



# Organisational Communications Strategy

Coiste Gairmoideachais Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh  
Tipperary North Vocational Education Committee





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Tipperary (NR) VEC has always been convinced of the need for systematic planning and ongoing strategic development. This conviction is exemplified in the development of FIS 2020. Many of the key objectives detailed in FIS 2020 are now included in our current Education Plan 2006 – 2010. This document, which incorporates the voices of all partners and stakeholders in Vocation Education in North Tipperary, provides a grounded and realistic roadmap for the development of education in the county.

One important objective arising out of our Education Plan is to enhance the learning capacity within the organisation. To support this objective the Plan urges the development of an effective internal and external communication system which reflects the growing complexity and size of the VEC. It goes on to suggest that... 'Communication in this sense is about much more than information exchange. It is about drawing on the expertise of staff, students and Boards and sharing the expertise to maximise the use of limited resources. It is fundamentally about building and sharing our vision of education so that, as a team, we can deliver a first class education service'. This objective is fundamental to the implementation of our Education Plan.

Coincidentally the VEC sector is meeting the challenge of modernisation and organisational change through the Partnership Process. Under the current National Development Plan Towards 2016, the VEC National Partnership Forum has identified Organisational Communications as an essential element for organisational development.

To address this two-fold challenge Tipperary (NR) VEC established a Communications Implementation Team to explore all aspects of Communication within and outside the organisation and design and implement a Communications Policy. The work of this Team is presented in our Organisational Communications Strategy.

David Leahy

CEO

Tipperary (NR) VEC held an important Organisational Communications Workshop in 2005 with the dual aim of evaluating communications systems operating in the organisation and to provide direction regarding the development of a communications strategy. There was general agreement that most, if not all processes and procedures to ensure effective organisational communication are in place. However it was now time to systematically attend to this important dimension of organisational activity.

Our Communications Workshop provided many important insights and understandings which are incorporated into this strategy however a most important outcome was agreement regarding the 'principles' underpinning a communication policy. It is essential that our communication strategy is:

- Democratic
- Person-centred
- Ethical
- Transparent
- Relevant
- Realistic
- Quality Assured.

The following strategy aims to reflect all key principals arising from this important Communications Workshop.



## Our understanding of communication

Real and genuine communication is grounded on trusting, respectful, open and honest interpersonal relationships where all partners / stakeholders are encouraged and even feel obliged to voice opinions without fear of ridicule but with a confidence that each persons' ideas are truly valued (Tipperary (NR) VEC, Communications Workshop, 2005).

### Underlying Conviction

We are convinced that an effective communication strategy will enable our organisation to access the wisdom and expertise of all our educational partners. On this basis we can build and share our vision of education so that, as an organisation, we can continually provide a quality education service.

### The Aim

The aim of this strategy is to develop a communication culture that enables our organisation to trust its own potential to respond confidently and effectively to the challenges associated with the provision of a quality educational experience for all our learners.

Here we detail the communication priorities which we will address through this strategy so that we can achieve the identified outcomes.

- 1 To facilitate authentic participation of all partners/stakeholders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an ongoing basis
  - 1.1 Outcome – Engaged and motivated partners/stakeholders
- 2 To ensure that everyone who is a partner/stakeholder understands and accepts what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation
  - 2.1 Outcome – Ethical and responsive partners/stakeholders
- 3 To communicate with stakeholders/partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged
  - 3.1 Outcome – Respected and appreciated partners/stakeholders
- 4 To protect and enhance our organisation's image
  - 4.1 Outcome – Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation.

By identifying the following specific actions we now deal with the manner in which we will put into operation the way we strengthen and develop communications throughout the organisation.

Goal 1	Actions	Outcome 1
<p><b>Authentic participation of all partners/ stakeholders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an ongoing basis</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Design a clear diagram and other appropriate communication media to illustrate the structure of the organisation including all Schools, Centres, and Services provided</li> <li>2 Create clear diagrams, illustrations, etc that clearly illustrate the decision-making process within the organisation</li> <li>3 Illustrate points at which relevant partners can inform decision outcomes</li> <li>4 Evaluate diagrams and illustrations among relevant stakeholder/partners</li> <li>5. Produce and use a range of media brochures, handouts, presentations - to communicate this information</li> <li>6. Post information materials on the website</li> <li>7. Use Staff Newsletter to regularly update regarding structural and decision-making developments</li> <li>8. Use a range of sources – staff meetings, notice boards, informal discussions, staff newsletter- to initiate policy developments</li> <li>9. Inform all relevant partners of decisions made on their behalf</li> <li>10 Relevant stakeholders/partners representation on policy development, consultation and evaluation teams</li> <li>11 Feedback to contributors regarding their contributions using a range of media including staff meetings, management presentations, Staff Newsletter.</li> </ol>	<p>Engaged and motivated partners/ stakeholders</p>





### Goal 2

**All partners/  
stakeholders  
understand and accept  
what is expected of  
them and what they  
can expect from the  
organisation**

### Actions

In addition to all actions related to Goal 1

1. Develop and Communicate Continuing Professional Development Policy to all Staff
2. Inform staff of relevant staff development initiatives
3. Explore the feasibility and practicality of acknowledging contribution of staff in each location and in the organisation
4. Continue to hold annual Educational Conferences
5. Collate information regarding all staff development initiatives
6. Evaluate staff development needs on an ongoing basis
7. Clearly inform staff of what they can expect from the organisation
8. Clearly inform staff of their duties and obligations
9. Facilitate an inclusive exploration of ethics in educational practice.

### Outcome 2

Ethical and responsive  
partners/  
stakeholders



### Goal 3

**Communicate with stakeholders/ partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged**

### Actions

In addition to all actions related to Goal 1 and 2

1. Communications will address issues such as:
  - Time and place
  - Language
  - Forms of media
  - Facilitating feedback.
2. Use informal communication as appropriate
3. In consultation with partners/stakeholders develop ways of acknowledging and valuing the contribution of informal communications and feedback

### Outcome 3

Respected and appreciated partners/ stakeholders



**Goal 4**

**3. Protect and enhance our organisation's image**

**Actions**

In addition to all actions related to Goal 1, 2, and 3

1. Evaluate organisational brochures, posters, logos etc with a view to creating an up-to-date, professional corporate image
2. Use all appropriate occasions and events to promote organisational achievements and plans
3. Clear guidelines developed with regard to responding to external news and media
4. PR person to be appointed in each location
5. Training in PR provided to individuals responsible for PR.

**Outcome 4**

Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation

