

GET HEARD. MAKE IMPACT – THE ART AND SCIENCE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

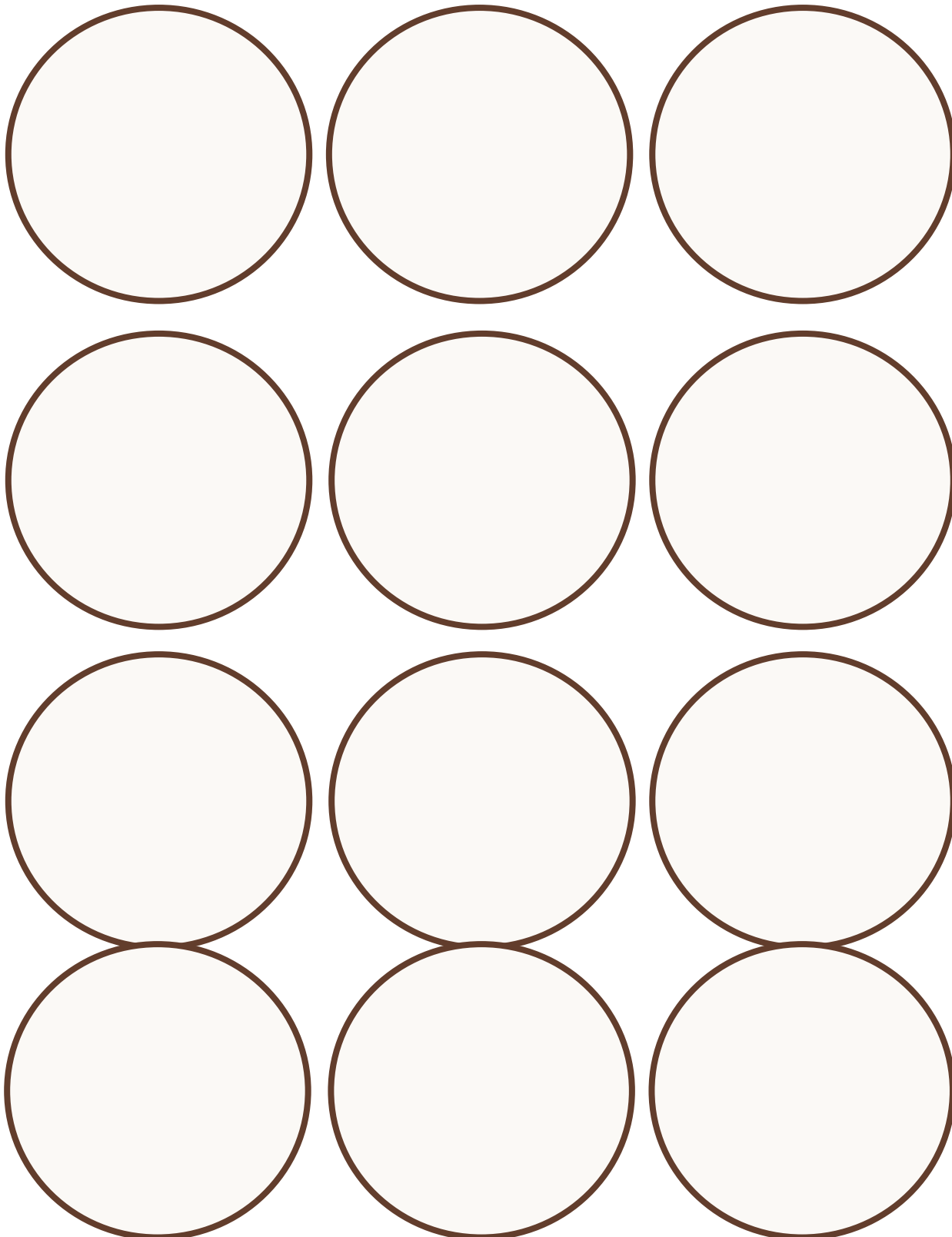
Participants workbook

Not for profits

Tuesday, 28 May 2024

PAGE OF IDEAS

Use this page to capture any bright ideas you have throughout today's workshop that you can action later.



