Strategic Communications Framework

for Statistical Institutions

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Preface

Strategic communication is a relatively new concept for most statistical organizations, which have traditionally focused their efforts and resources on dissemination practices and systems.

In some statistical organizations, communication is given little attention or is seen as a low priority. In others, however, it is growing in importance as many are realizing the value of effective communication to maintain and enhance the relevance of official statistics in today's society.

Communicating official statistics is more than writing press releases or answering user questions and requests. Statistical authorities need a modern, proactive communication strategy with clearly defined key messages, and must use different channels to reach various target audiences.

A strategic communication function can guide the development and implementation of a communication strategy. This has particular relevance for the world of official statistics, where communication and dissemination have traditionally focused on expert users. With the changing environment, statistical organizations must learn to communicate more effectively and directly with citizens and improve statistical literacy across all audiences.

A productive, professional communication function can help position the statistical organization to succeed in this highly competitive environment. Communication professionals can work in partnership with the statistical organization's leadership board and staff to develop a communication strategy that supports the statistical organization's mission, demonstrates the value of official statistics and enhances the competitive advantage offered by the statistical organization.

All the components of this framework are offered as a guideline and are not intended to be prescriptive. Statistical institutions are invited to use the two phases of the framework in their entirety, or to use only those elements that help support their business needs.

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Official statistics are operating in a competitive and challenging environment–one that has changed significantly over the last 20 years and accelerated greatly in recent years. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,[1] based on independence, impartiality, professional standards, ethics, accountability and transparency, give official statistics an incredibly profound competitive advantage. For traditional users of official statistics, the value and importance of official statistics are undisputed.

Yet, for the average citizen, digital and social media revolutions mean that more people have instantaneous access to various data sources outside official statistics. The 24/7 news cycle is a reality, trust in government is decreasing and the "fake news" phenomenon is growing.

Now more than ever, timely and relevant data and stories produced by statistical organizations are essential to healthy democratic societies since they remain the only independent, impartial, trusted and reliable sources of official statistics. For official statistics to be beneficial to society, policy debate and decision making, they must be known, understood, communicated and used.

Recognizing the importance of strategic communication, the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics endorsed a two-year priority project – the Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions. The project was intended to complement the "Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics"[2] and supports the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.[1]

Part I of the project, completed in 2018 and endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2019, resulted in the production of the "Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions – Part I". The purpose of the framework is to guide statistical offices in the development of a strategic approach to protect, enhance and promote the organization's reputation and brand. Part I is intended to help statistical organizations maximize their corporate image through proactive user consultation; engagement with and understanding of target audiences; channels, tools and approaches designed to meet particular audiences' needs; messages tailored to various audiences; media engagement; and measurement of the results and impact of communication activities. Part I of the framework also includes proposed skill sets to support a professional external communications program, a communication maturity model and roadmap and guidelines to create a proactive response strategy to issues that have the potential to cause reputational damage.

Part II of the Strategic Communication Framework Project builds on the experience and momentum gained in Part I and focuses on the development of guidelines and strategic approaches to internal communications; the value of and ways to engage staff so that they can become ambassadors of the organization's key messages to external partners and stakeholders; and the development of stakeholder engagement strategies. It also explores, from a communications perspective, statistical organizations' involvement in the development of national data strategies.

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1   Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, https://unece.org/statistics/fundamental-principles-official-statistics

2   Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics:
    https://unece.org/statistics/publications/recommendations-promoting-measuring-and-communicating-value-official

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Part I

Chapter 1:   Assessing the statistical organization

1.1   Branding

The purpose of this section is to define what branding is as it relates to statistical organizations. It also describes the process to position, develop, review, confirm or redefine a brand.

1.1.1   What is branding?

A brand is much more than a logo (the badge an organization wears), a visual identity (the colour scheme and complementary theming across its products and web estate) or a tagline (its purpose, for example: data, evidence decisions). Branding is all of these things and more. It is how the organization is living its values and how it is presented to and perceived by the public.

> The **Digital Communication, User Analytics and Innovative Products (DIGICOM)** Project is one of the eight ESS Vision 2020 portfolio projects. Attention has been paid to prevent overlap and to complement the ongoing DIGICOM branding exercise.

Branding is the process by which products or services are distinguished from their competition. Branding permits an audience to develop associations (e.g. status, prestige) with these products or services; this eases the decision-making process and can lead to the generation of market leaders and dominators.

There is no single unifying definition of what branding or a brand is and although a number of definitions exist, with most following a similar thread, there are often subtle differences depending on the market environment (its pressures etc.) in any given country.

One consistency, however, is that a brand should cover the breadth of organization. It should be the golden thread that runs through all products and outputs, it should be closely linked to the vision and values, and it should resonate with all who encounter it (from staff to stakeholders).

The following definitions provide a useful way of understanding the many facets that will require consideration when approach branding, and may help to provide a route into the challenge:

- A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers & to differentiate them from those of competition. (American Marketing Association, 2012. 'AMA Dictionary')
- A brand is more than a label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It is a complex symbol that represents many things… The net result is a public image, a character or personality that may be more important for the overall status (and sales) of the brand than many technical facts about the product. (Gardner, B.V. and Levy, S.J. 1955. 'The Product & the Brand', Harvard Business Review, March/April)

- A brand emerges as various "authors" tell stories that involve the brand. Four primary types of authors are involved: companies, the culture industries, intermediaries & customers. (Holt, D. B. 2004. 'How Brands become Icons', Boston: Harvard Business School Press).

1.1.2 Why is branding important?

A mature brand is part of an organization's DNA. It is the cohesive thread that runs through an organization's strategies, objectives and core purpose. A strong, developed brand should be omnipresent and should represent the organization's:

- **personality**—how it interacts with its stakeholders
- **identity**—how others recognize it and the image it portrays
- **reputation**—how it is perceived and described by others.

To stakeholders, a successful and distinguished brand heralds quality and elicits trust. With that comes loyalty. An organization's brand should evolve and adapt to organizational and environmental changes.

Branding plays a core role in an organization's corporate communications. Well-developed branding reinforces what an organization says and does, while poorly developed branding can undermine or confuse an organization's reputation.

Successful brand implementation will enable statistical organizations to maintain their reputation for independence and modernize their offerings, which will increase their value in a world with more data and increasing levels complexity.

A brand is important for statistical organizations because it:

- builds trust, gives you credibility and will differentiate you from others who work in the same or similar field/business
- results in implicit reuse of your information by users
- demonstrates relevance
- bridges the gap between how others perceive you and how you live your values.

> **As a statistical organization, you have a brand whether you acknowledge it or not. Therefore, it is important to control and own your brand.**

1.1.3 What to consider when branding a statistical organization

One of the most important considerations when developing a brand is to do so holistically; this facilitates a smooth embedding process and ensures staff remain engaged with the defined values. Internal stakeholders remain as important as the perceptions of those outside the organization.

Crucially, there is also no pre-set time in which a brand needs to be re-developed. While a brand should be under constant review to ensure it resonates and aligns to a statistical organization's vision and values, there is nothing that dictates it must change at any given point in time. Likewise, if the ongoing reviews determine that a brand remains viable, change should not take place just for the sake of change.

Branding and its review is not a 'do it one' task; it is ongoing and iterative.

The only other consideration is whether a strategic re-branding – either wholesale or simply visual – could be helpful following a crisis or significant business change. The alternative would be to place a significant focus of restoring the existing brand and its values, with the communication team playing a central role in this re-establishing process. Figure 1 provides an overview of the considerations for branding a statistical organization.

Figure 1   Considerations for branding a statistical organization

1.1.4   Positioning the brand

The following paragraphs describe the activities, featured in Figure 1, that should be considered when conducting a branding exercise. Please consult Annex 1 for a case study on creating a new brand.

Definition – define your desired brand (see Figure 2)

- At the most senior levels of the organization, define how the organization wants to be identified by society.
- Using thorough horizontal-scanning, identify where your organization holds a unique space in the marketplace, or agree the appetite for competing against others and the unique selling point of the statistical organization.
- Explore the vision, mission, values and corporate strategy.
- Elaborate the values (e.g., trust, impartiality, timeliness, quality, relevance), mission and position in society.
- Break down the brand into components such as visual, physical and behavioural. Think about how each component should look.

Assess the actual brand

- Ask about how are we really doing. This could include considering visual identity, current values, mission, corporate strategy, physical components, behavioural components, staff consultation, etc.
- Conduct a gap analysis (gap between desired and actual).

Visual identity - Understand your perceived brand (reputation)

- Assess the public's reaction to your brand components (visual identity; current values, mission and corporate strategy; physical, behavioural and external influences; competitors; and societal relevance). Consider consumer or public opinion research, environmental scans, and benchmarking information.
- Conduct a gap analysis (gap between actual and perceived brand).

Develop

- Develop visual identity (logo, language, brand guidelines, templates, audio, signage [e.g., for your building] and positioning statement that assesses the gaps between the actual and desired positions.

Test

- Test with internal and external audiences to confirm that branding is understood and meaningful, paying particular attention to ensuring the changes advance the organization from its actual to desired state.

Embed

- During the implementation phase, embed the brand in the communications strategy, marketing strategy, staff engagement and customer engagement.
- Ensure the brand is represented in every part of your organization, remembering that it is the ever-present 'golden-thread'.

Evaluate

- Conduct surveys and environmental scans (measurements: media monitoring, media analysis, public engagement and levels of usage of data).
- If successful, the actual position replaces the desired one with the gaps filled. It is now time to continuously review and address new and emerging gaps without proper statistical foundation are essential to using statistics in effective decision-making.

Figure 2   Positioning the brand
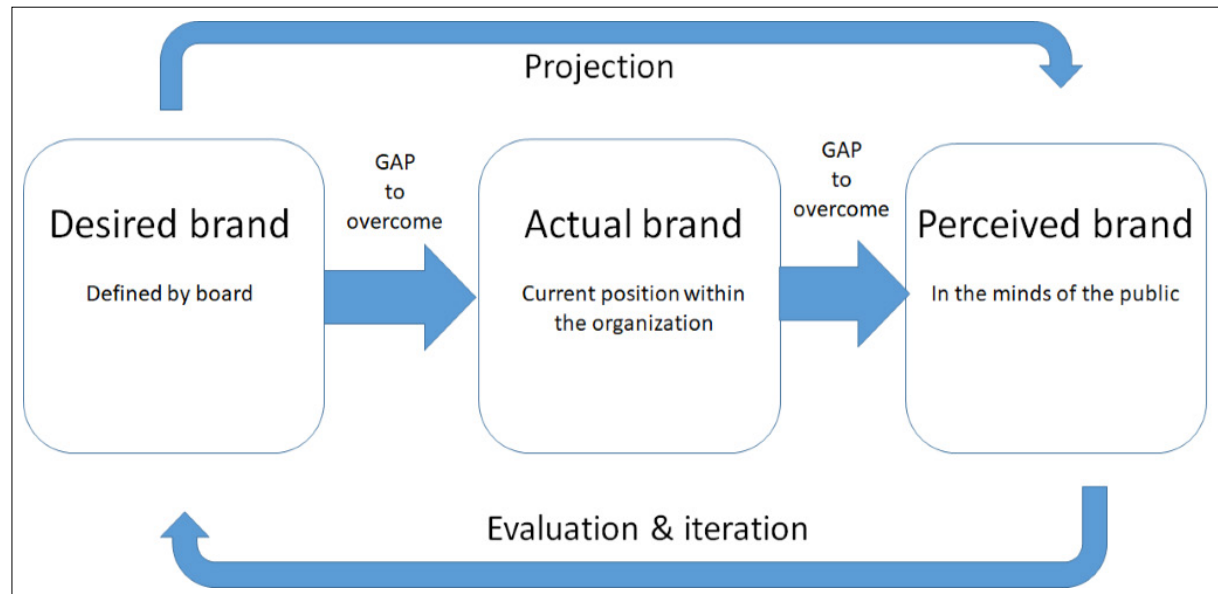
1.2   Communications Maturity Model

This section provides a Communications Maturity Model (see Figure 3) designed to help statistical organizations gauge their current external communications maturity, and to propose areas for improvement.

The following are the main applications of the model:

Descriptive: The maturity model serves as a diagnostic tool that enables national statistical institutions to assess where their current capabilities lie in terms of their external communications activities and, therefore, their current maturity level.

Prescriptive: The maturity model can be used to identify desirable maturity levels. The model suggests actions to reach a desired maturity level.

Comparative: The maturity model serves as a comparative tool since it allows for external benchmarking among other organizations.

Figure 3   Communications Maturity Model

Communications Function Maturity Model

	Initial	Reactive	Structured & Proactive	Managed & Focussed	Continuous Improvement
Organizational Level / Leadership / Management Policy	• Management unaware of need & value of strategic communications. • Positioning of communications within organizational structure is low. • Reluctance to engage with media. • No spokespersons.	• Awareness of need for strategic communications exists. • Part-time responsibility exists. Only selected / ad hoc issues considered. • Inexperienced but willing to engage in communications efforts on ad hoc basis.	• Greater leadership involvement in strategic communications. • Communications at high level to senior management/some guidance documented. • Engagement experience and protocols in place.	• Active leadership engagement in all communications activities. • Senior executive acknowledges importance of, and actively engages with, strategic communications activity. • Communications team work closely with senior management.	• Strategic communications acknowledged as critical success factor in dissemination of official statistics. • Executive considers strategic communications as a competitive advantage. • Communications Director in the board of executives.
Strategic Orientation	• No Communications Strategy in place or communications processes in place.	• Need for strategic communications, aligned to corporate strategy, identified. • Trial and error approach dominates.	• Communications Strategy in place.	• Communications Strategy is a living document within the organization. • Investments in people, processes and procedures to support strategy.	• Sustainable, agile strategy in place that produces results and creates measureable value. • Activities completely focussed on bringing insights and value to citizens.
Media Engagement	• No proactive engagement. • Media interactions only happens when enquiries received.	• Learning who key media are but ad hoc contact.	• Media contacts exist. Good understanding about how to build relationships with them.	• Relationship building in place supported by Communications Strategy. • Media Relations practices in place. • Tailored communications and content strategy in place.	• Strong extensive set of relationships with key media. • Active media relations function (responsive, strategic response to media as well as proactive engagement).
People	• Understaffed and uncoordinated. • Key functions absent.	• Identification of needs. • Development of key functions. • Specialist expertise underdeveloped or absent.	• Key functions established/in situ. • Defined roles and responsibilities. • Defined skillsets of a professional communication office.	• Specialist roles in place. • Ongoing training and development of staff. • Increased resources and awareness of defined roles and responsibilities.	• Culture supports continuous growth and innovation. • Experienced/professional staff. • Fully resourced. • Communication skills included in the basic skillset of NSI staff.
Processes	• No formal processes in place e.g. media relationships protocols, internal communications protocols. • No formal relationship between communications function and statistical divisions with regard to the production of communications outputs.	• Needs Identified and processes emerging. • Importance of need to work closely with statistical business functions in relation to the production of communications outputs identified.	• Processes developing. • Emergence of partnership approach between statistical business functions and communications function with regard to the production of communications outputs. • Minimum verification and measurement.	• Formal engagement processes established and communicated. • Clearly defined production processes which combine statistical and communications expertise with regard to the production of communications outputs. • Verification / governance structures in place.	• Formal engagement processes, reviewed, evaluated and improved on an agreed basis. • Cycle of continuous improvement. • Statistical expertise embedded within communications team.
Technology	• Limited capacity. • Professional tools not available.	• Needs identified e.g. media monitoring, graphic design, video production, web development, data storage, social media, analysis tools, etc..	• Improved capability and additional infrastructure in place.	• Dedicated capacity and engagement processes established to support communications division e.g. dedicated front end developers to support web design team.	• Fully resourced capacity. • Innovation processes in place. • Fully integrated communications requirements in place.
Budget	• No dedicated communications budget. • Spending and staffing ad hoc.	• Minimal budget for isolated activities. • Part time staffing.	• Staff in place. • Budget in place.	• Fit for purpose budget designed to support strategic communications.	• Fully resourced and viewed as priority by senior executive.
Metrics	• No formal measurements in place.	• Outputs measured only e.g. no. of press releases, basic metrics e.g. no of placements. • No user satisfaction survey.	• Outputs measured, plus some deeper analysis around interactions or relationships with influencers.	• Advanced outputs and outcome metrics, including sentiment analysis, customer satisfaction levels, etc.	• Balanced analysis of quantity versus quality of engagements.

The model sets out five maturity levels:
1. Initial
2. Reactive
3. Structured and proactive
4. Managed and focused
5. Continuous improvement.

Within each level, capabilities that are most relevant to the field of communications are set out as follows:
- organizational level / leadership / management policy
- strategic orientation
- media engagement
- people
- processes
- technology
- budget
- metrics.

High-level criteria are described for each capability level to help statistical organizations evaluate their performance and identify a path forward.

1.3   Skill sets of a professional external communications program

To operate effectively in today's highly contested environment—characterized by a fast-paced 24-hour news cycle, vitriolic social media and fake news—high-performing statistical organizations have established and well-resourced professional external communications programs.

Professional communications programs will look different from one statistical organization to another, depending on their organization's needs, objectives and available resources. There is no preferred or recommended structure. However, there are eight broad functional areas that an external communications program could include:
- leadership and management
- strategic communication and brand management
- media relations
- content creation
- website management
- stakeholder engagement
- social media
- digital media, graphic design and data visualization.

Statistical organizations traditionally do not have a great understanding of communication. Effective communication requires qualifications and experience.

Communication without these requirements risks not being taken seriously and becoming a dumping ground for unwanted staff. Qualifications are therefore

important. As a general rule, a professional communications function will employ staff with either:

- professional qualifications (e.g., communications, journalism, marketing, advertising, multimedia/visualization production, channel management or a related field)
- qualifications through **relevant experience** (the more experience, the more senior the position).

While some people without either qualifications or experience may work in a communications area, to maintain professional authority, they should be the exception (below 10%).

A range of more specific skills is also required. Figure 4 outlines typical skills required and provides a possible arrangement of these skills against the eight functional areas.

Communication skill sets in an organization can either be developed in-house or can be outsourced. The type of skill set needed in a statistical organization also depends on the level of maturity of the organization (see section 1.2). The more mature an organization, the less likely it is to outsource tasks and skills.

For example, in a communications organization with an "initial" or "reactive" maturity level, the following skill sets might be partially or completely outsourced:
- social media (excluding strategy development)
- website management / most website tasks
- digital design and data visualization
- media relations elements, such as monitoring or event planning
- content creation elements, such as new multimedia production.

Most communications organizations tend to recruit or develop the following skill sets in-house:
- management and leadership
- strategy development (e.g. in social media and strategic communications)
- basic content creation and production/dissemination
- stakeholder relations management, public relations.

The number of financial resources available is also a consideration when organizations determine whether to develop (in-house) or to buy (outsource). For example, outsourcing the creation of digital and visual content (e.g., infographics, video and online applications) in larger volumes might be more expensive than producing that content in-house. However, if the organization only uses this type of content occasionally, then outsourcing may be a more practical approach. Each statistical organization has to assess the local environment and business operations to determine which skill sets must be maintained in-house, compared with the efficiency or practicality of outsourcing.

No single organizational structure or combination of skill sets will work for every statistical organization. This includes the selection and training of official spokespersons. Depending on the situation and the nature of the communication, the official spokesperson may be a communication professional or a trained subject matter expert/analyst. The aforementioned skill sets are not prescriptive, and structures will change and evolve depending on the demands of the statistical organization at a particular time.

Figure 4 Communication skill sets

- Media monitoring and analysis
- Issues management
- Reactive media engagement (e.g. responding to inquiries)
- Proactive media engagement (e.g. pitching stories, partnering)
- Data Journalism
- Event management (e.g. press conference)

- Graphic design
- Photography
- Videography
- Video editing
- Animation
- Infographics
- Data visualization

- Content writing – for various formats and channels including website, social media, media, scripts, blogs, data visualization)
- Speech writing
- Data analysis and story telling
- Editing and copywriting

- Event management
- Procurement and contract management
- Channel identification and implementation
- Brand management and brand image

- Stakeholder/relationship management (including online communities)
- Written and verbal communication
- Account management
- Stakeholder planning/mapping
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Government relations
- International relationship building and partnerships

- Social media strategy
- Social media monitoring and analysis
- Digital marketing and advertising (including search engine optimization)
- Engagement management (interaction with communities, influencers)
- Social delivery (social media can be used to answer client questions/client contact center)

- Web master
- Web design/User centred design
- Web analytics
- Web design
- Web writing and editing
- Web architecture
- Content management

IT architecture and security etc. usually handled by agency IT team.

