

MODULE III STRATEGY

Content	Page
I. Introduction	2
II. Strategic Planning	5
III The Leadership's Communication Strategy	10
IV Major Strategies	18
V. Module's summary	26

Note: Some pages which are intended for exercises and work during the course are omitted in the Participant's version. They will be handed out during the course.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a few words, one could define strategy as an elaborate, consciously adopted and systematic plan of action. Strategy is also a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal and by its nature, extensively premeditated.

A well-planned strategy stimulates organisational growth and improves the union's performance because it formally delineates a comprehensive action orientation, identifies the critical direction to take and guides the allocation of resources of the entire union. Nonetheless, strategy must be differentiated from tactics or immediate actions with resources at hand but the strategies adopted by the Leadership will affect the overall direction of the union and redesign the union's future environment.

In short, a strategy is a planned, deliberate, goal-oriented course of action (proposing an identifiable outcome) to pursue through a sequence of steps (or projects) subject to monitoring and modifications in order to appropriately respond to the continuous changes of the union's field.

Strategic thinking is a condition for strategic planning and for setting development objectives for the union. However, strategic thinking cannot become a reality without consistent strategic planning. Therefore, this module provides tools for strategic planning, which should become the link for prioritising and developing strategic operational projects.

In today's unions, the responsibilities for strategies are shared by the union's Leadership and the union's Management (or Administration). Previously in this course, the Leadership of a union was defined 'as the group of people who lead... ..usually elected officers and top level staff'¹. This understanding demonstrates that the union's Leadership team's configuration is one of the most developed and up-to-date concepts in foremost organisations, providing a solid base for coherent and effective decision-making, because it unites the two major organisational forces within the union: those with the top responsibility to lead and those with the top responsibility to manage.

This type of Leadership team configuration becomes the most important strategic tool a union can have, and success will depend on how effectively and coherently its members understand and use this strategic power. Regardless of whether some members of the Leadership are better leaders than others or whether some are better managers than others, the important factor is that together they are a formidable force to push the union forward.

In developing and putting strategies into practice they will need the strengths of both disciplines as shown in the following table:

The manager	The leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>administers</i> Follows established procedures precisely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>innovates</i> Revises, eliminates or creates new methods to raise the union to new challenges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has established references</i> Has role models and tries to act accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>goes beyond the references</i> Is a role model her/himself.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>maintains</i> Makes sure that the level of quality acquired is at least always the same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>develops</i> Puts energy in trying to give a better service each time.
	.../

¹ Module I, Section IV. The Leadership's Responsibility, 1. Definitions, p.18

The manager	The leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>focuses on systems and structures</i> Knows rules and procedures to the letter and relates with structures and stakeholders strictly within these limits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>focuses on people</i> Understands the spirit of the rules and procedures and relates with structures and stakeholders always within their humane impact framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>relies on control</i> Establishes systems to make sure that nobody cheats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>inspires trust</i> People just know deeply that he/she is absolutely honest and wouldn't cheat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has a view on the present</i> Operations are most important and urgent, daily, weekly and monthly deadlines and special situations are key to his/her performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has a long-range perspective</i> Has developed a system of delegation of responsibilities so that regular and special situations are efficiently dealt with, leaving him/her time to prepare for the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>asks how and when</i> Is concerned with style and deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>asks what and why</i> Is concerned with substance and impact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has his/her eye on the bottom line</i> Is concerned with immediate results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has her/his eye on the horizon</i> Is concerned with long-term progress.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>accepts the status quo</i> Is happy with the established rules and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>challenges it</i> Knows that the current system can be improved and is committed to improving it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>is the classic good soldier</i> Can be trusted to act according to the established rules and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>is his own person</i> You can trust that he/she will act for the benefit of everyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>does things right.</i> Does everything according to established rules, procedures and the guidance received from superiors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Does the right things</i> Does everything according to the principles of the union and with a deep understanding of their humane context.

Leaders' and Managers' characteristics are found in different degrees in everyone. Those with specific responsibilities in the union's Leadership team will find themselves more or less inclined towards the Manager's or the Leader's and no one should feel disappointed if after comparing personal traits with the listed characteristics one finds him or herself located more clearly on one or other side of the table.

No one within the team will be 100% on one side of the table or 100% on the other. The greater the variety within the team the stronger the strategic potential of the union's Leadership. To be effective, the Leadership needs both.

Effective leadership integrates the manager's abilities and characteristics and expands them into the leader's role. Many may prefer to remain on the manager's side since a leader's role, on top of demanding a thorough understanding of organisational management also demands taking the risk of leading the union into unknown territory, the future. Many are happy in middle-of-the-road roles, which may well fit the requirements of their functions within the team and the union.