The page contains a grid of 12 empty circles, arranged in 4 rows and 3 columns. Each circle is outlined in a dark brown color and is intended for capturing ideas.

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PLEASE NOTE: More resources are available on our website at elmcommunications.com.au/comms-strategy-training/

SECTION 1: THE BASICS OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

What is strategic communications?

“Strategic communications is about analysing a problem or opportunity that may help or harm an organisation's ability to do its job and working out how to deal with them.” – James Mahoney

“A purposeful and designed discipline that helps an organisation to fulfil its mission” – First edition of the International Journal of Strategic Communications

“With rigor and discipline, a communication professional identifies opportunities and challenges both inside and outside of the organization. Addressing communication challenges and opportunities with a thoughtful strategy allows the organization to achieve its mission and goals. The communication professional systematically manages communication activities, making decisions based on research, analysis, planning and evaluation. The professional also has the flexibility and creativity to adjust to change inside and outside of the organization.” – IABC.

What is a communications strategy?

A communication strategy refers to a planned and systematic approach used by an organisation to convey messages effectively to a target audience. It involves determining the goals, messages, channels, and timing of communication efforts to achieve specific objectives.

A communication strategy serves as a roadmap for effective communication. It ensures we have a clear purpose, that messages are aligned with the intended audience's needs, and we can achieve measurable outcomes.

The difference between a strategy and a plan

Plan	Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short term• List of outputs or tactics• Timeframes• Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Situation/environmental analysis• Objectives• Clear approach• Target audiences• Tactics to reach the audience• Implementation• Evaluation
Sets clear expectations of what will be delivered and when.	A detailed outline of the current situation, and how communications will help solve it based on audience needs.
Based on instinct.	Based on research

The cycle of strategic communications



The why – Purpose and goals

Before you start, you have to know your **why**.

- **Purpose** – Why are we doing this? What is the issue and opportunity?
- **Organisational goals** – How does it align with the organisation's priorities? What is the business trying to achieve?
- **Communication goals** – what can we contribute?

Notes

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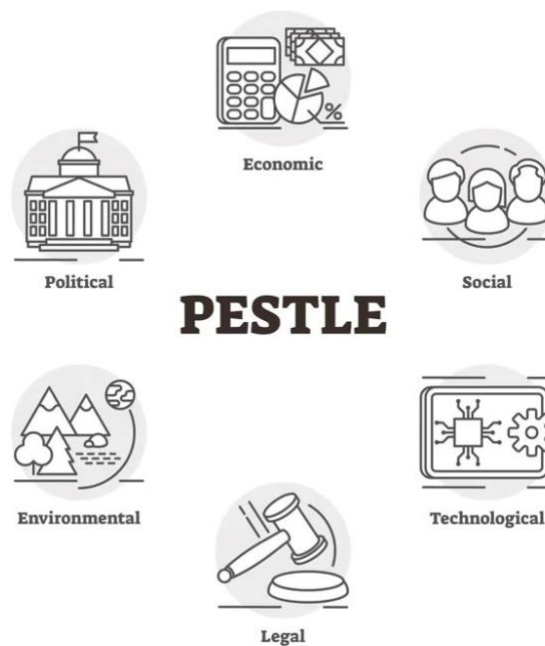
SECTION 2: YOUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

What is environmental scanning?

The task of identifying and interpreting the complex and changing world that our organisation and clients operate in.

Tools for environmental scanning

PESTLE Analysis



SWOT Analysis



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SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES

An objective is a precise, measurable statement that indicates the steps needed to achieve goals. It is either built on a baseline or sets a new level – you need something to measure against.