- Research and analysis including market research
- Strategy development, implementation and evaluation (including government campaigns e.g. for Census)
- Behavioural economics
- Horizon scanning/environmental analysis
- Project and resource management, planning and organization
- Public Relations
- Advertising
- Account management

Strategic Communication and Brand Management*

Internal Commination*

Content creation

Stakeholder Management*

Management & Leadership

Strategic Communication and Brand Management

Social Media

Website management

Chapter 2: Designing and implementing strategic communications

This chapter offers guidelines on how to create an external communications strategy and how to develop an issue and crisis management strategy—both of which are critical elements of an effective communications program.

2.1 Guidelines for creating an external communication strategy

This section outlines the main elements and steps for developing a comprehensive external communications strategy and provides suggestions for an implementation plan. Each statistical organization is unique, and the guidelines should be adapted to suit the needs of individual organizations.

This section will describe the following elements to consider to develop an effective communications strategy:
- values and principles
- environmental scan
- communications objectives
- audience segmentation
- communication channels
- content strategy.

2.1.1 Values and principles

The communications strategy should be aligned with the values and principles that underpin statistical organizations and that are defined by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. These will guide the development of the communications strategy and decisions related to implementation.

The following values should guide the development of a statistical organization's communications strategy:
- ethical
- independent (without influence)
- honest
- trustworthy
- transparent.

The principles upon which a statistical organization should establish its communications activities include:

- impartial
- visible/vocal
- equal access
- relevant
- timely
- flexible
- confidential/secure
- innovative

use of appropriate tone, content and channel for the identified audience.

2.1.2 Environmental scan

An environmental scan provides information that organizations can use to design new objectives and strategies, or modify existing ones. Environmental scanning is defined as the careful monitoring of an organization's internal and external environments to detect early signs of opportunities and/or threats that may influence current and future plans.

The following elements should be considered in an environmental scan:

- **SWOT analysis**—What are your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? Strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal environment. Opportunities and threats relate to the external environment. See Figure 5 for an example of a SWOT template that could be used to guide this process.

- **Stakeholder scan**—What are key stakeholders, influencers and commentators saying about your statistical organization? What issues are other statistical organizations facing that may be relevant to your organization?

- **Past or similar activities**—Have similar activities been undertaken before? What were the results or lessons learned? What changes were implemented as a result? What worked well, and what did not work?

- **Market or opinion research**—Externally, have you tested stakeholder or public views through surveys, focus groups or other market research? Internally, are there employee satisfaction surveys, focus groups or other feedback sources that could provide insight into the level of employee engagement and satisfaction? Summarize relevant findings; do not just point to a report. All research should be referenced and made available to all interested parties.

- **Existing metrics**—Review metrics for important insights into the statistical organization. The review could include metrics from the organization's website, social media and networking sites; contact centre metrics; and national and subnational survey response rates. Identify both negative and positive issues; these will help inform key messages and communications activities.

Figure 5   Example of a SWOT analysis template

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• What your organization does well • What makes your organization stand out from others • The unique capabilities and resources you possess • What others perceive as your strengths • Partnerships or stakeholder's support	• What your organization does not do well • What other organizations do better than you • What you need to improve given the present context • What others perceive as your weaknesses	• What trends or conditions could help you do your job better • Emerging needs that you could meet • New channels or tools that could help your organization thrive • Potential partnerships	• Emerging competitors • Changing public environment of negative press coverage • Lack of resources or lack of skilled workforce • Changes in legislation or regulation

2.1.3   Communications objectives

The foundation for a communications strategy is an overarching objective established by the organization's leadership. The objective should convey the need to align the strategy to the organization's corporate objectives.

Objectives can differ from one institution to another depending on the country's level of development, or its statistical system. Objectives should be designed to supplement each other and focus on what is to be achieved.

Communications objectives generally focus on one or more of the following:

- **Informing**—increasing awareness about the importance of statistics in everyday life; promoting official statistics and the work of the statistical organization.
- **Understanding**—exchanging meanings, learning, reducing misunderstandings and misinterpretation of statistical data.
- **Changing attitudes**—shifting perceptions
- **Altering behaviour**—persuading the audience to act differently and heeding a call to action.

Objectives should be clear, measurable and specific, but may also be qualitative. Their focus should be the target audience outcome. What do you want the audience to think, feel and do as a result of the communication? Defined objectives turn a general statement into a specific, quantifiable, time-sensitive statement of what is going to be achieved and when it will be achieved.

2.1.4 Audience segmentation

Statistical organizations engage with and provide information to a variety of audiences. They tend to engage with their audiences directly (through targeted releases) or indirectly (through the media).

Direct engagement is only effective if an audience is clearly defined, its characteristics are known and the message is directly tailored for their consumption. Distributing a general, undifferentiated message to several distinguished audiences will likely be less effective than separate, tailored messages. Therefore, segmenting the general public into different groups based on a set of characteristics is the first step to creating specifically tailored messages.

This section describes potential audiences and groups. Some people may be members of more than one group. The sum of all audiences is the general public, which can be addressed as a whole.

Policy makers

Policy makers work in organizations, governments and other authoritative bodies to develop and execute public policy. Their views of the statistical system are often anecdotal and occasionally critical. Policy makers may not be aware of the support that statistical organizations can offer, or they may not be interested in engaging with members of the statistical system.

Examples of policy makers could include
- ministers, special advisors and senior civil servants (current or former)
- mayors, local government cabinet members, political advisors and senior officials
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, European Union and United Nations leaders and senior officials.

Influencers

Influencers govern, control, oversee or question policy makers, and influence their behaviour and decisions. Their views are occasionally critical. Influencers are more likely to see statistical outputs, but they may not see the need for or the benefit of engaging with the statistical community. They also provide an essential channel to reach all citizens.

Examples of influencers could include:
- politicians
- members of think tanks and interest groups
- academics (students and teachers)
- commentators and senior journalists
- business leaders
- civil service leaders
- leaders from non-profit organizations (the third sector).

Scrutinizers

Scrutinizers observe government, administration, policy makers and influencers in a critical manner, acting as watchdogs to increase accountability. They believe their work is for the public good. Scrutinizers can be supportive of statistical work, but they can also be critical. Their views are typically not collected systematically since they are generally vocal in making their problems or issues known.

For policy makers, influencers, and scrutinizers, a proactive and concerted communications effort is the best approach to maintain these relationships.

Examples of scrutinizers could include:
- parliamentary committees and scrutiny committees
- other national statistical leaders
- international bodies (e.g., Eurostat, international statistical organizations)
- statistical and digital bloggers, journalists, commentators and social media influencers
- academics (students and teachers)
- information commissioners
- privacy commissioners and campaigners
- open data campaigners.

Partners

Partners are people or organizations that provide statistical organizations with services crucial to core statistical processes. Their satisfaction levels and views of data providers are often unknown.

Examples of partners could include
- funders
- survey respondents
- administrative data providers
- syndicators and aggregators
- academics and other innovators.

General public

The general public is comprised of a variety of audience groups with different interests and motivations. For a statistical organization, reaching the general public is not always a viable option since the audience is too diverse. It is more effective to send narrow, targeted messages to specific groups or target audiences.

2.1.5   Channels

A channel is the medium through which a message is transmitted to its intended audience. The best channel for reaching a specific audience depends on many factors, particularly regional/local circumstances. There is also inherent risk associated with the use of various communication channels as these channels will change overtime with contexts and uses continuously evolving. This section presents a list of communication channels. Each channel has a particular set of characteristics that supports different forms of content for different audiences. For example, Instagram is well suited to reach the younger population through short, visual messages. However, this would not be the recommended channel to reach senior citizens.

Using multiple channels to reach target audiences is essential. However, this does not imply that every channel must be used. The message must be consistent, and content should be specifically tailored to each channel.

Direct channels (owned)

Direct or owned channels are under the control of the statistical organization and can be used to send messages directly to the end user. Direct channels are an effective option for reaching target audience subgroups.

Offline channels include all means of communication in a non-digital format, mostly in the analogue (or brick and mortar / paper) world. Offline channels could include
- direct contact between people (e.g., events or press conferences)
- presentations by a statistical organization's representatives (e.g., conferences, courses and seminars)
- printed media (brochures, reports created by the statistical organization and advertising campaigns [national or local]).

The value of offline channels should not be underestimated. They can reduce misunderstandings and can help build strong client relationships.

Online channels are digital communication channels that can be accessed by devices with an Internet connection, such as computers, smartphones and tablets. This type of channel includes websites with specific formats such as online video platforms, online courses and Internet search engines (e.g., Google and Bing) that index websites and online content.

Social media is another way to spread your message online. One way to tap into target audiences is to connect with people who have a large online following (e.g., creative influencers, opinion makers and bloggers) and to encourage them to share the statistical organization's message with their community.

Social media channels specialize in offering direct contact between users and established user communities. Most social media can be accessed online through special applications installed on users' devices. Applications include
- Facebook / Facebook Messenger
- Twitter

- Instagram
- YouTube
- LinkedIn / SlideShare
- Snapchat
- Google+
- Pinterest
- WhatsApp
- Flickr
- Facetime / Skype / Google Hangout
- Reddit

There are also online platforms like crowdsourcing, which invites the public to share data and information, and there are always new channels on the horizon. Future channels may use artificial intelligence (e.g., Alexa [Amazon], Siri [Apple], Cortana [Microsoft], and Google Assistant).

Indirect (non-owned)

Indirect or third-party channels can be used to reach groups beyond those identified in the direct channels. They are the best option for reaching the general public. Examples include

- press/media (print media, broadcasting media and online news media [often part of the mainstream media]), which distinguish between general media (nationwide news media, regional media), and targeted media (business and professional titles)
- online social media communities (organized around influencers such as YouTubers and bloggers).

Statistical organizations can nurture these channels by partnering with them to serve their information needs. These partnerships can allow for a greater level of control over external messages and can help ensure that stories include the statistical organization's information.

Indirect or third-party channel groups are outside the direct control of the statistical organization. These channels can reach a large audience that would not normally be accessible to a statistical organization.

Crossovers

Extra exposure is gained when a message that is successfully launched in an earned audience on social media is picked up by a news medium (e.g., newspaper, radio and television) and redistributed to its audience. This is called a crossover. A statistical organization's message can migrate from direct social media channels to indirect channels. A crossover is likely to happen when there is a lot of engagement or debate within the targeted social media community (e.g., when other influencers start to participate in the debate). A crossover can also work in the reverse when a message that starts in news media goes "viral" on social media.

2.1.6 Content strategy

An effective content strategy maps out the right mix of channels to reach the identified audiences. The content (message) must also be tailored to the audience subsets. A successful campaign knows the audience and reaches them through a variety of channels. A cross-media approach leverages a variety of channels, so the audience gets the optimal message. The following paragraphs outline the steps to develop a content strategy.

Identify the audience

It is important to identify the audience that the statistical organization wants to influence before starting to communicate. It is necessary to conduct demographic research, create audience profiles and analyse the impact that the issue has on the audience. This may involve examining the audience's current position toward the product, service, program, organization or issue, and identifying any barriers to changing their awareness, attitudes or behaviour.

Choose channels

Based on the audience profile, the next step is to analyse the most effective communication channels to engage them. It is important to assess the characteristics of each channel and consider the awareness, knowledge, attitude and behaviour of their users.

Choose content type

The strategy should indicate the best content formats for each channel. Some suggestions include the following:

Channels	Products
Social media	• short video (<1 minute) • simple infographic • image
Online	• video (<2 minutes) • text and graphs • images • podcasts • blog/crowdsourcing
Print broadcast	• text • graphs • infographics • images
Event	• live streaming • presentation • press conference

Develop key messages

Key messages are the main points that you want the target audience to hear and remember. They are an important part of the communications strategy–they create meaning and headline the issues to discuss.

Key messages must address the communications objectives and align with communication values and principles. These messages can be incorporated into communication tools, such as media releases, fact sheets, webpages, social media posts or signage.

If the communication campaign relates to a specific issue, an environmental scan should be performed prior to creating the key messages. Changes in the environment may lead to changes in the messaging. Who is talking about the topic? What is their position? What is going on locally, regionally and internationally? Is the issue political or legislative? Have there been methodological changes or unexpected results?

There are two steps to construct key messages:

1. **Clarify audience objectives**–Identify the audiences and what to say to them. Is it important to increase their awareness, improve their understanding, or change their perceptions or behaviour? In other words, what does the organization want the audience to think, feel or do? Key messages should link back to overarching communication objectives.

2. **Create messages**–Key messages should be clear and succinct, and written with the target audience in mind. The communicator should write messages from the audience perspective. Focus on what the audience cares about, and show what benefits them (not what benefits the statistical organization). Messages should be written in plain language, without jargon or bureaucratic prose.

The key messages should cover three key elements:

1. Describe what is happening using the five Ws (who?, what?, when?, where? and why?)
   - Who should care? Why should they care? What's in it for them? (benefits)
   - What is happening?
   - When is it happening?
   - Where is it happening?
   - Why is it happening? (context)

2. Call to action
   - What should the audience do?

3. What is the one take-home message that the audience should remember?

The following questions may help to create the key messages:
- What information is currently being communicated? Does it need to change?
- What are the benefits to the audience?
- What is the one take-home message that you want the audience to remember if they forget everything else?
- What is the story? How can you make the message relatable?

Matching key messages to audiences

Once the overarching key messages have been identified, it may be necessary to further tailor the messages to specific audiences and/or channels.

Key messages need to be targeted to audiences and channels. This ensures that the communication reaches the right audience with the right message for the right channel.

Set the timing or periodicity of your campaign

A calendar can be useful for planning several products in combination. To engage indirect media (press/news media) and influence them to develop high-impact, prominent news products, the following techniques can be used:

- create an in-house release (press conference) with a short media lock-up; make spokespersons/specialists available to journalists
- release information by owned media with a longer embargo period (no lock-up, but controlled distribution to trusted media parties)
- set a release time for the convenience of news media (e.g., midnight, afternoon)
- develop social media posts, videos, email blasts
- provide technical background and reports.

Evaluate the campaign impact for each channel

Evaluation is a key component of any communication activity. It helps to understand what worked well and provides lessons learned for the planning of future activities. For more information on how to evaluate communication activities, please refer to Chapter 3.

2.2   Guidelines to develop a crisis and issue management strategy

Within the broader context of a strategic communications framework, it is critical to remember that sometimes things go wrong. All statistical organizations encounter challenging issues and sudden crises. The purpose of crisis and issue management is to mitigate the damage that adverse events may trigger by ensuring that statistical organizations are well prepared to respond to problems publicly, in a timely and appropriate manner. Sometimes the immediate task might simply be quieting a sudden uproar. Other times, it might be the more laborious work of re-establishing trust.

Though it may be hard to remember in the middle of a high-stress crisis or troublesome issue, adverse events also provide an opportunity for a statistical organization to reinforce its brand and demonstrate the organization's commitment to integrity and transparency in concrete and visible terms. Challenging events can originate within the statistical organization, or externally.

Internal issues could include:
- statistical issues—estimation errors, methodological shortcomings
- corporate issues—corruption, conflict of interest, incompetence, unwise public statement by an employee (especially on social media)
- continuity issues—system failures (e.g., website down)
- security issues—confidentiality breaches.

External issues could include:
- reputational attacks—allegations of bias, distortion and fake news
- political interference (real or perceived)—premature disclosure of data by political actors, pressure to change or reschedule releases, and national or international political instability
- continuity issues—severe weather events, cyber-attacks, and violence in or near the worksite
- statistical issues—stakeholders challenging data (e.g., affected groups disagree with organization's estimates).

Many of these events will require coordinated responses from multiple areas within the statistical organization. Staff in information technology, statistical methods, administration, security, etc. may have significant roles to play. In some circumstances, a business continuity team may be assigned overall responsibility. In all cases, however, corporate communications will be vital.

2.2.1   Crisis and issue management principles

At the heart of crisis and issue management lies the brand that the statistical organization has crafted (see section **1.1 Branding**). Effective crisis and issue management builds on the institutional values the brand embodies (taking advantage of the organization's reputation for integrity and accuracy) and works to reinforce or re-establish that brand by demonstrating the organization's commitment to transparency and accountability, even under trying circumstances.

Consistent with general communications principles, during an adverse event, a statistical organization should:
- communicate facts as quickly as possible
- provide updates as circumstances change
- ensure the safety of its community and the continued operation of essential services to its stakeholders.

The statistical organization should convey what it knows in a timely fashion, using multiple forms of media. It should not speculate. Providing factual information is especially important in the first minutes and hours of a crisis. The goal is to be transparent, accountable and accessible to all stakeholders, while respecting legal and privacy obligations.

2.2.2   Crisis or issue?

Not every adverse event is a crisis. Understanding the difference been a crisis and an issue is essential to the development of an appropriate and effective response.

Figure 6   Crisis/issue Matrix

Impact	Timing	
	Now or imminent	**In the future**
High Threat to long term reputation or High level of media, social media and/or political attention	Immediate action Full resources Highest level of attention and approvals required	Planning to prevent or mitigate damage Substantial resources Highest level of attention and approvals required Monitor situation
Medium Threat to short term reputation or Medium level media, social media and/or political attention	Immediate action Substantial resources High level attention and approval required	Planning to prevent or mitigate damage Resource appropriately Attention and approval levels to be determined Monitor situation
Low No threat to reputation Only certain groups interested	Decide whether to take action Resource appropriately Low level attention and approval required	Planning to prevent or mitigate damage Resource appropriately Low level attention and approval required Monitor situation

The two primary considerations to assess whether an adverse event constitutes a crisis or an issue are the level of immediacy and the threat level. Some communications experts recommend decision matrices with many more considerations. Regardless of the specific methodology chosen, distinguishing issues from crises will always require a degree of sound professional judgment. Therefore, in the crisis/issue matrix above, some cells have a gradient shading to indicate that decisions are not always clear-cut. For example, an adverse event that takes place in real time with a medium threat to the organization might be considered a crisis in some circumstances, and an issue in others.

A crisis can be identified when an adverse event is currently taking place or will take place in the immediate future, and when the risk is severe or the level of attention paid by outside actors is high. A crisis is characterized by a threat to an organization's long-term reputation. Crises have the potential to disable or interrupt an organization's operations. Crises may include injury, illness or death, and typically garner high levels of attention in the traditional media, on social media and in the political establishment.

Examples of crises could include:
- leak of data before the announced release date (either accidental or deliberate)
- delay in issuing high-attention indicators past the announced release date
- significant error in data that have been cited by a public official and detected after release
- employee misconduct (arrest or public blunder)
- high-profile cyber attack
- prominent figure attacks the integrity or accuracy of statistical organization.

If the crisis requires a response by the statistical organization, that response needs to be immediate. The organization's top leadership will need to be aware of the situation and be involved in decision making. Finally, a full response to a crisis typically involves multiple bodies, including a variety of specialists within the statistical organization, and outside actors such as media, stakeholders and partners.

An issue, by contrast, can be identified when an adverse event can reasonably be anticipated in the future, or the threat level and attention level are moderate. When addressing an issue, the statistical organization's staff often have adequate time to assess the situation, understand the problem, and consider multiple solutions before selecting and implementing an approach to reduce the negative impact. All or most critical operations can continue as normal. No injury, illness or death has occurred.

Examples of issues could include:
• embarrassing misprint in a published news release
• delay in issuing a low-attention indicator past the announced release date
• government closure due to a delay in passing a budget.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the organization's top leadership may need to be aware of the situation and be involved in decision making. In other cases, issue management can be delegated to middle or even front-line management. Again, a full response to an issue may involve multiple specialists within the statistical organization as well as outside actors.

