

The 5 Ws and an H

answer these questions before communicating virtually anything

Ask any journalist and they can tell you about the **5 Ws and an H**. Any solid news story covers those six concepts. The same is true for communicating inside an organization, especially as it relates to sharing a compelling vision or guiding decisions about the future.

Think 5 Ws and an H to ensure you capture important perspective, share the all-important context and make the information complete and relevant for your audience.

WHY	WHAT	WHO	WHERE	WHEN
Why is it the right decision?	What's the decision?	Who made the decision?	Where is this decision coming from?	When is this happening (timing)?
Why now?	What does it mean?	Who's in charge?	Where/what locations will it affect?	When will we learn more?
Why is it important?	What should I know?	Who does it impact?	Where can I get more information?	
	What's in it for me?			
HOW	How was the decision made?	How will it be implemented?	How will communications flow internally and externally?	How does it impact me?

The principle behind the **5 Ws and an H** is that each question should elicit the facts necessary for a story to be considered complete. None of these questions can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." They require context and detail so the information is communicated in a meaningful and relevant way that answers the questions on everyone's mind.

OVER ▶

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The 5 Ws and an H Exercise

Take time to answer these questions before developing communications to your audience.

<p>WHY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>WHAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
<p>WHO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>WHERE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
<p>WHEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>HOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____



TIPS

1. Adult learners want to know the “why” first, then the “what;” the rest can follow logically
2. Consider different communications vehicles that might help answer these questions in a relevant way for your audience
3. After time passes, answers to these questions may change; consider how that impacts your communications and when to update your audiences