Tips for Sending Effective Messages

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Contents

Tips for Sending Effective Messages 3
Be careful of “Message Fatigue.” 3
Make your initial notification a positive one. 3
Write your message down before recording it. 3
Practice your recordings until you find the most effective speaking volume. 3
Always include the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* of your broadcast message. 4
Who: 4
What: 4
When: 4
Where: 4
Why: 4
How: 5
Always repeat important information. 5
Be professional, but do not be afraid to have fun. 5
Do not be afraid of feedback from your recipients. 5
Questions? 5
SchoolMessenger Solutions Support 5

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Tips for Sending Effective Messages

The success of any communication depends on how it is received. Take care in preparing and presenting your messages. The following is designed to share the combined experience of our customers and staff for sending effective messages.

Be careful of "Message Fatigue."

This is when parents and guardians tune out messages because they have received too many communications. To keep your audience engaged, aim to send no more than 2 messages per month regarding the same topic.

Note: *There is no limit to the number of Broadcasts you can make unless otherwise noted by your Account Management, so if you do need to send more than that, you are free to do so – this is simply a general tip applies to most situations.*

Make your initial notification a positive one.

Rather than starting with an absence notification, start with a short message introducing parents to the SchoolMessenger Communicate notification system. Briefly explain that it will be used to provide them with relevant and timely information.

Write your message down before recording it.

Always script your message first; this will help you create a professional message that flows smoothly. Also, have someone else read the message and provide feedback before recording it.

Note: *When creating a broadcast using the message sender (Dashboard tab > New Broadcast button), there is a space called a "scratch pad" on the "Call Me to Record" portion of the phone message during Step 2: Message Content. Though nothing you type here is saved in any way, you can use it as a temporary place to type what you want to say, which saves on paper and allows you to quickly record on the fly.*

Practice your recordings until you find the most effective speaking volume.

As with any type of recording, the volume of your voice and the distance at which you position the microphone affect the quality of the sound. By creating practices recordings first, you can find the combination that works best for you.

Additionally, the **equipment used** can affect the quality of the recording – if your recordings are not working well when using one phone or microphone, try another one. Technology varies greatly from device to device, and it may take some troubleshooting to find the right setup for your particular situation. (Though, most devices and microphones should work fine.)

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Always include the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* of your broadcast message.

Who:

Start your messages by identifying yourself and the group/organization you are representing. This ensures that recipients immediately recognize the message as important.

Example: *This is MR. SMITH from SCHOOL DISTRICT*

The other possible "who":

Identify who the message is directed to, who is affected by the message and who needs to take action, if any.

Example: This message is for all ELEMENTARY SCHOOL parents.

What:

Identify what you are calling about early in your message.

Example: *I am calling to update you on the annual bake sale.*

When:

When changing and event date be sure to specify the date canceled and the newly scheduled date. This is information that you should repeat.

Example: *The bake sale was originally scheduled for Monday, Jan 10th and has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17th. I repeat, the bake sale has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17th.*

Where:

When moving an event location be sure to clearly state the new location and also include the start time. This, again, is important information that should be repeated.

Example: *The bake sale was originally to be located in the Media Center and has been moved to the Cafeteria. I repeat, the bake sale has been moved to the cafeteria.*

Why:

Though not as important, people like to know the reason behind change and possible inconvenience. Keep your explanation brief, but provide one ex. scheduling conflict, availability, resources, safety issue, weather conditions, etc.

Example: *The bake sale date has been changed because of the threat of school closure due to* weather conditions.

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How:

This may not apply to all messages, but if it does – indicate how a plan is going to be executed, how people can help, or how to respond. Again, be clear and concise in your instructions.

Example: *If you volunteered to contribute or assist with the bake sale please call your students teacher to confirm that you are still able to participate.*

Always repeat important information.

Always repeat important information, such as dates and times of events, several times throughout your message. Doing so allows recipients time to write down important information.

Be professional, but do not be afraid to have fun.

Many schools have found that they can achieve the goal of getting important information delivered while putting a smile on a parent's face.

Do not be afraid of feedback from your recipients.

Ask recipients if the messages you are sending are clear and how they could be improved. Also find out the type of information recipients desire and how often they want to hear from you.

Note: *A great way to gain feedback from your recipients is to utilize the Survey feature of Communicate. See the online help resources for more information about this feature. You can also turn on Voice Responses for your broadcasts - if you have the resources to review them, this is a great way to get personal feedback.*

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact support.

SchoolMessenger Solutions Support

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