The purpose of issue management is to identify potential problems early, and to implement strategies that will resolve the issue in a manner that produces a positive (or at least neutral) outcome for the organization. Effective issue management greatly reduces the likelihood that a situation will evolve into a crisis. Conversely, an inadequate response to an issue increases the likelihood of a subsequent crisis. There are no guarantees; therefore, all issue management strategies must include careful monitoring of any ongoing situation to recognize when a tipping point into a crisis may occur.

In many ways, strategic issue management is structurally similar to crisis management in that it follows the same general sequence of steps. However, there may be more flexibility in developing a response to an issue since there is more time to weigh options, consult with stakeholders, and decide on appropriate and effective mitigation procedures.

The following section will first address crisis management in a communications context, and then will discuss how issue management differs.

2.2.3   Crisis management

There is no universal process for managing crises. Different external environments and internal cultures will lead to different approaches. Figure 7 demonstrates a crisis management process that uses a strategic, planned and controlled approach. Individual statistical organizations might start here and modify steps as required, or they may read it for ideas but design their own procedures from scratch.

Figure 7   Crisis communications process example
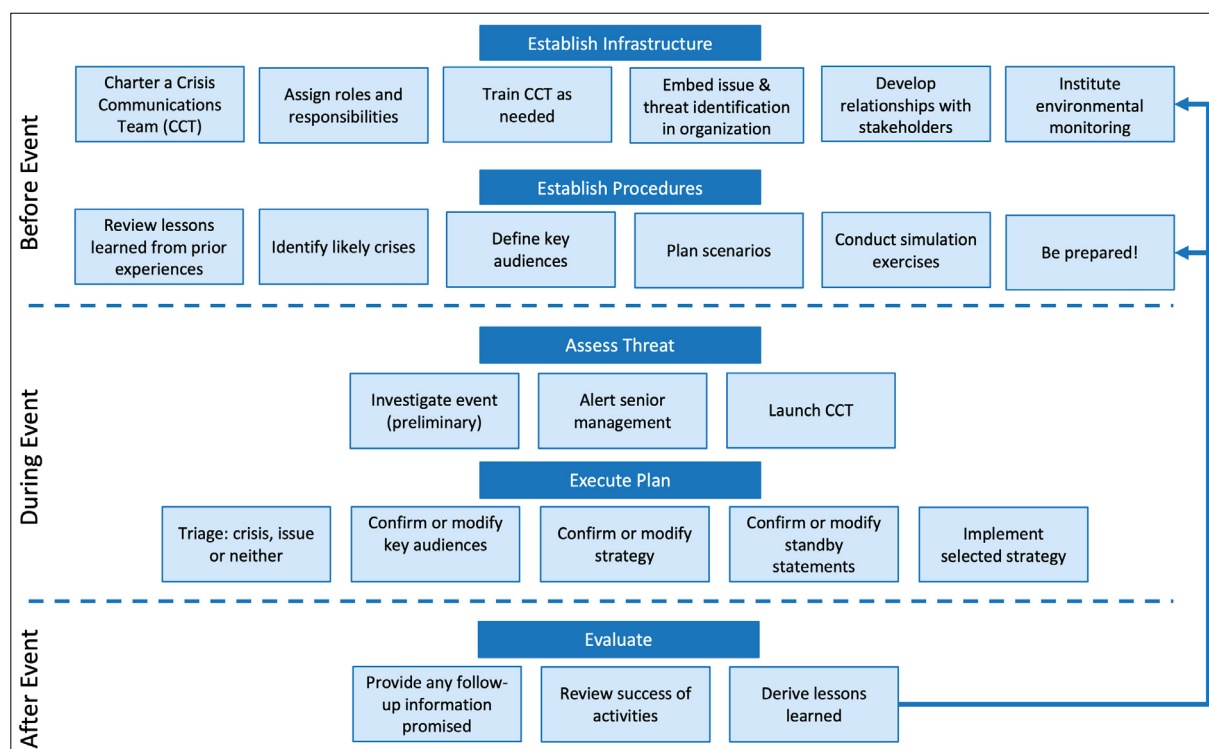
Part 1 – Advance planning

The purpose of advance planning is to assign responsibilities, define procedures, prepare draft responses (standby statements) to be used during a crisis, and obtain organization-level buy-in before any adverse event takes place.

Advance planning begins with establishing the organizational infrastructure necessary to respond rapidly with full organizational authority. The first, foundational step is to establish a crisis communications team composed of senior management, and to delegate broad institutional authority to the team. The crisis communications team is the central element in any crisis communications plan. The team determines and enacts the communications tactics best suited to the crisis situation and must have the appropriate authority to act on behalf of the organization with little or no further consultation. An explicit assignment of responsibilities makes this possible.

The normal structural activities common to all teams must take place, such as collecting and distributing contact information, establishing ground rules (e.g., quorum and decision-making process) and determining expected team communication vehicles (e.g., teleconferences or in-person meetings). These activities have particular significance in the context of this team since they need to take into account the possibility that a crisis will not schedule itself conveniently during regular working hours when all team members are present at their desks.

In addition, the team should allocate specific roles to team members. These roles and responsibilities may change depending on circumstances but approaching a crisis with default predetermined assignments simplifies and streamlines the response.

Finally, if any crisis communications team members would benefit from additional training on their roles and duties, then that training—including periodic refresher training for all team members—must be arranged.

Establishing the organizational infrastructure also includes developing and fostering a good early-warning system. This starts with implementing a solid environmental monitoring program, where both traditional media and social media are tracked continuously in as close to real time as is feasible.

Embedding threat identification within the organizational structure can fill gaps that media monitoring does not cover. This means instituting a corporate culture where staff at all levels are on alert for potential threats and adverse events, know how seriously the organization treats such threats, and are aware of both the importance and the procedures for reporting events up the organizational ladder to senior management. This is critical to recognizing internally triggered events before they become part of a public conversation. Although staff may be reluctant to acknowledge problems or to bring problems to the attention of their superiors, communicating and frequently reinforcing an institutional message of "no surprises" is key.

To strengthen the early-warning system for externally triggered events, it is also useful to develop relationships with outside stakeholder networks so that they are also encouraged to recognize adverse events and threats that might affect the statistical organization, and so they know whom to notify.

The second stage of crisis management advance planning involves thinking ahead to potential threats and preparing optimal reactions. This activity can be broken into seven steps.

Step 1: Review lessons learned from prior experiences

All statistical organizations have experience responding to adverse events, whether a formal crisis management plan has been in effect or not. The starting point for future planning involves reviewing effective past responses, missteps that hampered previous responses, and how previous responses could have been improved.

Crisis management plans should also be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis, and always in the aftermath of a completed crisis.

Step 2: Identify likely crises

Based on past experience and on an assessment of the current technological, social, and political climate, generate a list of potential adverse events that the statistical organization may face in the future. Try to include as many reasonable crisis situations as possible without being diverted into outlandish or low-probability events.

There is overlap here between crisis and issue management, on the one hand, and risk management on the other.[3] In particular, the risk management assessment process includes identification, analysis and measurement, and weighting (i.e., prioritizing risks). Risk identification can feed into communications planning by pinpointing some of the more likely issues and crises, though it cannot be expected to identify all the threats a crisis communications plan should address. Crisis and issue management, in turn, can feed into risk analysis and weighting by specifying measures that can be taken to mitigate problems when they arise.

Step 3: Define key audiences

Understanding the audiences and stakeholders that a statistical organization may need to reach when responding to an adverse event depends, in large part, on the nature of the event. There are many potential audiences that will want information during and following an incident, and each has its own information needs. The challenge is to identify the most significant set of stakeholders for a given situation, and to anticipate the type of information that can and should be provided to them.

For a statistical organization, potential audiences might include:
- data users
- respondents
- teachers and students

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3 See: https://statswiki.unece.org/x/owEuCg for additional details.

- journalists (conventional and new media)
- other government agencies
- political appointees
- employees.

Audiences are not just passive recipients of information; they may also be key allies in implementing constructive responses to adverse events. Just like external stakeholder networks can assist a statistical organization in threat identification, they can also be helpful defending a besieged organization, and can sometimes make statements that would be inappropriate for the organization to make itself. Expressions of support from external stakeholders may have a higher level of credibility within their networks than the same statements issued by the statistical organization.

Step 4: Plan scenarios

Once a list of potential crises and the key audiences associated with each one has been developed, it is time to plan effective communications responses. Planned responses need to include:

- What will be communicated?
- When will it be communicated?
- How will it be communicated?
- Who will do the communicating?

Among other considerations, the preferred communication channels need to be specified. Should the organization's response be in the form of a press conference, a news advisory, a website post, a tweet, or some combination of these?

Planning needs to be as realistic as possible, taking into account that the early stages of a crisis are typically filled with a great deal of uncertainty, and possibly with incorrect information within both the statistical organization and the public coverage.

There are situations where the best response by a statistical organization is not to issue any communications at all. However, when the organization determines that communication is in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders, the communication needs to be rapid, honest and reliable. Often this translates to an initial statement (e.g., "We are assessing the situation and will report when we know more"), followed by further detail once the situation is better understood.

Planning also needs to account for the fact that, when other institutions become involved in an adverse event, the required coordination between organizations often delays effective responses and communications. This may be especially true when law enforcement or other branches of the judicial system are engaged.

Statistical organization employees can be different from external stakeholders in terms of their information needs and the channels available for reaching them. Therefore, it can be beneficial to include specific examples of internal stakeholder outreach in scenario planning.

In addition to developing scenarios for specific situations, it can be useful to develop a generic scenario that lays out a sequence of steps that can be referred to when completely unanticipated situations arise. This generic scenario will be fairly vague but can serve as a helpful starting point to manage crises that take a statistical organization by surprise.

Scenario planning is best done as a group, including the members of the crisis communications team and others with insight into past successes and failures.

Step 5: Prepare standby statements (could be included in Step 4)

Some statistical organizations have procedures in place that require that public statements go through one or more levels of review and approval (often including a legal department) before they can be issued. The higher the visibility of a communication, the more stringent the review and approval process tends to be. This can impose substantial delays on communications, during which, in the event of a swiftly unfolding crisis, the opportunity to mitigate damage can be diminished or effectively eliminated.

Standby statements are draft communications templates that address a particular type of problem and include placeholders for specific detail.

> **Example of a standby statement**
>
> At **(X:00 PM/AM date)**, the **Statistical Organization** announced that data from the **(date and name)** news release that was scheduled for release on **(time and date)** were inadvertently released from the website. The release can be found here: **(link)**.

Standby statements are written, reviewed and approved in advance. Therefore, when an organization is responding to a crisis under time pressure, details can be inserted, and the statement can be issued quickly.

Standby statements provide an opportunity for the statistical organization to explicitly reference its brand by embedding key messages. This must be approached delicately so as not to generate offence or ridicule but can be effective when done well.

Step 6: Conduct simulation exercises

A plan is only useful if it can be executed properly. Testing the crisis communications plan is critical for two reasons:
- Testing uncovers shortcomings, gaps and inefficiencies in the plan.
- Testing prepares participants to successfully perform the activities their role requires.

Generating an actual crisis for testing purposes is risky, so a simulation exercise is required. Tabletop exercises have proven useful in evaluating and practising crisis communications plans.

A tabletop exercise is an activity where the crisis communications team, led by a facilitator, gathers to walk through simulated emergency situations. Members of the crisis communications team review and discuss the actions they would take in response to a particular scenario, testing the crisis plan in an informal, low-stress environment. The tabletop exercise clarifies roles and responsibilities, can identify additional personnel who would need to be pulled in as the crisis evolves, and can identify additional mitigation and preparedness needs. Tabletop exercises also

work as a reminder of small but important details, such as alternate assembly points and whose responsibility it is to contact political appointees if the organization head and deputy are both unreachable.

Tabletop exercises are never completely realistic, and therefore cannot provide a comprehensive test of operational capability. They are, however, low cost and relatively easy to conduct, and as such can be repeated on a regular basis.

Any deficiencies in the plan uncovered by the tabletop exercise should be corrected.

Step 7: Be prepared

Crises are inevitable. Statistical organizations must integrate that understanding into their organizational culture and prepare rigorously. This includes practising responses until they become ingrained. To be successful, advance planning needs to integrate lessons learned from previous crises, be comprehensive and detailed, and ensure buy-in from the highest level of the statistical organization.

Part 2 – Executing the plan

The purpose of the execution Part is to manage a live crisis efficiently and effectively. When an adverse event has been detected and reported, the communications manager must:
- quickly gather as much information available
- alert senior management
- launch the crisis communications team.

Typically, the first report of an adverse event does not include complete information. It can take hours, sometimes even days, for the full scope and impact of an event to be known. It may take even longer for the cause to be reliably identified.

The communications manager will need to make a rapid judgment call: based on preliminary, incomplete and possibly inconsistent information, is the situation sufficiently grave to launch the crisis communications team? Perhaps the greatest pitfall to avoid at this stage is being too thorough in investigating the situation, thereby losing valuable time. Once launched, the crisis communications team can follow a sequence of steps.

Step 1: Assess the situation

The preliminary information the team receives is probably incomplete and possibly inconsistent. Nevertheless, the crisis communications team needs to evaluate the information on hand and determine whether to treat the situation as a crisis. If not, the matter can be referred to other parties for issue management or program-level follow-up.

If the situation is a crisis, the team should continue.

Step 2: Consult the crisis communications plan

The crisis communications team will find the scenario in the crisis communications plan that either addresses the existing situation or is close enough to the existing situation that it can be used as a model, or they will use the generic scenario. The selected scenario will provide guidance on whether an active or reactive communications strategy is desirable, or if no communication at all is preferred.

Step 3: Confirm or tailor plan elements

Since few, if any, actual crises will conform exactly to the scenarios detailed in the crisis communications plan, the chosen response during initial planning needs to be reviewed. The crisis communications team must either affirm that the plan should be executed as originally envisioned or modify elements of the plan to better suit the specific event.

The elements that must be confirmed or tailored include:
- key audiences
- response strategy/sequence
- standby statements
- communication channels.

Step 4: Implement the strategy

At this point, the crisis communications team has a detailed roadmap of actions to take and should implement the chosen strategy with the agreed-upon modifications.

The key to a successful crisis management execution Part is an efficient and effective process with timely decision making.

Part 3 – Evaluation

The final stage, after the crisis has been weathered, is to follow up on any promises made during the event (such as providing more information or being available for an interview), and to evaluate the effectiveness of the completed communication process.

The review process should occur promptly to ensure that the lessons learned are fresh and comprehensive. The evaluation results should trigger a review of the crisis communications plan to improve future responses.

2.2.4 Issue management

Strategic issue management is similar to crisis management in basic structure and follows the same general sequence of activities. Since the immediacy of an issue may be less than that of a crisis, there is often more flexibility to develop and implement a response, including time to collect additional information, weigh options, consult with experts and stakeholders, decide on appropriate and effective mitigating procedures, and refine the strategy as the situation unfolds.

Some issues can be highly time sensitive. For these situations, it is recommended to follow the more thorough steps outlined in crisis management.

Figure 8   Process for issue management/communications
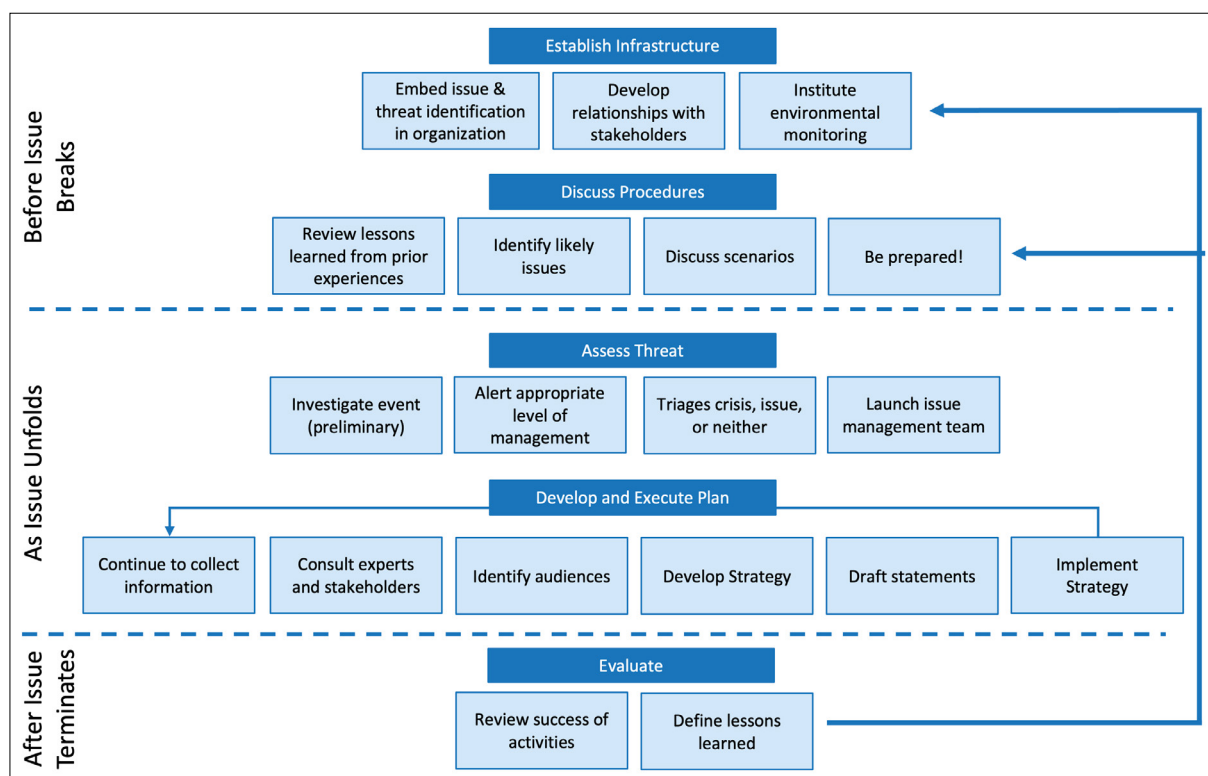
Part 1 – Preparation

Issue management shares the early-warning infrastructure with crisis management.

A statistical organization only needs one environmental monitoring program to track traditional media and social media. Any disquieting activity that might result in an adverse situation should be reported to the communications manager, who can pass the information on to either the crisis communications team or other officials at the organization or project level for issue management.

Issue management shares the embedded threat identification within the organizational structure and the relationships with external stakeholder networks. Therefore, all parties are encouraged to recognize adverse events and threats that might affect the statistical organization, and they know whom to notify.

Like crisis management, issue management benefits from advance planning. However, this planning does not need to be as rigorous or detailed as crisis preparation planning.

It is a good practice for management and senior staff working either at the project level or at the organizational level to meet periodically and discuss known risks and how they might turn into issues. Appropriate responses to potential issues should also be considered at this time, especially in the context of which organizational units might be involved in crafting effective mitigation strategies. Risks, potential issues and potential responses should be documented, at least informally.

Finally, just like in crisis management, organizational preparedness to face both predictable and unexpected issues is likely to lead to better outcomes.

Part 2 – As an issue unfolds

The initial threat assessment in issue management is similar to that in crisis management and may involve many of the same people or groups. When an adverse event has been detected, reported to the communications manager and passed on to project or organizational management as a potential issue, that manager or group must evaluate the information and decide whether to treat the situation as an issue. If the event should be treated as an issue, a manager or management group should be assigned to follow up. Depending on the specifics of the situation, management could be mid-level or upper management.

Example of issue management
Offensive language in randomly selected barcodes

On Saturday, September 16, 2017, a journalist contacted the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to query a survey form barcode that included an offensive word. The codes used to generate the unique barcodes used an algorithm generating more than two quintillion combinations (2,000,000,000,000,000,000) of letters and numbers to generate highly secure barcodes. Within 40 minutes of the query, the ABS was able to identify that the code was authentic and issue a public statement acknowledging the issue, apologizing for not undertaking an offensive word check on the barcodes, and offering the opportunity for anyone affected to have their code/form replaced. Investigations were undertaken to confirm that this was a computer-generated code and that no human intervention had occurred.

