



INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

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THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

The main purpose of communication from the standpoint of the organization is its successful functioning. Internal and external communication are considered to be very important resources of corporate communication. Internal communication is information and ideas exchange within the organization itself, while external communication means exchange of information both within the organization itself and outside the organization.

Communication is of vital importance to achieving ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association mission and vision. The purpose of this manual is to ensure that ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association communication is consistent, coordinated, efficient, and that it meets various needs of all interested parties. This manual will ensure that accurate and good-quality information about ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association programs is timely and efficiently communicated to the public.

Our communication strategy will combine various means and ways of communication in order to protect the integrity of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association, as well as to promote the values on which our organization based its vision and mission.

PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Employees of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association, whose job requires correspondence with various interested parties, should have in mind basic principles of business communication:

- efficiency and promptness: it is important to respond to a received letter/e-mail as soon as possible (within 24 hours). When it is not possible to give a complete response, a preliminary response should be sent with a note that a complete response will be sent in a timely manner
- truth and validity: all presented information should be valid, documented and based on facts
- reliability and confidentiality: implies constant and secure functioning of correspondence and regardless of the subject matter of the correspondence, the obligation not to disclose trade secrets and confidential information
- conciseness and clarity: implies that it should be concisely and clearly, precisely and unequivocally pointed out in a letter/e-mail what one wants, decides, etc.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is information exchange within the organization. Messages can be exchanged via personal contact, telephone, e-mail, intranet (the website accessible only by employees) etc. Internal communication as a way of information exchange within the organization can be vertical, horizontal and diagonal.

Internal communication helps employees in performing their work, developing a clear sense of organization mission and identifying and promptly dealing with potential problems.

In ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association internal communication is organized in the following manner:

- vertical (communication between employees on different hierarchical positions)
 - downward – executive directors, management, officers, assistants
 - upward – assistants, officers, management, executive directors
- horizontal (communication between individuals on the same hierarchical positions)
- diagonal situations (when vertical (upward and downward) channels have to be filled)

In ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association internal communication is established via various channels: e-mail, staff meetings, and online tools for information exchange (Google Calendar, and Google Drive).

INTERNAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION (E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE)

As one of the channels of internal communication in ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association the e-mail is used.

- Employees in ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association have business e-mail addresses
- Signatures in ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association e-mails are uniform and they contain the following information (first name, last name, position, business mobile phone number, e-mail, the name of organization, address, telephone number and office e-mail, contact phone, link to the organization social network page).

STAFF MEETING

In order to exchange information, plan and coordinate program activities, once a week or more often if it is necessary, staff meetings are held.

- The person who schedules a meeting via e-mail informs all employees that are supposed to attend the meeting;
- In a meeting invitation e-mail the purpose of the meeting should be stated;
- Scheduled time and topic of the meeting are entered into organization Google Calendar;
- For each meeting a person who will keep minutes is appointed;
- After the meeting, minutes are forwarded to every employee via e-mail;
- The person who sends minutes, files it into Google Drive folder “Minutes” and in the appropriate subfolder depending on the meeting topic (subfolders “Management”, “Finance and Administration”, “Programs”; inside the subfolder “Programs” there are folders for each individual folder....)
- Minutes document is named as a file in the following way:
 1. Minutes_date (day,month,year)_initials of the person who created minutes file
 2. Example: Minutes_3.2.2014_JDJ

Minutes template is stored on:

- ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association server, folder “Media”, subfolder “Templates”, subfolder “Minutes”
- Google Drive, folder “Minutes”

ONLINE TOOLS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

For the purpose of better information exchange and activities coordination, employees of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association use online tools: Google Calendar and Google Drive (Documents).

GOOGLE CALENDAR

- All dates and deadlines regarding project activities are entered into Google Calendar;
- Google Calendar contains sub-calendars associated with individual programs (.....), non-project activities and the staff calendar;
- Employees enter the information about the absence from work in the staff calendar (personal time off, annual leave, sick leave, seminars, conferences...);
- Employees enter the information about meetings, attending conferences and other activities in Google Calendar.

