor", the feeling of luxury, recognition by neighbours, being trendy, getting quality, or achieving savings.

How do you find the arguments?

The main task is to translate the properties of the product or behaviour into benefits to the consumer or to people in general. This can be done in various ways. A useful method is to use the chessboard[13] which focuses on three types of benefits: emotional, social and material. The benefits can be achieved at three different levels: the personal level, locally, or in society at large.

- *Emotional benefit:* The personal satisfaction of doing what is morally right. The joy of doing your best, of behaving decently, of doing something good. But also other types of feelings, for instance feeling beautiful, rich or healthy. This is called the feel-good factor.
- *Social benefits:* Benefits related to other people. To be recognised by your friends, to be on a friendly footing with your neighbours, to meet the rules and norms of society. This is called the good-neighbour factor.
- *Material benefits:* Specific measurable benefits. Money saved, greater effect, better quality, more vitamins, time saved, better health.

The three types of benefits can be achieved at personal level, locally, and in society at large.

- *Personal:* individual consumers, people in general.
- *Locally:* the community, workplace, association etc., and countryside in the local area.
- *Society:* the national and the global society, as well as the national and global environment.

13 The chessboard is developed by the Danish consultancy firm Valør & Tinge

Benefits	Emotional	Social	Material
Personal	The joy of doing something which is good for you	Recognition from friends	Money saved
Locally	The joy of doing something which is good for the neighbourhood	Recognition from the neighbour-hood	Green area being saved in the neighbourhood
Society	The joy of doing something which is good for the world	Meeting rules and norms	Better economy in society

The chessboard gives nine types of argument. New and often surprising angles arise from formulating all the benefits and arguments for a specific environmental situation. The best 2-3 arguments for the target group are selected.

Benefits	Emotional	Social	Material
Personal	The pleasure of dressing nicely	Recognition from friends for a good buy	To buy a quality product which is guaranteed to be environmentally friendly
Locally	The joy of sup-porting a clothes shop selling environmentally friendly textiles	To wear stylish clothes and look good in public	Support sales of eco-labelled products
Society	The joy of giving textile workers in Pakistan better working condi-tions	Following soci-ety's encourage-ment to buy eco-labelled products	Reduce global consumption of pesticides by xx units

Arguments for buying an ecolabelled shirt – a fictive example. The chessboard has been com-pleted out with nine benefits for the consumer.

Looking at the three types of benefits at the three levels provides us with nine types of arguments. They vary greatly depending on the subject and could for instance be as in the chessboard on the left.

Finally, we have applied the chessboard to a fictive example illustrating the ben-efits of buying an eco-labelled shirt: beautiful design, good quality, made in Pakistan without the use of pesticides and harmful dyes, sold from a local shop (see below).

Usually, several arguments fit into each of the fields. But sometimes it seems good arguments cannot be found for a certain field. Still, try to fill in all the fields. Very often you will find that things can be viewed from a new angle that you would never have expected.

How do you choose the best argu-ments?

Typically, when all fields are filled in, you will have a handful of arguments that seem quite convincing. The job is now to select two or three arguments which you believe are the best. When doing so, you should think of the target group you are aiming at. What is impor-tant is to find the arguments that are best for them. You do not have to throw out the other good arguments. These arguments can serve to further support your aim, and for derived argumenta-tion – for instance towards secondary target groups. ■

Bluecare: A winning combination of environmental, price and quality arguments

In the autumn of 1999, the National Consumer Agency of Denmark tested detergents for coloured textiles. They found that Coop Denmark´s Swan-labelled detergent "Bluecare" was by far the best. Bluecare Color was most efficient, most environment-friendly, and among the cheapest on the market. The results were presented in almost all the media, and sales went up by a factor of 12. At the same time, sales of other Bluecare products doubled or tripled.

Read more (in Danish): www.coop.dk

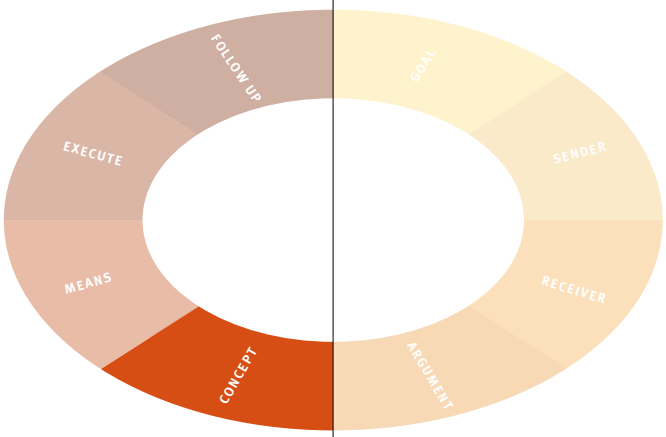
When a product has good environmental properties and is also of high quality at a reasonable price, it is easy for consumers to make the right choice. FDB's Swan-labelled washing powder "Bluecare" washes well at a low price. Consumers rewarded the manufacturer and the environment by increasing their purchases by a factor of 12.

To the consumer, the benefits were numerous and convincing. In the chessboard, they may look like this.

Benefits	Emotional	Social	Material
Personal	The pleasure of buying a product which is best, cheapest, and most environment-friendly	Show family and friends that you care about the environment	Buying a product guaranteed to be the best. Buying a cheap product
Locally	The joy of supporting Coop Denmark's environment policy	Recognition from other environmentally conscious customers in the shop	Reduced discharges of harmful substances into the local aquatic environment
Society	The joy of doing something which is good for the environment	Following society's encouragement to buy eco-labelled products	Reduction of global pollution

5

WHAT IS OUR CONCEPT?



■ Once you have set the goals, selected the senders and receivers, and formulated the arguments, you are ready to define the concept – i.e. the overall creative idea giving your message its unique, overall and appealing shape. The concept must break through information noise, and will attract the attention of the target group and interest in the message. A good concept is often characterised by having a humorous, surprising or even provocative approach.

A concept will normally include three elements:

- *The message*, formulated as an appealing slogan – also called pay-off
- *A visual appearance* – also called graphic identity
- *An activity or an element* which appeals to the target group.

Furthermore, *timing* may also be considered to be part of the concept. For instance, the success or failure of a campaign may depend on the date it is launched.

How do you find the concept?

Developing a good concept is a difficult operation. To succeed, you need to forget about sense for a while, and let your imagination and creativity take over. A good idea could be to invite a number of creative people to take part in the process. If you do not have the resources required to hire professional creative people, inspiration for ideas may also come from your colleagues or friends with professional and personal backgrounds that differ from your own. This may trigger new ideas and perspectives which you would not have found yourself. Brainstorming or – even better – conversation over a nice dinner are useful options.

It is always a good idea to use the experience gained by others. Before letting ideas and creativity come out freely, you may for instance discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the concept used in communication work resembling your own. Spend some time collecting materials from others that may trigger the discussion.

You may use the advice and inspiration below to develop your concept, and to assess that of others.

Slogan – pay-off

The campaign slogan is the most important message to be learned and remembered by the target group. Examples are the WWF slogan "WWF – for a living planet", the EU Flower Week campaign "The Flower makes it easy to buy green", and the Danish Road Safety and Transport Agency campaign "Green cars go twice as far as red cars". A good slogan hits the core of the overall message, it is short and catchy, it trips off the tongue, and it is able to stand alone. This will make it easier to remember for the receiver.

Making a good slogan which fulfils all these aims is not easy. Often you will have to test many different proposals and adjustments, before you find the slogan you are looking for.

Visual identity

Most communication projects need support from different forms of visual material, for instance leaflets, advertisements, websites etc. Therefore, you need a visual identity to penetrate all the material produced for the campaign, for instance pictures, colours, fonts, shapes, figures and logos. You may invite a famous person to front the campaign – a well-known but still

E2: Humorous use of the concept "positive energy"

An example of a well-planned concept is the Danish energy company E2's campaign "We create positive energy". The campaign was launched after the liberalisation of the Danish electricity market in 2004, and aimed at positioning E2 as an environmentally conscious supplier of energy from wind turbines and wood pellet boilers.

The campaign used the hippy phrase "positive energy" and freaky Danish comedian Anders Lund Madsen was cast in the leading role. As a flower-power guru, Madsen gave the message of positive energy, using humorous rhetoric and metaphors from a spiritual universe to describe the environmental profile of E2. The visual concept of the campaign was richly coloured flower power, sometimes with spinning wind turbines instead of flowers.

The campaign materials included outdoor advertisements, newspaper advertisements, TV spots, postcards, and a website where consumers could send "positive energy" via electronic postcards.

Further information about E2 (in English): www.e2.dk

The concept is the overall creative idea which gives the message its special appeal. A good example is the energy company E2 with its campaign "we create positive energy".

efficient tool. Together with the slogan, the visual elements help the target group recognise the campaign when they meet it in different media.

Activities and elements

In principle, this part of the concept can be anything – what is important is to find something that is especially appealing to the target group. Something that ties things together and creates attention. In the following we present some of the most typical elements, for instance celebrities, events, competitions and give-aways.

Celebrities

Celebrities may add to the attention given to a campaign. Actors, writers, sportspeople, TV personalities etc. will lend their credibility to the campaign and transfer it to the message. The campaign may also strengthen the front person's credibility when arguing for a good environmental cause. Contrary to this, the person's credibility may be jeopardised, if, for some reason, the campaign fails. A lot of people exposed in the media are aware of this risk, and are very careful not to lend their name and face to anything. Moreover, they will often charge a fee for taking part in the campaign – even though they do nothing but lend their face to the campaign. Remember: before you choose someone famous for your campaign, you must consider thoroughly what they stand for – what attitudes or products are associated with their personal profile.

