



Innovative Strategies for the Road Ahead

TIPS TO COMMUNICATE YOUR FLEET POLICY



Inspired by an article from Caroline Duncan
(<https://www.alert-software.com/blog/company-policies-effective-communication>)

Whether there is a new strategic direction for your organisation, new systems are implemented or new donor requirements affects your programmes, your organisation's fleet policy and procedures will inevitably be updated and change.

When your policies and procedures change, communicating these with staff members is essential to avoid costly mistakes and errors. Depending on the nature of the policy or procedure that's being changed, there could be legal and financial consequences if your organisation does not comply,

First, determine who is going to be affected by the new fleet policy. It might not only be your staff members, but also stakeholders such as your vehicle rental provider, and your maintenance garage. This will help you determine how and when to communicate your policy and procedures changes.

How to communicate policy changes to staff members

Once you have established that change is necessary, you need to turn your mind to how you will inform staff about changes to your policies and procedures. These are the essential steps you must take to ensure that people are informed and understand the changes, and the implications of not following new protocols.

1. Be very clear about these changes

When communicating policies and procedures in the workplace, it should be clear, concise and easy to understand.

Be straightforward about why the change is necessary, exactly what is changing, what is staying the same, and what steps need to be taken by all staff members to make sure they comply with the new requirements.

Also spell out clearly what the consequences are for the organisation if the policies are not followed.



2. Consider face-to-face communication

If possible, and if the policy and procedure change warrants it, hold a meeting or a webinar with senior management in attendance to explain the need for the policy change and any consequences.

Face-to-face communications on important issues often feel more authentic and help to build trust with staff members.

Even if changes are announced via email or in writing in other official channels, it's still a good idea for managers to speak directly to their staff members about them in team meetings or even individually to ensure compliance.

3. Ensure new fleet policy is easy to find

The easier you make it for staff members to find your changed fleet policy, the easier it is for them to implement and adhere to them.

The worst thing you can do is put any new rules in a place staff members can't easily locate them. This means if it lives on your intranet, for example, they have to search through many pages to find the information... and that's if they even know to look for it in the first place. You should have a clearly labeled and easy to find and navigate fleet or transport section on your intranet site that sets out all policies and procedures. In effect, this is a soft copy "organisation's manual".

Whenever you make changes or updates to this organisation's manual, you should send communications to staff members outlining the changes and telling them where they can find the information.

4. Use staff members as champions

Some policy and procedural changes have major implications, for example switching from dedicated vehicles to vehicle pooling. A good way to communicate a new policy to staff members is by tapping into the leadership resources within your team and appointing passionate staff members with a solid understanding of the changes to be a "champions" among their peers who can advocate the importance of the changes and also assist others to implement them.

Staff members are more likely to successfully "buy in" to change when it is being championed by a colleague they respect and trust.

5. Provide adequate training

Sometimes policies and procedural changes will be complex and require a complete new approach to work practices, for example implementing a new fleet management system. When concepts are difficult to grasp, just writing them down and hoping for the best is not enough. You need to ensure that staff members are given appropriate training in new procedures so that they can carry out tasks in the way that is expected of them.

Depending on the changes, you may need to roll out training at the beginning of the new initiative, or just as required. Refresher and follow-up training should also be factored in if necessary.

6. Ask for staff members input when updating the fleet policy

When you're updating your fleet policy, it can be useful to get feedback and assistance from staff members to ensure you hit the right mark. You can do this by communicating the proposed new policy and procedures and providing them with a sample of what it will look like.

Involving staff members in the process provides them with the opportunity to ask questions and to give honest feedback about how easy your fleet management handbook is to understand and follow from their perspective.

7. Be open to two-way communication

People are often resistant to change, especially when they have done something a particular way for a long period of time. They may have an emotional reaction to change, and they may also feel that the changes aren't practical.

Just as you need to clearly communicate the need for change, offering opportunities for staff members to provide meaningful feedback can help to keep them engaged throughout the process.

The means of communication to use to effectively establish a new policy

When you have the fleet policy and procedure changes to communicate, there are a number of ways you can do so.

This can include:

- Sending emails to staff members
- Putting information on your intranet site
- Sharing the policies on your internal social media platforms
- Write directly to staff members
- Having managers discuss the changes at team meetings
- Including information about the policy in internal newsletters
- Posting updated policies on noticeboards
- Including policies in any staff handbooks

There are however, some limitations with these communication methods. They rely on staff members paying attention to emails, actively looking at intranet and other internal channels or being present at a meeting if it was discussed.

As with any good internal communications approach, the best ways to communicate policy changes include:

- Use of a combination of delivery channels to ensure the message gets across
- Send reminders or hints and tips about the policy update as part of an internal communications campaign to really make sure that the message gets through
- Quiz your colleagues on their understanding of the new policy
- Monitor compliance with the policy changes and tailor any further communications to addressing any problems