The ABS ensured that all existing barcodes with offensive words were not issued. The story appeared in the media four days later (September 20).

There was only one reported issue of this type.

The initial information the issue management group receives is probably incomplete and possibly inconsistent. Unlike with crisis management, the issue management group may have sufficient time to conduct further investigation before being forced to act. The better the issue management group understands the situation, the better they can react to it.

Also, the issue management group may have sufficient time to consult with colleagues within the statistical organization (especially those with special expertise or who have encountered similar situations in the past) and stakeholders outside the statistical organization.

From this point on, the process is conceptually almost identical to that of crisis management. The issue management group identifies key audiences, develops a strategy, drafts statements (in this case, final statements rather than standby statements), selects appropriate channels to distribute the message and implements their strategy. The biggest difference between issue management and crisis management is that there may be sufficient time to evaluate the success of the mitigation efforts while the issue is still active, and to fine-tune or revise the strategy based upon this ongoing assessment.

While mitigation efforts are being developed and communications strategies are being implemented, the issue management group must be mindful of the possibility than the issue could cross a boundary and become a crisis, in which case a crisis communications procedure would be required.

Part 3 – After the issue has been resolved

Similar to crisis management, the final stage after an issue is no longer active involves evaluating and documenting the effectiveness of the completed communications process.

This review should occur promptly to ensure that the lessons learned are fresh and comprehensive.

2.2.5   Communication and risk management

There is an important connection between crisis and issue management and risk management.[4] Effective communication is a critical component of both.

Information, communication and reporting comprise one of the five components of the 2017 Revised Enterprise Risk Management Framework issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission.[5] Enterprise risk management requires a continual process of obtaining and sharing necessary information from both internal and external stakeholders, which flows up, down and across the organization.

Communication is an important tool for disseminating information and promoting awareness and understanding of risks and risk management decisions. To ensure that relevant information is collected, organized, synthesized and shared, statistical organizations should establish a communications approach that supports the enterprise risk management framework and facilitates the effective application of risk management.

Risk management is a broad process to prevent a risk from materializing and to reduce its consequences. A crisis communications plan is implemented when an event has already taken place and risk management has failed. Communications strategies and plans could be fundamental responses and controls to prevent a risk from occurring and to mitigate a risk's impact and consequences.

Furthermore, a communication process itself can have risks that must be identified, assessed and managed. It could be useful to apply the risk management approach to communication planning to limit the inherent risks of the communication response, and to prevent communications from become an exacerbating factor that trigger further escalation of an issue or crisis.

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4   See: https://statswiki.unece.org/x/owEuCg for additional details.

5   See: https://www.coso.org/Pages/erm.aspx for additional details.

Chapter 3: Evaluating external communications

The Communications Maturity Model described in section 1.2 can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of an external communications function. The model can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization's communications function and to identify areas for improvement. This chapter explicitly examines the importance of evaluating communications activities, and the ways in which evaluation can be conducted.

All communications activities should be measured and evaluated to confirm that they achieve communications objectives. As Peter Drucker famously said, "what gets measured gets done." Measurement and evaluation should be a consideration throughout a communications activity and should not wait until an activity has concluded.

Done effectively, measurement leads to iterative improvements to communication. Evaluation can guide future activities and strategy development. Measurement also presents opportunities for continuous improvement and helps organizations develop an understanding of the impact of communications activities. In turn, an evaluation demonstrates the tremendous return on investment that good communication can provide.

The most common form of measuring communication activities is the use of Key Performance Indicators or KPIs. According to the website KPI.org, "KPIs are the critical (key) indicators of progress toward an intended result. KPIs provide a focus for strategic and operational improvement, create an analytical basis for decision making and help focus attention on what matters.

KPIs should be identified at the start of the activity, not when the final results are in. KPIs should demonstrate the impact of the activity on organizational goals and, if they are already in place, provide an effective benchmark that allows for easy tracking of improvements and progress.

When developing KPIs, it is important to recognize and distinguish between **output** measures and **outcome** measures. Output measures track the statistical organization's activities. These are typically reasonably easy to collect. Outcome measures track the effect those activities had on the intended audience. These are often difficult, sometimes impossible, to collect. Nonetheless, outcome measures are the gold standard of evaluation.

Three types of common communication measures can become KPIs:

- **Activity-based –** if no other measures are available, report what you did (e.g., three newsletters, 10 seminars and seven webpages).

- **Measures of communication channels –** quantitative measures (e.g., number of webpage hits and views, dwell times, phone calls, attendees, Twitter retweets/likes, Facebook comments/followers) indicate the uptake of information.

- **Analytical –** these measures bring quantitative measures together and complement them with qualitative understanding. These are the most detailed measures, and they provide a deeper understanding of performance. They address awareness, understanding, behavioural change, sentiment, share of voice, ownership and the difference between creating and informing the news.

Using a combination of measures, particularly with an increased use of analytical measures, can help to evaluate the contribution that communication makes to the overall project outcome.

It is important to recognize the difference between communications objectives and business/ program objectives. Communications objectives typically focus on what the audience is expected to think, feel or do differently because of the communications activities. Business/ program objectives present the results that a manager hopes to achieve in a project or business enterprise. Recognizing the difference allows for a separate and objective evaluation of each set of objectives. For example, communications objectives could be met, but the project may not have met all its business/program objectives. This usually means that the initial business/ program objectives were faulty.

Thinking about objectives can help identify issues or areas for improvement within the communications or program implementation. It also promotes the maturity and professionalism of the communications industry.

A number of questions can be asked to help assess the success of communications objectives separately from the success of the business or project. These include:

- Did you reach the right audience?
- Did you use the right communications tools and/or channels?
- Did your audience understand your messages?
- Were decisions taken as a result of your messages?
- Did the target audience take action as a result of your messages? Was it the desired action?
- Did you comply with the budget? If not, why?
- What would you do differently next time?

In addition to these questions, consider the following **PROOF** principles when measuring or evaluating communications activities:

- **Pragmatic:** Use the best available information source. Do not seek to generate perfect numbers instantly. Metrics should be fit for purpose. It is important to use what you have and to improve it through iteration.
- **Realistic:** Always seek to prove the things you can or acknowledge those you cannot. Evaluations should stick to the facts and only state what you know. Do not extrapolate meaning or conflate correlation with causation.
- **Open:** Record and share as much as possible. Do not hide results. Remember that communication objectives and business/program objectives are different, albeit closely linked.
- **Objective:** Remain honest now to learn for the future. Recognize both successes and failures. Record lessons learned.
- **Fully integrated:** Make evaluations ever-present, not add-ons at the end of an activity. Monitoring and evaluation should be embedded into your communications strategy, which is why you should start monitoring and evaluation at the beginning of your project.

Figure 9 presents a method to align objectives with activities and lessons learned.

Figure 9   Example of communication evaluation

Objective	Communications activities	Key performance indicators	Lessons learned
To increase awareness of x issue.	• Stakeholder engagement undertaken • Information sessions conducted • Web copy updated • Press release issued	• Number of media mentions • Number of website hits	The approach must be multi-channel and key messages need to be fully integrated.

Chapter 4:   Conclusion and recommendations – Part I

The High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics has recognized that a strategic communications approach is an essential component to maintain and enhance the relevance of official statistics in today's society.

Across the globe, statistical organizations are at varying levels of maturity in terms of their communications function. However, all have recognized the importance of building and maintaining relationships not only with expert users, but also with the general public. An effective communications function guides the development of a strategic approach to protect, enhance and promote the organization's reputation and brand.

This framework proposes a number of components that statistical organizations should consider when developing a strategic approach to its communications function. The following summarizes the recommendations presented throughout the framework.

Recommendations:

1. It is important for all statistical organizations to control and own their brand. To stakeholders, a successful and distinguished brand heralds quality and elicits trust and loyalty. An organization's branch should evolve and adapt to organizational and environmental changes.

2. One of the most important considerations when developing a brand is to do so holistically. This facilitates a smooth embedding process and ensures staff remain engaged with the defined values.

3. Statistical organizations can use the Communications Maturity Model to gauge their current maturity level, identify areas for improvement and design action plans to reach the desired maturity level. The Communication Maturity Model can also be used to evaluate the organization's communications function and activities.

4. Professional communications programs will look different from one statistical organization to another, depending on the organization's needs, objectives and available resources. There is no preferred or recommended structure. However, there are eight broad functional areas that statistical organizations should consider: leadership and management; strategic communications and brand management; media relations; content creation; website management; stakeholder engagement; social media; and digital media, graphic design and visualization.

5. The communications strategy should be aligned with the values and principles that underpin statistical organizations and that are defined by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (United Nations, 2014[6]).

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6   https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx

6. To guide the development of an effective communications strategy, statistical organizations should consider the following elements: values and principles, environmental scans, communication objectives, audience segmentation, communication channels, and content strategy.

7. Effective crisis and issue management is critical to protect and maintain a statistical office's reputation. All statistical organizations should establish a crisis communications and issue management process to better prepare the organization to respond quickly, efficiently and effectively when a crisis or issue occurs.

8. Crisis communications and issue management protocols should be tested, and lessons learned from the testing and implementation of the processes should be used to inform and further enhance the organization's preparedness for successful responses.

Part II

Chapter 5:   Stakeholder engagement

5.1   What is stakeholder engagement?

5.1.1   The importance of strategic engagement

Stakeholders are some of the National Statistical Organizations (NSO) most valuable assets in ensuring the effective delivery of the corporate strategy, the imparting of messages and a high-performing national statistical system.

Harnessed correctly at a strategic – rather than transactional – level, stakeholders can be instrumental in helping an NSO inform decision making, support democratic debate and improve the communication and understanding of the role data play in the effective operation of a country. Working with communications can also aid the development of an early warning system that proactively uses stakeholder intelligence to mitigate risks and capitalise on opportunities.

There are also tangible benefits, as effective engagement with stakeholders encourages advocacy and elicits trust at all levels through the imparting of bespoke messages and the ongoing demonstration of value. Communication assets, such as a corporate narrative, can be helpful in achieving this, and it should emphasize the role of an NSO in being helpful to the policy making agenda and providing statistics to meet user needs. This then needs to be weaved into all that an NSO says and does.

It is important that stakeholder engagement activity is built into an NSO's business planning process and timetable as this will help ensure that stakeholder needs are at the heart of its business and that priority issues can be identified as part of an annual period of review. Engagement with stakeholders and staff can also make its way into the business plan, further supporting an integrated approach and enhanced corporate communication.

The level at which these engagements takes place must also be considered and it must be recognized that it is often the case, statisticians speak best to other statisticians while methodologists may speak best to other methodologists; this should be wholly encouraged as effective engagement is not about channelling interactions through one person.

5.1.2   The role and value-added of communications in professionalizing approaches

It is the role of communications to ensure that value is always added in these relationships and a focus on objectives remains, as it cannot simply become an information trade between those within the same profession. In difficult times, communications can ensure that essential information and interventions are staged in a constructive way and continue to deliver change while building and maintaining trust.

With this considered, communication has a unique role to play in ensuring an NSO's effective stakeholder engagement. While the utmost focus needs to always remain on the organization's overall objectives, it is vital that communication teams have specific communication objectives that respect the team's strengths and weaknesses.

The objectives could be high level, like developing and maintaining two-way and trusted relationships at the highest levels of government, or more focused, in areas such as:

- Identification of priority issues or the identification of individuals with a stake in an issue and mapping their interests and influence in policy making and scrutinizing.

- Identification of the fora an NSO needs to be in, the tables at which it should sit, the conferences that need to be addressed, events to organize, and networks to participate in.

- Identification of other channels for increasing the reach, e.g. the media, social media and stakeholder media.

- Identification of the key players – the people with the most appropriate knowledge and contacts - and partnering with those who can best engage with and influence these individuals.

- Development of the capability of these key players so they have the listening, communication, digital, political and presentation skills to engage effectively.

- Development and implementation of contact programmes on the key issues.

- Support for the contact programmes with a narrative, briefing and presentation materials.

- Monitoring the contact programmes for quality and frequency of interaction and for 'movement' of stakeholder position.

Treating relationships as accounts

Communications cannot and should not own every relationship that an NSO has. A common model for managing relationships is to treat relationships as 'accounts', with account holders (such as chief statisticians, directors, etc.) being supported by communications to manage their relationships effectively, consequently leading to more robust and value-added relationships.

These accounts should cover all significant stakeholder organizations and focus on building relationships with the senior policy makers and influencers in each organization.

Communication teams play a pivotal role in defining and shaping the expectations of these accounts and can work closely with the account holders to undertake thorough mapping exercises of priority accounts, to identify who will support relationships, and to provide detailed recommendations on how relationships will work in practice.

This support will allow key account holders to oversee the relationship at the highest level and to focus on strategy, co-ordination and problem-solving where needed. Communications can also consider providing customized external affairs and stakeholder management training for all primary account holders to help develop their skills to manage their accounts confidently and effectively.

Communications can also provide strategic support and response to emerging issues. In addition to providing individualized ongoing support and advice to key account holders, issues that require action can be identified and rapidly raised via an early warning system. The strategic

management of accounts and monitoring of the state of the relationship can be conducted through quarterly reviews with the primary and key account holders and relevant parties.

Once relationships are established, they can also become new insight channels and provide the vital intelligence to inform decision making. This will complement the account holders' strategic focus and identify issues of concern and presenting opportunities, with insights and action areas being shared as part of ongoing account management.

5.1.3   The differences between stakeholders, users and audience

Understanding the difference between stakeholders, users and your audience can help the NSO better identify what it hopes to achieve in communication terms when working with each community.

The following definitions may prove helpful to define the three groups:

Stakeholders are primarily those with an interest in the NSO's business. They can be individuals, groups or organizations that are affected by the activity of the business, as well as providers of its data.

User is typically used to define a person or organization that is in receipt of a service. For example, accessing an NSO's website to acquire data or using a service to apply for a passport. When researching users, it can be helpful to understand who they are and what they're trying to do; how they currently do it (for example, what services or channels they use); the problems or frustrations they experience and what they need from your service to achieve their goal.

Audience is more typically used with communications, as it defines who is at the receiving end of the communication. This could be a particular user group (for example: applicants to a particular service) or a specific set of stakeholders (for example: charity groups). It could, however, be even more broad, such as the public.

5.2   Stakeholder mapping

5.2.1   Stakeholder mapping and its importance to an NSO

Stakeholder mapping is the visualization of those with whom a relationship needs to be developed or maintained to help the NSO achieve its goals. It is the identification of all stakeholder groups, determining their position and roles, and their impact on the external environment. It organizes the structure of the relationship with the external environment and describes who and at what level in the NSO should be involved in the contact with the stakeholder or stakeholder group.

A properly developed map of stakeholders facilitates and shortens the process of planning communication with these groups. It shows what actions should be taken to maintain a proper relationship between NSO and stakeholders and eliminates the risk of inappropriate communications or actions.

5.2.2 How to map effectively

Stakeholder mapping begins with identifying all stakeholders with whom the NSO has contact and a relationship. These can be both institutions and individuals.

It is important for the list of stakeholders to include all those with whom an NSO has built or wants to build relationships – including key politicians using data or well-known academics, analysts and journalists. The institutions or people with whom relationships are difficult to maintain should also be included as they form a core part of an NSO's challenge.

The list of stakeholders should be reviewed at least once a year to make sure that it correctly reflects the external environment and to ensure that an NSO can continue to have the required influence.

5.2.3 Determining the importance of stakeholders

Using the list of stakeholders created, it is necessary to define their importance in building an NSO's relations with the external environment and in achieving the NSO's goals.

To assist with identifying stakeholders and defining their relationship to the NSI, the following questions can help:

- How important is the relationship?
- What role does it fulfil (i.e. data providers, users)?
- What is the impact on the external environment (opinion forming)?
- What is the range of impact (nationwide/local/isolated in a specific environment)?
- What is the financial dependency (private company, government unit etc.?
- Who does the NSO work with?
- Does it involve politics?
- What is the stakeholder's opinion in the external environment?
- Who can NSO influence through this stakeholder and how?

Properly asked, these questions will allow an NSO to describe in detail the position and role of the stakeholder in the external environment and what it wants to influence or where a relationship is absent and needs to be built.

This information can then be used to help map stakeholders effectively. A common mapping method is the Boston Matrix (see Figure 10 below). Using this approach, the importance of stakeholder groups is determined by how much interest they have in official statistics (interest) and how much influence/impact they have on the environment (power).

Figure 10 Mapping the importance of stakeholders using the Boston Matrix
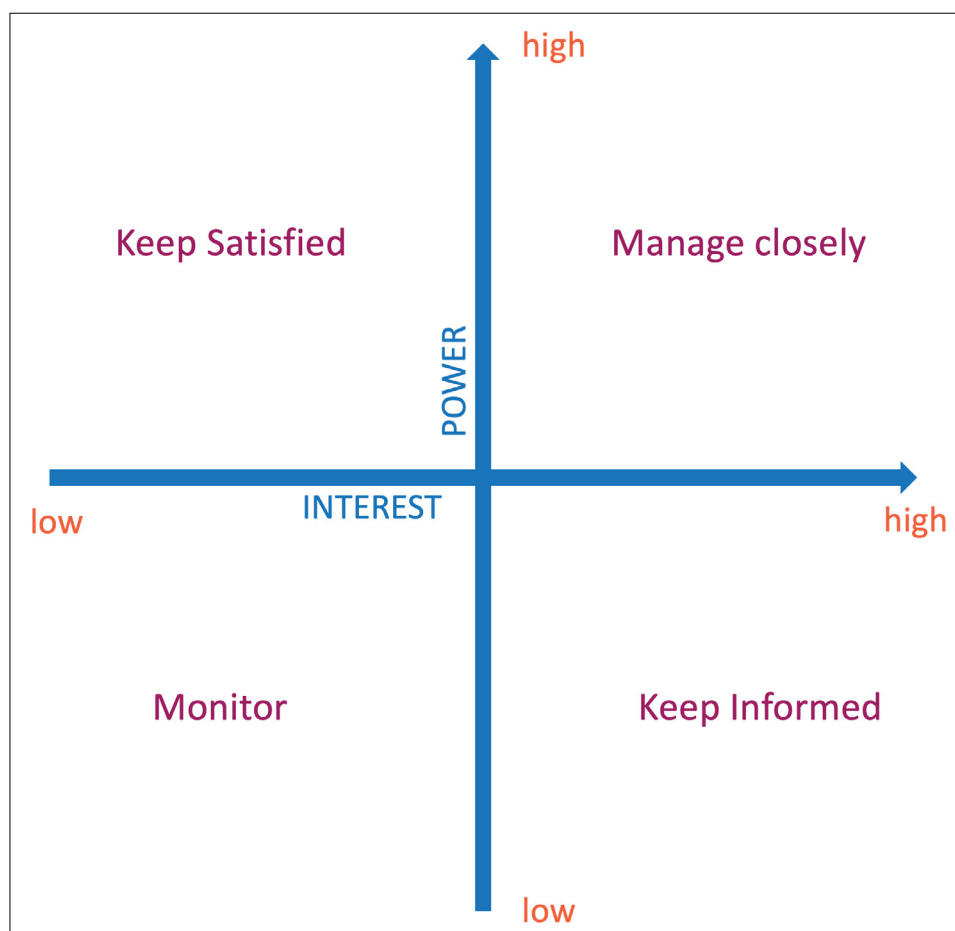
This figure shows the most important category as "manage closely". These are the stakeholders who are most important to an NSO's business and the ones who can have the greatest impact on the external environment. This is the group the NSO should establish the closest possible relationships with and devote the most attention to.

The second most important category is occupied by two groups simultaneously: keep informed and keep satisfied. The difference between these groups is due to their location on the graph. "Keep satisfied" is a group that has a large impact on the environment but is hardly interested in NSO activities (e.g. court, judges) whereas "Keep informed" is a group that has a low impact on the environment but is very interested in an NSO's activities.

The final, and third, category is the group of stakeholders that should be monitored to ensure their interest or power doesn't fluctuate, but no major energy needs to be exerted in their management.