Events

An event could be a happening to launch a communication project, or it could be the main element of the communication project: a concert, a market for environmentally friendly products, a local water day, or an event for children. The possibilities are endless. A good thing is that you can invite the target group to a specific event, and that the possibility of press coverage is good. TV reporters are especially interested in types of event that include some kind of activity, because reporters depend on living pictures to introduce their story. A traditional press conference would not have the same effect, because all the reporter gets are talking heads to go with his story. And these are already very well represented in the news as it is!

Games and competitions

Competitions, test-yourself questionnaires, games and quizzes are well-known concept elements, because they serve very well to activate specific target groups. They are also efficient tools in efforts to communicate messages, because the target groups gain new knowledge of the subject matter when they take an active part in the activity. The Internet is an obvious and frequently used media for competitions and quizzes, but there are plenty of other possibilities.

Give-aways

Giving away gifts may also be a good concept element. The most common give-aways are T-shirts, caps and balloons with printed campaign messages. There are also a whole range of other items, for instance fridge magnets, matchboxes, key rings and cords, posters, mouse pads etc. In Norway, hand showers were given away during a water-saving campaign. If you wish to give away gifts, you should choose something that will not be thrown away at once, because the gifts are aimed at making the message part of the target group's everyday life, and because it is not very friendly to the environment to produce something useless. ■

Max Havelaar: Tour de café with brunch, live jazz and debate

A good event does not need to be one-off event. In the autumn of 2003, the Danish division of the fair trade organisation Max Havelaar carried out its Worldshake Brunch Tour in Denmark, with six events at cafés throughout Denmark. The events, which aimed at telling us "how we may all contribute to supporting sustainable development by thinking each time we shop", included a brunch of Max Havelaar products, live jazz and celebrities introducing the debate.

The events attracted a lot of people and good press coverage in the cities outside Copenhagen in which they took place.

Further information (in Danish): www.maxhavelaar.dk

Max Havelaar invited people to a sustainable brunch, live jazz and well-know people to lauch debate at a number of café events in the Worldshake Brunch Tour.

Agenda 21: Giving away low-energy light bulbs to all households in the municipality

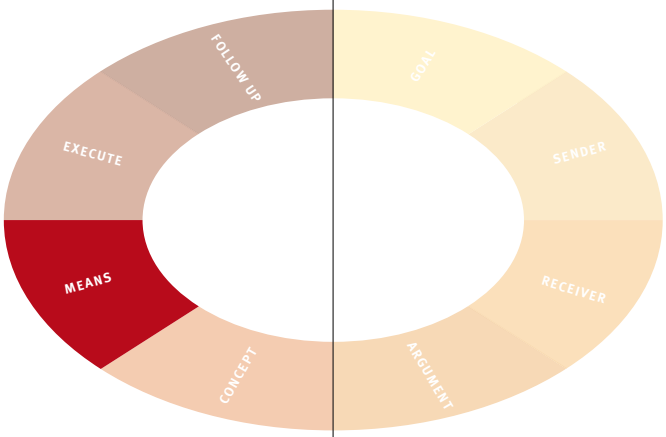
You do not have to be rich in order to be generous. The Agenda 21 group in the Danish municipality Ramsø brought attention to local Agenda 21 work by giving away free low-energy light bulbs to all 3,400 households. The bulb was packed in a paper bag with a printed text presenting the sender and the possible savings to be achieved when using the bulb – DKK 400 during its lifetime. The group packed and the local scouts distributed the bulbs. The total price of the event was DKK 58,000 (7.700 EUR).

Further information (in Danish):
www.eco-info.dk

The local Agenda 21 group in Ramsø municipality distributed low-energy light bulbs to all the households in the municipality, and they explained about the electricity savings of DKK 400 for each household over the lifetime of the bulb. The picture is from the local newspaper. Photograph: Jens Wollesen.

6

WHAT ARE OUR MEANS OF COMMUNICATION?



■ When you have developed and determined your concept, it is time to consider what means of communication you will use. By means of communication we refer to all the different channels a message can be communicated through. The list of possible communication channels is infinite and this manual describes only the most common ones, such as advertisements, websites, the press, etc. The appendix provides an outline of the most important means of communication, including their strengths and weaknesses.

A rule of thumb of good communication is to combine several means of communication. Analyses of information campaigns run by the Swedish authorities show, for example, that combining public information, media coverage, and network communication can be very effective.[14] Basically, whether your goal is to affect the knowledge, attitude, or behaviour of people, a combination of different communication channels will be required, as the individual channels of communication emphasize and supplement each other. Therefore, you have to consider what combination of communication channels to use rather than what single communication channel to use. One example of a common combination is advertisements in mass media supplemented by a website containing further information.

When choosing your means of communication, the following three dimensions should be thoroughly considered:

- The nature of the message
- The media and buying habits of the target group
- Your own resources

14 A Swedish report: *Miljöinformation som styrmedel – Förstudie* (TemaNord 2003:540), p 47

When you have developed and determined your concept, it is time to choose which means of communication you will use. A hen's cage as an outdoor installation gave consumers opportunity to experience for themselves how battery hens live. "We have stopped our sale of eggs from battery hens. Go into this cage with 7 other people and you' ll understand why."

Coop Sweden: Cages, film strips, and posters used in campaign to promote organic eggs

An original combination of media was used in Coop Sweden's campaign –"A small step towards happier hens". The campaign built on the concept of involving the consumer in freeing more hens by buying organic eggs. The campaign combined e.g. the following communication:

- Steel cages were set up in public spaces bearing the following inscription: "We have stopped our sale of eggs from battery hens. Go into this cage with 7 other people and you'll understand why."
- TV advertisement featuring a hen riding a motorbike, enjoying its freedom
- Printed advertisements
- Point of sale material

The campaign led to Coop Sweden's sales of organic eggs reaching 32.5 per cent – against only 6 per cent by other retailers.

Further information (in Swedish and English): www.coop.se

Coop Sweden gave consumers the opportunity to experience the living conditions of battery hens, while organic hens were allowed to experience the boundless freedom of motorbike riding.

Consider the nature of your message and tick the problem and solution type in the table. If the environmental message is simple with readily accessible benefits for the consumers, most often it will be sufficient to supply and/or distribute information. However, if the environmental message is of a more complex nature and the benefits are long-term, it will be necessary to utilise more dialogue-oriented communication means.

☐ Simple ☐ Visible ☐ Specific ☐ Local/regional ☐ Acute	Environmental problem ⟷	☐ Complex ☐ Not visible ☐ Diffuse ☐ Global ☐ Develops over time
☐ Easy to use ☐ Immediate benefit ☐ Personal benefit ☐ Cheap ☐ Small sacrifices ☐ Individual effort	Solutions ⟷	☐ Hard to use ☐ Long-term effect ☐ Collective benefit ☐ Expensive ☐ Large sacrifices ☐ Collaborative effort

What is the nature of your message?
Some messages are simple and easy to understand and act on. Others are more complex and demand more of the target group. The nature of your message is decisive for your choice of communication channels. Simplified, one can say that if the message is simple and provides easily accessible benefits for the consumer, you should primarily put efforts into supplying and distributing information. If the message is complex and the benefit long-term, you should put your efforts into dialogue-based communication channels.

You can narrow down the nature of your message by considering these questions.

What type of environmental problem is it?
- Is it simple or complex?
- Is it visible or not visible?
- Is it specific or diffuse?
- Is it local, regional or global?
- Is it acute, or has it developed over time?

What is the nature of the solutions the target group are to understand and act on?
- Are they easy/hard to use?
- Is the benefit to be gained immediate, or will it be a long time before it is gained?
- Is the benefit personal or collective?
- Is it cheap or expensive?
- Does it require small or large sacrifices by the consumer?
- Does it require individual effort or collaborative effort?

When you know the answers to these questions, plot them in the chart above by ticking the right answer.[15]

Where do you have the most ticks? If there are more ticks to the left, you should place your emphasis on the communication channels such as distribution and supply of information. If there are more ticks to the right, you should place your emphasis on network communication and personal communication. Use of the press is almost always relevant, no matter what communication assignment you are faced with.

Note, however, that it is not about choosing channels from one side or the other. The objective is to find out where to place the main emphasis. In the following, we describe the five categories of communication channel. In the appendix is an outline of 21 specific means of communication.

15 This is a reduced version of a model by Ulrich Nitsch. See the full version (in English) at *www.greencom.se*

Gålå Højfjellshotel: Mountain resort using ecolabels in its marketing

Ecolabels are point-of-sale material which, increasingly, is being applied within service industries, including tourism. An example is the Norwegian mountain resort Gålå Højfjellshotel, which apart from being EMAS-certified, also has the Flower and the Swan labels. The resort received the national environmental prize "Glassbjørnen" – the Glass Bear – in 2004 for its efforts, and it uses ecolabels pro-actively in its marketing.

Gålå Højfjellshotel displays the labels on its website, in sales material at tourist agencies, and at the hotel itself.