The differences



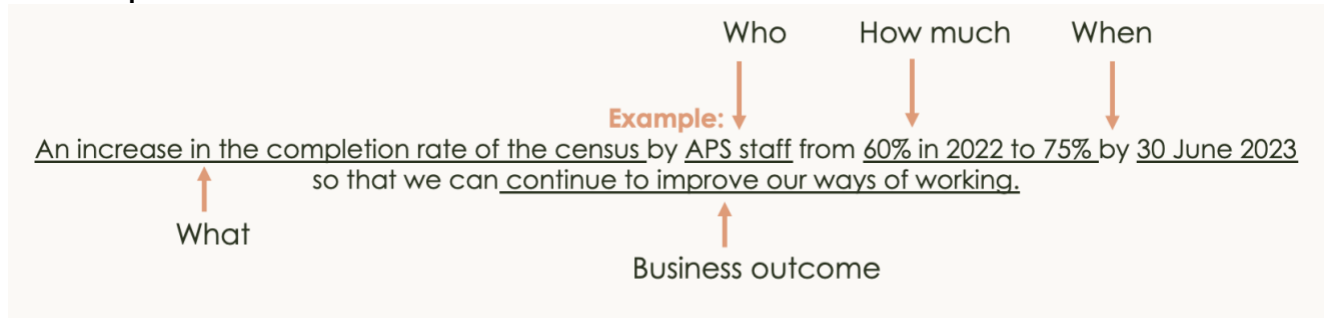
What can you measure in communications?

Outputs	Outtakes	Outcomes	Impacts
<i>What you put out that is received by target audiences</i>	<i>What audiences do with and take out of your communication</i>	<i>Effect of your communication on audiences</i>	<i>The results that are caused, in full or in part, by your communication</i>
Distribution Exposure Reception	Attention Awareness Understanding Interest Engagement Participation	Knowledge Attitude Satisfaction Trust Advocacy	Reputation Relationships Compliance Org. change Social change

How to write an objective?



For example:



Quick tips:

- Use only one action verb in each objective (expand, increase, generate). Using several verbs implies that several activities and/or behaviours are being measured.
- Be specific about the audience, the behaviour or the issue being addressed by the objective.
- It may be necessary to develop different objectives for a different phase of the communications plan. Some objectives will have a short timeframe, while others may have a longer one.
- Keep it simple, you can't measure everything, and you won't have data for everything. Measure what you can, and don't forget you can use this strategy to set benchmarks for the next time.

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SECTION 4: BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS



Behavioural insights involves the study of human behaviour, drawing on research in behavioural science fields including economics, psychology, anthropology and sociology.

It's about understanding the social, cognitive and emotional behaviour of individuals to identify the best way to provide information that is more likely to have the desired impact on behaviour.

Everyone in your target audience will have many other things competing for their attention. Understanding how people filter information, engage and decide to take action will help you develop a more impactful strategy. **Why not design your communications to work with the human brain rather than against?**

Consider the 'Dual Process Theory' – what tactics can you use to tap into the natural 'shortcuts' your audience already uses to make decisions or do you need to build in some friction to make them stop and think?

System 1 thinking <i>e.g 2x2 or your daily commute</i>	System 2 thinking <i>e.g 24x17 or driving in a different town</i>
Your examples:	Your examples:

Ask yourself:

- What do I already know about my target audience?
- What is the context in which they will get my communications?
- What do they want and need?
- How can I check my assumptions?



Read more about integrating behavioural science in your communications strategies and get the top 5 principles for behaviour change.

The 'FEAST' framework offers a useful tool for better understanding your audience and their needs. You can find out more about the Framework and examples at www.bi.team

F

Fun: when appropriate, find ways to deliver your message that use humour or gamification.

Notes:

E

Easy: make it as easy as possible for your audience to understand the message and take action. Reduce choices, highlight the call to action, use plain English, remove jargon, and reduce the clicks.

Notes:

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Attractive: make your communications stand out using colour, style and imagery that will be meaningful to your audience. Where possible, personalise your messages, use people's names and storytelling.

Notes:

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Social: consider the social identity of your target audience, draw on reciprocity, tap into existing social norms and use a messenger that they already trust.

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Timely: consider the time of the day, week, month or year – when will your audience be most responsive?

Notes:

SECTION 5: IDENTIFYING AUDIENCES

Target Audiences

Target audiences are the people who need to know about the messages to achieve the objectives. They are defined, segmented, and researched, but ultimately, they are people. They have thoughts, feelings, and emotions; they are not always rational or think the way you want them to.