5.2.4 Turning intelligence into action and maintaining the relationship

After grouping stakeholders, the next step is to define the activities required to reach them and determining who within the NSO should be responsible for managing the relationship and their level in the hierarchy. These activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Publications, such as a magazine or newsletter that is circulated on regular basis;
- Dedicated channels (i.e. closed groups on social networks, special profiles on social media, tailored messages on LinkedIn etc.);
- Frequent contact through formal or informal meetings;
- Identifying a key account contact who works exclusively with a stakeholder;
- Special events (councils, briefings, conferences with networking etc.); and
- Tailored information for and from the stakeholders.

To determine the level of relationship management, and the seniority required, it can be helpful to categorize the nature of the engagement. For example:

- Strategic relationships would typically be conducted by the management of the NSO. Strategic activities are often those involving meetings with the management of government institutions, representing the NSO at international and national meetings, or the participation in high profile meetings with stakeholders.
- Operational relationships should be carried out by the experts (for example: statisticians) with the support of a communication team if necessary. These are mostly bilateral relationships with their counterparts in other institutions. Activities here often include participation in briefings to provide substantive explanations, running working groups with stakeholders, and participation with stakeholders on topics of expert specialization.

In addition, there are also the relationships that are owned by the communication team. These will often be a hybrid of strategic and operational relationships and form the foundation for future stakeholder relationships to be developed.

Typically, communication will focus on ensuring there is an ongoing provision of information for stakeholder groups through monitoring the activities and ensuring the flow of information and contacts between stakeholders and experts. The goal with all activities is to ensure that there is robust and transparent relationship management within an NSI. This is crucial to the success of any stakeholder engagement programme, particularly as specific team members will often be dealing with different stakeholder contacts.

5.3 Developing a stakeholder plan

A stakeholder plan is a fundamental part of any communications strategy, regardless of whether the strategy relates to the overall communications of an organization or to specific initiatives, such as the introduction of a new service or product, or crisis management.

Every communications strategy requires a stakeholder plan that is tailored to the key audiences that have an impact on the success or failure of the communications strategy objectives.

The stakeholder plan is effectively the roadmap for delivering messages to stakeholders and is the foundation for achieving stakeholder buy-in for the communications strategy's objectives.

An effective stakeholder plan needs to consider the following questions:
- What are the strategic reasons for consulting with stakeholders?
- With whom do we need to communicate?
- What are the priority issues?
- What types of influence do various stakeholders have?
- What will be the most effective means of communicating/engaging with stakeholders?
- When and how often do we need to communicate with stakeholders?
- Are there opportunities to collaborate to ensure key messages are consistent and avoid consultation fatigue?
- How will the results be captured, tracked and evaluated?

The following steps outline how a stakeholder plan is developed:

Step 1: Context analysis

The first step in the development of a stakeholder plan is to perform a context analysis using a tool, such as a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), to evaluate the current challenges associated with the communications strategy's objectives, with a focus on stakeholder-related issues.

Depending on the nature of the communications challenge, some or all of the following steps might be considered:
- Analysis of existing information readily available e.g. internal documentation, media coverage etc….
- Interviews with business areas within the organization
- Interviews with senior management
- Brainstorming with the communications team
- Surveys and focus groups.

In most cases, an analysis of this kind will have been undertaken as part of the development of the overall communications strategy. Even if this is the case, it is important to revisit this exercise in the context of stakeholder engagement.

Step 2: Identifying and evaluating stakeholders

In developing a stakeholder plan, it is vital to identify all the stakeholders related to the relevant communications strategy objectives:
- Which stakeholders are supporters and which are potential detractors?
- Who are the stakeholders who have the most influence on this communications initiative?
- Which stakeholders will be most affected by this communications initiative?
- What are the top motivations and interests of these stakeholders and what is their driving force, e.g. financial interest, emotional interest, competitive interest etc.?
- Can some of these stakeholders be grouped in terms of their common needs?

When conducting this identification and evaluation stage it is important to be thorough because it is easy to underestimate the ability of a minor stakeholder to derail a communications strategy if they are not communicated with adequately or appropriately.

Step 3: Defining stakeholder objectives

In considering what individual stakeholder objectives should be, it is important to consider how their interests overlap with the overall objectives of the communications strategy. In this regard it is important to consider:

- What is their ability to stop the organization achieving its communications objectives?
- Where does stakeholder power derive from, and how can it be controlled or channelled?
- What are the stakeholders' business goals and how do these interfere with what the organization is trying to achieve?

By considering these types of questions, individual objectives for each stakeholder or stakeholder grouping can be defined, all of which should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-focused).

Step 4: Tailoring communications

Having defined the communications objectives for individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups, the next step is to consider what action or actions must be taken to enable the organization to deliver on its overall communications objectives.

This process involves defining what key messages must be developed for each stakeholder or stakeholder group and the most appropriate tools (e.g. newsletter, email, etc.), channels (e.g. website, social media etc.) or platforms (press conference, one-to-one briefing etc.) needed to deliver the messages effectively.

Step 5: Timing

It is important to plan and time the steps of the stakeholder management plan carefully as certain stakeholder workstreams may need to be prioritized above others to successfully achieve the communications strategy objectives.

To this end, a timing strategy should be built, based on knowledge, research and available resources.

Step 6: Engagement plan template

A simple planning tool, such as the one outlined below, can be used to record the stakeholder plan.

Stakeholder	Title / Role	Interest: How much does this issue / initiative affect them (1,2,3)	How much influence do they have? (1,2,3)	Stakeholders objective: What does this plan need to achieve to deliver on the communications objective?	Action required	Communications tool or channel, etc.	Timing

5.4 Evaluating success

It is critically important to know that the actions taken with stakeholders have led to a tangible – and preferably measurable – improvement, as this allows success to be repeated and helps to demonstrate the return on investment that the communication function continues to deliver.

As with all communications, it is vital to evaluate activities throughout the course of the stakeholder engagement – it is not a task that is conducted exclusively at the end of a project. Through evaluation, an NSO can ensure it is meeting its objectives, targets and engaging with the right stakeholders to advance its strategy.

5.4.1 The art of evaluation

Determining the efficacy of stakeholder relationships can be an inexact science so, to overcome this, communications teams should consider using a complementary suite of quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitative metrics can be easily gathered using surveys and scoring mechanisms that allow benchmarks to be established and targets set. Other simple metrics to display are the number of stakeholders influenced, engagements surrounding social media activity, and the amount of media coverage that contained a stakeholder's quote.

These should then be supplemented with the elements that simply cannot be presented in a dashboard or chart, for example the facets that cannot be counted, such as crises mitigated, goodwill extended and general advocacy. It is the communications team's responsibility to combine these measures into an evaluation that is actionable and allows future decisions to be made, using a solid evidence base. Wherever possible, there should be an explicit focus on the power of communications' interventions.

A common approach to presenting this information in a useful format is to use a supporting narrative. This should tell the story behind any data that has been achieved and be the vital context in understanding an outcome. The following questions can be used to inform this narrative's production:

- Did the NSO achieve what it wanted to – namely its primary objective – and can communications demonstrate that it met its objectives?
- What role did stakeholders have in helping to achieve this objective?
- Is there evidence of a better two-way dialogue with key stakeholders, consequently improving an NSO's ability to listen to external views and identify and mitigate risks to stakeholder support?
- Is better reputation measurement now available, allowing an NSO to track how it is performing with its planned engagements with stakeholders?
- Has the volume of engagements increased and why?
- Is there anecdotal evidence of improved support and advocacy? Do external organizations now know an NSO's story?
- Could better policy emerge because of early engagement with stakeholders and listening to their views?
- Is there feedback from stakeholders about what has worked well and what has been learned for future activities?

5.4.2   Lessons learned

Using this information, recommendations for effective relationship management in future can be made. Although every campaign is different, there are often similar points of failure and common requirements for future engagements. These can often include:

- Ensuring that there is a maintained database or contact sheet for all stakeholders involved in the project, especially if evidence suggests that not everyone was reached appropriately or at the right time.

- Nominating a relationship lead and/or a primary contact. This relationship lead should have overall responsibility for stakeholder activity and will be responsible for relationship building. This is especially important if feedback suggests stakeholders have struggled to find a *route in* to an NSO.

- Ensuring that stakeholder management is a regular agenda point and that updates are expected during routine reporting. Remember: evaluation is not simply a concluding activity.

- Installing a process to maximize good practice and rapidly resolve conflict.

- Running a culture change programme to remind all employees that stakeholder engagement is a constant, proactive part of an NSO's business and not just done in their free time.

- Determining which stakeholders need to be more actively involved than others.

- Increasing the transparency of feedback on progress with an NSO's plans. For example, if stakeholders were asked for feedback, it could be powerful to acknowledge their feedback and outline what an NSO is doing in response.

5.5   Considerations for the successful public acceptance of a National Data Strategy

Governments, worldwide, are increasingly dependent on data. This data revolution is forcing governments to consider data as a strategic asset and is transforming the way governments collect, share and use data – fundamentally changing the way they make decisions and deliver services to their citizens. Many countries are developing government-wide strategies focused on the protection, use, management and sharing of data – with statistical organizations playing the critical role of data stewards.

The June 2019 Conference of European Statisticians featured a seminar on the Emerging role of national statistical offices as offices for statistics and data. The seminar focused on a discussion paper[7] prepared by Estonia, with contributions from Canada, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the UNECE Secretariat. This paper has since been updated through the work of a task force led by Estonia, with contributions from Albania, Canada, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and the UNECE Secretariat. The revised paper is entitled 'Implementation of the New Role of National Statistical Offices at the Time of Expanded Possibilities'.

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7   The Role of National Statistical Systems in the New Data Ecosystem, CES meeting June 2019
https://unece.org/statistics/events/CES2019

What has emerged from the initial international discussion on this topic is that different models are being adopted based on the country's governmental, political and social landscape. Each has distinct strengths and challenges. The provision of clear guidance on communicating such strategies would be premature, as national interests and priorities differ.

However, it is understood that data strategies will need to pass the test of public scrutiny to be successful. Ratified and implemented correctly, they will enhance the reputation of an NSO and sustain public trust.

This chapter focuses on factors to be explored, from a communications perspective, as countries consider the adoption of national data strategies. In developing these considerations, the Strategic Communications Project reviewed the aforementioned discussion papers and all the papers submitted to the 2018 CES Bureau meeting[8] as well as the June 2019 Conference of European Statisticians ([67th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians | UNECE](#)).

Value proposition

Defining the value proposition is the most important first step. An NSO must be able to clearly articulate the benefits of a national data strategy for citizens, as it is only through the understanding of these benefits that risks can be mitigated, and in some cases accepted.

A successful proposition will resonate with citizens by demonstrating its relevance to their daily lives: it should be about them, their needs and expressed in simple terms. For example, it could focus on how the strategy will help understand the cost of living or promote better healthcare.

Data types, safeguarding and protection

A successful data strategy will bring together data from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

- Administrative
- Survey
- Private and acquired (big data, etc.)

By nature, an NSO knows how to ethically manage, safeguard and protect data. These features must be built into a national data strategy from the outset and not applied at the end of the process or when data collection begins.

Communication teams must remain cognizant of this in everything that they do. For example, data on an individual's health or financial position will be much more sensitive than aggregated migration data. Likewise, information about businesses will be of commercial value and require the proper access levels.

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8   http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2018/October/04-Redefining_national_statistical_systems.pdf

Methodologies

A national data strategy will unite potentially disparate data sets, making coherency and consistency problematic. The NSO must articulate these differences, as otherwise citizens may be unable to correctly use the data, providing further challenges to perceptions and trust, consequently reducing the overall use of the data.

As an ongoing initiative, an NSO should work to impart the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics[9] to providers to drive continuous improvement in the acquired datasets.

Privacy

A national data strategy increases the amount of data held exponentially, and this sheer amount of stored/linked data could raise citizens' concerns. As such, citizens must be assured that their privacy will always be protected and an NSO should promote its strong track record in doing so.

The use of a framework, such as the five safes that are used to help make decisions about the effective use of confidential data, should be considered as a foundation for communicating widely to reassure citizens.

Transparency

For trust to be gained and maintained, there must be complete transparency about the methods, processes and types of data held. This should include the necessary safeguards that are in place, as well as any recorded breaches or changes to what could be considered to be the public record.

An NSO often leads the way across government in this and, as part of a national data strategy, should seek to raise standards within the entire system.

Accountability

It is essential that the owner or partners of a national data strategy – who do not necessarily have to be the NSO – have clear accountability for the management, protection and design of the data holdings. This should include escalation routes and clear points of contact for citizen questions or concerns.

Public trust can be further increased with the designation of an independent commissioner or ombudsman to represent citizens' rights and views, including the management of dispute resolution.

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9   Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, http://www.unece.org/?id=3207.

Social License

Social license is created and maintained slowly over time as the statistical institution, through its actions, builds trust with its stakeholders, users and the public in general. As the NSO considers this new business model, it must consider the impact of its established relationship with its community. It is no longer sufficient for an NSO to rely on its reputation. It must be transparent about the changes it is considering, be seen as operating responsibly with the data to which it has been entrusted and take care of its employees and the environment.

When problems do occur, the NSO must be transparent with the public and move quickly and definitively to resolve the issue. Without such actions, the social license is at risk.

Conclusion

The considerations described above represent initial thoughts from a strategic communications perspective.

As countries embark on the design of their national data strategies, the communications team of the NSO should be engaged as a strategic partner. Communications are constantly monitoring the external environment (governmental, societal and political) and can help assess the public acceptability of different strategic models or proposals in order to provide professional advice that will ensure successful adoption and engagement.

5.6   Summary and conclusion

The High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics has recognized that stakeholder engagement is a key component of an effective Strategic Communications Framework.

To succeed in the increasingly competitive data environment, statistical organizations must engage with the full range of their stakeholder community. To do so effectively, staff at all levels must understand and embrace the organization's mission and vision, and know with whom to engage and how to analyse the level, type and most effective engagement strategy to deploy.

No two national statistical institutions are identical in terms of their level of maturity and/or type of responsibilities. The social and political environment from within which they operate from country to country varies. However, across the globe, statistical organizations are increasingly understanding the importance of engagement and forming partnerships with those who use, provide and have a vested interest in data. In essence, national statistical institutions are becoming leaders or strategic players in the formation and nurturing of the national data ecosystems.

This work proposes a number of elements statistical organizations should consider to identify, understand, manage and nurture the range of stakeholder relations. The following summarizes the recommendations presented throughout the document.

Recommendations

1. Relationships should be regularly assessed. Harnessed correctly at a strategic (rather than transactional) level, stakeholders can be instrumental in helping an NSO inform decision making, support democratic debate and improve the communication and understanding of the role data play in the operation of a country.

2. Messages and narratives should be crafted and shared with partners. Effective stakeholder engagement encourages advocacy and elicits trust at all levels, through the sharing of information and the ongoing demonstration of value.

3. It is important that stakeholder engagement activities are built into the NSO's business planning process to ensure stakeholder needs are at the heart of business decisions. An annual review ensures that priority issues are identified and acted upon.

4. Communications cannot and should not own every relationship that an NSO has. Communications can provide strategic support and response to emerging issues as well as individualized and ongoing support and advice to key account holders.

5. Stakeholder mapping is an essential element for the effective maintenance of stakeholder relationships. It is the visualization of those with whom a relationship needs to be developed and maintained.

6. A properly developed map facilitates the process of planning communication and interaction with the stakeholder community and identifies each stakeholder group's importance. It also determines the level of relationship management, be it strategic or operational.

7. Evaluating the success of stakeholder relations should be a continuous process using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

8. Information gathered through evaluation should be used to form recommendations for improvement at a strategic or individual level.

9. As countries embark on the development of government-wide data strategies, it is understood that data strategies will need to pass the test of public scrutiny to be successful.

Chapter 6: Employee engagement and internal communication

Effective internal communication is critical to an organization's well-being. Even the most compelling vision for the development and growth of a statistical organization cannot inspire or motivate employees unless it is shared with every staff member in a form that resonates with them both individually and collectively. An inspired and motivated workforce, in turn, is the decisive element that enables a statistical organization to achieve its mission.

6.1   What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a relatively new concept coined around 1990 by William Kahn, a professor at Boston University´s Questrom School of Business. His research, presented in a paper entitled "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work",[10] argued that the problem was less about employees being the right "fit," or lacking financial rewards, but fundamentally it was about how they felt. Figure 11 below describes the elements of Kahn's employee emotion: meaningfulness; safety and availability.

Figure 11   Elements of employee emotion (based on Kahn)

Meaningfulness
Does an employee find their work meaningful enough to warrant them engaging their full self?

Safety
Does an employee feel safe bringing their full self to work without risk of negative consequences?

Availability
Does the employee feel mentally and physically able to harness their full self at their full self at this particular moment?

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10 http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?url=http://www.academia.edu/download/33787773/WILLIAM_A._KAHN.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm3QBjY-wI105-tmCljb75wM737yOA&nossl=1&oi=scholarr

As the result of ever-changing social environments within organizations, defining employee engagement today goes beyond Kahn's theory and has become a more complex term. Some authors still conceive employee engagement as a psychological concept while others believe it to be a concept related to performance or attitudes. Gallup suggests that engaged employees are "psychologically committed to their work, go above and beyond their basic job expectations, and want to play a key role in fulfilling the mission of their organizations", whilst disengaged employees were are said to be "uninvolved and unenthusiastic about their jobs and love to tell others how bad things are".[11] Kevin Kruse defines employee engagement as "the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals".[12]

We define employee engagement as the extent to which a staff member's personal goals and interests align with the vision and goals of the organization where they work.

6.2   Benefits of engagement

An engaged workforce produces measurable organizational benefits. According to Gallup research, engaged employees are ten times more likely to strongly agree that they can take creative risks at work than actively disengaged employees.

 "compared with disengaged teams, engaged teams show 24% to 59% less turnover, 10% higher customer ratings, 21% greater profitability, 17% higher productivity, …, 70% fewer safety incidents and 41% less absenteeism".[13]

It makes intuitive sense that staff with high levels of dedication and enthusiasm will gain greater satisfaction from their jobs. It is worth highlighting a possibly less intuitive finding from Gallup, though: customers react positively to engaged employees.

We conclude that statistical organizations' data users and respondents will be better served, and will place higher value on our organizations, if their contact is with well-informed and motivated staff.

In short, some of the benefits of having committed employees are:
1. Increased productivity
2. Lower costs
3. Faster problem solving
4. Higher quality of goods/service
5. Promotion of better practices
6. Increased trust between employees and leaders
7. Understanding and support in critical times
8. Embracing a culture open to change

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11 Rick Blizzard, "Engagement vs. Satisfaction Among Hospital Teams", https://news.gallup.com/poll/10903/engagement-vs-satisfaction-among-hospital-teams.aspx.

12 Kevin Kruse, "What Is Employee Engagement", https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2012/06/22/employee-engagement-what-and-why/#22098ff47f37.

13 https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/200108/damage-inflicted-poor-managers.aspx

6.3   Types of employees

Knowing one's employees is a critical first step. Employees are critical to the organization's success as they both influence one another and influence external audiences' perceptions, especially those of customers.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) proposes that employees can be divided into three types with regard to their level of engagement: the engaged, the not engaged, and the actively disengaged (see Figure 12 below for definitions). The actively disengaged are the biggest threat to an organization's brand due to the sharing of their discontent with co-workers and the outside world.

The goal of a high performing organization is to move its employees along the spectrum in the hope that all of them will become engaged employees.

Figure 12   Three types of employees[14]

| THE THREE TYPES OF EMPLOYEES	
1	**ENGAGED** Employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward
2	**NOT-ENGAGED** Employees are essentially 'checked out'. They're sleepwalking through their workday, putting time - but not energy or passion - into their work.
3	**ACTIVELY DISENGAGED** Employees aren't just unhappy at work; they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish.

14 Gemma Robertson-Smith and Carl Markwick, *Employee Engagement: A review of current thinking*, https://www.employment-studies. co.uk/system/files/resources/files/469.pdf.

6.4   Strengthening engagement

Numerous academic studies have explored what drives employee participation. By knowing the three types of employees, organizations can improve employee engagement by developing strategies to move employees along the continuum so that they become fully engaged. Another IES report[15] lists seven key drivers of employee engagement:

1. Managers listen to employees
2. Employees are involved in decision-making
3. Employer demonstrates concern about employees' health and well-being
4. Senior managers show employees they value them
5. Employees feel able to voice their opinions
6. Good suggestions are acted on
7. Employees have the opportunity to develop their jobs.

Figure 13   The engagement model
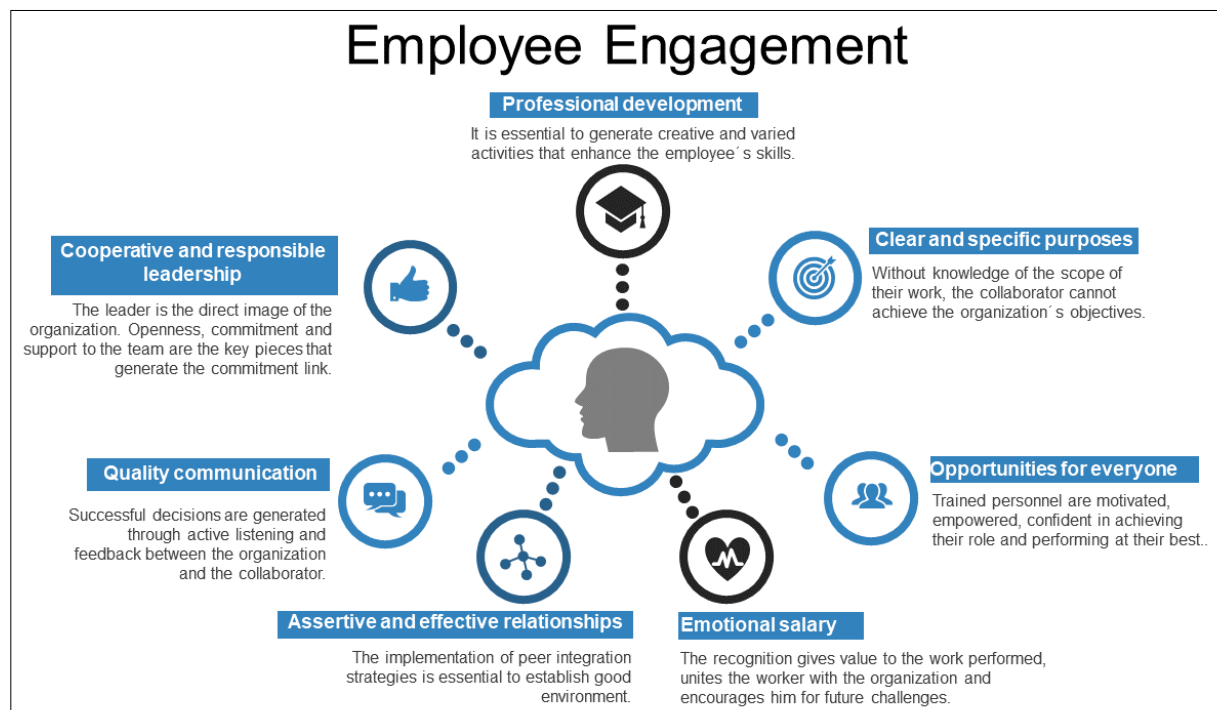
6.5   Measuring engagement

In order to develop an effective employee engagement strategy using the seven key drivers described in Figure 13 above, an organization must have a reference point. To develop this reference point, an organization needs to measure its current state of affairs.

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15   D Robinson, S Perryman, S Hayday, The Drivers of Employee Engagement, https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/408.pdf.

Personnel assessment tools give the project manager and the project team insight into areas of strength and weakness. These tools help project managers assess the team preferences, aspirations, how they process and organize information, how they tend to make decisions, and how they prefer to interact with people (see Chapter 11: Assessment and monitoring for more detailed information on how to conduct employee assessments).

Creating a corporate culture that values its employees through a commitment to strengthening feedback and communication creates added market value and can help establish the national statistical institution as an employer of choice.

6.6   Internal communications

Internal communications can be defined as the sharing of information and culture within an organization for business purposes. Though this is not identical to employee engagement, the two concepts are very closely connected. Effective internal communication is one of the primary tools' management has to engage meaningfully with staff. We explore the tools used to develop an internal communications strategy in Chapter 6.

6.7   Pyramid model

One model of internal communication is built on a simple vertical principle: managers convey information and direction to subordinate employees. The head of the organization has a management board under her or him and communicates with it. The management board has individual department heads under it, the heads of departments have employees under them. In time-critical crisis situations the pyramid model of communications fulfils its role well. It does not matter if the information is positive or negative. Communication has a clear and formal vertical flow.

The pyramid model has severe shortcomings, though. Exclusively top-down communications in an organization prevents management from obtaining essential information from staff and, in the medium to long term, demoralizes staff and diminishes employee engagement.

Thus, top-down communication must be accompanied by equally formal and well-structured bottom-up and peer to peer interaction (Figure 14).

6.8   Bottom-up and horizontal communication

Well-organized communication in an organization should be as open as possible. The objective in all communications should not only be to convey information, but also to receive information and responses. Each employee, according to their level of responsibility and the confidentiality of certain data, will benefit from receiving as much information as possible. An informed employee who knows the goals and plans of the organization, the current situation, and also understands the environment and common challenges, is much more effective.

Figure 14   Internal communications flows
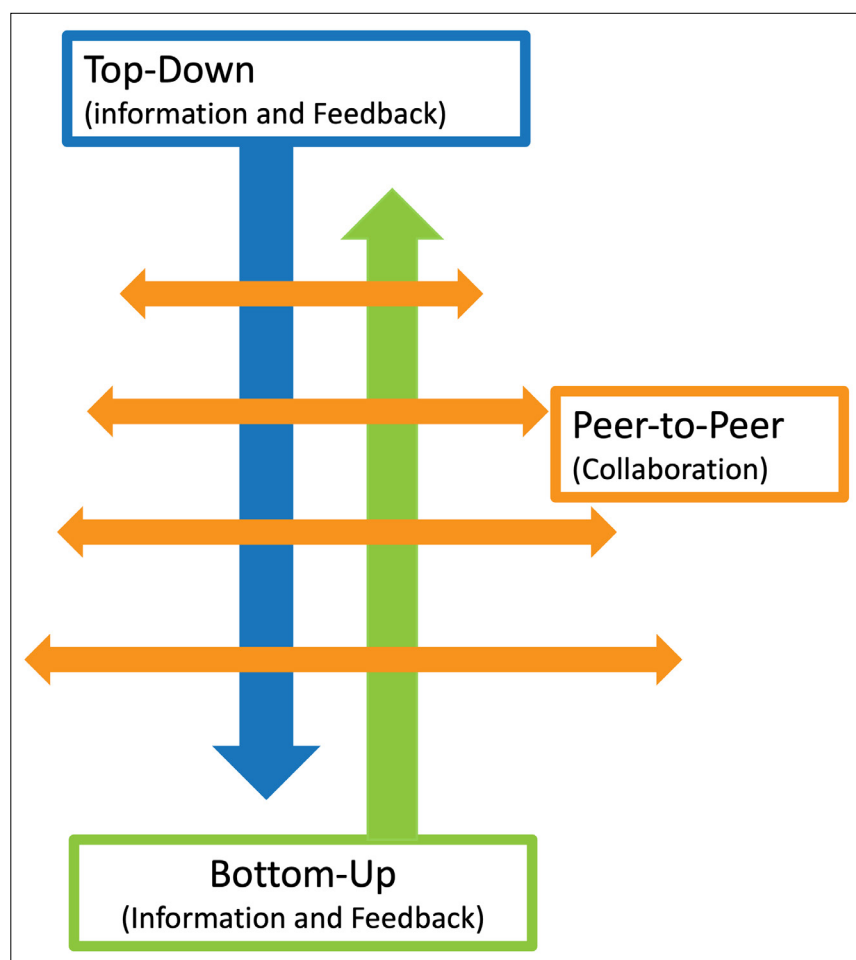
Bottom-up communication is the vehicle through which employees share their intimate knowledge of the day-to-day operations of an organization with senior management. Bottom-up communication unveils the detailed successes and roadblocks in production processes as well as customer interactions. Bottom-up communication is also the vehicle through which employees react to management proposals, indicating their approval or concerns with new policies, procedures, or strategic decisions so that these issues may be addressed.

Horizontal communication between peers enables collaboration. Horizontal communication inevitably takes place between staff in the same workgroup but may have the most value when structures are in place to promote communication between employees and their peers in different workgroups and occupational specialties. Facilitating broad peer-to-peer communication across all levels of the organization leads, among other things, to effective innovation.

The most important task of internal communication is to ensure that everyone who is associated with the organization receives complete, accurate and reliable information at the right time, and can add their knowledge and understanding to the corporate information flow. Ensuring proper communication within an organization is the simplest and most efficient method to succeed.

All staff, from the most senior executives to the newest recruits, are participants in effective internal communications. See Chapter 5 for the various institutional roles in communications.

6.9 Strengthening engagement through communication

The nexus between employee engagement and a robust internal communications program is clear.

An effective internal communications strategy must be grounded in the reality of an organization that is genuinely driven by its mission and values. Deloitte's *Becoming irresistible: A new model for employee engagement*[16] has identified five key drivers of employee engagement:

1. Make work meaningful
2. Foster great management
3. Establish a flexible, humane, inclusive workplace
4. Create ample opportunities for growth
5. Establish vision, purpose, and transparency in leadership

The Qualtrics XM Institute Bruce Temkin and Aimee Lucas, *Employee Engagement Competency & Maturity Insight Report 2018*[17] proposes five employee engagement competencies for management:

Inform – Provide employees with the information they need to understand what's expected.

Inspire – Connect employees to the company's vision and values.

Instruct – Provide employees with the knowledge and skills to succeed.

Involve – Allow employees to participate in making decisions about how they work.

Incent – Deploy appropriate systems to measure, reward, and reinforce desired behaviours.

In order to meet the competencies described by Qualtrics, internal communications must go well beyond simply disseminating information from the top down, to facilitating multi-directional interactions, forging partnerships across silos, building strong relationships deep in the organization, and promoting trust in leadership.

Today's employees need to feel part of the organization and to clearly see and understand how their role contributes to the fulfilment of institutional goals.

High performing organizations include communication skills in evaluations, track the performance of managers, and publish the results.

Leadership within an organization plays a key role in employee engagement. Some leadership characteristics that foster a favourable working environment and consequently increase employee engagement are:

- Presenting and adhering to organizational values and principles
- Acknowledging achievements
- Supporting talent
- Promoting fairness
- Motivating employees
- Involving employees in new projects

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16 Deloitte Review Issue 16, https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-16/employee-engagement-strategies.html.

17 Employee Engagement Competency & Maturity Insight Report 2018, https://www.qualtrics.com/xm-institute/employee-engagement-competency-and-maturity-2018/.

- Respecting diversity
- Having a humanitarian sense
- Listening to employees
- Detecting skills and talents
- Looking for growth opportunities.

In summary, leaders must foster a strong and transparent organizational culture that provides employees with a line of sight between their work and the vision, mission and values of the organization. See Chapter 8 for more detailed information on organizational culture, mission, vision and values.

Chapter 7:   Strategic planning and tools

Now that we have explored the theory and concepts, this chapter outlines the main elements and steps for developing a strategic plan for internal communications and employee engagement within statistical organizations. Since no two statistical organizations are exactly the same, these guidelines should be adapted to suit the needs of individual institutions.

Note that strategic planning for internal communications and employee engagement is very similar to strategic planning for external communications. This chapter will draw on the **Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions – Part I** and highlight primarily those areas in which internal communications planning differs from that of external communications.

In general, strategic planning is a present and future look at an organization and its related environment. It is the process of determining an organization's long-term goals and then identifying the best approach for achieving those goals.

A high-level flow diagram for strategic planning is shown in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15   Strategic Planning
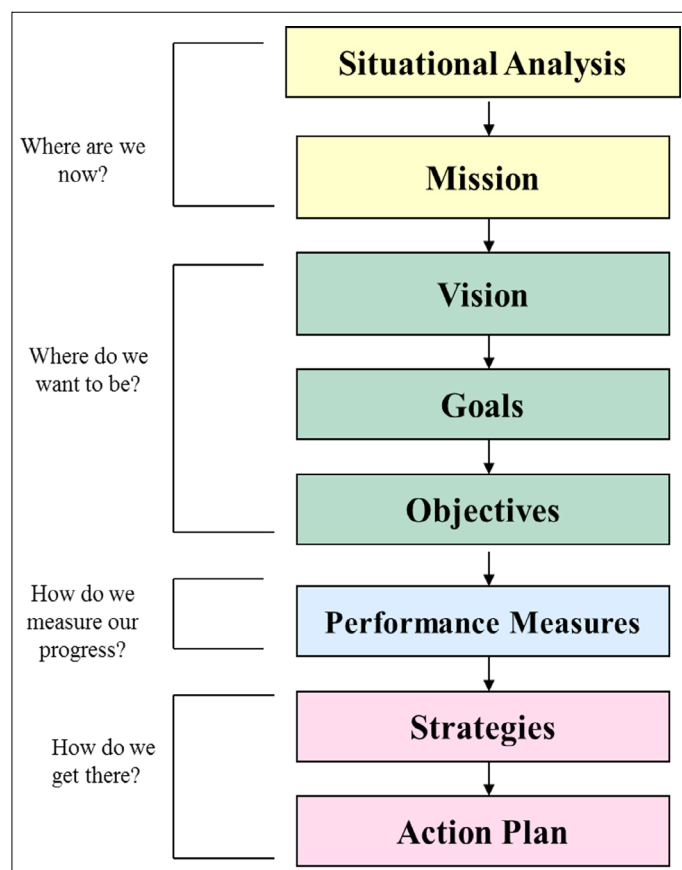
Within the context of internal communications and employee engagement, the stages represented in this diagram break out as follows.

7.1　Situational analysis

Situational analysis provides information on the current environment within an organization. This information can then be used to design new communications and engagement objectives and strategies, or to modify existing ones.

The following steps should be considered when conducting situational analysis:

Step 1:　Stakeholder identification

Who are the organization's primary internal stakeholders? For internal communications and employee engagement, stakeholder identification serves the same purpose as audience segmentation does for external communications. A list of key internal stakeholders might include:

- Executives and upper management
- Middle management
- Front-line supervisors
- Subject-matter experts (statisticians, economists, demographers, agronomists, etc.)
- Information technology staff
- Field staff (data collectors)
- Support professionals (budget analysts, human resources specialists, communications experts)
- Clerical staff.

What is important in stakeholder identification is not documenting each occupational specialty, but rather sorting organizational levels and domains into groups with common interests in organizational activities, and who might respond to similar outreach or messaging initiatives.

Some questions to consider when engaged in stakeholder identification include:

- What are the members of the employee group interested in?
- What do they value?
- What motivates them?
- What are they sceptical of?
- What are they likely to pay attention to?
- What is common for them to ignore?
- What is credible to them?
- Are there further subgroups with different needs and points of view within the employee group?[18]

Step 2:　Stakeholder scanning

What is the existing relationship between employees and the organization at large?

- Do employees identify with the organization?
- Do they believe in the mission and values?

18　*Manual de comunicación interna*, INEGI. This chapter draws on ideas from the INEGI manual in multiple locations.

- Are they even aware of the mission and values?
- Do they trust leadership?
- Do they believe they are being informed of important decisions that affect their work lives?
- Do they feel they have a voice in organizational decision-making?

Some tools for stakeholder scanning include SWOT analysis, focus groups, surveys, and similar methods. Initial stakeholder scanning can be thought of as establishing a baseline. Ongoing assessment and monitoring (Chapter 11) continue this measurement work.

Step 3: Review prior initiatives

What internal communications campaigns have been effective in the past, and for whom? Have conditions changed so that a similar approach might no longer be as useful, or are some worth repeating?

Step 4: Review existing channels

Evaluate what methods have been used in the past to communicate with staff: organization-wide meetings, posters, newsletters, e-mail, videos, etc. Assess which have been the most effective for various employee groups, who is reading them, and what impact they may have had.

7.2　Mission and vision

Organizational culture as well as mission, vision and values are explored in more detail in Chapter 8.

Mission, vision, and values statements are typically not intended only for internal communications and employee engagement. On the contrary, they serve an organization-wide purpose governing all aspects of the statistical enterprise. Nonetheless, mission, vision, and values statements are critical to motivating employees and aligning them with broader institutional objectives.

7.3　Goals, objectives and strategies

The terms "goal", "objective", and "strategy" are often used interchangeably, or to mean different levels of abstraction. For the purpose of this section:
- A goal is a broad primary outcome
- An objective is the approach you take to achieve a goal
- A strategy is a concrete step you take to achieve an objective

At the highest level of abstraction, goals define broad communication priorities that support the overall mission of the organization.

When defining goals, it is helpful to start with the organizational outcomes or business needs the internal communications plan is intended to support. The question to ask is "What will be different in the organization as a whole when we have successfully achieved our plans?"

Internal communications goals flow from these business needs. The question to ask is "What role can communications play to help achieve the organizational outcomes we desire?"

An example matrix of business needs and communications goals is shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16   Business needs and communication goals

Business need	Internal communications goal
Improve customer service	Enhance employee engagement
Ensure risks are identified and problems caught early	Build a culture of open communication
Measure an ever-changing economy	Encourage innovation and creativity
Change institutional governance structures	Facilitate the adoption of new processes and compliance with new policies

Objectives break goals down into actionable components. They identify separate initiatives that, together, fulfil the goals.

A central component of developing objectives is composing key messages. A clear, concise, and effective message platform is the cornerstone of any successful communications program.

Key messages are the most explicit tool an organization has to shape and reinforce its brand. In the context of internal communications within a statistical organization, key messages must provide a narrative framework that expresses what the organization does, what principles lie underneath that work, what value the organization brings to its employees, and – perhaps most important in this setting – how employees contribute to the success of the organization. Effective messages must be concise, relevant to the audience, compelling, and memorable.[19] Internal key messages must also be credible to their audience, which, in this case, is highly knowledgeable and discriminating.

Key messages become the source of all further communication activities. Internal messaging must also be compatible with external messaging, since employees consume both.

In addition to key messages, statistical organizations must develop a consistent approach to conveying these messages. Together, the messages and their delivery comprise a message platform. This is one of the activities that takes place during strategy creation.

Strategies are concrete action steps or tasks an organization takes to achieve an objective. Strategies need to be **SMART**:

- **S**pecific – what are we going to do for whom?
- **M**easurable – is it quantifiable and can we measure it?
- **A**ttainable – can we get it done within the time frame and with the resources we have?
- **R**elevant – will this strategy have an effect on the desired objective?
- **T**ime bound – when will this be accomplished?

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19   Levi and Kindelan, "Developing, delivering, and evaluating key messages: A case study from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics", UNECE Workshop on Statistical Dissemination and Communication, June 2019.

Strategy development targets actions to specific audiences or stakeholder groups. Some questions to address when determining target audiences include:

- How will a proposed communication address the interests and concerns of this audience?
- What does the team want this audience to do, think, feel, or believe as a result of the communication?
- What are the most important points the audience should retain?
- What level and frequency of communication is needed?
- What kinds of media does this audience consume at work?
- Whose messages will this audience pay attention to?
- Will support from any audience member be required to communicate the message?
- Are there constraints of geography, time zones, work shifts, culture, or technology that need to be addressed for this audience?

Any given key message and surrounding communication can likely be delivered through multiple media or channels. These might include:

- Organization-wide meetings (potentially streamed to regional locations)
- Work group meetings
- E-mail
- Intranet
- Wiki
- Newsletters
- Posters
- Videos.

Channel selection should be based upon the media which are most suitable for any given communication priority. Each channel offers specific advantages and drawbacks, and not every channel will be fit for purpose. Some strategies will benefit from using multiple, mutually reinforcing channels and higher message repetition. An effective content strategy maps out the right mix of channels to reach the identified audiences.