As suggested above, the configuration of this team and the way its functions are fundamental to ensuring a sound strategy formulation process which in turn is the root of successful strategic planning. Strategy formulation consists of looking toward the future in a realistic perspective to provide direction to the union in the areas in which it chooses to be engaged. At the same time, strategy formulation is the most important input to setting appropriate goals and objectives. Clear and coherent strategies, designed within the context of the union's vision and mission are the enabling factors for strategic planning and their connection to consistent operations in the field.

Because the Communication and Leadership's functions have such an important role in the strategic planning process, together with reviewing the process this module offers practical experiences in setting the Leadership's own internal and external communication strategy. Then, it provides tools and exercises to develop coherent major strategies.

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning makes possible effective operational planning and increases the likelihood that the union's operating units will achieve the desired results.

1 Definition

Strategic planning is the means the leadership uses to move organizations towards their desired future stages of development. It involves three major tasks: Situation Analysis, Strategy Formulation, and Path Finding.

The next paragraphs provide an overview of the various facets of Strategic planning and of its complexities.

2 Overview

In Strategic planning, the Situation analysis task intends to define where the union is at the present time and how it got there. The Target definition tasks intend to establish where the union wants to be in the future. The Path finding task is the real planning process which identifies the ways of how the union will get to aimed future.

2.1 Comparative perspectives²

The industrial organizational perspective is primarily based on economic theory, deals with issues like competitive rivalry, resource allocation, economies of scale, and on assumptions of rationality, self interested behaviour, and profit maximization. Obviously, this is an opposite perspective to the principles on which the union has been built.

The sociological perspective is based on social theory, deals primarily with human interactions and their impact on the final result and on assumptions of holistic rationality, focusing on behaviour, leadership maximization and correlative financial stability.

The social approach is often discouraged in business by saying it will lead you to the "Peter Principle"³ which results in promoting the most competent person to a level where the person will be incompetent. This situation is also seen in unions where sometimes a very effective shop-floor activist is promoted within the local or regional branch to posts for which he/she has not been prepared. Similar situations also happen at higher levels. The advantage of the leadership team approach proposed in this course helps to avoid this danger due to the team's diversity and the team's ability to focus freely on tapping hidden resources in individuals and in overall union's structures and networks.

2.2 Methodologies

Basically, there are two ways of doing strategic planning:

2.2.1 Strategy as four incremental logical steps:

- i. situation analysis including the union's field analysis (member's and potential members' needs, demands and expectations; employers' negotiating capabilities, government's mediating capabilities, competition, internal capabilities and internal rivalries);
- ii. strategy development including determining vision, mission, objectives, and formulating strategies to respond to findings and the union's vision and goals;
- iii. strategic plan including strategy specification, resource allocation and action plans (part of path finding) ;
- iv. implementation, monitoring, adjustment, and process control (part of path finding).

² Adapted from Achieving Success Through Social Capital, Wayne E. Baker, 1995.

³ The Peter Principle, Laurence J. Peter, William Morrow & Co., 1969

2.2.2 Strategy as a revolution

- more a mind-set than a formal technique;
- neither rule nor ritual oriented, not downsizing, not reactive, not autocratic;
- identifying the unquestioned beliefs within the union and challenging them - Looking for opportunities to re-write the rules of the union;
- looking for major discontinuities in technology, operational styles, habits, and labour politics, and embracing the change wholeheartedly – not wasting time with small incremental adjustments – being prepared to create a completely new operational model and political stand at any time.

Sometimes, when status quo leads to a dead-lock and people's sufferings are no longer bearable, revolutions become a necessity or cannot be stopped. However, revolutions always pay a heavy price in human, material and structural resources. The value of internal revolution outcomes in unions is debatable and would require a separate study to define it with clarity.

The value of taking incremental logical steps to elaborate and implement strategies appears to be the one that pays better returns for union growth and development. It is defined on the basis of factual analysis; it is previously mapped even if the territory the union is getting into is still unknown to its members; strategic actions are planned with due allocation of resources, and implementation is carried out with support systems that allow monitoring, on-the-way comparisons and adjustments.

2.3 Supporting processes

While there are many variations, successful strategic planning processes use one or all of the following processes, generally known tools and even design some of their own for their particular needs. The most common ones proposed in this course are:

- The Operational Efficiency Cycle (See Module II, Section II)
- Union Field Analysis (See Module II, Section III)
- SWOT Analysis (See Module III, Section IV, paragraph 2.1)

Strategies are developed to be implemented and therefore need subsequent processes to be achieved and to produce the desired impact. These are

- Planning, which will be introduced in Module IV, and
- Execution, which will be introduced in Module V)

2.4 Achievement requirements

Defining achievement requirements at the stage of developing each strategy allows the planning process to be effective. Therefore, a strategy statement should include the following requirements for each of the proposed strategies:

- Identifying title;
- Brief description of strategic action;
- Resources and core competencies needed and compatible with the union's field;
- Feasible and consistent implementation methods;
- Financial framework within which planning is possible;
- Parameters of dynamism, flexibility, authority and adaptability to changing situations;
- Definition of desired uniqueness of comparative advantages sought;
- Definition of desired sustainability to be attained, and
- Vision of the advantages to be attained.

