Communications glossary

COMMON COMMUNICATIONS TERMS

As in any professional or technical sector, the field of communications has its own vocabulary, sometimes words originally in English, that one should be familiar with in order to communicate well and to be able to communicate with other actors in the field. Here is a non-exhaustive list of some of the most commonly used terms:

▶ **Advocacy**
Influence Communication done publicly via mass media for the purpose of trying to influence, indirectly, elected officials, heads of regulatory bodies or certification bodies to enact or modify laws in its favor by means of communication that targets the general public. Advocacy Communication uses the media and the Internet to help incite the general public to put pressure on the decision makers.

▶ **Angle**
The main focus from which the story is framed: Controversy, technical, human interest, strategic, etc.

▶ **Author's Correction**
In publishing, a change made by an author to a text or a draft. When a design agency, printer or graphic artist indicates to the client that the alterations made (usually regarding the final PA draft) will be considered as an "Author Correction" this generally means this will result in an addition to the price initially agreed upon. It could be possible to negotiate a fixed price for 'author's corrections' in advance and the manner in which it will be billed, for example, "after two modifications included in initial agreement price".

▶ **Base line**
A slogan that acts as the signature tagline for a publication, for example, or for a product/service in an advertisement. Ex. "Bemba di Vida – The IBAP Newsletter."

▶ **Box**
The part of a text that is surrounded by a frame or set against on a colored background, different from the rest of the text, allowing for a second level of reading. Used for interviews, technical data, additional information.

▶ **Brief**
A notebook for keeping track of the work specifications, formal or informal, that will be needed when making the printing order.

▶ **Cap (CAP)**
Capital letters.

▶ **Calibration**
Refers to the "quantity" of text defined in the number of characters or "signs", spaces included and serves to help define the amount of copy required before making the writing assignments. A "sheet" has a calibration of 1, 500 signs, spaces included. In the Word software, the calibration of a text can be known by selecting the text and then going to "Review/Statistics".

▶ **Chapo (Chapeau)**
A brief introductory paragraph, highlighting the "hook" of the article, that is placed below the headline and just above the text, usually in bold letters.

▶ **Community Manager**
The person in charge of overseeing the management and monitoring of multiple web sites, i.e., Website, Intranet, Social Media Networks.

▶ **Cov' (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th cov')**
The Cover of a publication. The 1st cover page, 2nd page, etc. …

▶ **Cromalin®**
The photo paper colorimetric print proof that is the most reliable way to verify the final print colors, and is done for the Printing Approval (PA), to validate the colors in the document (i.e., is there too much red, blue, should we increase, decrease, etc.).

▶ **Dpi**
The acronym for "dot per inch" or "point per inch-ppp", the unit of measure for resolution of images, with 72 dpi = low definition (good for screens and the Internet) and 300 dpi = high definition, the standard for quality resolution in publishing.

▶ **Engagement**
On the Social Media networks this refers to the activity on sites and user interactions. For example, the number of "Likes", "Shares," "Comments" of a post on Facebook, retweets on Twitter, etc. The Engagement Rate is measured by the amount of interactions in relation to the number of users. For example, for 1,000 users, if there are 100 interactions, the engagement rate is 10%.

▶ E-reputation

The online reputation of a person, a company, or institution posted on the Internet.

▶ Flatplan (flatplan, chemin de fer, page imposition)

A page plan of a publication that shows how all the content (text and images) are to be laid out, and in what order, page by page, once the document is printed. This can be created using Excel.

▶ Font

In printing, a size and style of type. There are thousands of fonts. Some you have to pay for because they are registered artistic works. There is a multitude of font families. There are basically two types of font, Serif and Sans- (without) Serif, distinguished by the fact that one has decorative small curls ("feet" or "wheelbase"), as with the font Times Roman, which is considered a very classical style. A Sans-Serif (or "stick") font such as Arial or Calibri, is also very readable. A font may be used as a communication sign and to add a certain touch - modern, classical, off-beat, original. Pay attention to legibility as well as placement of certain fonts. One speaks of "body" when talking about character size.

▶ Four colors

See "RGB/CMYK".

▶ Graphic Chart

A document gathering the rules and the elements indicating how to formally represent the visual identity of an organization. In includes all the declinations of the logo, the rules to follow for its use; the font (s) types to be used; the color codes (CMYN, RGB, Pantone). As well as all the possible applications, e.g., stationery (business cards, heading paper, invoice, envelopes…), Web, packaging, vehicles, signage of the locations… the Graphic Chart also includes all the necessary computer files: JPEG, EPS, AI, PNG, PDF, in CMYN/RGB.

▶ Header

The upper part on the cover page of a publication that notes the publication name, the edition number, date, and eventually, a base line.

▶ Headlines

All the titles, surtitles (supertitles) and subtitles. The "Chapeau/Chapo" can be included in the headlines as well.

