



## **Change Superhero Toolkit: 4 MAT Communication Planner**

## 4 MAT Communication Planner

There is a helpful model that can be used to structure this type of communication effectively, known as 4MAT. It was originally developed by Bernice McCarthy (1980) with reference to David Kolb's (1984) well-known learning styles. Essentially, 4MAT is based on the premise that people ask four different questions when taking in information: 'why?'; 'what?'; 'how?'; and 'what if?' We have already covered the 'why' and the 'what' to a large extent during our factfinding. However, according to 4MAT we can make our communications even more effective by also preparing to answer the 'how' and 'what if' questions.

We generally need to start by answering the 'why', because this provides the reason and motivation to change. 'What' questions will explain what the change is, probably to a level of detail that is relevant to each group of stakeholders. It is also helpful to explain 'what' will stay the same as part of our communications to help keep the perception of the impact of the change proportionate.

'How' questions are likely to be either practical or personal. Again, they will vary according to the stakeholder in question. People need to understand 'how' they will be involved in delivering the change, including what they will need to do as part of their role to support or facilitate the change. If they are also on the receiving end of the change, they need to know how they will personally be affected.

The 'what if' category is all about understanding the potential implications of making the change or not. By doing this, we are answering the questions, or pre-empting the objections, that are often overlooked but are likely to be in the heads of 25% of our stakeholders. It is about motivating people towards a goal and away from a negative outcome (carrot & stick) by including both, we increase our chances of motivating more people.

Ensuring that all four aspects of 4MAT are included in our planned communications means that they are likely to appeal to the maximum number of people.

See the example on the next page.

## Should be sent from the most senior/influential/most respected person in the business

<b>Example 1: Covid-19 – Manufacturing Comms Example</b>
<b>Introduction:</b> I am writing to explain the rationale for maintaining production in our plant and how everyone in the business can play their part.
<b>Why:</b> We must find the safest way to keep our production line running throughout the Covid-19 crisis because key staff in the NHS are dependent on our supplies. We will soon all know or be related to someone directly affected by this virus and lives could be lost without our efforts.
<b>What:</b> We need to maintain production with some changes to our working practices to maximise safety for our staff and their families.  We must pull together to do our part for the country whether this means working different shift patterns or following self-isolation protocols if we or a family member exhibits Covid-19 symptoms.
<b>How:</b> The new specifics of your workplace e.g. Temporary 24-hour shift patterns with fewer staff; marked out social distancing; use of Personal Protective equipment; closing/use of communal areas.
<b>What if (we don't/we do):</b> If we can't staff the production line, and maintain production, we will negatively affect the NHS's ability to do their job.  By pulling together and adapting to these changes, we can do so in the knowledge that our actions may save lives, including those of our friends and families.
<b>Next steps:</b> Further details on shift patterns/requirements for self-isolation and availability of sick pay can be found here...  Thank you to everyone for playing their part in the fight against this pandemic.

## Blank Template

Your example
<b>Introduction:</b>
<b>Why:</b>
<b>What:</b>
<b>How:</b>
<b>What if (we don't/we do):</b>
<b>Next steps:</b>

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