

# COMMUNICATE!

Unconfirmed reports are coming in of an earthquake in Central Europe. As two teams of journalists, it's your job to find out what's happened.

## Key Skills

- **Verbal communication**
- **Listening**
- **Information handling**
- **Co-operative teamwork**
- **Assessing data**

**Numbers** Two teams of 3-6 delegates

**Timing** 1.5 hours

**Cost** £199 (plus £10 delivery & VAT)

***This activity requires two audio CD players***

**COMMUNICATE!** is a participative training activity that closely mirrors today's hectic working environments where, all too often, poor communication skills between people and departments adversely affects key results.

In particular, **COMMUNICATE!** requires of the participants:

- clear verbal communication skills
- active listening
- the often neglected skill of checking and qualifying information
- a planned, communication strategy

Use the exercise with **any** level of delegate to:

- highlight how easy facts and data can become misconstrued
- demonstrate key methods that improve the communication process.

## What Happens?

One team represents a London national newspaper, the other represents journalists in Central Europe. The teams are physically separate, their only means of communication is a set of intercoms (provided in the pack).

When a major earthquake erupts, the two parties need to share information as accurately as possible while at the same time listening to news flashes and radio reports detailing the latest situation and casualty figures (on audio CDs provided).

The groups must collate and assess the incoming data, decide how good the sources are and what further details they require. What exactly do they need to communicate to the *other* team?

Each team then presents their understanding of the event – and many discrepancies are revealed! The debrief focuses on the importance of good communications, the need to plan and to have a strategy, the importance of noting what information has been sent and when, the benefits of having one person in each team as ‘communicator’ and the dangers of assumptions and failing to listen.

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### What to Do

1. Introduce the exercise and issue briefs to each team.
2. Set up the intercoms. After 15 minutes, play the audio cassettes to the groups.
3. Teams now gather key information for their newspapers. It must be up-to-the-minute and accurate. Observe how groups share the news. Does one person dominate the intercom? Are they taking notes? Is there a checking procedure? What are the frustrations and conflicts?
4. Allow teams 10-15 minutes to compile a list of bullet-point facts about the disaster.
5. Listen to each team’s presentation and score accordingly.
6. Lead a discussion on how the communication practice could have been improved.
7. Draw up an Action Plan to improve communications back at work, based on the importance of questioning, listening and clarifying information.

### COMMUNICATE!

#### Trainer’s Comments

*“Very powerful exercise for identifying communication shortfalls - and it allows you the opportunity to correct them.”*

L Murdock, School of Ordnance

*“Very simple to use but amazingly effective.”*

J Batty Anglia Regional Cooperative

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