GOOGLE DRIVE (DOCUMENTS)

In order for employees of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association to access documents necessary for successful performance, the access to the necessary documents is enabled via Google Drive.

All employees can create their own folder and documents in Google Drive and share them with co-workers.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

While in internal communication information flow goes upwards, downwards, horizontally and diagonally within the organizational structure, in external communication the information exchange goes both within the organization and outside of it. Organizations communicate with the outside world on a daily basis. External communication can be formal and informal.

FORMAL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Special attention is paid to formal communication in organizations. Regardless of how it is established – via a letter, e-mail, web, telephone or some other way – the efficient external communication is the first step in creating the appropriate image. Carefully created letters, reports, presentations or web pages, send the outside world an important message about the work and quality of the organization.

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

A telephone conversation can frequently be the first and the only time to make an impression on the person you are talking to, not only about the individual but also about ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association, so it is important to know the rules of telephone etiquette.

- The telephone should be answered no later than the third ring;
- After the connection has been established, you should identify yourself as well as the organization, that is your position in the organization;
- The call is transferred to a coworker only after he/she is informed who calls him/her;
- If the person who is called is not in the office or cannot answer at the time, you are required to write down the caller's first and last name, the institution/organization and the telephone number;

- During the conversation, you should try to make your voice sound as pleasant as possible;
- During a business telephone call always be professional, interested, polite and concise;
- During work time, calls to friends and family should be avoided, as well as any other private calls;
- During a telephone conversation, special attention should be paid not to disturb the office coworkers.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES

- It is required to turn off the mobile phone during business meetings. It is unacceptable to make a phone call during a meeting;
- It is inappropriate to use business mobile phone numbers for private conversations.

EXTERNAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association encourages its employees to use all types of electronic communications and corresponding services, because they make communication more effective and efficient. Electronic communications are the property of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association and it is necessary that all employees respect the confidentiality of the organization's work and activities. Electronic correspondence is a relevant document in case of a misunderstanding.

- During communication with donors, colleagues etc. depending on the topic it is required to put the executive directors, management and/or the project coordinator in Cc box of the mail;
- If it is necessary that some other employee is acquainted with the received and sent mail, always forward the e-mail to that/those person/s;
- E-mail address of the recipient is put into the box To. The field BCC is used if a message should be sent simultaneously to several addresses and to prevent each recipient from seeing the other addresses to which the message has been sent. The field Cc is used during the teamwork, and when the information sent to an individual recipient should be seen by the other team members;
- In case of orally transferred business messages or assigned tasks it is required to forward it via e-mail also;
- The subject of e-mail should be precise and unequivocal, and to transfer the very essence of the message that needs to be communicated;
- Respond to e-mails immediately, or within 24 hours at the latest;

- If you receive an e-mail to which you cannot respond immediately or perform the assigned task (of a donor, site visitor or an employee) mark it as unread in order not to forget about it;
- Writing style should be adjusted in accordance with the topic or the person to whom you are writing;
- While using the Internet, employees should be professional and give information in a concise and clear manner;
- Additional information, including graphs, pictures, tables can be attached to the e-mail message;
- Grammar and spelling are of vital importance, and it is important that each message should be grammatically correct and composed with style;

BUSINESS LETTERS

The nature of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association business is such that sometimes it requires communication via sending official letters, memos etc.

1. For business letters use ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association letterhead
2. Address the letter appropriately to the person, his/her position and company;
3. Finish the letter with your full name, position in the organization, as well as with all the contact information;
4. Writing style should be adjusted in accordance with the topic and the person to whom you are writing;
5. Do not write long, or technically complex letters;
6. Before sending the letters, always proofread it;
7. Respond to letters immediately or as soon as possible;

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business meetings should be scheduled in advance in writing, several days prior the meeting, so that all participants could plan their time. In emergency situations, meetings could be scheduled by phone. When scheduling, clearly define the purpose of the meeting.

