

6 Communication of Sustainability

Lesson 03: Strategic Communication of Sustainability

Assoc. Prof. Dr. habil Franzisca Weder
School of Communication and Arts
The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

 Universität Bremen

ZMML
Zentrum für Multimedia in Lehre



Where are we?

Episode 6.1: Communication of Sustainability

Episode 6.2: Organizations & their Stakeholder

Episode 6.3: Strategic Communication of Sustainability

Episode 6.4: Sustainability Reporting



Learning outcomes

Learning outcome 1:

Describe the diverse nature of contemporary practices of sustainability communication on an individual, organizational and societal level, the relationship of strategic communication practices to other public communication practices, the role of stakeholders and publics and the communication practitioners in and outside of organizations (corporate, NGO, political and educational institutions etc.)

Learning outcome 2:

Develop comprehensive and well-founded knowledge in sustainability communication as field of study, an understanding of how other disciplines relate to the field and an international perspective on the field.

Learning outcome 3:

Understand the key elements of communication theories, strategies and tactics, and, thus, the character and operationalization of best practice sustainability communication planning frameworks.

Learning outcome 4:

Advance your understanding of social and civic responsibility and develop an appreciation of the philosophical and social context of sustainability communication. Advance your knowledge and respect of ethics and ethical standards in relation to communication of, about and for sustainability.

Learning outcome 5:

Anticipate and Interpret current issues and challenges of a world in transformation and social change. Develop a deep understanding of and skills to create change, develop advocacy, leadership and authorship in and for sustainability communication.



Overview

- A. Strategic planning *of* communication
- B. Goals & objectives
- C. Tactics & instruments