Further information (in English):
http://www.gala.no/EN/Default.aspx?tabid=663

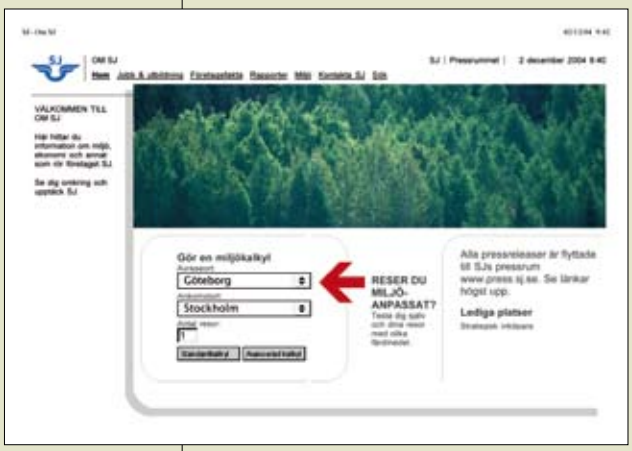
Ecolabels are being used increasingly in the marketing of services. The Norwegian mountain resort, Gålå Højfjellshotel, for example, uses the Swan and the Flower ecolabels as key visual elements in their marketing.

SJ – the Swedish railways: Website including environmental calculation tool

The interactivity which websites provide can be utilised for much more than games and information search. The Swedish railways' website features an environmental calculation tool by which you can compare the environmental effect of a trip by car, bus, plane and train respectively. The tool can be set calculate the trip the customer is planning, for example from Gothenburg to Stockholm – and the result is stated in terms of health and environmental impact, as well as direct environmental costs.

The environmental calculation tool also allows you to make advanced comparisons based on number of travellers, number of trips, and type of car, bus, plane, or train, as well as on type of fuel.

Try out the tool (in English):
http://www.sj.se/sj/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=280&l=en



Calculators and other problem-solving features on websites give the users a feeling of having really gained something from visiting the website. SJ makes it possible for its customers to calculate for themselves the environmental benefit to be gained from choosing the train.

Distribution of information
When information is distributed, the sender is active while the receiver is passive. The receiver has not asked for any information from the sender, nor has he thought about which type of information he lacks. To this category belong advertising and shop material (point-of-sale material, or POS).

- *Advertising*: Advertising in the printed and electronic media is one of the most effective means of distributing information. This applies with regard to exposing the messages as well as with regard to raising familiarity and knowledge. The weakness of advertising is that it is an expensive means of communication. Advertisements are generally suitable when the target group is broad and the message is simple. Advertising includes: advertisements in newspapers and magazines, outdoor advertisements, TV advertisements, internet banner advertisements, radio advertisements, and postcard advertising distributed for free in restaurants, bars, cafés etc.

- *Point-of-sale material:* Point-of-sale material is used for communication by retailers to stimulate sales of products. Point-of-sale material is suitable if your goal is to affect the behaviour of the target group, since consumers are faced with the material in the buying situation, when they are open to the message. Point-of-sale material includes shop signs, flyers, packaging, labels and more, as well as material which alone is intended for the environmental message, such as ecolabels and environmental declarations.

Supplying information
When information is supplied, the receiver is active while the sender is passive. You can make it possible for the receivers to search out more specific and complex information by allowing them opportunity to request printed material or visit the Internet and find what they are looking for on their own. However, this means you have to distribute information about which type of information you are supplying.

- *Folders and brochures:* Folders and brochures are suitable means of communication to consumers who are especially interested in receiving information. This type of media is short-lived if the folders are linked to campaigns and are based on news, whereas the life span can be relatively long, if the folders provide concrete instructions and good advice.

- *Websites:* Websites are suitable when communicating more complex information, because the user seeks out the information actively and chooses to visit the website on his own account. Websites provide opportunity for tailoring the message to fit different target groups precisely and to guide them to the webpages of particular relevance to them. Moreover, websites provide the receivers with opportunity for interacting with the sender, for example, through games, quizzes and tests.

The press
The press is a very important communication channel, because many people assess the importance of a subject on the basis of the scope of its media coverage. Editorial writing appears more credible than e.g. advertisements, because the sender is a journalist. The press, however, cannot be controlled, so the story could end up with another angle than intended.

- *News media:* News media include newspapers, TV, radio and to some extent also regional and local newspapers. Common for these media is that they want to tell stories that contain news. Therefore, environmental messages should contain news or provide a topical perspective on an event. If there is no real news to your message, an alternative possibility is to convince the press to include it for its useful consumer information. However, this is a significantly weaker angle.

- *Other media:* Other media include specialist journals and magazines. The number of readers is usually considerably smaller than for news media; however they are more interested and willing to spend more time on their reading. A further advantage is that specialist journals and magazines have a longer lifetime than news media. Their weakness is primarily that they are published less often and take longer to produce. This makes it harder to use them in connection with campaigns.

Network communication
Network communication is not associated with specific media, but is based on the concept of using the communication channels of collaboration, alliance and other involved parties in one's network to communicate the message. This could be e.g. making use of other parties' specialist journals, websites, newsletters, members' meetings, courses, discussion fora, informal network groups, offices and other premises where members come. The strength of network communication is that it allows you closer to the target group, and – due to the nature of the communication channel – the message will usually have greater credibility. It is a cheap but relatively time-demand-

City of Copenhagen: Immigrants communicating environmental messages to immigrants

An example of successful personal communication within a residential area was carried out in Mjølnerparken in Copenhagen. Mjølnerparken is a public housing development of high-rise blocks where 90 per cent of the residents are of another ethnic origin than Danish. In 2004, the City of Copenhagen ran a campaign in Mjølnerparken with the objective of providing the residents with advice and guidance on how to save water and separate waste.

The campaign's themes targeted women at home. A preliminary survey showed that personal contact and communication via the target group's own network was crucial. The main activity of the campaign was therefore to train a number of immigrant women from Mjølnerparken as environmental ambassadors. The women were contacted in collaboration with the housing department and went trough a short course about waste and water seen in a cycle perspective. The women – all volunteers – then toured Mjølnerparken, establishing contact with residents speaking their language.

The campaign also included trips for residents to a recycling station and an incineration plant, contact to all-men's associations, mosques, schools, language centres, etc. The information material was published in Turkish, Urdu, Farsi and Danish. The material included a folder, a refrigerator magnet, a small sign to put on the water tap, and more.

A more detailed description of the campaign and experience gained from it available in Danish at:
www.miljoe.kk.dk/etnisk

People close to the target group can communicate an environmental message directly and in a credible manner. The City of Copenhagen therefore trained immigrant women from Mjølnerparken as environmental ambassadors. The photo shows Copenhagen's head environmental official Winnie Berndtson presenting diplomas to the women that completed the training.

Even environmental ambassadors will need 'sales' material to help then push the message. Folders can be reread, once the conversation with the ambassador is over. The material used in the Mjølnerparken case included a refrigerator magnet and a small sign to put on the water tap, i.e. point-of-use material.

ing way of working, which, often, will require the message to be adapted to the individual communication channel.

Personal communication

In personal communication both the sender and the receiver are active. This is the most committed form of communication, because both parties have decided beforehand to spend time with each other. Personal communication can take the form of meetings and workshops, teaching, telephone hotlines, exhibitions, canvassing, and similar events. Because you are in direct contact with the target group, personal communication is the most effective method if your goal is to change the target group's behaviour. For example, the advice and guidance of shop staff in connection with sale of consumer durables such as furniture, TV sets, and white goods etc. can be decisive for the consumers' choice. Personal communication is also suitable for use in connection with campaigns aimed at specifically small, predefined target groups, for example in a residential area. The weakness of personal communication is that it is resource demanding and has a limited range.

What are the target group's media and buying habits?

We have already asked this question once in this manual, on page 23. Now the time has come to look at the answers again and convert the media types you have chosen, together with you knowledge about the target group's behaviour, into concrete proposals for which media you will use. This gives us the following formula:

Media types defined by the nature of the message
\+ *Target group's behaviour*
= *Proposed media*

In other words, you should use your knowledge about the target group to select the right media. If you do not have this knowledge, consider the answers to questions such as:

- Which newspapers, weeklies, magazines, specialist journals, etc. does he/she read?
- When and what programmes does he/she watch on TV and hear on the radio?
- Which supermarkets etc. does he/she use?
- Which specialist shops does he/she visit, for example clothing, home decoration and furniture, do-it-yourself centres?
- Which public institutions does he/she frequent, for example the library, the doctor?
- Which societies and associations is he/she active in, for example sport, environmental, political?

What are the resources available to you?

Finally, there is a third dimension – the matter of resources. This gives us the following extended formula:

Media types
\+ *Target group*
\+ *Resources*
= *Proposed media*

Resources are primarily about finances. If you have a budget running into hundreds of thousands of Euros, you can think a campaign in terms of TV spots and large newspaper advertisements. However, if your budget is of a more humble size, thinking in terms of press and network communication is perhaps more advisable. In all events, it is important that to be aware that resources are more than just money. Resources are also:

- *People*: Most NGOs have a small budget. On the other hand, they possess something that companies and authorities rarely have, namely members who are willing to chip in for free. The same usually applies to local communities, sports associations and clubs, tenant and residents' associations, etc. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider whether your communication could be based on people participating actively. Communication among and involving many people often is more effective than traditional mass communication.

- *Time*: Time, as we know, is a scarce resource in modern society. Investing more time can often compensate for a small budget. This could be spending time making good articles and comments for newspapers and specialist magazines; researching subjects thoroughly, perhaps stumbling upon something sensational; or participating in many different events and meetings etc. On the other hand, not enough time can be costly, financially as well as for the people involved.

- *Allies*: The resources that you do not possess on your own, others might have. There may be people in your network with special competences or contacts, who are willing to help you. There may be companies or organisations, happily willing to use their media and communication channels to communicate your message – because they sympathise with you, or because they want to be associated with a good cause. See the case about Aaland next page. ■

The Aaland islands' local Agenda 21 office allied with the local dairy processor. Concrete instructions for actions for how the individual could help save the Baltic Sea were printed on to milk cartons: in this way the information was distributed to every household, and exposed to everyone around the breakfast table.

