

10 QUESTIONS TO NAIL A COMMS STRATEGY

A checklist for communicators and changemakers



WHAT REAL WORLD CHANGE DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?

This is your north star. Avoid framing your goal in terms of tactics ("get media coverage") – instead, describe the actual shift you want to see. Maybe it's a policy change, a behaviour shift, or a new way people think about your issue.

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WHO DO I NEED TO INFLUENCE TO MAKE THAT CHANGE HAPPEN?

"The public" is not an audience. First define the people whose actions can deliver your desired change – that's your primary audience. Then map out the secondary audiences: those who influence the primary.



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WHAT IS MY THEORY OF CHANGE?

The theory of change is the logic that links the plan to the outcome. How will your comms connect the dots between the current situation and the outcome you want?



WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO MEET MY AUDIENCE?

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Where does my audience already spend their time and attention and how do I show up there naturally? Choose channels that fit your audience's habits and context. That might be LinkedIn for business leaders, church bulletins for faith-based groups, or specialist newsletters for policymakers.



WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT MY AUDIENCE?

How do they feel about my issue? Are they ready to hear what I want to tell them? Use insights, research, and listening tools to understand your audience. The most effective messages are designed to meet them where they are and gradually move them towards your point of view.



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WHO IS THE BEST MESSENGER FOR MY MESSAGE ?

The messenger is just as important as the message, sometimes even more so. Ask: who does my audience already trust, and how can I amplify those voices? Sometimes the best messenger isn't you, it's a partner, community leader, or influencer.

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HOW DO I GET MY MESSAGE OUT?

Now come the tactics. Maybe it's a social media campaign, an opinion piece, a podcast interview, or a workshop with content creators. The key is alignment: the right messenger, delivering the right message, through the right channel, at the right time.



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HOW WILL I KNOW IF IT'S WORKING?

What outcomes matter most and how will I measure them? In social impact work, it's not always easy to link activity directly to impact so consider proxy indicators, signs that your work is moving the needle, even if indirectly, e.g. media framing, engagement quality.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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What could derail this plan and how will I adapt? Anticipate risks, challenges or changing circumstances, e.g. misinformation spreading online, political shifts, or delays in partner approvals. Preparing for these challenges helps you build agility and keeps the plan realistic.



REALITY CHECK – IS MY STRATEGY DOABLE?

Even the best strategy is useless if it can't be delivered. Match ambition to resources: do I have the budget, time, and people to deliver? Is the timing right for what I'm asking? A reality check keeps you honest and helps you focus energy where it will count most.