2.5 Anticipating the future (the Leadership's most important role)⁴

Failure to anticipate change can be fatal. This section proposes a series of tools the Leadership can use in sequence or independently to help the union anticipate the future:

2.5.1 Improving the team's model for decision-making: normally the Leadership would flow-chart the expected development of defined strategies. An improvement would be to flow-chart the parallel emerging issues that may be unnoticed by members and stakeholders but can have a definite impact on the projected implementation of a given strategy. This approach provides an opportunity to foresee how serious those issues are and how different the expected strategic impact may turn out for the union, so that the Leadership can make decisions in time.

2.5.2 Identifying Emerging Issues: The first step is to identify emerging issues before they strike, much like earthquake forecasters scan fault lines for signs of abnormal activity. Because significant issues may emerge from unexpected places, it is important to scan the macro-environment for social, technological, economic, institutional, and political developments. Any event in these areas can change the future of the union's field, such as an embargo, food or water shortages, immigration, new legislation or the effects of climate change. Trends and events create issues of concern to the union.

A signal may be a demographic trend, such as a "baby burst" or AIDS which may mean a severe dearth of membership, or an environmental trend, such as a build-up of greenhouse gases, which portends global warming and critical economic changes. As signals like these get louder, the union's action options narrow and its potential may decrease due to lack of adjustment in time. Therefore, the sooner the Leadership can identify emerging issues, the more options the union will have. The team can use the following tools to identify emerging issues:

- Identifying, monitoring and forecasting: Identifying signals of change and monitoring these signals allow forecasting which estimates the duration, direction, acceleration, and amplitude of the signals.
- Challenging assumptions: Often assumptions develop over time and become filters, keeping out information that doesn't fit. For example, members of a leading team may believe that "The Internet is useless", "The labour movement does not represent the concerns of a significant portion of the country's public", "Our country is isolated from the rest of the world".
- Assessing vulnerability issues: Identifying the subtle, overlooked opportunities or threats that fall outside the union's normal sphere of activity; identifying the union's vulnerability to change and disruption that may result from new competitors, new regulations, special-interest-group initiatives, scientific discoveries, media disclosures, economic stratagems, or political initiatives. This can assist the Leadership in surfacing strategic issues before they become critical and before opportunities for acting are constrained.
- Building scenarios: The purpose of scenarios is to illuminate uncertainty. Scenarios help to determine the ramifications of an issue's development along several likely paths, enabling the Leadership to examine an issue's implications over time. If a union, for example, is thinking of merging with another, it should consider scenarios of political risk for the sector and the workers involved, such as employers' and government's reactions towards the new labour force.

⁴ Adapted from an article originally published in *The Futurist*, September/October 1997, 31(5), pp. 47-50, and from *Anticipatory Management: 10 Power Tools for Achieving Excellence into the 21st Century*, by William C. Ashley and James L. Morrison, Issue Action Publications, Inc., Leesburg, Virginia 20175, USA.

- 2.5.3 Preparing Issue Briefs: An Issue Brief is a well-prepared discussion paper for the Leadership team that summarizes the analysis of the intelligence gathered so far about an issue that could affect the union. A typical issue brief (about two pages) contains a statement of the focus of the issue; a discussion of its background; a description of the trends, driving forces, and people and groups with a potential interest in it; a forecast describing its future prospects; and the potential implications for the union.
- 2.5.4 Prioritizing Issues: when several issues have been identified, the Leadership must address crucial questions: What is the probability that the issue will become critical? What is the probability that it will affect the unions significantly? Can or should the union influence the issue? Issues must then be prioritized based on whether they require an immediate action or simply should be monitored and periodically revisited. For example, the failed attendance of half the county's N.E.C. members to an urgent extraordinary meeting demands immediate attention and action, while locals' lapses in meeting deadlines for news articles for the union's journal can be dealt with later.
- 2.5.5 Evaluating Performance: After the Leadership has taken an action on a high-priority issue, the team must review how well the action plan was implemented, whether objectives were attained, and how the people and groups involved responded. Example: *Following assembly-line workers' complaints of repetitive stress, a union response brought the issue to the company's Management proposing a well-prepared strategic and constructive approach through which both would collaborate in finding the cause of the problems in as scientific a method as possible. Rather than dismissing the union's proposal, the company, accepted to hire the temporary services of a physician to assess the situation and make recommendations. The physician identified problems of physical order due to the job's physical demands on the workers, and recommended the advice of an ergonomics engineer to evaluate the assembly-line. The recommendations from the doctor and the engineer were put into action and complaints of repetitive stress decreased by more than 80%.*
- 2.5.6 Becoming Accountable for Better Decisions: It is important to understand how strategic information flows from outside to inside the union. Otherwise, the Leadership may find itself befuddled by an issue for which ample information already exists somewhere in the union.

