# How to be an effective communications rep online version

## Tutors’ notes

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## Introduction

This is the new reps training course for 2024 (to be trialled and delivered in the autumn of 2024). This training can be delivered online or in person and should take approximately 3 hours (TBC). The training is to provide reps who have completed reps part 1/H&S rep course and wishing to take on the communication rep role within the branch. As with all courses, there is an action plan running throughout. We would then suggest Officials follow up and encourage this activity as much as possible before attending any further training.

Parts of the original PowerPoint created by comms (pre 2019) has been amended with a greater scope for the comms rep role. The course is to be trialled to see how effectively it will run. Ideally over a three-hour session with one short break. If there is a desire to pull out certain elements to use as a stand alone course, this can be possible with the format, but separate user guides would be needed. It would be beneficial to have a research part of homework where reps update their esite/ take on another task? (There will be a pre work request for reps to answers a few health check questions initially on the current comms)

This training will work for both classroom and online, the activities completed as a big group with the PowerPoint presentation cut down to a minimum with the tutor sharing the screen when delivering online.

Ideally 6-9 delegates online and up to 12-16 classroom.

## How these notes work

There are 3 core resources associated with the course:

1. The PowerPoint presentation, which includes visual aids, but also maintains the structure/order of the course
2. The participants workbook, which covers logistics, background information and activity sheets
3. The tutor’s notes which explain the activities, suggest discussion-prompts, give (loose) timings, and ‘index’ the other resources, tying the whole thing together. The words in bold are the changes from the classroom course delivering the online version.

(As tutors who’ve committed to delivering this course, we would suggest a small amount of preparation time ahead of the course to ensure you’re familiar with the session, activities and tutor instruction.)

## Tutor Notes/Course Structure

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| **Session** | **Slide no/WB page** | **Notes** | Resources |
| **Online session 1**  **Welcome**  **10.00** | Slide 1 / pg1-11 | * **The PowerPoint is not used at the beginning of the session.** * **You may need to help people with technical issues such as sound Invite people, as they arrive online, to skim through introductory section of workbook (History of Prospect/ Trade Union Terminology) and check they received it ok** * **Run through the zoom basics – microphone – mute etc, video – off if necessary, reactions when showing the power point, chat box for anything private or sharing, change name function, raise hand function. Polls** * **Add if zooms crashes or issues with connectivity, tutor will join asap – please ask delegates to work on the activity, look at next activity.** | **Tutor to ensure you have joined online zoom meeting slightly earlier than the start time;**  **Zoom functions** |
| **1 –** **Introductions and objectives**  5 mins  **10.05** | Slide 2 / refer to  pg 2/9 | * Pronoun to be mentioned and refer if necessary, page 10 about letting people speak * Go through Learning outcomes on page 4 * Terminology page for information/reference page 6 * Interactive course and reps are encouraged to discuss, raise items and participate in the sessions whether it be online or classroom. | Workbooks needed |
| 10 mins  **10.15** | No Slide.3  p12/13 | * **Session 1. Activity A.** * **On the online version it is easier for everyone to introduce themselves in under 60 seconds. For classroom - you can do the activity in pairs and ask each pair to introduce their partner.** * **Tutor should go first (keep very brief in the hope everyone else will too!)** * **Added in how long they’ve been a rep as this should guide the tutor in terms of reference to the pitch of the sessions** * **Introductions should be quick, giving most of the time to a bit of social interaction** * **Write down answers to what they want to get from the course. This can be referred to during the day but also covered by next steps, further courses perhaps. The most important point is that these are the outcomes of the delegates and to recap over them at the end of the 3 sessions to ensure they’ve been met wherever possible.** * **Finish session by summing up traditional image portrayed by media of trade union reps, based on their experience of attending reps 1, they’ll understand the key area of building membership and activity and engagement is by good communication. In this session we explore the tools which may assist the communication rep.** | Tutor, Pen & paper to make notes, or use whiteboard and save to send at the end of the session. |
| **2 – Health Check**  **Activity B**  15 mins  **10.30** | Slide 4/p14 | **Share the PowerPoint**  **Prework – the health check questions given before the course.**  **Introduce the concept of the health check. To improve we need to know our strengths and weaknesses.**  **This is a basic tool to access on a scale of 1-10 how effective are the communications currently. If a rep answers 10 (the best), we need to ask why they think this and what they are doing and what has been achieved/happened to make them score 10.**  **Equally if a rep answers 1 or 2, we need to ask why they feel that is – it could be do with lack of resource, apathy etc.**  **The key point is that comms reps shouldn’t feel like the whole task falls to them – membership of a union is a two-way thing. We’re simply identifying some approaches we they may not have through of previously or perhaps didn’t know how to go about starting.**  **Some branches/reps may already be using a health check as a guide but this is to explore how to get the most out of the exercise and ensure reps have something to take back to branch with them.**  **ACTION Complete the action plan and communication branch strategy** | PowerPoint  Introduce the health check from the resources here too? |
| **3 -**  **How Prospect communications Work**  **20mins**  **(10.45)** | | No Slide 5  p 15-17 | * Learning outcome; Knowledge of union structure. A union is democratic and its’ structure should reflect that and make that possible. Any member gets to have a say on their workplace no matter how big their employer is. * A branch is made up of different offices, roles and sometimes many locations. This can cause difficulties with ensuring you are communicating out to all members and allowing all member an opportunity to have their say/voice. * It also has a committee made up of elected positions. A good proportion of these roles must have direct contact with members as far as reasonably practicable. Branch Sec, Branch Chair, Membership & recruitment sec, comms rep. * Go over the questions on the slides and give each rep time to respond to what they know – it’s important this isn’t seen as a test but more an opportunity to address anything not clarified during their time as a rep and really hone in on their understanding. * Recapping a bit from reps 1 and ensuring that each comms rep knows who they are communicating to – both members and the branch officers and the union. | Additional resource of the member journey emails. (on tutor resource page) |
|  | | Slide 6/ p18 & 19 | * Outcome to be achieved; recap how their branch is set up (section/subsection) * The diagram shows a branch at one location but with 3 different departments * According to rules branch must have a chair, secretary. * Branch meeting where an issue can be raised and discussed, and a democratic decision can be voted on. Much of the vote is the course of action a representative(s) takes up   with management on behalf of the members.   * It is sometimes difficult to attract members to branch meetings, apathy rules in most cases. Decisions still need to be made on the day-to-day business of the branch and to facilitate this, the branch of members elect a committee. * It’s important that all areas, grades, department and shifts all have representation on the committee and are communicated to before meetings happen to ensure the elected ‘rep’ has a true reflected voice of the area they represent. | Prep work for the tutor – double check the attendees and if they are part of branches/sections/sub sections. |
|  | | Slide 7/  What comms are important to a new member? | * Keep in incase it comes up) * Prospect branches come in all shapes and sizes. They evolve to fit the needs of the members. Most are designed to match the organisation structure of the employer. * Regional branches – too small to form a branch (under 21 members) or there is no recognition from the employer. * TU act 2015 for a ballot of members to be legal it has to have all of the members who are affected by the outcome balloted and this can be called into question by the employer * About giving members, a say… * …and making sure they KNOW they have a say, and how. * Gives them ownership of THEIR union * If we can unite members behind an issue raised by them, chosen by them, that’s important to them, it gives us the foundation for VISIBLE union activity * One of the main roles of the rep is guiding new members into the right branch * What do new members receive? Email from Prospect, possibly from M&R sec welcome email, link to website * What do existing members receive? Changing preference and updating details.   Highlight why comms to a new member is important – inclusive, informed, awareness – how to build on this to develop member engagement. | Resource – tips for reps  Go over member journey |
|  | | Slide 8/p19 | * What happens when a member joins?  1. Where they work to be relevant for their workplace 2. Who they work for so pay and conditions can be improved 3. What their role is, so working conditions can be compared with others 4. What campaigns are currently running 5. Next meetings 6. What is their role as a member? The comms role should be seen to encourage and engage with newer members to ensure they are aware of their role.   Go over diagrams in the workbook (if needed) and cover off what comms reps will have access to and can organise. (more on the job spec & tools later) |  |
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| **Session 4 – Types of communication rep**  **20-30 mins**  **(11.05)** | | Slide 9/ p20-22 | This section should be seen as a bit of clarification of what each role does – we’ve gone over the types of roles who communicate with members, now its drawing out a bit more about the job specs and what is expected of these roles.   * Confirming there are several rep roles which can assist with the comms work and then how the comms rep role differs to those other officers and the permissions they have. * A reminder that Ebranch admins will likely change with the introduction of new movement tool (June 2025) * A comms rep role can send a bulk mail and can update the ebranch (just doesn’t have access to membership lists) This would be the decision of the Branch chair. It’s advised the comms rep and the M&R sec work closely together for these purposes. | Bectu rollout of Movement in Dec 24 |
|  | | Slide 10/p23 | * **Outcome to be achieved: what do effective comms look like in your branch – be honest! (following on from health check)** * **List on page ? to help but consider all of the ways you could communicate with your members – don’t worry if currently only use 1-2 ways, this is why we’re providing this training to ensure you’re aware of other ways you could communicate.** | Activity C part 1  Use whiteboard to create the list or straight to the part 2 session if easier.  Share the list of communication tools on page 23 – any others from reps themselves? |
|  | | Slide 11/p24 | * **Using the list the reps have created, ask them to consider to put themselves in the shoes of the member and be honest about how effective this means of communication is working?** * **E.g, do members often complain they don’t know what’s going on? Are there boundaries in terms of what comms is accessible? Does the employer/workplace help with resource/areas you can communication (intranet/noticeboards etc)** * **It’s important that reps reflect on the pro’s and con’s of the communications they currently use and look at least 1 new way they could use in the future.** | Activity C part 2  Whiteboard/post it notes (on virtual whiteboard online) |
|  | | Slide 12 - 15  p25 - 29 | * Vital to the work of the comms rep – but shouldn’t be seen as scare tactics to stop reps from operating in a useful and eligible way. * Go through slides and answer any queries – remember most queries can be raised with official or DPCO (Tracey) * Remind rep about direct marketing & PECR \_ privacy and electronic communications regulations 2003 (works side by side with GDPR 20218) * Regulation sets out more specific privacy rules on the following areas;   1. Direct marketing calls, email, texts and faxes.  2. Cookies and similar technologies that track info about people accessing a website or other electronic services.  3. Keeping communications services secure  4. Customer privacy as regards traffic and location data, itemised billing, line identification and directory listings. | One crucial point all reps need to be aware of GDPR implications.  Ask reps to discuss the GDPR access within their own workplaces with the branch secretary/chair. Do they have access to noticeboard/intranet/websites/etc |
| **10 mins**  **(11.30)- 11.45)**  **Possibly after break dependant on time.** | | Slide 16  Page 30 - 31 | **What would you do if …. Activity** | Breakout rooms and split into pairs… 5 mins) |
| **10 mins (11.45 approx – 11.45am)** | | Slide 17 | **Tea break** |  |
| **Session 5 continued**  **12.00 – 13.00 (ish)**  **(5 mins to introduce)** | | Slide 18 -32/p32-38 | **Common forms of communication – overview**  Basic of rep comms role in more detail as they are key link between members and union  Already chatted through details on the types of communication reps  Prospect prides itself on its reps and the good work they do.  (Many reasons members become reps)  They are good communicators, and other members think they would be best for the job  Go through the list we’ve created on slide 18 and the explain to the reps that we’re going into details on three main areas.  Sign up to the Prospect website so the rep can access their e-branch | Introduce the content and we’ll focus on ¾ areas in detail |
| **(5 mins)12.05** | | Slide 19/ p32/35 | * Overview of eSite system – ensure delegates know of the pitfalls as new reps and for the most GDPR compliant way of emailing and contacting members, use the eBranch. Mention changes in June 2025 possible… | Overview |
| **12.05 – 12.15**  **(10 mins)**  **(10 mins)**  **12.15 – 12.25** | | Slide 21, pages 36-37 | Sign up to the Prospect website so the rep can access their e-branch  Look at the website to think about how they would signpost members/generally familiarise yourself.   * Websites – go over the slides & answer any queries – explain the member site is not as user friendly and some of the existing materials may have been updated. * The main piece of information here is to show and share the **ambition page** and resources reps have access to. (10 mins) * Mention Megaphone (TUC overview so outreach to all union members) | Focus on ambition/templates  Ensuring reps focus on workplace issues - rather than world-wide issues in any campaigns/comms |
| **(10 mins)**  **12.25 - 12.35** | | Slide 22 pg38 | * Union induction – checklist – see the checklist on the course resources (5 mins) | Resource checklist |
| **(2 mins)**  **12.35 – 12.45**  **(10 mins)** | | Slide 23 /pg 39-40  Slide 25-30  Page 39-41 | Recap on what is important when formulating comms.  **Social media/comms best practice.**  4 steps of good practice  **Survey & newsletters** |  |
|  | |  |  |  |
| **12.45 – 13.00**  **15 mins** | | Slide 31  Page 42  . | **Activity E – Story Writing.**  **Some of the basic principles in terms of putting together a interesting news story – how to separate the unnecessary detail to create something to captivate your members.**  Read through the passage on page 41 and formulate.  A media post,  A headline  A blog. | Divide the group into 3x3’s then give 15 mins for this activity. |
| **13.00 – 13.05**  **5 mins** | | Slide 32/page 43 | Recap on the comms role & expectation (remind about no legislation for comms reps – what would fall into duty/activity  Run over the fact that comms reps don’t have legislative rights – so we must be creative to use them as our way of keeping members informed |  |
| **13.05 – 13.10**  **5 mins** | | Slide 33/ page 43 | Explain the benefits of each ingredient.  • Membership density, It is very important that reps realise, without enough members the management will not take the union seriously and could look to de-recognise the union.  • Engaged members, it is very unlikely that any issues will get resolved if the member are not involved or care Virtuous circle  • Visible Profile, the management will conveniently forget to consult if they never see a union presence. Why would a non-member join something they never see or hear about  • Dialogue, the need to have good lines of communication to members and management is necessary to make things happen  • Representative membership, If members don’t feel they have a voice, their membership will be their first cost saving when they look at it  • Representatives - with input, forgotten workforce, seeing no value to TU, nothing will get done, low membership, no activity  • In case it hasn’t been covered, ask how these ingredients sustain each other.  **What’s the role of the rep in all this?**  **The virtuous circle & communication** |  |
| **Action Plan**  **5 mins**  **13.10 – 13.20** | Slide 34/35/Page 44 | * Ensure everyone has a clear focus on their action plan when going back into the workplace/ready for organiser follow up. * What will they stop, continue or start to do * **What does success look like in your branch, Communication agenda? What’s to improve?** | Refer to the action plan on page 45 in workbooks and ask reps to complete |
| Summary of the course/Finish last session | Slide 36/page 45 | **Useful links.**   * Go over learning outcomes from delegates at beginning of the day * Clarify links and further information & appendix if needed * **Run Poll!** * **Questions?** |  |
| **Feedback from reps (as it’s a trial)**  **13.20 – 13.30** |  | **Feedback from reps – what worked/what didn’t/ things to keep/things to take away.** |  |
|  |  | * + **End of the course** |  |