Note that, since effective internal communications is not exclusively a top-down activity through which leadership conveys information to subordinates, care should be taken to facilitate bottom-up and peer-to-peer interaction. This might include leaving ample time for question-and-answer sessions at all meetings, an electronic mailbox for employee comments and suggestions, a facility for employee-posted content on the organization's intranet or wiki, etc. To be credible in the long term, employee feedback must be taken seriously and integrated into organizational planning.

A communications calendar can be useful for planning several products in combination.

7.4   Performance measures

All communication activities should be measured and evaluated to assess whether they achieve the communication objectives and strategies. Done effectively, measurement enables iterative progress in communications planning. It presents opportunities for continuous improvement and helps organizations develop an understanding of the impact of communications activities.

Baseline research conducted during the situational analysis Part is central to understanding audiences' priorities and values. Evaluation throughout implementation is central to understanding whether the audiences' priorities and values have changed, that is, whether the communications activities are making a difference.

Since situations change over time, objectives and strategies may need to change as well. Properly planned and executed, performance measurement and evaluation can help an organization identify unexpected events, opportunities and threats that affect its work, and make adjustments in time to take advantage of critical moments.

Performance measures, assessment, and monitoring are treated in more detail in chapter 11.

7.5   Action plan

The action plan pulls everything together into a single document with the background (situational analysis, mission, and vision), the overall strategic direction (goals), intermediate actionable components (objectives), and detailed implementation steps (strategies), all bound together with measurement and evaluation indicators.

Chapter 8: Organizational culture and its mission, vision and values

This chapter explores organizational culture and provides an example of how to define and change it. It also defines mission, vision and values, provides examples of how to develop each element and demonstrates the importance to organizational identity and employee engagement.

This chapter complements the work undertaken by the Developing Organizational Resilience Working Group, which gathered examples of mission, vision, values and Target Operating Models from several national statistical organizations.[20]

8.1 Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behaviour. It can simply be viewed as "the way we do things". It includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, vision, customs, values, norms, beliefs, and habits - written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time. It also defines behaviour, such as what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within an organization.

Organizational culture directly influences the behaviours of employees within the organization, how they identify with the organization as well as interactions with clients. It changes over time. In fact, culture must evolve for an organization to stay relevant in a changing world.

When properly defined and aligned, culture can guide employees towards a shared purpose and improve an organization's capacity to excel. Defining statements, such as mission, vision and core value statements, help employees of organizations understand their organization and what is expected.

8.1.1 Defining organizational culture

Before an organization can understand its own culture, it is helpful to dig further into organizational culture. What are its attributes? How can it be explained or defined?

Groysberg et al.[21] note that there are many formal definitions of organizational culture and a variety of models and methods for assessing it, but agreement is sparse. They identified four generally accepted attributes:

> **Shared:** Culture is a group phenomenon - it does not exist at an individual level. It lives in shared behaviours and values. It is most commonly experienced through the norms and expectations of a group - especially the unwritten rules.

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20 https://statswiki.unece.org/download/attachments/218890322/NSI%20TOMs%20v2.docx

21 Groysberg, Boris, Jeremiah Lee, Jesse Price and J.Yo-Jud Cheng. Harvard Business Review Spotlight – Leading Culture. January-February 2018.

Pervasive: Culture can be found everywhere in an organization; sometimes it is part of the organizational identity. It can be seen in collective behaviours, physical environments, visible symbols, stories, and legends. Other aspects of culture are less visible, including mindsets and motivations.

Enduring: The type of culture in an organization can last for a long period of time. Lengthy existence can be explained partially by the attraction-selection-attrition model, i.e. people are drawn to organizations with characteristics they find appealing; organizations are more likely to select individuals who seem to "fit in"; and over time those who don't fit in tend to leave. It becomes self-reinforcing and also more difficult to change.

Implicit: Culture is subliminal in nature as people instinctively recognize and respond to it - it acts as a kind of "silent language".

8.1.2   Culture styles

it wants to be. In an article published in Harvard Business Review, Groysberg et al. determined two primary dimensions that apply regardless of organization type, size, industry, geography, etc. Analysing where the organization fits into the two dimensions is essential for understanding the culture of an organization.

The two primary dimensions are:

1. People Interactions

An organization's orientation toward people interactions falls upon a range of highly **independent** to highly **interdependent**.

— Independent cultures place value on autonomy, individual action and competition.
— Interdependent cultures emphasize integration, managing relationships and coordinating group effort. People in such cultures tend to collaborate and to see success through the lens of the group.

2. Response to Change

There are two responses to change: flexibility and stability.

— Stability includes focusing on predictability and the maintenance of the status quo.
— Flexibility is about adaptability and an openness to change.

Organizations that favour stability tend to follow rules, are hierarchical and strive for efficiency, whereas flexible organizations typically prioritize innovation and openness.

8.1.3   Eight types of organizational culture

In addition to the above dimensions, eight styles apply to both organizational cultures and individual leaders.

1. Caring focuses on relationships and mutual trust. Work environments are warm, collaborative, and welcoming places where people help and support one another. Employees are united by loyalty; leaders emphasize sincerity, teamwork, and positive relationships.

2. **Purpose** is exemplified by idealism and altruism. Work environments are tolerant, compassionate places where people try to do good for the long-term future of the world. Employees are united by a focus on sustainability and global communities; leaders emphasize shared ideals and contribute to a greater cause.

3. **Learning** is characterized by exploration, expansiveness, and creativity. Work environments are inventive and open-minded places where people spark new ideas and explore alternatives. Employees are united by curiosity; leaders emphasize innovation, knowledge, and adventure.

4. **Enjoyment** is expressed through fun and excitement. Work environments are light-hearted places where people tend to do what makes them happy. Employees are united by playfulness and stimulation; leaders emphasize spontaneity and a sense of humour.

5. **Results** is characterized by achievement and winning. Work environments are outcome-oriented and merit-based places where people aspire to achieve top performance. Employees are united by a drive for capability and success; leaders emphasize goal accomplishment.

6. **Authority** is defined by strength, decisiveness, and boldness. Work environments are competitive places where people strive to gain personal advantage. Employees are united by strong control; leaders emphasize confidence and dominance.

7. **Safety** is defined by planning, caution, and preparedness. Work environments are predictable places where people are risk-conscious and think things through carefully. Employees are united by a desire to feel protected and anticipate change; leaders emphasize being realistic and planning ahead.

8. **Order** is focused on respect, structure, and shared norms. Work environments are methodical places where people tend to play by the rules and want to fit in. Employees are united by cooperation; leaders emphasize shared procedures and time-honoured customs.

## 8.1.4   Integrated culture framework

With these eight styles and two dimensions, Groysberg et al. created the *Integrated Culture Framework*. Essentially, it illustrates the degree to which the eight styles fit into the independence or interdependence (people interactions) and flexibility or stability (response to change) spectrums. (See Figure 17).

The spatial relationships are important. Proximate styles, such as *safety* and *order*, or *learning* and *enjoyment*, will coexist more easily than styles that are far apart on the chart, such as *authority* and *purpose*, or *safety* and *learning*.

Some dimensions and styles work better together than others. Organizations that are shown to be about *results* and *caring*, for example, may be confusing for employees (should they work individually to meet all targets or work as a team and emphasize collaboration and shared success?).

In contrast, a culture that emphasizes *caring* and *order* encourages teamwork, trust, and respect. These two styles are mutually reinforcing, which can lead to strong loyalty, limited conflict, and high levels of engagement, but this can also lead towards groupthink, reliance on consensus-based decisions, avoidance of conflict, and a sense of "us versus them".
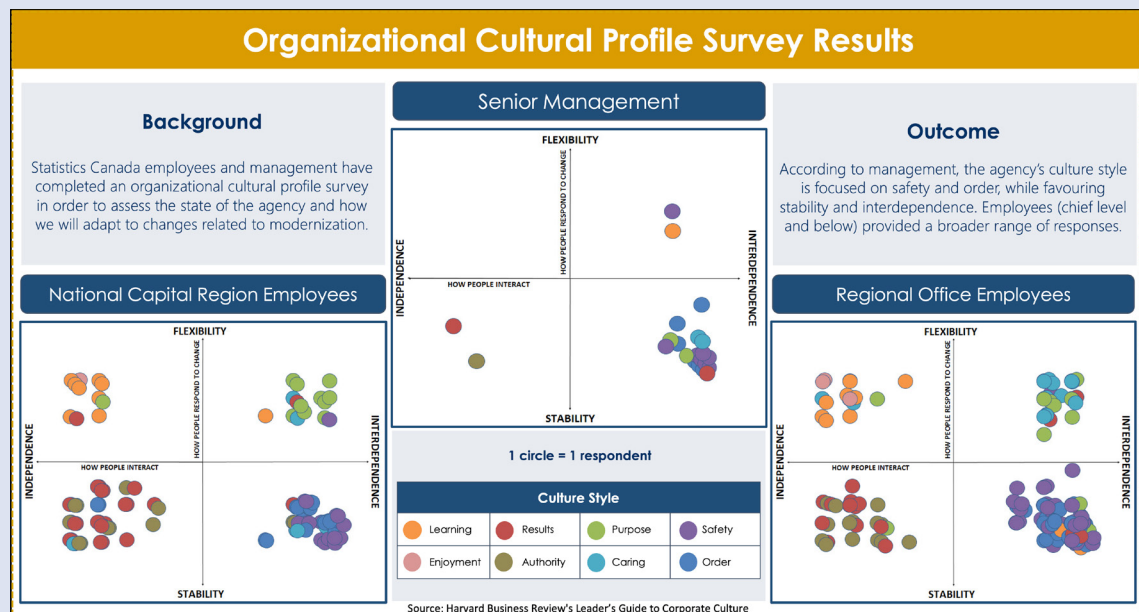
Figure 17   Integrated culture framework
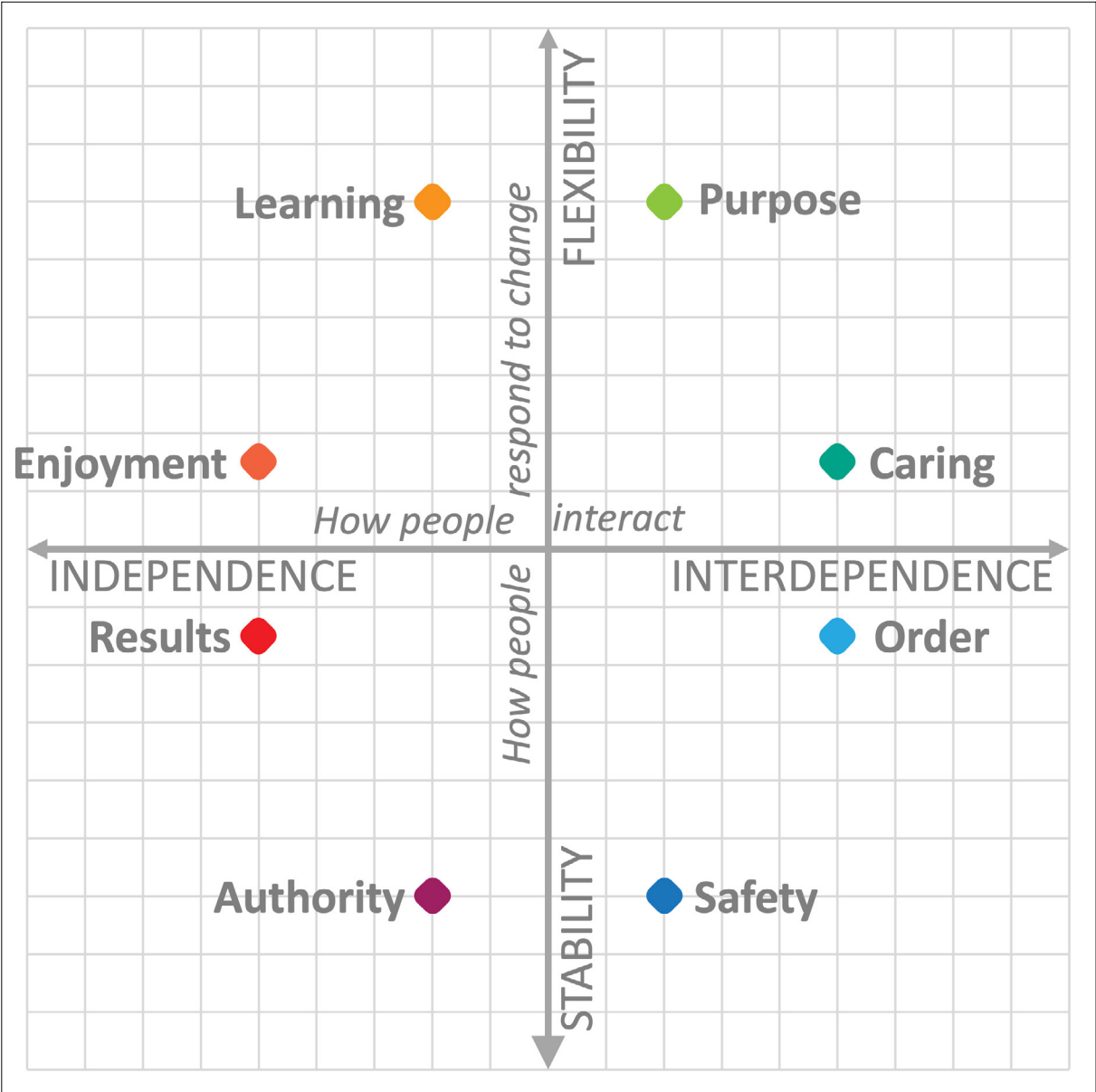
It is important to stress that each dimension and style has advantages and disadvantages, and no dimension or style is inherently better than another.

A survey tool could be used to help organizations determine their organizational culture (see Case study 1)

Case study 1:   Culture analysis at Statistics Canada

A survey tool, developed by Groysberg *et al.*, is available to help organizations determine their cultural make-up. Statistics Canada used this tool as part of its vision statement exercise.

Organizational Cultural Profile Survey Results

Senior Management

Background

Statistics Canada employees and management have completed an organizational cultural profile survey in order to assess the state of the agency and how we will adapt to changes related to modernization.

Outcome

According to management, the agency's culture style is focused on safety and order, while favouring stability and interdependence. Employees (chief level and below) provided a broader range of responses.

National Capital Region Employees

Regional Office Employees

FLEXIBILITY — HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO CHANGE
INDEPENDENCE — HOW PEOPLE INTERACT — INTERDEPENDENCE
STABILITY

1 circle = 1 respondent

Culture Style

Learning	Results	Purpose	Safety
Enjoyment	Authority	Caring	Order

Source: Harvard Business Review's Leader's Guide to Corporate Culture

Organizational Cultural Profile Framework

Culture Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Caring Warm, sincere, relational	Improved teamwork, engagement, communication, trust and sense of belonging	Overemphasis on consensus-building may reduce exploration of options, stifle competitiveness and slow decision-making
Purpose Purpose driven, idealistic, tolerant	Improved appreciation for diversity, sustainability and social responsibility	Overemphasis on a long-term purpose and ideals may get in the way of practical and immediate concerns
Learning Open, inventive, exploring	Improved innovation, agility and organizational learning	Overemphasis on exploration may lead to a lack of focus and an inability to exploit existing advantages
Enjoyment Playful, instinctive, fun loving	Improved employee morale, engagement and creativity	Overemphasis on autonomy and engagement may lead to a lack of discipline and create possible compliance or governance issues
Results Achievement driven, goal focused	Improved execution, external focus, capability building and goal achievement	Overemphasis on achieving results may lead to communication and collaboration breakdowns and higher levels of stress and anxiety
Authority Bold, decisive, dominant	Improved speed of decision-making and responsiveness to threats or crises	Overemphasis on strong authority and bold decision-making may lead to politics, conflict and a psychologically unsafe work environment
Safety Realistic, careful, prepared	Improved risk management, stability and business continuity	Overemphasis on standardization and formalization may lead to bureaucracy, inflexibility and dehumanization of the work environment
Order Rule abiding, respectful, cooperative	Improved operational efficiency, reduced conflict and greater civic-mindedness	Overemphasis on rules and traditions may reduce individualism, stifle creativity and limit organizational agility

Source: Harvard Business Review's Leader's Guide to Corporate Culture

8.2   Changing an Organizational Culture

There are a number of approaches for changing or evolving organizational culture. Given the social and often emotional nature of culture change, careful thinking and planning about culture change is important.

Cummings & Worley (2004) proposed six guidelines for culture change that could help an organization adjust to a new culture:

- Formulate a clear strategic vision
- Display top-management commitment.
- Model culture change at the highest level
- Modify the organization to support institutional change
- Select and socialize newcomers
- Develop ethical and legal sensitivity.

Groysberg *et al.* called their approach "four levers for evolving culture change." Although there are some similarities with Cummings and Worley, the approach of Groysberg et al. is more about recommended practices for evolving culture:

1. Articulate the aspiration

Much like defining a new strategy, creating a new culture should begin with an analysis of the current one, using a framework that can be openly discussed throughout the organization.

2. Select and develop leaders who align with the target culture

Leaders serve as important drivers for change by encouraging it at all levels and creating a safe climate. However, culture change can and does lead to turnover; some employees will move on because they feel they are no longer a good fit while others are asked to leave.

3. Use organizational conversations about culture to underscore the importance of change

Explicit communication at all levels is required for smoother transitions. The options are endless, including organization-wide meetings, presentations, social media, etc. The important fact is that they occur. The integrated culture framework and survey tool referred to above can be used to discuss current and desired culture styles and also differences within an organization. (See Text Box examples).

4. Reinforce the desired change through organizational design

An organization's structure and activities need to be aligned to support the aspirations of a new culture. This can involve renaming and reorganizing the structure or providing specific training. For example, at Statistics Canada, culture change included the creation of new 'modernisation' teams and pathfinder projects.

Organizational performance can be improved through culture change. Tools such as the framework above can be simple, but powerful. Senior management must be aware of their organization's existing culture, define a target, and then move towards it. Culture is often seen as a fundamental management tool.

8.3   Mission, vision and value statements

As we saw in Chapter 8, mission, vision, and value statements are often part of the strategic planning process that statistical organizations use to describe their present situation and future goals. These statements can become an important tool for understanding an organization's existing culture, and what kind of culture it would like to have. They are also useful tools for consulting or educating employees about organizational culture.

These statements let the employees, and the citizens they serve, know:
- the purpose of the statistical organization (current state)
- where the organization wants to be (e.g., future state)
- its values or what it stands for.

All statements should be inspiring and developed with input from employees. By creating clear, meaningful and reflective statements, management can communicate their objectives and motivate their employees. This will ensure employees understand the organizational objectives, make consistent or coherent decisions and are engaged in organizational changes.

To be most effective, mission, vision, and values statements must be repeated many times. It can be good practice to integrate these statements as standard elements into most, or all, internal communications vehicles.

An increased sense of employee pride may occur when employees see themselves working as part of an organization that stands for something and is united by a common sense of purpose.

Mission, vision, and values statements are also useful for communicating the "who, what and why" for the external users of the statistical organization's data products and services.

8.3.1   Difference between vision and mission statements

A **mission statement** is about the present, whereas the **vision statement** is about the future. A mission statement describes the organizational purpose and objectives including the quality of its products and services, whereas a vision statement is used to inspire employees to help achieve organizational goals.

8.3.2   Mission Statement

At the core of a mission statement is the reason why the statistical organization exists and **what it actually does** at present. The statement should be short, interesting, and easy to remember. Using jargon or technical wording is not advised. Mission statements generally outline priority activities, but also the importance and uniqueness of the agency (i.e. what makes the organization stand out compared to others).

The mission statement should be developed with an outsider's perspective in mind, taking account of what will interest and connect with those outside the organization as well as any benefits that may accrue to them, but with full consultation and engagement of employees.

How to create a mission statement

Campell and Yeung[22] conducted a two-year research project with 53 large, successful companies in the early 1990s in order to devise a meaningful mission structure. They created a framework known as the Ashridge Mission Model[23] (see Figure 18 below).

The framework consists of four important mission statement dimensions:

1. Purpose

What is the organization for? For whose benefit is all the effort being invested?

2. Strategy

To achieve its purpose the organization needs a strategy. If the purpose is to be the best, there must be a strategy explaining the principles around which the company will become the best.