Anticipatory leadership relies heavily on processes and responsibilities. Improving the team's model for decision-making described earlier helps the Leadership to follow the flow of strategic intelligence through the union. But accountability or responsibility for responding to that intelligence must be assigned within the team. While emerging issues may be complicated, the process by which they are dealt with should not be.

Here is a simply structured Anticipatory Accountability Model:

- Assign the anticipatory function;
 - Form a steering committee within the team to deal anticipatory issues;
 - Handle each issue in a systematic and participatory way;
 - Ensure that the Leadership takes a consensus decision on each issue.
- 2.5.7 Applicability demands: Using the anticipatory approach model assures that the union is linked to its external macro-environment and ready to act.

Anticipatory leadership provides systematic and formal ways of understanding the world outside the union. However, anticipatory leadership only becomes useful when it becomes integrated to the way of thinking of all members of the Leadership.

The tools of anticipation offer important additional information about the outside world. More significantly, they fundamentally alter perceptions, challenge prejudices, and open people's minds to new insights.

However, many unions spend much of their time solving problems and resolving crises and have little time for innovation. The tendency to race headlong into the future while looking in the rear-view mirror (to see how something was done in the past) and out the side windows (to see how the competition is doing it) consumes resources that could well be used for foresight and anticipation to make the union more effective.

Both strategic methods have advantages and special efforts are required from the Leadership to determine when and where one should prevail over the other.

3 Leadership and communications

The leader is expected to always show the way. Leading correctly needs knowledge and knowledge for leadership needs research: the leader's own research both on the discipline of leadership and on its own union's field and situation.

There are various models of leadership, but basically four styles will characterise how leaders lead their organisations based on people and performance orientation:

- The first two are low on people orientation and comprise the styles of "laissez-faire" and "authoritarian" demand. The former is low in performance and the latter shows high performance, but with a great degree of damage on the human side.
- The second two are high on people orientation and comprise the styles that promote human relations and participatory management. In this case, the former tends to be weak in performance as it lacks the "systemic" support, while the latter tends to be the most effective because it combines the better of the two orientations.

However, the key for leaders to achieve success from identifying the correct needs to ensuring that responses satisfy those needs, and getting more people within the union to follow the Leadership is communications. Leaders must be able to transfer what is in their heads to the heads throughout the union and they can do that by mastering communications in all its types (oral, written, graphic and pictorial, listening and reading) and adequately choosing the right type for each situation; whether showing the path or providing feedback.

III. THE LEADERSHIP'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1 Definition

For this course, communication has been defined as **creating understanding**.

Through words, actions, body language, voice tone, and other processes the leader sends many messages about him-herself, the union, and the challenges ahead. This constitutes the first part of the communication process. The second part consists of verifying that the message sent was actually received and interpreted by people the way intended. The only way that a leader can be sure to have created understanding is to listen to the people involved in the communication process, and to make a special effort to encourage them to reflect back what they have heard (and what they make of it).

2 Implications of communication in leadership⁵

Many of the problems that occur in a union are the direct result of people failing to communicate. Faulty communication causes the most problems. It leads to confusion and can cause a good plan to fail. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It involves a sender transmitting an idea to a receiver. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit.

Studying the communication process is important because the leader coaches, coordinates, counsels, evaluates, supervises and takes decisions through this process. It is the chain of understanding that integrates the members of a union from top to bottom, bottom to top, and side to side.

2.1 The process:

- Thought: first, information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, idea, information, or feelings.
- Encoding: next, a message is sent to a receiver in words or other symbols.
- Decoding: lastly, the receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or information that she or he can understand.

The transmission of a message implies two elements: content and context.

Content is the actual words or symbols of the message which is known as language – the spoken and written words combined into phrases that make grammatical and semantic sense. People interpret the meanings of words differently; even simple messages can be misunderstood. And many words have different meanings.