Aaland's local Agenda 21 office: NGO and dairy processor allying

On the Finnish Aaland islands the local Agenda 21 office allied with the local dairy processor, "Aalands Centralandelslag", in getting the message across about saving the Baltic Sea. All of Aaland's milk-consuming residents learned from text on their milk cartons that discharges of nutrients into the Baltic Sea cause the disastrous flourishing of algae. Under the headline "You can save the Baltic Sea", there were concrete instructions for how to help: take the bike or bus rather than the car, shop locally, etc. Each example was illustrated by the corresponding reduction it would occasion in the number of kilos of algae in the sea.

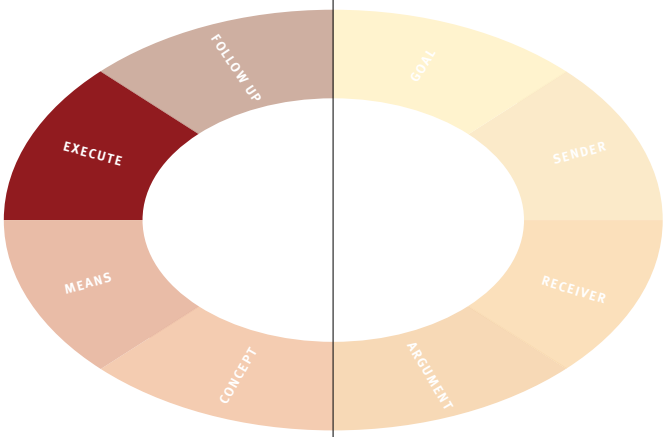
The Agenda 21 office entered into another similar alliance, when it had a number of advertising agencies take part in a competition for the best advertisement to save the Baltic Sea. The advertisements were published free of charge in local newspapers.

Further information (in Finnish): www.agenda21.aland.fi

On the Aaland islands, part of the environmental benefit is high-quality bathing water.

7

HOW DO WE EXECUTE?



■ When your means are in place, you are ready to communicate your message. In this chapter you will find advice on how to prepare the communication plan and how to control and ensure reaction preparedness during execution. Finally, the chapter provides advice on how to brief copywriters and on how to construct and prepare e.g. websites, teaching material and press releases.

How do you prepare a communication plan?

A communication plan should describe how you intend to execute your communication. It should describe what is to happen and when, as well as who is responsible for what. It is a good idea to prepare the plan as a table, rather than merely writing down a series of dates. The best thing would be to draw up the plan on a board which enables you to revise the plan as you go along. In this way, you will literally have the common plan in sight during meetings.

Normally, a communication plan is prepared as a timetable, covering the project from start to finish. This timetable may be divided into a number of main tasks, the individual steps of which are plotted in with deadlines for their completion. Typically, the plan will be a week plan with the deadlines showing as dates. Below is an example (fast) communication plan.

Things seldom go as planned but that should not keep you from making plans. However, it is always a good idea to revise the plan as you go along. If not, you risk losing overview of the situation.

How do you control the project during execution?

When the project is running at full speed, decisions have to be made continuously. Therefore, it is important that you have clearly defined before-

hand how you will make the decisions. The goal is to strike the right balance between consideration for your partners and the need to be able to make decisions at short notice.

How your decision-making structure should be constructed, naturally, depends on the project in question and on the interests and culture of the organisations involved. However, most often it will be necessary to appoint a project manager empowered to make the daily decisions. It is also necessary to know who will make decisions when the project manager cannot be reached. Finally, it may be convenient, especially where many organisations are working together, to set up a steering group, which will meet on a regular basis. This will ensure that all parties have influence on and responsibility for the decisions made.

Apart from the decision-making structure it is important to be ready for feedback etc. When you launch the communication, hopefully you will get positive reactions from a number of people. These might be consumers making enquiries, citizens asking questions, or journalists interested in writing a special feature. Furthermore, unexpected opportunities might arise which require extra efforts of you, such as someone asking you to write an article for their media. Make sure that you have the necessary capacity to take advantage of the attention given you, and take care not to disappoint the people that approach you.

Your internal communication, to partners and allies, is also important. It can take place through e.g. a weekly news mail sent to all parties involved.

How do you brief your suppliers?

You will probably need the services of one or more professional suppliers to properly mold and shape the wording etc. of your communication. You can hire an advertising agency to help you with everything or you can engage a number of freelancers for selected assignments, e.g. a graphic designer, photographer, web designer, and copywriter. If they are to be able to perform their assignments successfully, they will need the right background material and a clear understanding of their assignment. It is your responsibility to provide both.

This is seldom achieved merely with just a brief meeting. The best thing is to have a detailed preliminary talk where you go through the details of the assignment and allow the supplier time to ask all relevant – and often surprising – questions. Naturally, you will be inclined to see the message from the sender's perspective, whereas the supplier will be able to see things from the receiver's perspective. It is therefore important that you are open to the supplier's point of view, which may reveal new and better ideas. If you insist too strongly on your own point of view in the preliminary phase, you will probably end up with a less creative product.

What – who and when! When you are in the process of carrying out your communication project, having a communication plan which provides an overview is a must.

	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11
Press Person responsible: NN	18/2 – Draft article for weekly magazine X to be completed 20/2 – Draft press release to be completed	23/2 – Article for weekly magazine to be completed 24/2 – Steering group to approve article 25/2 – Article to be released and press release to be completed	2/3 – Steering group to approve press release 4/3 – Press release to be released 5/3 – Minister to open website in connection with event	8/3 – Follow up on press coverage
Website Person responsible: PP	16/2 – Website raw content to be completed	23/2 – Structure and final content to be completed 24/2 – Steering group to approve structure and content	1/3 – Programming to be completed 2/3 – Steering group to approve website for uploading 5/3 – Website to open	9/3 – Register traffic and adjust, if relevant
Network Person responsible: TT	16/2 – Issue invitations for event	26/2 – Deadline for acceptance of invitations	5/3 – Dialogue with attendance by network	10/ 3 – Prepare story about event that can be communicated by network

It is also a good idea to provide the supplier with a written definition of the assignment, so that he or she has something concrete to base his work on. A description of the assignment could include:

- Your goals – and how you will evaluate them
- A description of yourself and other senders involved in the project, including any wishes you have with regard to visibility, e.g. the application of logos and web addresses on information material.
- A description of the receivers, including any target group analyses
- Main arguments and chessboard arguments
- Your thoughts and ideas for creative concept and main message
- Your ideas for communication channels and your suggestions as to distribution of responsibilities
- Possible requirements to the material, including use of design manual, Swan-labelling of printed matter, use of environmentally certified printing, etc.
- Your budget framework

How do you prepare good input to the copywriter?

You will probably need the services of a copywriter. Whether the copywriter is an external or internal resource – e.g. someone from your communications department – your task is to deliver the input which the copywriter will be working on. The better the input you deliver, the greater the likelihood that you will receive a text that will draw and hold your readers' attention. As a rule, a text is as good as the original input the copywriter is given to work from. Since information about the environment is often difficult to comprehend for people without an environmental background, it is important that you help the copywriter to weigh what is essential to the message and balance the content. The copywriter's job, then, is to translate the content into a wording and a style which the target group understands.

Below is some advice, which may be helpful if you prepare the final version of the text yourself:

- *Keep the focus*. When a text is focussed, the reader can readily understand its purpose. Everything in the text should serve to communicate the message. If the text contains an overflow of information, the reader will lose track and thus lose interest to read on. Start by writing the main arguments of each section. In this way, you can ensure that only essential information is included.
- *Make what is complicated simple.* Use words the reader can understand. Avoid using abbreviations and specialist terminology – and if specialist terminology cannot be avoided, provide explanations for the terms.
- *Make what is simple interesting*. The more concrete and close-to-home a text is, the easier and more interesting it will for the reader to read. Do not just write etc. Rather, you should provide explanations and examples which the target group will recognise from their own lives.
- *Use the news pyramid*. Start with the conclusion, then the most essential information, and, lastly, all the details – just as in newspaper articles. In this way, the reader gets the most important information first, by reading the introduction.
- *Find illustrations that underpin the message*. Illustrations catch the reader's eye and are often the first thing the reader sees and decodes. Some things are easier to explain using a picture or an illustration rather than words. Photos are also good for triggering the reader's identification. Graphic illustrations and diagrams may help simplify a complex context.

Input to website content

When you write texts for the Internet, the same advice applies as above, but you should keep in mind that we read text 25 per cent slower on screen than on paper. Shortening the text correspondingly is therefore a good idea, but you have to do more: the structure has to be adapted to the electronic media.

Here is some good advice:

- *Present an overview of the content on the first page:* The user should be able to see right away whether the website contains the information he or she is searching for. If you write to several very different target groups, you should guide the user in the right direction from the first page.
- *Make the structure clear and simple:* Too many levels and choices make it difficult for the user to navigate the website. You should therefore have no more than three levels and no more than 10 choices per level.
- *Repeat the important messages:* On the Internet, the classical outline of the text is no more; you cannot control the user's navigation, or where the user starts and ends. By repeating the important messages throughout the website, you can compensate for the fact that the user may enter from several doorways.
- *Make plenty of use of headlines and bullet points:* Long blocks of dense text rob the eye of features to navigate from. The users should, as a minimum, be able to see the next headline within the same screen view, and preferably more than just one.
- *Use hyperlinks moderately:* Do not fall for the temptation to establish links whenever there is an occasion.

Danish Ministry of the Environment:
Waste campaign aimed at 11-12-year-old school children

In autumn 2003, the Danish Ministry of the Environment carried out a campaign called "CLEAN WEEK – don't waste it!", which was aimed at Danish 11-12-year-old school children. The purpose of the campaign was to teach the students about waste and how to handle it. The campaign's main feature was a competition to prepare the best online newspaper about waste. The hub of the competition and the newspaper production was "the Great Collection Day", when the students were out collecting litter. A popular national children's TV host and the Minister for the Environment participated in the Collection Day and were among the judges in the online newspaper competition.

The teaching material was centred on a website made to fit the style of the target group. The site contained information about waste, green tips, a quiz, an example of an online newspaper, graphics etc. 11-12-year-olds from a total of 127 schools participated in CLEAN WEEK, and 97 classes produced an online newspaper. All online newspapers were subsequently made available via the campaign's website. An evaluation showed CLEAN WEEK to be an educational success

Further information (in Danish): www.renuge.dk

The waste campaign CLEAN WEEK culminated with "the Great Collection Day", when the participating pupils collected litter from nature and found material for their online newspaper on the subject of waste. The pupils collecting litter from the Fælledparken Common in central Copenhagen were accompanied by some of the members of the CLEAN WEEK's panel of judges, the Danish Minister for the Environment, a popular children's TV host and the editor of Børneavisen, a Danish children's newspaper.

During the waste campaign the CLEAN WEEK website served as the heart of communication. The students were given accesses to easily searchable information, and to templates and ideas for use in the production of their online newspaper about waste.

You should prioritise carefully, and perhaps make a separate list with explanations of words and phrases.

Special requirements for teaching material aimed at schools

Teachers are flooded with offers of teaching material. If you are considering preparing teaching material as part of a campaign, you should make sure that it lives up to a number of requirements.

Here is some advice:

- The teaching material should be carefully and professionally prepared
- The teacher should be able to understand and plan his or her use of the material without spending too much time (e.g. include a proposed teaching curriculum)
- The teaching material should be flexible enough to allow students with differing personal and intellectual capacity to gain something from working with the material
- The material should be fun and illustrative
- The material should be relevant in terms of what is on the exam syllabus (if aimed at older students) or related to official requirements to the subjects taught
- The material should motivate the students, containing, for example, quizzes, games, and contests with the possibility of winning prizes
- If the material is made available on a website, the students should be able to find the information they need on the website, so that they do not have to surf the Internet extensively

Special requirements for material aimed at immigrants

Europeans in general have become more environmentally aware over time, but it has taken many years – including many information campaigns – to get to this point. However, there are many immigrants whose specific knowledge about the environment and ecology is relatively poor. On the other hand, the concept of sustainability is well understood. The Koran, for example, tells us to pay heed to and behave with modesty towards nature. In Denmark, some immigrant groups have problems because of a low level of education, high unemployment, and poor Danish skills, as well as little social contact with people of Danish background. Their friends, family and formal network such as immigrant clubs and meeting points etc. can therefore serve as important sources, if you want your message to reach these groups.

Here is some good advice:

- Written material should be easy-to-read, devoid of metaphors, since this would mean a risk misunderstandings
- The text should be written in the target group's mother tongue

In addition, as with communication to non-immigrant target groups, the following should be observed:

- The text should point out concrete actions the individual can perform everyday
- Arguments that we all have a shared responsibility for the environment can be useful
- Financial arguments, e.g. that we can save money from acting environmentally correctly, are important

Special requirements for press releases/invitations

Journalists receive printed as well as electronic press releases on a daily basis. But since they cannot publish all material, only few press releases are followed up and end up as articles or features. Therefore, it is important that the press release can be a help for the journalist so that he or she is able to form a quick idea of whether the story has interest for the reader. Press releases seldom in themselves lead to more substantial articles, however they can often serve as an introduction to dialogue with the journalist.

Here is some good advice:

- Headline and sub headline should pinpoint what the story is about. The rest of the press release is used to fill in the detail and can also include quotes
- The press release should not be longer than what corresponds to one A4 page
- Avoid technical terms: be brief and to the point – preferably targeting the individual media's area of coverage
- If you are informing about an event, remember to include all relevant data on time and place etc.
- Give a contact person including phone number
- If you send the press release as a mail, state the subject of your press release in the headline subject field
- Ask the journalist, if he or she would like to subscribe to your free newsletter, but never enter him or her on the list without his or her express acceptance

If you intend to hold a press conference, you will have to offer the journalists more than a written press release. The press conference can for example be used to provide key journalists with special briefing and interviews. Exclusive stories normally provide the best results in the form of longer, more thorough articles. Press conferences allow you to enter into immediate dialogue with journalists, and thus to create good coverage for your message in the media represented at the conference. However, you do not have certainty that everyone you invite will turn up – even if they have said they would. ■

Seeing the problems with your own eyes makes a difference – also for journalists! One of the journalists invited by WWF Skov 2000 to go on a trip to the rain forest was Benjamin Holst, a writer for the Danish newspaper Politiken. This photo shows him in front of FSC-certified tropical timber at the storage site near Deramakot Forest Reserve in Sabah, Malaysia. Photo by Søren Ring Ibsen, WWF Denmark.

WWF Skov 2000: Journalists invited on trip to the rain forest

Journalists can be invited to more than press meetings, for example, so that they can see the environmental problem with their own eyes. This is exactly what "WWF Skov 2000" – a Danish forest and trade network for wooden products produced in a sustainable manner – chose to do as lead-up to its introduction of a label for certified sustainable forest management, FSC, in spring 2003. Two journalists were invited on a trip to see destruction of the rain forest as well as sustainable forestry in Brazil, Indonesia and Malaysia. The result was comprehensive press coverage of the FSC label, which paved the way for the FSC campaign "Wood without headaches".

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Apart from the press coverage, WWF helped the eleven member companies of the network to buy and use specially developed campaign material aimed at consumers and employees. Finally the campaign had a website with further media work by WWF. Four companies in the network – Coop, Jysk, Trip-Trap and Koppwood – used the materials to create awareness about their FSC-certified products, primarily garden furniture made from tropical wood.

The combination of press coverage and point-of-sale material, including the FSC label on the products, meant a real breakthrough for sustainably produced wood.

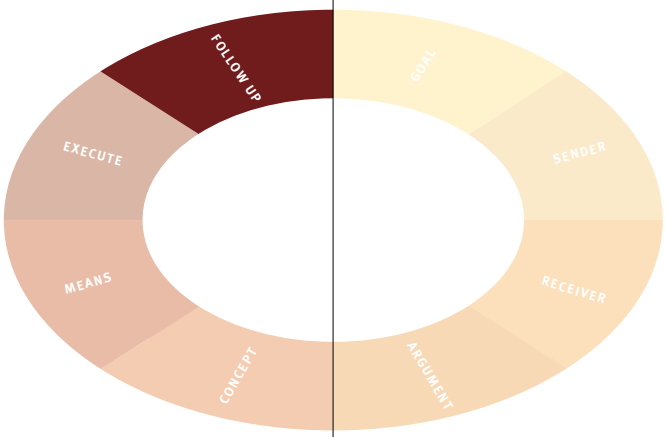
Further information: www.wwf.org and www.fsc.dk


DNA-test skal afsløre ulovligt træ

Newspaper article by Benjamin Holst – an example of the articles and media coverage which resulted from the journalists' trip to rain forests, and which helped place the sustainable production of wood products on the agenda in Denmark. The article is from the Danish newspaper Politiken.

8

HOW DO WE FOLLOW UP?



■ You have now completed your communication. However, this does not mean that your work is done. Your communication efforts have probably yielded positive results which put you in a better position to communicate your message in the future. The job now is to consolidate your position so that the results are not wasted. This can be ensured through good follow-up.

Good follow-up includes as a minimum the following three elements:

- Feedback to everyone involved
- An evaluation of whether the goals have been achieved
- Maintenance activities

How do you give feedback?

In this context, feedback is constructive and appreciative feedback on an effort. In principle, everyone who has taken part in or reacted to the communication should receive feedback. This includes cooperation partners, network players, consumers and others.

For cooperation partners, it will usually be advisable to provide written feedback, perhaps on the basis of the evaluation. You could also hold a concluding meeting at which you evaluate the cooperation process and discuss how you could continue work. A good rounding off with the cooperation partners will improve opportunities for cooperation in the future. If the project merely 'fades way' it may be more difficult to approach the partners again.

