

Strategy for Communications  
or  
Communications for Strategy?

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Today

- Contemporary 'Communications' – Elements and Challenges
- What is 'Strategic' ? – and a brief 'how to'..
- Some emerging communications trends
- Questions?

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*...the good news.....and the bad news...*

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*“...with little effort, almost everyone can see almost everything.”*

Wikipedia – ‘Strategic Communication’

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What does *communication capability* traditionally encompass?

- Public Relations
- Community Relations
- Donor Support
- Corporate Relations
- Media Relations
- Client Relations
- Internal Communications
- Government Relations
- External Relations
- Marketing
- Other



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### Communication Activities

Branding, Messaging, Promotion, Education, Awareness raising, Launches, Websites, Newsletters, e-M@il, Brochures, Publications, Blogs, Tweets, Reports, Conferences, Seminars, Meetings, Webinars, Shop-fronts, Advertising, Community Service Advertising and Promotion, Displays, Print Media, Radio, Television, You-tube, LinkedIn, Media releases, Media Placements, Press Conferences, Interviews, Press KITS, Op-Ed's, Community Based Activities, Collaborations, Stakeholder briefings, Tender submissions, Policy Input, Political Advocacy, Activism, Industry Events, Database Development, Facebook, Staff Bulletins, Member Communiques, Networking .....etc, etc..

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## Communications Capacity Needs

- We're OK thanks...
- None or little and need some...
- Have capacity, but not meeting objectives or not sure...
- Have capacity & meeting existing needs & want to develop further...

## Communication Issues we see

- Capacity Building (tailoring 'fit-for-purpose')
- Managing change
  - organisation, service
  - adaptation and positioning for external and internal drivers
- Lack of sustainable funding and resourcing
- Response - 'trouble-shooting', 'issues/crises'
- Support

## Underlying challenges:

- Time and resource constraints
- Can be seen as an ancillary, standalone, secondary function
- Communication planning (strategy) often not part of staff job descriptions
- Experience and capacity is variable (turnover)
- Outside support costs prohibitive
- Reconciling Social Mission, Growth, Volunteerism, Professionalism
- 'Biting the hand/s' that support/s you

## Solutions generally fall into 2 categories:

Getting the work done (operational, tactical, resource dense)

Knowing what **should** be done, and importantly **why** do it? (strategic, resource light)

Given the diversity and breadth of options where should you start?

Start with your Mission.....



### Some benefits

- Helps to focus and **prioritise**
- Reinforces your organisation/service culture
- Supports “Integration”
  - vertical - leadership, management and governance context
  - horizontal – across functional areas internally and externally
- Avoids ‘me too’ approaches to differentiation (‘we can’ vs ‘we should’)
- Considers values - reputation, credibility
- Considers risks across the organisation (eg. digital/social comms platform needs clarity of consistency of messaging if you’ve open access)
- Helps to assess your place within a dynamic environment

## Suggested Steps

- Costs are primarily time/personnel (Specific guides are readily available)
- Communications stock-take (what are we doing and what resources do we have?)
- Review a current Strategic Plan, Constitution, Business Plan (or anything which accurately describes why you exist)
- Assess needs in context of 'must do', 'should do' and 'would do if..'
- Map your audience / stakeholders (compare needs and specific objectives)
- Research knowledge gaps

### Consider channel options:

- Online
- Print
- Personnel
- Other (Event, etc refer to previous lists)
- Assess potential Impact – eg. are your clients online? Are peer based systems more accessible , etc etc,
- Message, story, narrative development, creative

- Define your capacity – think laterally in terms of who and what can contribute, Board/volunteers?
- Do we prioritise needs to for available resources?
- Or can we access more resources to fulfil greater needs?
  - Ask, research
  - Grants, pro bono, collaborate
  - Share 'back end' resources – set up costs, content independent, production etc..
- Ideally, everyone in the organisation should share the priority...

### Summary: Being Strategic means you should be able to confidently answer:

- What we need to do (why)?
- To whom are we communicating (why)?
- What do we want to communicate, what do we want to say (why)?
- How can we best engage with them, one way, two way, public secure etc (why)?
- How do we achieve and maintain their engagement (why)?
- How do we know if we have achieved our operational and strategic goals?

## A few Social media trends

- Hybrid and multiple identity communities
- Curate not just create
- Digital story telling
- Customer service

## Communicators prepare

- Be more like a newsroom
- Get edited
- Ethics matter

## Strategic technologies

- Cloud computing
- Being mobile
- 4G
- Video

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Thank You

Questions/Comments?

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