Typically, audiences are grouped into three types:

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Those directly affect that you want to influence, take action and be aware.	Indirectly affected but are able to influence the primary audience	They have a role to play in influencing others.

Key things to think about:

- Who are they?
- What do they need to do?
- What do they already know and believe about the situation or issue?
- What do they think, feel, do?
- What is their view of the organisation's reputation?
- What is happening in their world?
- What are their communication preferences?

Who is NOT a primary target audience?

- the general public
- media
- government

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SECTION 6: KEY MESSAGES

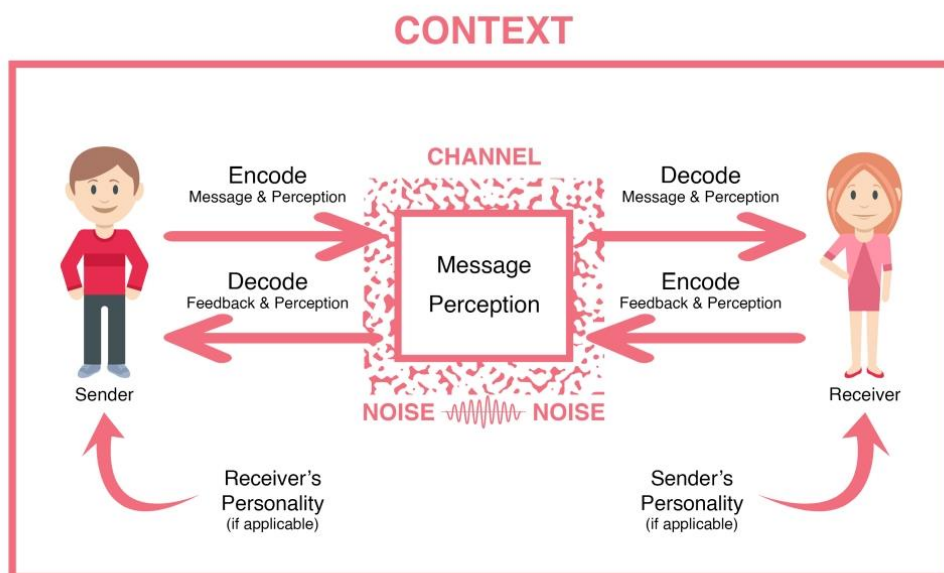
Use it as a frame, not a script

Messages don't need to be the same for every audience or every channel.

- They are a framework around which you shape your content.
- Create a consistent narrative while being flexible to meet the audience's needs.
- Make life easier for you so you don't have to start all content from scratch
- **Write them with the audience in mind, not your organisation.**

Message perception

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place –
George Bernard Shaw



Not all messages are created the same

- **Call to action:** Most common type of message. These are important because they prompt the audience to take a specific action, helping to drive desired outcomes and engagement. A well-crafted call to action provides a clear and explicit instruction, guiding the audience towards the next step or desired behaviour.
- **Value proposition:** Key messages that highlight the unique value, benefits, or advantages that an organization offers to its target audience. It can convey the brand's personality, values, mission, and positioning, helping to build brand awareness, loyalty, and recognition. It is about reputation.