For more remote cooperation partners, for example network players, you could send a thank-you letter with a brief report about the results of the project. If people have really done you a favour, then remember to show your appreciation, possibly as a couple of bottles

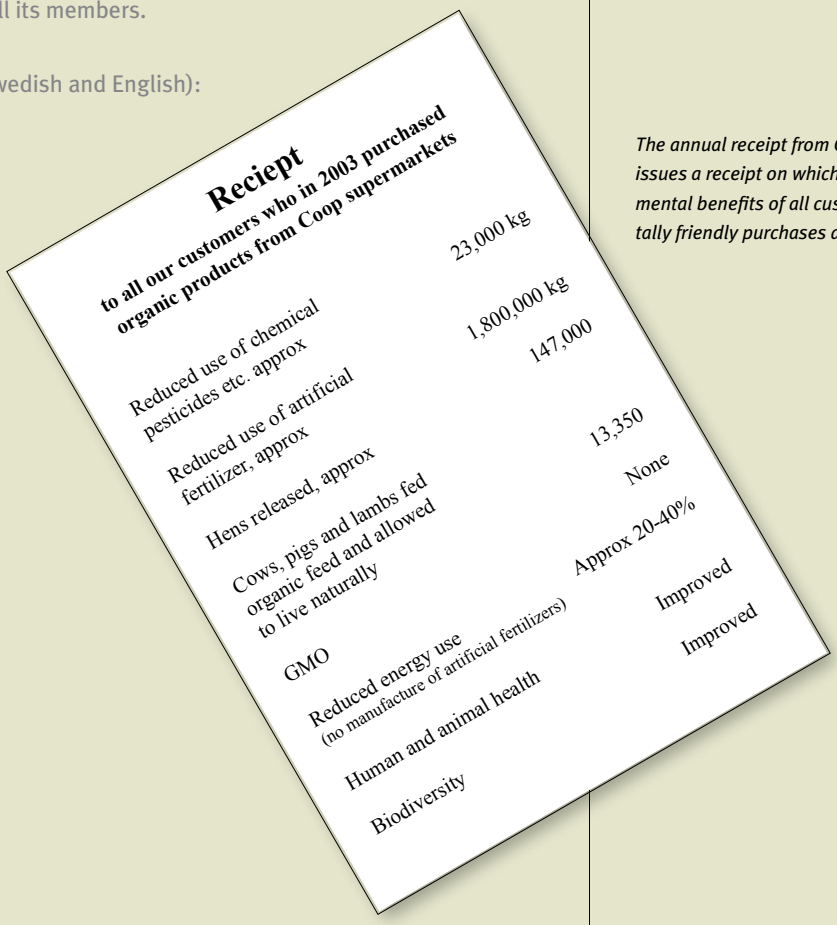
Coop Sweden:
Receipts for helping the environment

A good example of both short and long-term feedback to consumers is the environmental receipts from Coop Sweden. The receipts for actual purchases highlight purchases of environmentally friendly products by marking them with a clover, and the proportion of environmentally friendly purchases compared with total purchases is also stated.

In addition, Coop Sweden issues an annual receipt for the total environmental impacts of environmentally friendly purchases by customers to all its members.

Further information (in Swedish and English):
www.konsum.se

All organic and ecolabelled purchases are marked with a clover on the till receipt from Coop Sweden supermarkets. Consumers receive direct feedback and recognition for their environmentally friendly purchases.



The annual receipt from Coop: once a year Coop issues a receipt on which the combined environmental benefits of all customers' environmentally friendly purchases are stated.

of wine. Of course all this is common courtesy, but it will ensure you are welcome another time.

Last, but not least, it is important to thank the consumers, who have taken in your message and changed their behaviour. If you do not know the specific consumers, for example because they have merely taken a product down from the shelf, you could write the thanks on the packaging or similar. A more general thank-you note could be sent to all the consumers who have bought environmentally friendly, for example in the form of an annual 'receipt' similar to that issued by Coop Sweden to its members.

By saying "thank you" you bear out consumers' behaviour and help maintain it.

How do you evaluate?

There are several good reasons to conduct evaluations. The first and most obvious is to examine whether you have achieved your goals. Another important reason could be to examine why you did or did not achieve your goals. For example it involves identifying which elements have worked well and which have been less successful. Before you start your evaluation, you should clarify the function of the evaluation, as this will determine its design.

Evaluations can be designed in many ways. The following is based on the Danish Environmental Protection Agency's concept for evaluating communication activities by the Agency.[16]

- *Organisation*: Define the purpose of the evaluation and introductory meeting with the evaluator at which methods etc. are agreed. If the evaluation is to be valid, it must be performed by an external and professional evaluator, preferably with specialist knowledge on the environment and consumption.
- *Premeasurement*: As mentioned in the chapter on goals, it is important to complete a premeasurement process if you are to document the effect in relation to the existing situation, e.g. knowledge and attitudes about an environment issue. If communication is about the introduction of something new, for example a new scheme or product, premeasurement will usually be irrelevant.
- *Qualitative interviews:* Interviews with players with special qualifications to assess the communication. For example, this may be people at important places in the network. The objective is to get stakeholders' assessments of the organisation, execution and potential effects of the communication. It may also provide the evaluator with an important indication of what is especially relevant to ask about in the large quantitative survey. The interviews are conducted face to face or on the telephone on the basis of a questionnaire guide.
- *Effect measurement:* The hub of the evaluation. This will measure whether you have achieved your goals. Effect measurement should preferably be done immediately after the end of a campaign. Effect measurement is carried out via telephone interviews or by distributing questionnaires and is aimed at the target group. Effect measurement will typically examine three aspects:
  - The target group's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour after the campaign
  - The target group's awareness of the campaign
  - The target group's assessment of the campaign (design, content, tone)

  The questionnaires will also ask about respondents' sex, age, education etc. in order to identify relationships between perceptions and types of person. If premeasurement has been carried out, the questions should be the same in the effect measurement.
- *Analysis*: When all the data have been collected, the evaluator will complete an analysis. This will not only be based on the effect measurements, but on all the knowledge gathered. The analysis will also look at the purpose and could, for example, identify the elements in the design which have worked especially

16 Danish EPA (in Danish): *"Koncept for evaluering af Miljøstyrelsens kommunikationsaktiviteter"* January 2001.

well. The analysis will result in a number of conclusions. These can form the basis for decisions about your future communication efforts.

- *Post-measurement:* Finally you may want to carry out a post-measurement process. This is effect measurement carried out some time after the project and it aims at investigating whether the campaign has led to durable changes in the target group.

How do you maintain the results?

Even though your communication has been successful and you have achieved good results, you must calculate whether the effects become weaker over time. Consumers live in a vast sea of communication, where messages have to fight fiercely for attention. As time goes by, other messages will push yours into the background. Therefore it is important to maintain and follow up.

In some cases, follow up could be through repeating advertisements for the campaign at regular intervals, but something more than this is usually called for. However, you do not have to decide precisely how follow-up is to take place at this stage. What is important is to decide that there will be follow-up, when it is to be, and who is to be responsible for taking the initiative. All that is left to say is that organisation of the new campaign starts back at chapter 2 again! ■

The Danish environmental secretariat:
Effect wears off over time

An example of the effect of time on a message is the Danish ecolabel campaign. After the campaign in spring 2001, awareness of the Flower was 16%. After the smaller follow-up autumn campaign awareness had dropped to 13%. Without follow up, awareness would almost certainly have waned even more.

Consumer awareness of a message drops off over time. Consumer awareness of the ecolabel has to be underpinned with follow-up campaigns.

CHECKLIST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION TO CONSUMERS

Goals

- What is our overall goal?
- Do we want to change knowledge, attitudes or behaviour?
- What are our communication goals?
- Should we be able to measure whether the goals are achieved?

Sender

- Who is to be the sender?
- What type of senders do we especially need to work with?
- When should we involve the other senders?

Receivers

- Who is our target group?
- What characterises it?

Arguments

- What are our arguments?
- What are the benefits for the receiver?
- What arguments should we use?

Concept

- What is our slogan?
- What should it look like?
- What activities or elements should the concept build on?

Media

- What media should we use?
- How should they be combined?

Execution

- How do we manage and control?
- How do we brief?

Follow-up

- How do we give feedback?
- How do we evaluate?
- How do we maintain our results?

LIST OF FIGURES AND EXAMPLES

Figures

Examples

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION TO CONSUMERS

■ "Environmental communication to consumers" is a manual on communicating environmental issues to the consumer. The purpose of the handbook is to give decision-makers and employees within the governmental authorities, companies, and NGOs the tools to plan and carry out environmental communication aimed at the consumer. The idea of the guide was fathered in the Cross-sector Group for Product Policy of the Nordic Council of Ministers, NMRIPP. The group focuses on stimulating sustainable consumption through communication with consumers. The basis of this guide is experience of good environmental communication in the Nordic countries and lists 21 concrete examples of this in the Nordic countries.

Environmental communication for consumers has a lot in common with communication for consumers in general, but there are important differences. The most important is that the consumers' benefits from buying environmentally friendly products are primarily of a long-term and collective nature. This is illustrated as below.

The position of the environment requires that good environmental, consumer-oriented communication is about more than just communicating about the environment. It is about identifying and assembling the broad spectrum of arguments, which in its totality can convince the consumer of the benefits of the environmentally friendly product – and thereby alter the consumption. This is the starting point of this manual.

Content of the manual

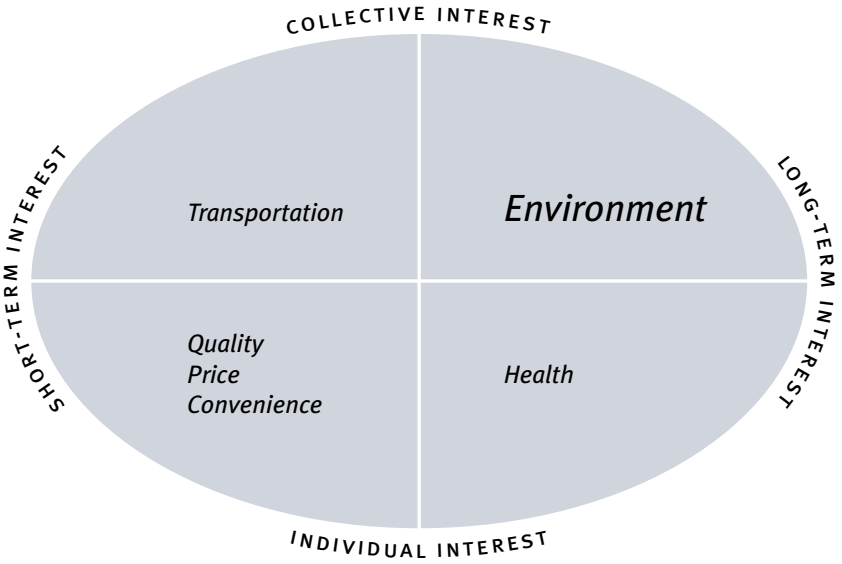
The manual is centred on eight fundamental questions, which must be answered when consumer-oriented communication is planned and carried out. The eight questions make up the eight chapters of the manual and can be illustrated as in the figure.

