

TLP Five-Minute Read Over Coffee – Communicating next steps

How to communicate next steps and talk about chocolate at the same time!

I had a really enjoyable set of workshops last week with a cool client looking at how to communicate next steps from a meeting. We did a practice meeting of a project team responsible for organising an Easter party for all site employees. Ideas included a chocolate fountain, Easter egg hunt and getting a senior member of the management team to dress up as an Easter bunny.

A hard skill I looked to develop was sending a positive and focused next steps email to all meeting participants.

Please see a template below and some examples as well.

Dear All,

Thanks for your input into the meeting today/Thanks for your contributions to the meeting today. Please find the next steps outlined below.

- A chocolate fountain supplier will be contacted by 27th March. (TH)
- An email invitation for the Easter party will be sent by 20th March. (TH)
- An easter egg hunt will be arranged by the 6th April. (TH)

If anything is unclear, please do let me know/If you have any questions, please do let me know.

Best regards

Toby

A couple of design principles behind this.

- 1) I use the email sandwich in a light, warm and streamlined way. I think a simple thanks for participants' contributions to a meeting is a good way to start.
- 2) I use the future passive to structure actions/next steps.

☞ I start with the 'object of the action' and then give a deadline using 'by' + date.

☞ The initials of the name of the person who is responsible for the action is in brackets (TH) at the end.

Note: I like this way of communicating actions as it is focused and clear in describing the 'what, when and who'. It can be a little impersonal so I look to balance this with a warm tone at the start and finish of my email.

3) I finish with a little expression highlighting I am open for feedback. I use these type of expressions a lot because I want to stay responsive to customers and contacts.

4) In terms of the general tone of this email I would describe it as semi-formal. It is appropriate for a project team or regular meetings with good customers.
