



**HOW TO BECOME A
STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATOR**

KNOW YOUR FRAMEWORKS

01

- **The Strategic Communications Framework and the Stakeholder Engagement Framework are the most important tools for managing communications in a purposeful and results-driven manner.**
- To be a strategic communicator, you need to be familiar with both and know how to use them to solve business, organizational, societal or political problems



GATHER RESEARCH, DATA & ANALYTICS

02

- Communications strategy must be guided by research and data. Do not depend on intuition or make assumptions about audience or stakeholder interests.
- Study their media habits, gather information about lifestyle, attitudes, beliefs and mindsets and then develop your targeting strategy accordingly



MEDIA LITERACY

- **Study how people use and receive information and how they respond, engage with and interact with media and social media platforms**
- **Examine how media perspectives or online content and conversations drive action and shape perception, attitudes and beliefs Study media habits, audience demographics and look for patterns and trends in media user behaviour.**
- **Understand the media landscape so that you can leverage on it. Understand the difference between traditional and social media in terms of audience relevance, context and influencing ability**
- **Follow developments in AI and develop a high level of media literacy - including how to identify fake news and neutralize misinformation campaigns**



FOCUS ON RESULTS & OUTCOMES

04

- To be a strategic communicator is to focus on results and not on effort. The strategic communicator takes an audience-centric, stakeholder-targeted, research-based, data-driven and insights-nuanced approach that is wired to deliver a predictable set of outcomes.
- Focuses on real-life value not on impressions and likes



GET CERTIFIED

05

- **Get certified as a strategic communications professional from a credible institution in your country or internationally – depending on your career goals or trajectory.**
- **Get trained.**
- Strategic Communications requires formal classroom learning with practical application



DON'T ATTEMPT TO WING IT!

06

- **Projects that require the expertise of a strategic communicator (as opposed to a tactical implementer) are usually complex and intellectually challenging.** It is impossible to operate successfully at that level without knowledge of the concepts, principles and frameworks to apply.
- Get the training and mentorship/coaching you need to help you develop the right skills and expertise



DEVELOP A PROBLEM- SOLVING MINDSET

07



- To be a strategic communicator, you need a mental paradigm shift from being task-driven to problem-solving.
- Learn to ask these questions: What is the problem we are trying to solve? What does success look like? Focus on deploying communications strategies that help to resolve real-life problems for business, organizations, politics, leadership and society

08

BECOME A KNOWLEDGE EXPERT

- **A strategic communicator must know a lot about many things.** Take interest in culture conversations, politics, societal trends within your country, continent and the world.
- Follow major political conversations that grab global headlines. You cannot be a strategic communicator if unaware of current affairs or have no interest in international issues



HONE YOUR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- **Critical thinking is a core skill for strategic communicators.** You cannot operate with a copy and paste mentality i.e. always wanting to replicate one campaign in several different places.
- Start every project or task from a blank sheet of paper and think through the specific context of the problem or business challenge. Gather info and insights.
- Ask questions. Do some online research, benchmark in the sector. And then identify the risks, opportunities and what you think can be realistically done to make a difference



PR SPIN, ETHICS & PROPAGANDA

- Know the difference between PR Spin, propaganda and authentic communications. Ensure to never dabble in miscommunication, fabrication of content, malicious misrepresentation of issues and information - *not only because it is immoral* but also because it is not a best-practise approach to communications
- At best - it is a short-term tactical approach that pushes the problem down the road.
- **The strategic communicator addresses the hard issues and resolves them sustainably. They do not recommend lies and deceit as a way out**



LEARN & BALANCE GENERALIST AND SPECIALIST SKILLS

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- Know the spectrum of communications skills and aim to be a generalist in the core competencies e.g. content creation, media relations, digital and social media management, stakeholder management, internal and external communication, communications strategy & planning, brand strategy, marketing communications, campaigns etc and then chose to specialize in one major area.
- **A strategic communicator MUST have broad generalist skill in several communications competence areas and then have mastery in one (or more) area.**



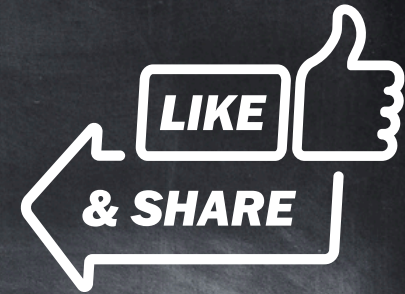
JOIN A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

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- Joining a professional association is integral to your growth as a strategic communicator.
- Please ensure it is an organization that includes the term “strategic communications “ in its mission and focus areas.
- Or join a professional network that is focused on building the capacity of communications professionals e.g. TheCommsAvenue



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