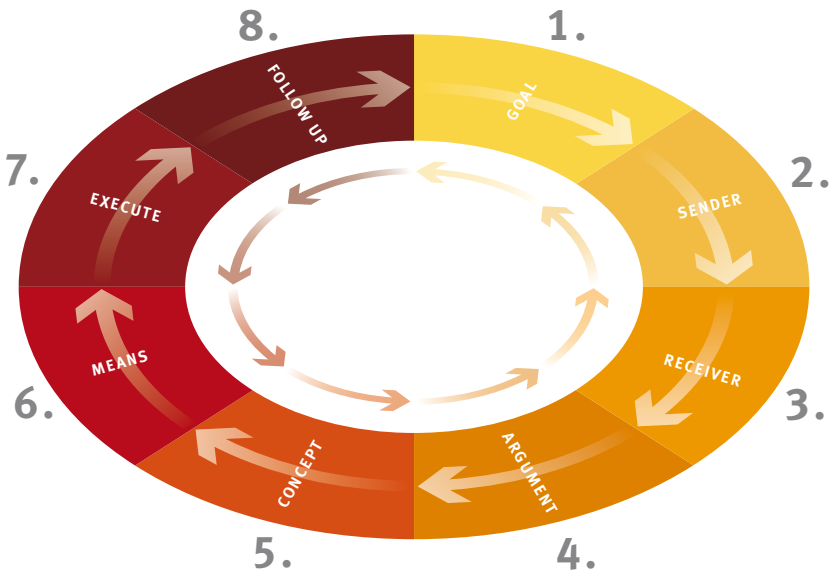
The large circle symbolises the progression in the process whereas the small circle illustrates the necessity of continually returning and adjusting.

Targets

The guide begins by outlining the many purposes of consumer-oriented environmental communication – i.e. establishing attitudes, maintaining behaviour or strengthening the profile of the sender. We distinguish between the overall goals and goals for communication and emphasise the need for clear choices between the consumers' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour

Environmental communication is about the necessity that we, as individuals and society act in a way that our common natural foundation is not diminished. In other words, purely environmentally founded arguments are based on collective long-term interests. If we wish to communicate to others than consumers already environmentally conscious, other types of arguments i.e. price, convenience or health, which can accommodate more individual consumer interests, must supplement environmentally founded arguments.





Through eight chapters the manual introduces the process of planning, execution and evaluation of environmental communication The planning of environmental a progressing process in which it is important to be able to go back and adjust earlier decisions. For instance, it is necessary to know the target for the communication before type of media is selected (bold arrow), meanwhile,an analysis of the target group's knowledge and attitudes can make it necessary to go back and re-evaluate the goal for the communication (small arrow).

The manual is written to be read chronologically, but can be read in excerpts.the figure is used as a guide in the book, which makes it easy for the reader to locate him or herself in the communication process.

that the communication aims to alter. The guide offers instructions on setting targets and subsequently making the targets measurable.

Senders

The chapter encourages the reader to consider which combination of senders would be the optimum to reach the established targets. It emphasises the need to consider own resources, means and credibility in relation to the receivers, as well as the need to find partners to compensate for own weaknesses. Different types of senders are described and premises for good cooperation are presented.

Receivers

It is important to make firm choices regarding target groups – and even more important to know the target groups chosen. The chapter presents three criteria for segmentation when choosing target groups – Data, Values, and Situation – as well as the most environmentally relevant criteria are described. Furthermore, we offer inspiration to uncover the media and consumption-patterns of the target group. Finally the chapter presents a form to use when establishing the overall description of target groups.

Arguments

The chapter focuses on the necessity of being able to argue convincingly about the benefits of the environmentally friendly product. We emphasise the need to identify all the different forms of benefits – i.e. emotional, social, and material – and subsequently choosing the most powerful arguments for the target group. The chapter presents a concrete method to identify different types of arguments, the chessboard.

Concept

The concept is the overall creative idea, which binds message, visual appearance and activities together in an appealing form. The chapter offers methods and ideas to find the concept's basic elements and presents inspiring examples of successful concepts.

Means

The choice of means of communication should be made from three criteria: The nature of the message, the media patterns of the target groups, and available resources. The chapter takes the reader thoroughly through the three criteria and introduces the possibilities and limitations of the different means of communication. The analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the different means can be found in the appendix.

Execution

The British claim that the devil is in the detail. This is also true for environmental communication. This chapter offers instructions on how to make a detailed communication-plan and how to control the process. Furthermore, there are tips on making texts, websites, briefing reporters etc.

Follow up

The activities carried out after the execution of the actual communication are crucial for the long-term effect. This is equally true internally as well as externally. The chapter emphasises the need for feedback to partners and consumers and also the need to maintain the achieved results externally. This should naturally be done on the basis of an evaluation of the effects of the communication. Therefore the chapter also offers advice on how to carry out an evaluation. ■

APPENDIX: 21 COMMON MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

■ This appendix reviews the most important advantages and disadvantages of the following means of communication:

Distribution of information

- Advertising in newspapers and magazines
- Outdoor advertising
- TV advertising
- Banner advertising on the Internet
- Radio advertising
- Postcards
- Shopsigns, flyers etc.
- Packaging and labelling
- Ecolabels
- Environmental product declarations

Supply of information

- Leaflets and brochures
- Websites
- Teaching materials for schools

Press

- Newspapers
- Radio and TV
- Regional and local newspapers
- Specialist journals
- Magazines

Personal communication

- Telephone hotline
- Debate meetings
- Face to face

Advertising in newspapers and magazines

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Seen by many • Possibility for specific insertion • Reader open to information • Most often bought by the user • Used at different time than TV	• Requires reasonable budget • Great demands on design and layout • Hard to measure effect

Advertising in newspapers and magazines exists side-by-side with other advertising and edited material. The advert should therefore attract attention and it should preferably be repeated several times in order to cement itself in the readers' consciousness. Advertising in newspapers has a short lifetime, but it also allows for response to current issues. Advertising in magazines usually has a longer lifetime. Adverts in special sections in newspapers and magazines can be more targeted.

Outdoor advertising

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Seen by many several times • "Forced" exposure	• Requires reasonable budget • Weak for complex messages • Long planning horizon, especially in peak seasons (spring/autumn)

Outdoor advertising includes posters, signs, stickers, neon advertisements and monitors on pillars and walls in shopping centres, on streets, at stations, in airports, in leisure centres, outside and inside busses, trains, taxis, scaffolding, waste bins etc. Outdoor advertising is good for creating an image/brand, but it must be spectacular to be noticed and the message must be very simple, as there is a lot of 'noise' which distracts the consumers' attention. Outdoor advertising is one of the broadest advertising media, but it is also a supplementary media which cannot stand on its own. Outdoor advertising works well together with either TV advertising or newspaper advertising, where the message can be elaborated. Outdoor advertising also acts well as a teaser/reminder close to the buying situation.

TV advertising

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Seen by many several times • Possibility for specific insertion • Can deliver a message emotionally	• Requires reasonable budget • Many viewers are tired of advertisements and use the break to make coffee

TV advertising can be aimed at all viewers, or else selected groups by sending the advert before or after selected programmes which attract viewers from these groups. TV advertising works best when specific messages are to be communicated; that a new product solves an environmental problem, or for a special offer. TV advertisements are very expensive to produce and buy time for, especially in prime time and in connection with the right programmes. And their lifetime is short. TV advertising is well suited to reach consumers who would otherwise be hard to reach through printed media. Furthermore, TV advertisements can tell stories and play on emotions through pictures and sound.

Banner advertising on the Internet

Advantages	Disadvantages
• High involvement (interactivity) • Target group can be reached at work • Low contact cost compared with TV or newspapers • Possible to measure traffic (clicks) • Innumerable creative opportunities • "Forced" exposure	• 1 out of 1000 click on to the website • Many are annoyed by adverts on the Internet • Long planning horizons • Rapid exposure

As use of the Internet is now extremely widespread, banner advertising is appropriate for both general and narrower target groups, depending on the portals at which the advert is placed. Banners can guide the user to a website once their attention has been caught, and therefore a banner is a good way of directing traffic towards a campaign site.

Radio advertising

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Low contact cost • Short planning horizon • Low production costs • "Forced" exposure • The radio is on all day at many workplaces	• Large local differences in listener profile • Risk that message drowns in other advertisements

Radio advertising on commercial stations is primarily best for younger target groups (15-40) and for targeting local campaigns using local radio stations. It should be possible to transmit the message without visual aids and it should be backed up with supplementary means of communication.

Postcards

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Most postcards are seen by more than the person you address it to • Suitable for creating awareness of new initiatives	• Not available in all towns • Often displayed with other cards

Postcards are a popular advertising medium. The postcards are distributed free via cafés, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, etc. in larger towns and cities. The users are younger, socially aware, information-seeking and cultural. Usually a postcard has a short lifetime, unless the receiver decides to keep it for a longer time, for example by hanging it on the wall.

Shop signs, flyers etc.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Can influence consumer choice • "Forced" exposure	• Require back-up from shops • Tough fight for space

The most commonly used POS (point-of-sale) materials are hanging signs, signs on shopping trolleys and baskets, wobblers, flyers, shopping bags etc., which can be used for a long time. These methods require that products are visible in shops and that shops support the campaign and make room for the material.