Context is the way the message is delivered and is known as paralanguage – the non verbal elements in speech such as the tone of voice, the look in the sender's eyes, body language, hand gestures, and state of emotions (anger, fear, uncertainty, confidence, etc.) that the receiver can detect. Although context may often cause misunderstanding (some may see more than what they hear); non verbal elements may also be powerful communicators that help people to understand each other. Often people trust the accuracy of nonverbal behaviours more than verbal ones.

Some leaders think they have communicated once they have told someone to do something. However, a message has not been communicated unless it is understood by the receiver (decoded). The leader must assure her/himself that the message has been properly received. Together with sending the message, the leader must obtain feedback from the receiver. Feedback tells the sender that the receiver understood the message, its level of importance, and what must be done with it.

⁵ Adapted from the articles Communication & Leadership, Performance, from Learning, Leadership, & Knowledge, <http://www.nwlink.com/~Donclark/leader/leadcom.html> and Leadership, Communication & Change, Robert Bacal, <http://www.work911.com/index.htm>

Communication is an exchange, not just a process to give information; all parties must participate to complete the information exchange.

2.2 Barriers to Communication

Anything that prevents understanding of the message is a barrier to communication. Many physical and psychological barriers exist. For example:

- Culture, background, and bias: People allow their past experiences to change the meaning of the message. Culture, background, and bias can be good as they allow us to use our past experiences to understand something new, it is when they change the meaning of the message that they (beliefs, values, knowledge, experiences, and goals) interfere with the communication process.
- Noise: Equipment or environmental noise impedes clear communication. The sender and the receiver must both make special efforts to concentrate on the messages being sent to each other.
- Ourselves: Being self-centred, rather than focussing on the other person can lead to confusion and conflict. Some of the factors that cause this are defensiveness (one may feel attacked by the other), superiority (one may feel above or more knowledgeable than the other), and ego (one may feel the centre of the activity).
- Perception: If the leader is talking too fast, not fluently, does not articulate clearly, etc., members may lose interest. Also the leader's preconceived attitudes affect his/her ability to listen. Often people listen uncritically to persons of high status and dismiss those of low status, and such an attitude is a killer for a leader.
- Message: Distractions happen when people focus on the details rather than the main idea. Semantic distractions occur when a word is used differently than the receiver prefers. For example, the word chairman instead of chairperson may cause one to focus on the word and not the message.
- Environmental: Bright lights, an attractive person, unusual sights, or any other stimulus provides a potential distraction.
- Suppression: Sometimes, people at the top dismiss information they deal with very often believing that it has no value to others or that they are already aware of such facts.
- Stress: People do not always see things the same way when under stress. What one sees and believes is influenced by the psychological pressure of the stress period.

These barriers can be understood as filters, that is, the message leaves the sender, goes through the filters, and is then understood by the receiver. These filters muffle the message. Active listening and feedback are ways to overcome filters.

2.3 Active Listening

Hearing and listening are different things. Hearing is the act of perceiving sound. It is involuntary and simply refers to the reception of sound. Listening is a selective activity which involves reception and interpretation of sound. It decodes it into meaning.

Listening can be passive and active. Passive listening is little more than hearing. It occurs when the receiver of the message has little motivation to listen carefully, such as when listening to music, story telling, television, or when being polite.

People can speak 100 to 175 words per minute (WPM), but can listen intelligently at 600 to 800 WPM. Since only a part of the brain is focussed, it is easy to go into mind drift and think about something else while listening to someone. The alternative is active listening; or listening with a purpose. People do this to gain information, obtain directions, understand others, solve problems, share interest, see how another person feels, show support, etc. The listener must focus on the words and the feelings of the sender for understanding.

Active listening takes the same amount or more energy than speaking. It requires the receiver to hear the various messages, understand the meaning, and then verify the meaning by offering feedback. The following are a few traits of active listeners:

- Spend more time listening than talking.
- Do not finish the sentences of others.
- Do not answer questions with questions.
- Are aware of biases. We all have them. We need to control them.
- Never daydream or become preoccupied with their own thoughts when others talk.
- Let the other speakers talk. Do not dominate the conversations.
- Plan responses after the others have finished speaking, not while they are speaking.
- Provide feedback, but do not interrupt incessantly.
- Analyse by looking at all the relevant factors and asking open-ended questions. Walk others through by summarising.
- Keep conversations on what others say, not on what interests them.
- Take brief notes. This forces them to concentrate on what is being said.

2.4 Feedback

One of Kung Fu Tzu's (Confucius) teachings on building knowledge explains the process of feedback: *"When you know something, say what you know. When you don't know something, say that you don't know."* In fact providing feedback is giving signals of understanding or not understanding to one's counterpart.

The purpose of feedback is to complete messages so the intention of the original communicator is understood by the second communicator. It includes verbal and nonverbal responses to another person's message.

