

ICON

(Internal Communication Operating Network)



What is it?

A local association communications network that is quick and efficient, encourages ongoing member involvement, causes the member to act, and is in a format that the member selects.

- This member contact system delivers and receives information quickly and efficiently in the manner each member selects.

How does it work?

It's similar to a telephone tree, except that teams of six are formed with the team's leader contacting the other 5.

Why teams of 6?

ICON works best with small teams, but the number can be varied to accommodate differences like location and/or number of buildings, number of members, department or shift configuration, existing teams, etc.

Who chooses the team leaders?

The local's leadership team (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and others designated by the local).

What will they look for in a team leader?

ICON team leaders *should* be members who:

- Are recognized as association leaders or as leaders at the worksites.
- Other members tend to listen to.
- Have a basic understanding of the union and the local CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement).
- Are willing and can be trusted to do the work.
- Have a home computer with a personal e-mail address.

What are the contact options?

Each member gets to choose the manner in which he/she will receive and respond to messages.

Options are:

- Face-to-face conversation at school;
- Home e-mail;
- Phone call - - home or cell, voicemail or text;
- Or by written notice personally delivered in school.

- ❖ **It is critical that the member selects the method by which he/she wants to be contacted. This is the key element that makes this system work most effectively.**

Who decides when to use ICON and what message to send?

The local leadership team (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and others designated by the local). When a piece of information is brought to the attention of a leadership team member, the team decides whether or not to send it out, to ask for a response and the exact language of the message.

- ❖ **It is critical that everyone receives the same message.**
- ❖ Every ICON message includes a question that is asked of all members. The message is sent out by and returned to the local association leadership.

How, exactly, does a leadership team set this up?

7 Steps to Better Communication

Step 1 At a meeting of the leadership team, collect data and consider:

- Total number of local association members;
- Number of members at each work site and/or shift.

A map of the school building(s) can be very helpful at this stage.

Step 2 Determine the number of ICON teams necessary and/or desirable based on the above.

Step 3 Consider any existing structures within the organization that may be utilized. Consider including the integration of your sister ESP or EA local at the school district into the ICON system. (The two groups should at least have separate systems with a connection between them.)

Step 4 Brainstorm for individuals who would make good ICON team leaders at each work site (keeping #3 in mind) AND decide who should recruit them.

Step 5 Choose a date on which ICON team leaders can meet with association leadership to review the procedure and divide the members in ICON teams.

Step 6 Design an ICON message template with a distinct, recognizable heading, color or size.

Step 7 One week after the recruitment of and meeting with the ICON team leaders run the first test message -- the collection of member contact data.

Use that data to maintain a database of ICON communication teams and leaders, including members' names, addresses, home email addresses and home phone numbers. Home contact information will be important for summer communications and for internal political action communications.

Use ICON regularly and often so that members are familiar with it.

ICON Implementation



1. Start with the Leadership:

- All communications are put into ICON solely by the local association leadership.
- Leaders should reach consensus on message content before sending.
- Decide which member of the local leadership team will coordinate the ICON network.

2. Develop ICON Messages:

- Design an ICON template with a distinct, recognizable heading, color and size.
- Make sure ICON message content, as delivered to each member, is the same. This will be easy to achieve with email or print material (which could be a printed version of an email). Telephone messages or face-to-face will require a script – a copy of the print or email message.
- End all ICON messages with the phrase – **Return Response Requested**. Every member should return a response to his/her ICON team leader. The ICON team leader then delivers the responses to the local association leadership.
- Avoid using school district email for ICON communications, as any emails on the district's system are readily available to people outside of your local association, and it is illegal to use district email (or any district property) for any internal political action communications.
- In order for committee chairs or other members to use ICON, their messages must be processed through the local association leadership.

3. Start using ICON:

- Notify the local association membership about ICON, including when they should expect to get the first ICON message.
- Test ICON at least three times over the next few weeks. This will acquaint members with the system.
- Use ICON regularly and often so that members are familiar with it.

4. ICON First Message:

- Use the first ICON message to establish your network. After the first message, subsequent ICON messages will be delivered in the format selected by each member.
- For the first message, each ICON communication team leader will talk one-on-one to his/her team members.
- Team leaders fill in the contact information form with the communication method each member selects. (See sample data sheet.)
- Team leaders keep copies of their members' contact information for future ICON messages.
- Team leaders give copies of all the members' contact information to the local leadership ICON coordinator so that this information can be included in the ICON database.

First ICON Message Text:

Our local association is establishing a member contact network called ICON (Internal Communications Operating Network). It is important for the success of our association to know every member's thinking about various topics. Please note that ICON is not designed to replace newsletters or other in-depth communications.

Here is the way ICON works. I will be your ICON contact person and will give you messages developed by our association executive committee. Most of the messages you receive will require your answer that I will deliver to the executive committee. In each case, everyone in our local association will receive the same message. The answers to the messages will help our local leadership make informed decisions in association matters.

In order for ICON to work for you, please tell me how you want to be contacted. The contact options are: by face-to-face conversation, by telephone, by printed document handed to you, or by email to your home email address. Which option do you prefer?

Second ICON Message Text (send one week after completing the first message):

We are submitting an article to the local newspaper that celebrates the high quality of our staff here in the district. We want to include some data that is accurate and up-to-date. Please give us the answers to the following:

Teacher members:

- Did you take classes this past summer to keep up your license?
- What is your highest degree level (BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD, other)?
- How many years have you worked in public schools?

ESP members:

- Have you taken classes for professional development in your job area?
- Do you do volunteer work in the community?
- How many years have you worked in public schools?

Thanks for your immediate attention to this!

Return response requested by _____.

Third ICON Message Text (send one week after completing the second message):

Use a local association issue/topic to develop the third ICON message. Include "Return response requested by _____."

Local Association

ICON Communication Team Leaders – sample

Names and Contact Information

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.

14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
21.
22.
23.
24.
25.
26.

**Local Association
ICON Communication Teams - sample**

ICON Communication Team Leader name and contact information:

Building: _____

Name, address, home email address, and home phone number	Method of Communication (circle one)
1.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
2.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
3.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
4.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
5.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
6.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
7.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email
8.	Face to Face Telephone: Home or Cell or Text message Personally delivered printed piece Home email

**Local Association
ICON Message Collection Form - sample**

ICON Communication Team Leader: _____

Date: _____

Describe or attach ICON Message: _____

Name	Response
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Please return this form or additional forms with comments provided to the local association
ICON coordinator by: _____