- **Policy or service:** This can also be a call to action, but it can just be informative. We have a xxx service for customers. Our role is to xxx. It is about awareness.
- **Fact or data:** Direct, clear and concise. It is about sharing information.
- **Insight:** Or thought leadership. Position the organization as an expert or authority in a particular field, sharing valuable insights, expertise, and perspectives. It is about building credibility and influence.
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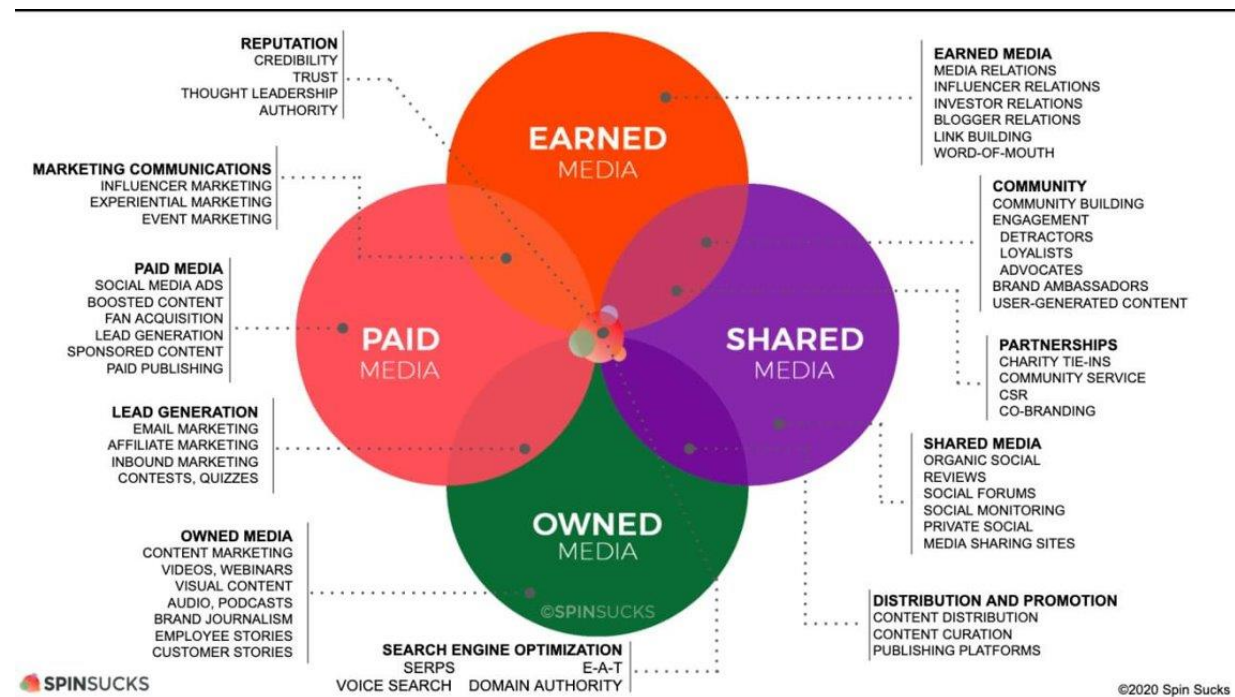
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SECTION 7: CHANNEL IDENTIFICATION

Getting your message to your audience



It's not a checklist



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SECTION 8: IMPLEMENTATION

What are the tactics?

Now that you've identified the channels you'll use, it's time to get more specific about the actual communication activities. For example, if you want to use Facebook, think about what that actually looks like.



Other things to consider:

People often confuse implementation with just tactics, but it is so much more. It is an assessment of how you will actually make this strategy happen.

- **Timeline** – outlines all steps, including development, planning and delivery.
- **Resources** – how many people will need to be involved, how long will it take them?
- **Budget** – is it needed?
- **Roles and responsibilities** – who will do what

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SECTION 7: MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Measurement – an ongoing process

So what?

- We created an output – so what? Make the collection of data as important as the product.
- Measurement should include both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Create sound, consistent ways of measuring – don't reinvent the wheel every time.
- Don't just measure the good things

Now what?

- Measurement isn't about data collection and tracking but about learning from the information and applying insight back into communications planning.
- Don't keep doing the same thing.
- You need to be transparent in your outcomes – share with others what went well and what didn't so everyone can learn.

Evaluation – how did you go?

- Demonstrates effectiveness - Were our efforts worth it? Did it have any effect on our audience?
- Improvements - Knowing what worked and what didn't - helps us to know what to do next time.
- Value - Evaluation is critical to demonstrating value to the business and agency.

Don't forget!

- "No one even reads it." That just means you haven't told them what they need to know.
- Find your measurement 'ah huh!' moment. Find that piece that shows impact. (Now share it with everyone else!)
- Make measurement an everyday activity and an evaluation a standard part of the process. Challenge yourself every day to ask - 'so what?' and 'now what?'
- Own it! If you don't drive measurement and evaluation in your organisation who will? Take charge.

- Don't forget to tell people. Reporting on our outcomes is just as important as evaluating them.
- Start at the beginning. Start with your goals and set clear objectives you can measure.

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