Providing feedback is accomplished by paraphrasing the words of the sender. Restating the sender's feelings or ideas in one's own words rather than repeating the sender's words. A feedback word example is saying, *"This is what I understand your feelings to be, am I correct?"* It does not only include verbal responses, but also nonverbal ones. In Western cultures, nodding the head or shaking hands show agreement, dipping eyebrows shows not fully understanding the meaning of a last statement, or taking air in deeply and blowing it hard shows exasperation.

Carl Rogers⁶ listed five main categories of feedback. They are listed in the order in which they occur most frequently in daily conversations:

- Evaluative: Making a judgment about the worth, goodness, or appropriateness of the other person's statement. It should be noticed that people make judgments more often than trying to understand.
- Interpretive: Paraphrasing – attempting to explain what the other person's statement means.
- Supportive: Attempting to assist or bolster the other communicator.
- Probing: Attempting to gain additional information, continue the discussion, or clarify a point.
- Understanding: Attempting to discover completely what the other communicator means by her statements.

Imagine how much better daily communications would be if listeners tried to understand first, before they tried to evaluate what someone is saying.

⁶ Carl Ransom Rogers (January 8, 1902 – February 4, 1987) was an influential American psychologist and among the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology.

2.5 Nonverbal Behaviours and Communication

To deliver the full impact of a message, leaders should use nonverbal behaviours in order to raise the channel of interpersonal communication:

- **Eye contact:** This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. People who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.
- **Facial Expressions:** Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, if the leader smiles frequently she/he will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and makes people react favourably.
- **Gestures:** If one fails to gesture while speaking he/she may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures the listener's attention, makes the conversation more interesting, and facilitates understanding.
- **Posture and body orientation:** A leader can communicate numerous messages by the way she/he talks and moves. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that the speaker is approachable, receptive and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when the speaker and the listener face each other. Speaking with one's back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling communicates disinterest.
- **Proximity:** Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. One should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion.
- **Vocal:** Speaking can signal nonverbal communication when one includes vocal elements such as: tone, pitch, rhythm, timbre, loudness, and inflection. For maximum teaching effectiveness, leaders must learn to vary these six elements of their voices. One of the major criticisms of many speakers is that they speak in a monotone voice. Listeners perceive this type of speaker as boring and dull.

2.6 Speaking hints

- When speaking or trying to explain something, ask the listeners if they are following you.
- Ensure the receiver has a chance to comment or ask questions.
- Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes – consider the feelings of the receiver.
- Be clear about what you say.
- Look at the receiver.
- Make sure your words match your tone and body language (nonverbal behaviours).
- Vary your tone and pace.
- Do not be vague, but on the other hand, do not complicate what you are saying with too much detail.
- Do not ignore signs of confusion

2.7 Written or Oral?

In organisations such as a union, geographical distance between the Leadership and members plays an important role in deciding whether communication should be primarily written or oral. Ideally, members of the leadership should be two thirds of their time communicating orally with members but unfortunately this is not easy to achieve given the usual constraints under which unions leaders carry out their functions.

There is also a tendency for people to avoid unpleasant interactions, and sometimes leaders will use written communication to avoid the discomfort of dealing face to face with problematic situations with individuals or small groups of members. While written communication is important to communicate about strategic lines and supporting documents such as the Constitution and the Mission Statement, it should not be used for these purposes alone. Below are some guidelines regarding the use of written versus oral communication.

Oral communication is more appropriate when:

- Receivers are not very interested in getting the message. Oral communication provides more opportunities for getting and keeping interest and attention.
- Emotions are high. Oral communication provides chances for both the leader and members to let off steam, cool down, and create a climate for understanding.
- The leader or the audience need feedback. It's easier to get feedback by observing body language and asking questions.
- The receivers are too busy or preoccupied to read. Oral communication provides better opportunities to gain attention.
- The leader needs to convince or persuade. Oral communication provides more flexibility, opportunity for emphasis, chances to listen to and remove resistance, and is more likely to affect people's attitudes.
- The details and issues are complicated, and cannot be well expressed on paper.

Written communication is appropriate if:

- The Leadership requires a record of the communication for future reference.
- Members and union structures will be referring to details on process later or need to have the information in hand to refer to it or to learn it to keep fresh in their minds.
- The Leadership is communicating something with multiple parts or steps and where it is important that receivers understand them.
- The Leadership intends to communicate something of importance quickly to all members and branches.
- Distance or lack of phone (or better, video-phone) does not allow the receiver or receivers to communicate verbally.

Generally, it is wise to use both written and oral communication. The more emotional the issues, the more important it is to stress oral communication first. Written communication can be used as a backup.

3 Concluding comments

For a union leader, communication is the primary and most important tool. This section has attempted to outline some of the important parts of the communication process, but it is difficult to discuss all the subtleties and issues about human communication.