- The circle of invited employees and who attend the meeting is defined by the purpose of the meeting. During meetings with clients/partners the employees who are not actively professionally included are not allowed to be present;
- The decision about who should attend business meeting is made by the one who organizes them;

- Each employee is provided with an unoccupied room (in which other employees are not present) for scheduled business meetings. If that is not possible, employees who are by circumstance present, should not interfere in business conversation unless explicitly requested to do so or asked a question by the person who organized the meeting;
- Never discuss the jobs you are not competent for or which are not part of your business description during business meetings. Make sure to include the most competent person/s from certain fields according to the level of knowledge required for that meeting;
- Always follow the topic of the meeting and do not make any digressions, i.e. do not discuss topics that have nothing to do with the work you are trying to finish. If a client/partner does it, have understanding if it is in business interest, but discreetly try to reestablish the business level and topic of the meeting;
- If you think that a client/partner is just wasting his/her and your time, try to prevent him/her from doing that in a decent but clear manner;
- It is not allowed to be late for a business meeting. Running late for no more than 10 minutes due to the traffic jam or other circumstances beyond your control may be acceptable;
- Business etiquette states that a meeting host should welcome, greet and take participants of the business meeting to the conference room.
- Upon the arrival to a meeting, you should cordially greet your host, and have a seat to a place your host offers;
- The host takes a seat only after all guests have sat down;
- Right after everybody sat down, business cards should be given out so that a person receiving a business card can read its content while receiving it. First and last name from the business card should be read out loud, and after that the business card should be placed on the desk, where it should be during the meeting. When the meeting is finished, the business card should be placed in the business planner notebook or the inner pocket of your jacket, or bag;
- The starting and finishing time, as well as the agenda of the meeting should be followed;
- During the conversation you should concentrate on the person you are talking to, pay careful attention to what he/she is saying and look him/her in the eyes when talking to him/her;
- Should any ambiguities arise during the conversation, you should ask the person you are talking to for clarification;
- During a business meeting you should never talk to only one person, and the eye contact should be established with all the participants;

- It is inappropriate to talk to people sitting next to you while somebody else talks, as well as read and respond to SMS messages and e-mails;
- At the end of the business meeting, you should see clients/partners to the door;

MEDIA RELATIONS

ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association is an open and transparent organization which cherishes a proactive and two-way communication with all interested parties. For communication system functioning and media relations the Communication Officer is responsible.

The term media stands for both traditional (radio, TV, newspapers etc.), as well as new ways of communication (text messages, the Internet, blogs, social networks).

- Employees are not allowed to give any public statements or appear in the media regarding any questions or issues relation to ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association unless they were authorized by the Executive Directors and Communications Officer;
- During a public appearance and communications with the media all ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association messages, values and interests agreed on must be respected;
- ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association creates various media strategies and uses various tactics: sending public reports, organization of press conferences, events, scheduling radio and TV appearances;
- Contacts with the media are mainly the responsibility of Executive Directors and Communications Officer;

INFORMAL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

All ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association employees represent an important informal communication channel with the outside world (with the public). During everyday work activities employees subconsciously absorb information thus enhancing their cumulative knowledge about the organization. Each time an employee talks about his/her organization, he/she sends a message. Informal external communication is the form of communication which we cannot regulate.

- Bearing in mind that each employee represents the organization on a daily basis outside the workplace, he/she is expected to respect all the organization values and to avoid calling into question the reputation of ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association during conversations with acquaintances, employees of other organizations and associates, because in that manner they show (dis)loyalty to organization;

- In case he/she encounters a problem at work, the employee should talk to the supervising manager or the organization management;
- By gossiping in the organization and outside of it, posting negative comments on online media or social networks, no problem can be solved, and both personal and organization reputation are damaged and it has a bad impact on the image of the organization in local and wider community.

RULES OF BRANDING

Visual identity is very important for every organization. Figuratively speaking, it represents the face and image of the organization. Visual identity has the purpose of simplifying and at the same time enriching the communication between the organization and the public. Any type of advertising is almost unimaginable without elements of visual identity as an integral part of the message or an advertisement.

- ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association has the official logotype used on all promotional materials and presentations created by the organization.
- Prior to sending materials to be printed, it is necessary to obtain the approval of the Executive Directors and Communications Officer;
- ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association respects visibility rules of its donors. The Communications Officer is responsible for implementation of those rules;