Packaging and labelling

Advantages	Disadvantages
• "Forced" exposure • Can influence consumer choice • The product becomes more recognisable	• Limited space for information • Can be perceived as superfluous and therefore distort the environmental profile

Packaging and labelling can be used to communicate environmental messages about the product, for example how the consumer can help the environment in use, maintenance and disposal of the product. Space limits the amount of information that can be put on packaging/labelling. Very little packaging and labelling has a life expectancy after the product has been used.

Ecolabels

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Officially recognised guarantee for a green purchase • Many large retail chains have ecolabels • Supported by many environmental and consumer organisations • Reinforce companies' profile and trademark • Many product groups help increase awareness of the labels • Give an overview and easy-to-read information in the buying situation	• Consumer awareness very low in several countries • Resource demanding for many producers to prepare documentation and apply for the labels • For some producers they restrict flexibility to restructure or change supplier rapidly • Some environmental organisations believe that the requirements are too relaxed

There are two officially recognised ecolabels in the Nordic region – the Nordic Swan and the EU Flower. Ecolabels indicate that manufactures have assumed responsibility for their products and ensured they live up to a great number of requirements, first and foremost regarding the environment, but also in terms of health and quality. The requirements restrict the use of substances harmful to health and the environment and cover the entire lifecycle of the product, i.e. from the extraction of the raw materials to disposal after use. The requirements are tightened every three to five years as new knowledge and technology that may reduce the environmental impacts of products become available. Products are approved by an independent third party. This makes it straightforward for wholesalers and consumers alike to purchase environmentally friendly products bearing the seal of approval. The Swan is available on 33 and the Flower on 21 different product groups, including textiles, footwear, detergents, household appliances, mattresses, computers and televisions, paints and varnishes, paper products, lighting, flooring and tourism.

Environmental product declaration

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Detailed information on the environmental properties of the product • Possibility to compare two products with the same benefits	• No guarantee that the product is environmentally friendly • Require that consumers know how to interpret the information in the declaration • Require that the producer has completed a lifecycle assessment of the product • Difficult to compare products with different benefits, especially if there are three or more

Environmental product declarations provide information about the most important environmental properties of a product throughout its lifecycle. In principle, declarations can be made for all products, from raw materials to finished goods and services. An environmental declaration is a table which describes the most important environmental properties of a product in words and figures. The declaration makes no assessment about whether the product is very or slightly environmentally harmful, and this distinguishes it from ecolabels. Environmental product declarations are therefore a supplement to ecolabels. There is an official environmental declaration scheme in Norway and Sweden, and this is on its way to Denmark.

Leaflets and brochures

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Can be taken home and read in comfort • The reader has actively chosen to find more knowledge and is therefore receptive to more complex messages	• Expensive for large target groups • Only for reading people • Misused media – risk of disappearing in the mass

Printed matter such as leaflets and brochures are recognised as effective means of communication to the interested consumer. They have a short lifetime if they follow campaigns and are based on news, but the lifetime can be relatively long if they contain specific instructions and good advice. Leaflets can be distributed in shops, libraries and at events, and can act as an appetiser to seek more knowledge on the Internet.

Websites on the Internet

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Flexible and easy to update • Modern and appealing to certain target groups • Easy to search and customise • Interactivity – tests, games, etc. • Large amount of data can be made available • Possible to make statistics about users • Possible to link to and from other websites	• Not everyone uses the Internet • Cannot stand alone – requires information that the website exists • Must be maintained, unless it is a campaign site

The rapid rise of the Internet means that websites have become significant in communication and offer many opportunities. Websites are suitable for more complex information because the user is actively seeks the information and has chosen to visit the site. Websites enable precise messages for specific target groups and they guide the target group to pages especially relevant for them. In addition, websites allow for interaction with the sender through, for example games, quizzes and tests.

Existing websites at campaign alliance partners can easily be used for campaigns, but you can also set up a special campaign site which can only be used while the campaign is running. One of the advantages of a campaign site is that it can be designed to coordinate with the rest of the campaign materials. If there are a lot of partners in the campaign, users can be guided to the partners' sites so that the campaign site acts as a portal. The most important thing is that users only need to remember one Internet address which may well be the same as the campaign or perhaps emanate from the campaign's pay-off.

Teaching materials for schools

Advantages	Disadvantages
• The learning situation makes the reader more open to complex messages • Usually combined with dialogue	• Schools are offered a lot of teaching materials and suggestions for topic weeks and competitions

Children and young people are an important group to encourage good environmental habits as they have a great influence on the family's consumption patterns. Most children and young people spend most of their time at school and in daycare, and it is primarily here that they acquire information about the environment. Therefore an obvious initiative is to produce various forms of teaching materials for use in schools. Many of the large nature and environment organisations have their own schools service where they produce a lot of good teaching materials. Moreover, public authorities and enterprises have also started making their own materials for schools.

Newspapers

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Many readers • Only costs time to word a press release and contact journalists • Can draw attention to the issue	• Publicity cannot be controlled

Above all, newspapers want newsworthy stories. Therefore, environmental messages should be linked to news or put perspective on a current event. If there is no real news in your message, an alternative may be to sell the story as useful consumer information which the newspaper can send on to its readers. However, this is a considerably weaker angle. A mention in a newspaper only lasts for a day unless other journalists follow up the story.

Radio and TV

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Vivid, dynamic reports reach many people • Large awareness value in national news programmes • Can create great awareness very rapidly • Good supplement to websites	• Message often reported in brief and without detail • Hard to get coverage, especially on national TV

The electronic media are suitable when the message can be transmitted as sound and pictures. Competition for space in news programmes is fierce, so the story must have something special to get through to the viewers or listeners in its entirety. There must be real news which appeals to many; there must be several angles; and it must be possible to report the story clearly, briefly and interestingly in about one minute. TV also requires living pictures for the story. Publicity usually has a short lifetime.

Regional and local newspapers

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Hits local target groups • Possible to direct action locally	• Publicity cannot be controlled

To a certain extent, regional and local newspapers concentrate on local news rather than current interest, and this also applies for the environment. They always try to give a national story a local perspective. The time horizon is short.

Specialist journals

Advantages	Disadvantages
• The reader is interested in the topic and allows time to read the journal • Can be used to report about complex topics and problems	• Long production time and only a few editions per year can make them difficult to use in campaigns

Specialist journals write about specific topics or sectors and for selected groups of specialists. Circulation is relatively modest, but on the other hand the readership is interested and often knowledgeable about the areas covered by the journal. Lifetime can be up to a couple of months. Articles and news are often published both on paper and electronically.

Magazines

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Readers allow time to read the magazine and they are receptive because the magazine is read for pleasure and often in a relaxed atmosphere • Read by many	• Use relatively few column inches on technical matters • Due to long production times, magazines do not bring news articles

Magazines typically target a broad spectrum of the population, primarily with lifestyle and hobby-linked topics. Lifetime is up to six months because the expensive magazines often circulate amongst friends.

Telephone hotline

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Direct contact to the target group • Possible to influence behaviour	• Requires qualified staff to take the phone • Requires distribution of information about the existence of the hotline and the questions it can help with • The effect is limited to one-to-one

A telephone hotline is a manned telephone service to which the target group can ring for answers to queries. For example this may be a line where consumers can find out about environmentally correct use and disposal of certain types of product or environmentally correct gardening. The hotline should be staffed so that it can cope with peak periods.

Debate meeting

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Provides a common understanding of environmental problems and solutions • Those invited perceive the meeting as an extra service • Can result in a continuous dialogue	• Participants must set aside time to take part • The quality of the debate depends on the participants

A debate meeting can be a good way of finding out attitudes and opinions favoured by various people and groups regarding local issues or specific topics. One of the factors motivating people to take part in a debate is that they will have a certain influence on a future project or campaign by making known their opinions. Therefore, a debate meeting can be a valuable activity in the planning phase of a campaign.

Face to face

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Direct contact and learning on site • Possible to influence behaviour	• Can be perceived as intrusive • Limited range • Expensive unless done by volunteers

The door-to-door method can be used in campaigns aimed directly at residents or businesses in a specific area. There is a big difference between delivering a leaflet through the letter box with junk mail and delivering it in person. The people sent out in an area should be chosen with care, however, as they must be perceived as credible messengers by the target group. One method is to partner yourself with a small group of residents who could act as ambassadors for the campaign's message. This is especially relevant if the target group have a foreign ethnic background, which may involve other cultural and gender-specific aspects.

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Environmental communication to consumers

This manual provides advice and tools to develop, organise and execute environmental communication to consumers. It has been written for decision-makers and employees responsible for environmental communication in governmental authorities, companies, and NGOs, and in particular it aims at those whose professional background is outside communication.

The manual is divided into eight chapters, each providing a necessary step in the process: Goals, Senders, Receivers, Arguments, Concept, Means, Execution, Follow-up. The chapters are instructive and include interesting examples, figures and illustrations. The manual also contains an extensive annex describing the various means of communication

The point of departure of the manual is that environmental communication to consumers is about more than communicating about the environment! Purely environmental arguments build on collective and long-term interests such as not to impoverish our natural foundation. Most consumers will not change their behaviour for this reason alone. Therefore it is important to supplement environmental arguments with more short-term arguments about individual benefits such as quality, price, health or convenience.

The manual builds on experience and analyses from the Nordic countries and includes 21 examples of good environmental communication in the Nordic region. The idea of the guide was fathered in the Cross-sector Group for Product Policy of the Nordic Council of Ministers, NMRIPP. The group's work includes developing and disseminating knowledge about consumer-oriented environmental communication.