▶ Iris®

Another colorimetric product brand name, same as Cromalin®.

▶ The Lead (hook)

The opening paragraph of an article that should attract the attention of the reader. Here are some examples of different types of leads:
- Question(s), interpellation. Ex.: "How to protect the MPA? This is the question asked by participants at the forum…"
- In situ: Plunges readers immediately into the action, into the field.
- Quotation: Start with a quotation to illustrate the topic.
- Reminder: Remind of a past situation that is related to the topic the article is addressing.
- Declarative: Example, "It doesn't seem that the regulation is being respected…"
- Imperative: "Let's Stop...!"
- Anecdotal: A short story illustrating the main point of the story that helps draw interest to the subject.
- Affirmative, Controversy.
- Fictional: An imagined dialogue about something that could have taken place or might happen in the future, for example, to start the story with a hypothesis.

▶ Linking/cross-linking/back-linking

Creation of hypertext links between web spaces, or external links directing to a site.

▶ Lobbying

Influence Communication that is done discreetly "in the hallways" for the purpose of convincing and influencing decision-makers (elected officials, heads of regulatory bodies or certification bodies) to enact or modify laws/regulations in a favorable way (to the one doing the lobbying).

▶ Low def, high def

Low definition, high definition. Designations about the quality of an image; 72 dpi = low definition, is appropriate for the screens or Internet; 300 dpi = high definition, is the recognized maximum for publishing.

▶ Lower case (lbdc)

The expression for using non-capitalized letters. It comes from the early days of the printing press when the letter blocks were stored in specially organized boxes called 'cases.' The cases containing the smaller versions of the capitalized letters were stored lower than those containing the capitalized ones. (See also CAP).

▶ Masthead

In a publication (newspaper, magazine), information indicating the names and functions of those in charge, journalists, and other employees, for example correspondents, contract (freelance) workers, sub-contractors such as graphic designer, printer, etc. as well as the publication's contact information. By law this information must be supplied.

▶ Media Planning

The plan developed for the implementation of a media campaign. The document indicates to the letter, a minina, in the form of a calendar, the exact timing for when inserts will be published and in which media, i.e., print, Web, radio, TV, billboards), etc.

▶ PA

Print Approval. In publishing, the step of validation of the content (texts, images, composition) of a final proof, usually in PDF format, indicating that the document can be sent to the printer for printing. (See also RFP).

▶ PPP

point per inch. (See DPI).

▶ Prospect

Potential client.

▶ Receipts/Testing

The validation and testing stage that is generally done for IT projects, Internet. Ex.: The validation phase for a website before putting it on line. The person who validates should inform the service provider and/or developer of all errors, technical problems, called "reserves". These problems should be resolved (the "reserves should be raised/waved") before going live online.

▶ Referencing /Natural Referencing

Also called SEO (Search Engine Optimization), referencing is the art of improving the visibility of a website and to increase its traffic based on engine searches, Google, in particular. Natural Referencing takes into account each search engine's rules, without violating them, therefore eliminating the need to buy keywords.

▶ Registrar

The organization or commercial entity authorized to sell Internet Domain Names.

▶ Requirement specifications

A document indicating to the service provider the specifics the client order (description of the requesting organization, context, objet, goal, targets, means, planning, deliverable…).

▶ RFP

Ready to Print. In publishing, this is the final step of proofing on paper (Cromalin®, Iris®…), indicating that the document can be sent to press. At this stage, in theory, it is not possible to modify the colors (Is there too much red, too much blue, should we increase, etc.). Once it is agreed that the proof sheet is OK, then this is noted on the back of each sheet" OK for RFP" – Ready for Print – along with the date and signature of the person giving the approval. Today, thanks to new technology, it is sometimes possible to modify the final proof, even if the Print Approval has been validated and the Cromalin® colorimetric proof printed.

▶ RGB/CMYK

The color wheel: Red Green Blue--Primary colors that are combined to make all the other colors; CMYK = Cyan Magenta Yellow Black. RGB is used for screens, Internet. CMYK is used for publishing, referred to as "four-colors" in printing.

▶ Sheet

The unit of measure in printing. One sheet = 1,500 signs including spaces.

▶ Signature

Words, slogans, taglines, associated with a logo, to a company's communication, indicating its values, identity, project goals. For example, "MAVA-The Nature Foundation."

▶ Verbatim

In publishing, a word-for-word quotation or passage taken from an article or text, to draw reader attention, provide information, or add a boost to the design of a page layout.

▶ Visual Identity

All the visible graphic elements that constitute a company's brand identity, the way it represents itself graphically. It concerns five elements, that give an organization immediate recognition: Name of the organization or the brand; Logo; Signature; Color Code and Character Font style. All the elements and rules for visual identity use are gathered in a document called "The Graphic Charter".