There is no substitute for good judgement, and union leaders need to be reflective and thoughtful about the ways they communicate. There is also no substitute for listening, and receiving feedback from staff, members and stakeholders and colleagues about how one communicates. Anyone can make communication mistakes, but the mark of a successful union leader is that these mistakes can be quickly identified through the effective use of feedback and discussion, and willingness to take corrective action.

The Leadership's vision, the union's Mission Statement, the strategies to make them a reality, the plans to put the strategies into action, the way to keep the action in line with objectives when problems arise, all these, need to be communicated with efficiency. That is the reason why the Leadership's team needs a communication strategy.

IV. MAJOR STRATEGIES

A union should have a few very clear strategies to channel and give consistency to its operations. They should be in harmony with the Leadership's vision and the union's Mission Statement. At the same time, they should focus on factual needs stemming from the union's Field Analysis and pragmatic assessment of the union's strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities and threats.

In this section of the course, participants will have the opportunity to practise the SWOT analysis and develop consistent strategies. However, before getting into the practical work, it is worth reflecting on a simple technique that could be useful later to set priorities in defining the major strategies.

1 Pareto's Principle – The 80/20 Rule⁷

In 1906, the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto created a mathematical formula to describe the unequal distribution of wealth in his country, observing that twenty percent of the people owned eighty percent of the wealth. In the late 1940s, Dr. Joseph M. Juran inaccurately attributed the 80/20 Rule to Pareto, calling it Pareto's Principle. While it may be misnamed, Pareto's Principle or Pareto's Law as it is sometimes called can be a very effective tool to help leaders manage effectively.

1.1 Origin

After Pareto made his observation and created his formula, many others observed similar phenomena in their own areas of expertise. Quality Management pioneer, Dr. Joseph Juran, working in the US in the 1930s and 40s recognized a universal principle he called the "vital few and trivial many". In an early work, a lack of precision on Juran's part made it appear that he was applying Pareto's observations about economics to a broader body of work. The name Pareto's Principle stuck, probably because it sounded better than Juran's Principle.

As a result, Dr. Juran's observation of the "vital few and trivial many", the principle that 20 percent of something are always responsible for 80 percent of the results, became known as the Pareto's Principle or the 80/20 Rule.

1.2 Significance

The 80/20 Rule means that in anything, a few (20 percent) are vital and many (80 percent) are trivial. In Pareto's case it meant 20 percent of the people owned 80 percent of the wealth. In Juran's initial work he identified 20 percent of the defects causing 80 percent of the problems. Project Managers know that 20 percent of the work (the first 10 percent and the last 10 percent) consume 80 percent of the time and resources. One can apply the 80/20 Rule to almost anything, from the science of management to the physical world.

1.3 The lesson for leaders

When there are too many issues to take care of, which is often the case, a simple application of this rule can help leaders to focus 80 percent of their time and energy on the 20 percent that is really important.

1.4 Example of an application of the Pareto rule

The table shown under Figure IV-1.4 is the result of a decision-making process based on the application of the Pareto Analysis to decide what areas of activities should be supported and enhanced by a union who carried out a survey intended to define the most important indicators of impact of their activities. See Case-study below.

⁷ Adapted from Pareto's Principle - The 80-20 Rule, F. John Reh,
<http://management.about.com/cs/generalmanagement/a/Pareto081202.htm>

Case Study – Pareto Analysis Application⁸

A population of 158 members of a union were asked to reply to a questionnaire which included a section on social impact of the union. This section included an open space for the three most important actions they considered had the highest social impact. It also asked them to rate each action according to their perception of impact marking a value within the range of 1 for the least impact and 10 for maximum impact.

The replies on types of activities were grouped into 15 types to facilitate analysis. Then, the types of activities were ordered in descending order according to the perceptual level impact perceived by survey respondents.

Union's social impact		
Final order	Indicators	Survey results
1	Promotion of Social Dialogue	98.8
2	Representativity of labour force within the sector	93.1
3	Impact on national labour movement	86.2
4	Recognition by employers	84.7
5	Recognition by other unions	75.0
6	Vision of the future	74.0
7	Solidarity (internal and external)	73.3
8	Presence at National & Regional structures	69.2
9	Sociability (level, number and quality of interactions)	67.5
10	Gender balance and integration (ratio, objectives, representation)	66.7
11	Participation in civil society work (quality, scope and impact)	63.3
12	Growth potential (membership, organising capabilities)	63.3
13	Youth (recruitment and integration)	60.0
14	Education and training (knowledge management)	53.3
15	Informal economy (recruitment and integration)	41.7
Range of average values from survey (98.8 - 41.7):		57.1
80% of the range of values (57.1 * 0.8):		45.7
80/20 cut off level = minimum value + 80% value (41.7 + 45.7):		87.4

Figure IV-1.4

The types of activities in the highlighted area of the table correspond to the top 20% of the range between 41.7 and 98.8. Instead of trying to develop strategies in all areas, this union developed a strategy based on the top 20% which helped channel inputs related to practically all others in a coherent manner. This coherence facilitated project planning and increased the union's prospects to obtain appropriate funding.

