



Water and communications

- Managing internal and external communications for improved governance of water utilities

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SIWI

- A policy institute that contributes to find solutions to the escalating water crisis, sustainable use of the world's water resources and sustainable development of society
- SIWI arranges "World Water Week" in Stockholm in August annually since 1991
- SIWI administers the Stockholm Water Prize and the Stockholm Junior Water Prize





SIWI

- World Water Week is a link between practice, science and decision-making to achieve development and environmental objectives
- www.siwi.org



Swedish Water House

- Contribute to increase cooperation and engagement on international water issues, with specific focus on IWRM and IBM
- Create new and innovative contacts between Swedish and international actors representing different competence areas and disciplines
- Initiated by the Swedish Government in 2003
- SWH is part of and is administrated by SIWI





SWH website

- www.swedishwaterhouse.se
- Gives you access to :
 - cutting-edge Swedish knowledge
 - Contacts with a broad range of actors
 - Networks that you can join



Communications????

- Communications = The science and practice of transmitting information
- Information = the strategic messages that shall lead to increased knowledge
- Communication = the interactive process of messages that shall lead to a change in attitude: send-receive-revise
- Relation = the goal, a mutual acceptance that lead to action and *result*.





Why communication?

- Communication is a strategic management tool for building confidence, reliability
- Communication is a first step towards good strong relations with customers and users
- Information and communication help a business to be successful and earn money
- A manager who knows how to communicate is a better manager



Internal communications – the fundamental basis

Good communication is based on good THINKING – more than on financial resources:

- Make your employees water ambassadors!
- Well informed employees give better service
- Open channels for communication in and out, up and down.
- Simple routines to enhance communication
- Set aims and monitor them
- Formulate policies





Reasons for external communications

Earn money, save money or resources -
- make water used wisely:

- Customers pay their bills if they know that they will get value for money
- Users respect water if they know what to do
- Politicians and financiers support efficient operations
- School-children teach families and friends, are future customers and decision-makers
- Media has an impact on opinions. Peoples' opinions have an impact on water use.



Water is too often neglected

Water from the tap is unique:

It is sold without brand, quality statement or price label! Who believes in such a product?

- Necessary to build confidence among users
- Necessary to increase knowledge for safe and effective use, health and prosperity
- Necessary to see the sewage – the wasted water – and handle it properly
- Necessary to build up co-operation
- Necessary to communicate!





Long-term strategic plans

Analyse the situation: what problems can be dealt with by communications activities?

- Assign responsibility and form working teams. Train them.
- Make a budget and directives for reporting results. Follow up regularly.
- Make strategic plans and review them annually. Adjust if necessary.
- Formulate key-messages to target groups
- Plan activities but do not forget the strategy



Common problems to turn into possibilities

- Water tariffs: Let people know what they will gain from better (more expensive) water.
- Lack of investments: Willingness to pay invoices opens for big investments in water
- Water scarcity: Make industries pay for their consumption and inspire saving water
- Pollution: Less pollution with increased knowledge – and known sanctions
- Pipe laying: Less complaints about noise and other disturbances. Create understanding.
- Protection of water sources: local pride and support



Reliable picture

Give clear messages that make sense!
Give a reliable picture of the company, its aims, values, operations and results!

- Marketing and communications should be integrated
- Keep your ambassadors (employees, board, owners etc) well informed
- Keep a long-term vision, show endurance
- No quick-fix in water communications:
- Handle crisis situations professionally



Crisis situations

A good reputation takes years to build. It can be destroyed in hours.

- Confidence is not based on what happened – but on HOW the organisation handles a problem/accident/scandal
- Openness – empathy – honesty – rapidity
- Communicate now: the work-process to solve the problem. Speak with one voice!
- Analyse weak points and steps to take





Endurance and realistic vision

- Communications is a long-term process
- Set aims to reach realistic goals
- Plan and develop
- Follow up results
- Listen to customers and water users
- Speak with people:
 - clear messages
 - nice simple language
 - show reliability



Only one water to share. Communicate the message!

- Water is the world's most important foodstuff
- It must be available to everyone, rich or poor
- There is only one water – it must be shared
- The Water cycle concept means interdependence and cooperation - locally and globally
- Communications are necessary tools to increase common knowledge, interest, attention, and sense of responsibility for water
- Communications are a basis for success