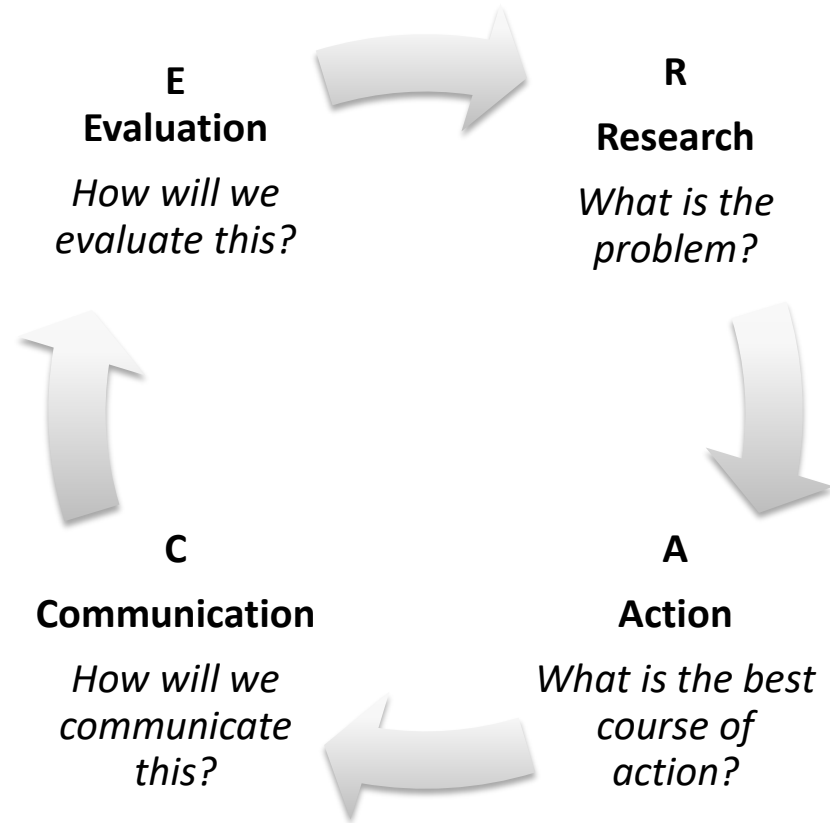


A. Strategic planning of communication



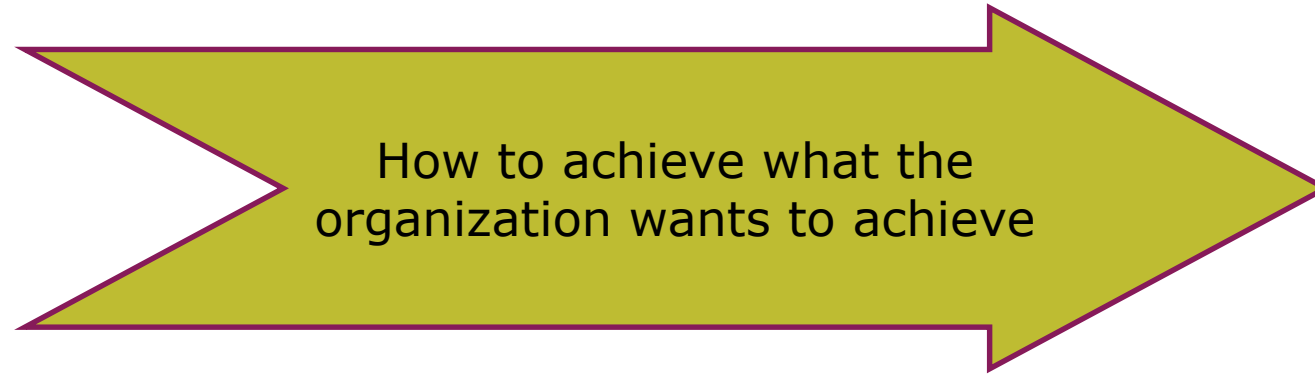


A. Strategic planning of communication





A. Strategic planning of communication



1. Proactive Strategy

An organisation takes the initiative to engage publics
Engagement, philanthropy and alliances
Publicity and transparency

2. Reactive Strategy

An organisation responds to influences and opportunities from an organisation's environment.



A. Strategic planning of communication

- Directs 'how' you can achieve the objective
 - If your objective is to increase awareness, then your strategy should set out how you will do that
- Acts as a guiding principle for campaign
- Works as your overarching theme
- Limits the tactics and channels you use.



B. Goals & Objectives





B. Goals & Objectives

Goal

- Must be rooted in the organization's vision or mission statement.
- Broad general outcomes you want to see achieved as a result of persuasive efforts. Not quantifiable.
 - “Inform customers about the benefits of Bamboo toothbrush.”



B. Goals & Objectives

Objectives

Awareness objectives

- Focus on information
- Deal with dissemination and message exposure
- Impact upon what public knows about the organization, products & services.

Acceptance objectives

- Deals with the affective (feeling part) of message.
- Help to form and reinforce interests & attitudes

Action objectives

- Aim to solicit a behavioral response be it opinion or behavior.
- Can be linked to the bottom line and relationship building.



B. Goals & Objectives

Anatomy of an objective

Target Date

Nature of intended change

Target public

Amount desired change

Knowledge outcome to be achieved

By July 1, to increase percentage of home owners from three to 25 percent who know that wildfires destroyed more than 2,500 homes during the past three years.

Sources:
Photo „gas punk“ by Patrick hendry on Unsplash
Photo „earth“ by NASA on flickr



B. Goals & Objectives

Goal, objectives (goal, vision)

- Ideas, vision/mission, goal
(Olivant, 2016; Botan, 2006)

Grand strategy

Strategy

- Plan, including messages, themes, and products
(Plowman, 2013, Saxton & Waters, 2014)

Tactics („initiatives“)

- Operations, practices, content, relationships
(Plowman & Wilson, 2018; Botan, 2006)



C. Tactics & instruments





C. Tactics & instruments





Which leads us back to ...

Paradigms



- **Pragmatic** (information, education, instrumental sense of communication, functionalist/structural perspective, description of reality)



- **Constitutive** (symbolic action, social constructivism, sense making, define sth as problem, creates attention, evokes values, orientation, activates/stimulates engagement, exploration)



Which leads us back to ...

Strategic communication (structural perspective)



- the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission (Hallahaan, 2007, p. 3; Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015)
- understanding “how a certain set of audience attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions will support those objectives” is what makes communication strategic (Paul, 2011, p. 5).

Communication management (process related, constitutive perspective)



- constitutive flows of communication (McPhee & Zaug, 1995, Putnam & Nicotera, 2007; Schoeneborn et al., 2016)
- Questions: narratives, discourses, interaction, interrelatedness, power, negotiation processes



Reflection

- What is the difference between strategic communication and communication management. Why does it matter?
- What are the 4 steps of a strategic communication plan?
- Think of an organisation you work for/are embedded in (your work place, your sports club, church or University).
 - what could be a sustainability related goal for their communication in the future?
 - Would this aim for acceptance, awareness or activation?
 - What would be a related objective?
- What could be a related strategy – what possible tactics? Why did you choose them? What is there connection to the objectives set?