An easier, but less precise method for a large number of alternatives is to prioritise the list and take the top 20% of the number of alternatives; in the above case, the top 20% of 15 (3). This would have required only one more strategy. However, since the extra strategy appears redundant, it is worth taking the time and effort to carry out the more precise analysis method.

⁸ Zegers TQM @ Acumanager.com – Development Services, zegerstqm@acumanager.com.

2 Bringing out the substance for strategy development

So far, the course has covered the definition and the responsibilities of leadership, policy development setting the ground and the limits of action, the field analysis that helps the union discover, assess and have a vision of its field of operations, and the definition of its mission. However, in order to develop strategies there is a need to obtain essential details about the field; knowing what is going on and who the actors are and how they perform and relate to the union is not enough.

To organise coherent action there is a need for the union to carry out a self assessment of its capabilities and weaknesses in an organised way, identifying the extend to which each of them provides force to the union or lessens it. At the same time, the analysis of the external field should provide further information about how important threats or advantageous opportunities are out there.

2.1 Union Strengths', Weaknesses', Opportunities' and Threats' (SWOT) Analysis

SWOT Analysis is a powerful tool to uncover essential elements on which to develop consistent and realistic strategies. It gives the basis to set consistent goals and objectives on issues that directly matter for the union. In a simple way – if carried out appropriately – it helps the Leadership to focus on the most critical issues that can increase the internal dynamics of the union and provide a realistic picture of the external challenges.

The text in the following frame synthesises the method.

SWOT ANALYSIS⁹

A scan of the internal and external strategic environment (the union's field) is an important part of the strategic planning process. Strategic factors internal to the organization can usually be classified as strengths (S) or weaknesses (W), and those external to the organization can be classified as opportunities (O) or threats (T). Such an analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a SWOT analysis.

The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the union's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates. As such, it is instrumental in strategy formulation and selection. The following diagram shows how a SWOT analysis fits into a union field analysis process:

SWOT Analysis Framework

Internal	S trengths	W eaknesses
External	O pportunities	T hreats

.../.

⁹ Adapted from QuickMBA.com, 1999-2004

Strengths

The union's strengths are the internal resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage. Examples of such strengths include:

- large membership
- well-developed and respected collective agreements
- good reputation among workers and employers
- negotiating capability from experience and know-how
- exclusive access to decision-makers in the country
- national and international affiliations and partnerships

Weaknesses

The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. For example, each of the following may be considered weaknesses:

- reduced membership
- incomplete collective agreements or no collective agreements
- poor reputation among workers and employers
- lack of negotiating capabilities
- lack of access to decision-makers
- absence of affiliations or partnerships

In some cases, a weakness may be the flip side of a strength. Take the case in which a union covers large number of sectors. While this capacity may be considered a strength that competing unions do not have, it also may be considered a weakness if the large amount of work required to coordinate coherent action through various sectors prevents the union from reacting quickly to changes in the strategic environment.

Opportunities

The external field analysis may reveal certain new opportunities for improvement and growth. Some examples of such opportunities include:

- an unfulfilled stakeholder need
- arrival of new technologies
- loosening of regulations or changes in legislation
- access to international resources

Threats

Changes in the external field also may present threats to the organization. Some examples of such threats include:

- shifts in members' interests away from the union's operations
- emergence of substitute unions or civil organisations
- new regulations
- loss of international support

.../.

The SWOT Analysis' TOWS Matrix

A union should not necessarily pursue the more lucrative opportunities. Rather, it may have a better chance at developing a competitive advantage by identifying a fit between the union's strengths and upcoming opportunities. In some cases, the union can overcome a weakness in order to prepare itself to pursue a compelling opportunity.

To develop strategies that take into account the SWOT profile, a matrix of these factors can be constructed. Such a strategic extension of the SWOT matrix, also known as a TOWS Matrix, is shown below:

TOWS Matrix

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	S / O strategies	W / O strategies
Threats	S / T strategies	W / T strategies

- **S/O strategies** pursue opportunities that are a good fit to the union's strengths.
- **S/T strategies** identify ways through which the union can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats.
- **W/O strategies** overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities.
- **W/T strategies** establish a defensive plan to prevent the union's weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats.