

Principal Contacts

Next, mark down your principal contacts. This is an extremely important step as your principal contacts should highlight your clients. The new vision is that we create a more clientele oriented service concept. Group them by the volume of communications: as it might be for a United States Consulate's Trade Section:

Business persons in Canada and the USA
Colleagues within the Mission
Colleagues in the Embassy in Washington
Individuals at Headquarters

Having identified your clients you are now ready to examine the extent to which your job activities complement the clientele oriented service concept. Sometimes it is helpful to include your clients in the discussion of the services you provide to determine how best to meet their needs. Eventually you must decide what to keep, what to stop doing and what to add. It is also useful to remember that you are also someone else's client. The service they give you can affect the service you give others.

Principal Modes of Communication

Lastly, jot down by order of degree of use your principal modes of communication. You may need to check on some of this: are you really sure the extent to which fax has replaced telex and mail, or are you making an educated guess? Try to pin down the facts of the current situation. Then list the communications vehicles by degree of use, as it might be:

Telephone
Face to Face
Fax
Telex
Other written materials

At this stage, if you have not already involved employees, we suggest you talk to your staff. You will not only wish to "pick their brains", and to see the organization and operations from their perspective, but this is also an excellent way of verifying your knowledge of the facts.

It may be useful to go back to your original decisions about who are your clients and what service do you provide. You can now start to challenge the assumptions you and your staff have made about what you do and why you do it. After this stage, people may have some new insights or have reinforced some old ones. You may be thinking of eliminating certain functions or adopting new procedures. It is now time to start using the technology as a new tool. We suggest that you make a list of the following:

Activities Potentially Affected by Technology

Let us take the example of the office with two or three incompatible computer-based word-processing systems that has had to struggle to find ways to produce compatible copy for a monthly publication deadline. At present you may well have a lot of annoying re-inputting, or inefficient language-to-language electronic conversion that requires a total edit of the transcribed text. Your input documents may be a hodge-podge of handwritten, typewritten, and computer-