3. Values

To capture the emotional energy of an organization, the mission needs to provide some philosophical or moral rationale for behaviour.

4. Behavioural standards

Values are the beliefs and moral principles that lie behind the organization's culture. Values give meaning to the norms and behavioural standards in the organization.

Values and behavioural standards explain the organization's culture. An organizational mission statement is effective when all the four elements of mission reinforce each other.

Figure 18   The Ashridge Mission Model
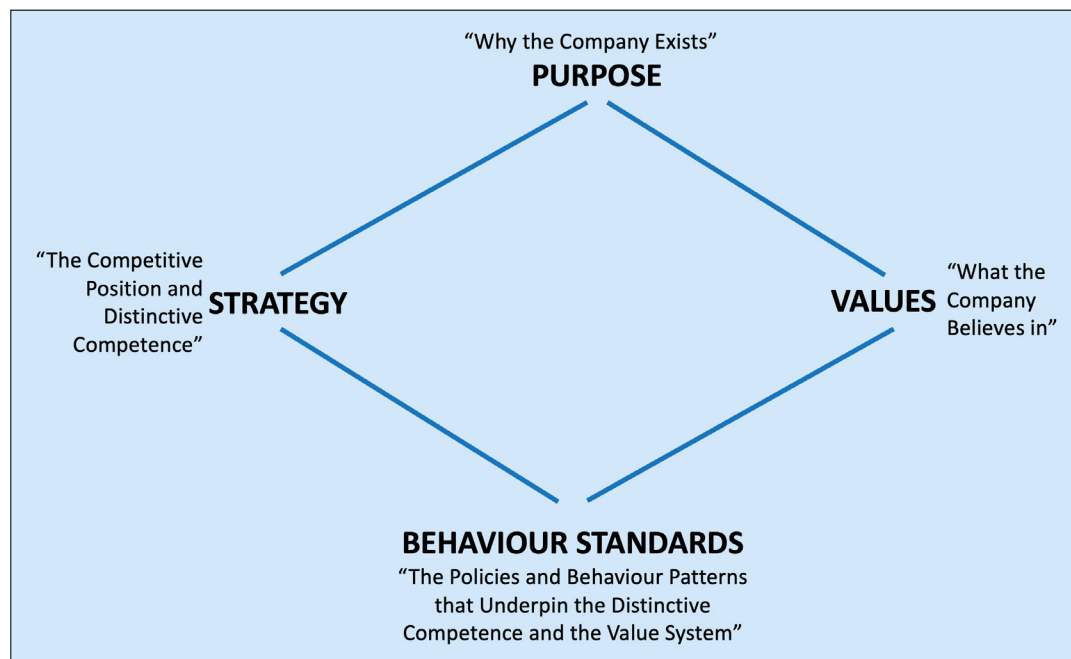
22   https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Campbell%27s_Ashridge_Mission_Model
23   https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Campbell%27s_Ashridge_Mission_Model

Vision Statements

Vision statements are carefully worded in order to inspire or motivate **employees**. They are used to describe what the organization aspires to be. They make use of the guiding beliefs of the organization to remind their audience of the values that have to be followed.

A vision statement can and should help drive the decisions and goals of an organization. Examples of powerful visions include:

- **Disney:** To make people happy
- **IKEA:** To create a better everyday life for the many
- **Oxfam:** A world without poverty.

Why should organizations spend time on defining their vision? Research indicates that more engaged employees are more productive, and they are more effective corporate ambassadors in the larger community. Employees who find their company's vision meaningful have engagement levels of 68%, which is 18 points above average (Fernandes, 2019).

When creating a vision statement, the following questions should be considered:
- What ultimate impact do I want my brand to have?
- In what way will my brand interact with clients/citizens?
- What will the culture of my organization look like, and how will that play out in employees' lives? (Fernandes, 2019).

The answers to these questions will help articulate the direction the organization would like to follow, its journey between the organization's present and its future state—in other words: its vision.

Based on the information from the questions, consider the following when finalizing the text of the vision statement:
- Project 5 to 10 years in the future
- Dream big and focus on success
- Use the present tense
- Use clear, concise, jargon-free language

- Infuse it with passion and make it inspiring
- Align it with your business values and goals
- Have a plan to communicate your vision statement to your employees
- Be prepared to commit time and resources to the vision you establish

(Fernandes, 2019).

Case study 3: The Development of a Vision Statement at Statistics Canada

In the spring of 2018, Statistics Canada held organization-wide ('town hall') sessions with employees to discuss the development of a vision statement. Given that the organization had launched a modernisation initiative, the activity also provided feedback on the status of the modernisation journey in the eyes of the employees.

The resulting analysis and discussion led to the adoption of a new vision statement: *Delivering insight through data, for a better Canada*.

Where will we be in 5 or 10 years?

- Still being the "gold standard" of statistical organizations
- Different work structure, less hierarchy
- Less risk-averse
- Increased engagement with users and stakeholders
- We will be the keeper of all data and will gather and share with necessary partners
- Shift in data collection
  - Decrease in the length and numbers of surveys
  - Increase in data sources and the use of administrative data
- More modern and flexible work arrangements
- Investing in building statistical literacy
- Greater balance between the Regional Offices and the National Capital Region
- A more user-friendly, interactive, visual and functional website
- We will be the central data hub
- Stronger brand and logo
- Better use of emerging technologies

Employees take part in round-table discussions about the core values of Statistics Canada. Photo: B. Duquette and G. Bowlby.

What do employees think about modernization?
Overall thoughts

- It is essential and long overdue
- Continuous growth and change to stay competitive
- Increased agility, flexibility and mobility
- Flatter organization structure
- Increase in collaboration and automation
- Different collection and dissemination methods
- Change in culture and workspace

Needs

- More clarity about the actual goal, and make innovation the main way to achieve those goals
- Understand the pillars, but would like more concrete direction about modernization
- Advanced and efficient technology
- More sharing and collaboration between National Capital Region and the Regional Offices
- Empower and encourage the bottom of the structure
- Less bureaucracy
- Better management of expectations
- Identifying more milestones for modernization
- Proper tools; plan and training management
- More communication with all levels

Concerns

- Modernization does not seem to align with our values (precision, reliability and quality), it seems to aim for less precision, being faster and working more efficiently
- Not well defined, the end goal isn't clear. The "what" is not clear
- Job security
- Policies and processes are not flexible
- Work-life balance concerns: employees noted being "exhausted given the high expectations"
- Regions feel like an afterthought
- Potential change in government priorities and impact on modernization
- Resistance to change due to lack of clarity
- Nervous about potential impact on data quality
- Equipment and technology will not allow employees to move forward

Background

Town hall sessions were held with Statistics Canada employees across the country to discuss modernization and a new vision statement. Discussion questions included:
- What comes to mind when you think of Statistics Canada?
- What do we do?
- What values are important to us?
- What makes us number one and how can we stay number one?
- Where will Statistics Canada be in 5 or 10 years?
- What are your thoughts about modernization?

STC Values

- Confidentiality, safety and security
- Integrity, reliability, trustworthiness and honesty
- Quality, precision and accuracy

A vision for Statistics Canada
Town Hall Sessions Results

Statistics Canada's Core Activities

What?
Collect, compile, analyze and disseminate relevant, reliable, unbiased, quality socio-economic data/information.

For?
Businesses, decision makers, public, academics, policy makers and government.

Why?
To provide a snapshot in time and facilitate informed decision-making.

First impressions of Statistics Canada

- Data and statistics
- Numbers and analysis
- Census
- Reliable and credible
- Slow and safe

What makes us strong?

- We're the gold standard
- High service and delivery standards
- Renowned quality and reliable data
- International interest, training and support
- Experienced, committed and expert employees
- Infrastructure and budget
- Trusted source
- Confidentiality and integrity
- Excellent and stable response rates
- Data collection and acquisition methods
- Open dissemination of data and information
- Neutral, unbiased and independent

How can we stay #1?

Internal Focus
- Valuing and investing in employees
- Enabling initiative, being innovative and encouraging creativity
- Improving talent retention and creating succession plans
- Establishing clearer, more realistic objectives
- Utilizing and staying up-to-date with technology, data collection and dissemination methods
- Making continuous improvements
- Decreasing approval hierarchy
- More knowledge transfer and training programs
- Increasing talent acquisition
- More workforce mobility

External Focus
- Maintaining transparency, integrity and credibility
- Increasing the quantity and quality of our outreach, public relations, marketing and engagement
- Better and faster response to societal changes and the needs of our users and stakeholders
- Increasing sharing, collaboration and partnerships
- Balancing quality and timeliness of data

8.3.3 Value statements

An organization's values are its guiding principles that apply across the organization and support how its work is carried out. They are the organization's basic beliefs about what really matters, which guide how things should be done. Values are what supports the vision, shape the culture, and reflect what is important to the organization.

Core values should be limited to about five, so as to be easy to understand and communicate. For example, Facebook has five organizational values: Be Bold; Focus on Impact; Move Fast; Be Open; Build Social Value.

Case study 4:   The identification of Statistics Canada's core values

In the fall of 2019, Statistics Canada outlined its four core values. In its extensive internal communications, the agency noted "Organizational culture is as diverse as culture itself. There isn't a single rubric for the perfect set of values—every organization is different. And yet, culture impacts everything. That's why over the past few years, culture has come up as an equally important piece of modernisation, and why the agency is building on its strong foundation by introducing four core values to help guide you—our 5,000 or so employees—throughout our modernisation journey.".

The images below outline the four values, and the activities created for employee engagement and enjoyment.

Our core values

Curious and always learning: We have a "growth mentality," promoting curiosity and everyday learning. We embrace new ideas, innovation, flexibility and collaboration.

Caring and inclusive: We show understanding, care and compassion for our most prized asset—our employees. We apply a diverse and inclusive lens in all aspects of our work, and we promote mental health and workplace wellness; accessibility; and, diversity and inclusion.

Trustworthy: We place a high value on our reputation as credible, trustworthy and neutral. We act as trusted data stewards who take pride and ownership in safeguarding our data assets. Together, we are committed to upholding security, privacy, confidentiality and integrity.

Purposeful: We are results-driven and focused on providing tangible outcomes for Canadians. We are committed to delivering services that are user-centric, timely and of high quality.

Stay tuned for culture activities

Explore this section to find activities for each core value.

Curious and always learning: *Your best asset in front of a challenge is your attitude.*

- A Learning Week
- Meet Modern Thinkers speaker series
- Internal speaker series on taking risks wisely
- "How to" learning sessions
- Innovation Fair

Caring and inclusive: *Never underestimate the power of kindness.*

- Pop-up messages on workstations
- Kudos walls
- "Secret Friend" week
- Video on the importance of small gestures

Trustworthy: *Trust is the basis of every good relationship, be it with clients, stakeholders, the public, or each other.*

- Culture framework passports
- Modern and flexible workplace videos
- Awards and recognitions for best culture transformations

Purposeful: *What you do truly matters because your work improves the lives of Canadians.*

- Faces of StatCan videos
- Show and tell sessions on projects that have had positive impacts on the lives of Canadians
- Good Deeds Wall

8.3.4 How to make defining culture and mission, vision, and value statements useful?

When defining or redefining organizational culture, or creating mission, vision, and value statements, it is important to involve employees often. This will strengthen employee engagement towards the organization and they will then take ownership.

Organizational culture definitions, as well as mission, vision and values statements, are meant to be a roadmap for an organization not to lock an organization into an unchanging pathway. They need to be reviewed from time to time to confirm that the organization continues to live its mission and move towards its vision, while applying its values. As noted earlier, these statements should evolve over time. In essence, the vision statement becomes the mission statement once it has been accomplished.

The more clearly an organization outlines high-level goals from the beginning, the less time and resources it will need to remedy poor communication, alignment, employee engagement and unwanted cultural behaviours at a later point in time.

When done correctly, culture, along with the defining mission, vision and core value statements, are puzzle pieces of the organization. To ensure the picture is whole requires a clear and specific organizational understanding and definition of each of these elements—and how the pieces fit together.

Chapter 9:   Maturity model

This chapter presents an example of a maturity model - a diagnostic tool for assessing an organization's proficiency in a particular area. Though such an evaluation can be carried out by external experts in the field (typically consultants), maturity models are just as often used in self-assessment exercises.

The Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model (Figure 19 below) is intended to be:

1. **Descriptive:** As a mechanism to help statistical organizations understand their current capabilities with respect to the most important characteristics of internal communications and employee engagement.

2. **Aspirational:** As an indicator of potential next steps in organizational development, providing guidelines for improvement.

Note that every assessment using a maturity model will require an element of subjective judgement. The intention behind the model is not to generate an empirically validated, statistically sound "score", but rather to give management and other participants an objective sense of organizational capacity, using a tool-based process that can be repeated over time to evaluate progress or lack thereof.

What happens after the maturity assessment?

1. Structure the problem

It is uncommon for an organization to display the same level of maturity across all characteristics.

One of the most valuable results of using a maturity model is recognizing that a high-level structure exists and seeing how the different characteristics fit into a larger equation. This helps to frame a broader discussion and begins to focus the right questions.

2. Determine desired level of maturity for each characteristic

Does an organization need to be 'proficient' in all characteristics? Maybe, but maybe not, at least not in the short term. Getting to the highest level of maturity rapidly can be expensive in terms of both financial and human resources. The cost of improvements in internal communications and employee engagement will need to be balanced with other organizational priorities. The maturity model can help identify areas where the most improvement can be achieved with realistic resource allocations.

3. Identify and prioritize opportunities for organizational growth

Maturity models are often the first step in a larger opportunity identification process. Based on the desired level of maturity in each characteristic, an organization can set measurable short, medium and long-term goals for improvement.

4. Develop a strategic internal communications and employee engagement plan.

(For a detailed description of strategic planning, see Chapter 7).

Figure 19 Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model

Characteristic	Beginning	Developing	Proficient
Leadership	Little or scattered management awareness of, or support for, internal communications and employee engagement.	Explicit promotion of internal communications and employee engagement by top management. Value and priority communicated to middle and front-line managers.	All levels of management committed to effective internal communications and employee engagement.
Management	Internal communications are ad hoc, according to manager preference	Internal communications are routine but mass-market (e-mail, newsletters, intranet, formal meetings)	Internal communications are frequent, direct, conversational, tailored to individuals or small groups
Staff	Communication is ad hoc, no mechanisms are in place for staff feedback or participation	Staff are consulted on visioning, work processes	Staff actively participate in visioning, determining work processes
Information flow	Ad hoc, top down	Routine, bi-directional (top down and bottom-up)	Routine, multi-directional (top down, bottom up, peer-to-peer at all levels)
Planning	Ad-hoc	Tactical, event or project focused	Strategic, coordinated organization-wide
Metrics and Evaluation	Few or none	Assessment once per year or less frequently. Results are shared among top management for information purposes. Little or no coordinated response.	Assessment at least once per year. Results are compared to benchmarks and established organizational key performance indicator goals. Results shared among management for coordinated action.
Resources	Tasks are assigned piecemeal to (possibly multiple) existing units, no additional staff, no professional specialization or designated budget	Tasks are assigned to a single designated existing unit, little professional specialization, some designated budget	Tasks are assigned to a specialized independent unit with professional expertise, adequate ongoing budget
Organizational Alignment	Staff identifies primarily with their own narrow work unit	Staff identifies with their own work unit and general organizational values	Staff identifies with organizational goals, are willing to cooperate across work units to achieve results
Training	Ad hoc, according to individual preferences	"Soft skills" training for all levels of management	Coaching for management; coaching, team building, facilitation, career development, etc. training for staff
Performance management	Communications and employee engagement are not incorporated into performance plans or reviews	Communications and employee engagement are a standard element in management performance plans and reviews	Standard procedures are in place organization-wide to recognize superior staff performance aligned with organizational goals

Chapter 10:   The roles in communication

In this chapter we explore the various roles in communications activities across the statistical institution.

Strong internal structures consisting of a well-motivated and effective team of key players in the organization can only be created through planned and thoughtful communication. Any information circulating within the institution must be associated with clear lines of responsibility and regulated by internal procedures.

The internal communication strategy distributes the responsibilities among identified roles. Each role carries its own responsibilities and accountabilities. The allocation of the roles and responsibilities promotes a culture of cooperation.

As we have seen in previous chapters, activities or responsibilities of internal communications are many. They include: planning and executing effective internal communications (e.g. measuring employee views and acting on such feedback, sharing information more widely, and ensuring senior management visibility); protecting and championing the desired corporate culture; empowering employees (e.g. encouraging self-managed teams, monitoring and continuously improving measurement assessment, reward and recognition systems); and enhancing internal relationships and learning (e.g. establishing internal support networks, encouraging employees to talk to managers and recognizing examples of successful practice).[24]

Figure 20 describes the roles of key players considered in the development of the communication strategy.

Figure 20   Key roles and related communications activities

Roles: Person/group responsible	Communication activity
Chief Executive (Chief Statistician, President, Director General)	Champion the organization's internal communication activities; communicate information relating to strategic objectives, directions, and policies
Communications	Communication of operational issues, building tools, functionality, events, messages; identification of internal communication gaps; development and implementation of communication plans, receiving and channelling feedback from employees
Human Resources	Communicate management decisions to staff; receive and channel feedback from employees
Managers/senior leaders	Communicate management decisions to staff; receive staff feedback and concerns
Employees	Provide feedback and communicate staff issues

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24   John M. Dalton and Susan Croft, *Managing Corporate Reputation: A Specially Commissioned Report*, Thorogood, 2003

10.1 Role of the Chief Executive (Chief Statistician/President/Director General)

Executive leaders, particularly Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), play a unique organizational role. As the top leader of the organization, the CEO influences organizational direction, relations with key stakeholders and organizational effectiveness by establishing a collective purpose, communicating a vision, and managing the culture. That role directly influences employee perceptions, attitudes, and performance through leadership and power.

10.2 Role of communications department

An internal communications department, whether it is responsible for strategic, internal, external or all forms of communications, has many functions. For the purpose of this document, the responsibilities for internal communications include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Creating and implementing a communications plan, in conjunction with other departments;
- Distributing and explaining policy changes to employees, streamlining the communications process, providing education and training, and addressing the problem of information overload;
- Overseeing internal announcements and training;
- Managing internal websites and social media, including working with website developers, posting regular social media updates and engaging with employees on social media channels;
- Managing blogs, including creating a relevant editorial calendar, writing articles and working with people to create content;
- Holding events, such as continuing education opportunities, networking mixers or open houses;
- Creating and distributing internal information materials, including brochures, newsletters and mailers; and
- Participating in issues and crisis management.

All of these functions help to strengthen the organization, brand and marketing efforts.

Effective communication is a vital part of developing transparency in organizations, especially in the wider context of political and economic uncertainty. Clear and consistent internal messaging is also needed as the nature of organizations and their workforces continues to change, driven by factors such as technology. As we explained earlier, good employee communication will help staff understand their organization's purpose and strategy, identify with the organization's values, and develop a sense of belonging by understanding how their role contributes to the wider purpose. Employees are more likely to contribute more and feel committed if there is a culture of open communication.

10.3 Role of Human Resources

People are the core of an organization, and Human Resources (HR) is the institutional bridge connecting employees to their workplace. HR may be responsible for communications related to employee training, benefits, wages and procedures. A close collaboration between HR and internal communications tends to strengthen an organization and is one of the primary bulwarks protecting employees from receiving mixed and possibly conflicting messages.

The HR and communications team should offer employees first-hand, accurate, and reliable information about wages and benefits, organizational policies and rules, company news, and other important HR issues. Without trust, employees may believe incorrect information or rumours.

10.4 Role of managers/ senior leaders

In internal communication, it is worth remembering and visualizing the role of the managers responsible for the functioning of departments. Line managers play a vital role as cogs in a well-oiled internal communications machine. Recognizing the value of their contribution, and investing more in developing management communication potential, is an area that deserves more attention.

There is a responsibility for line managers to ensure that all employees have an opportunity to participate in regular team/staff meetings. There is a responsibility upon each employee to attend and participate in these meetings. Employees should have the opportunity to respond and provide feedback. Managers will in turn convey this information to senior management where appropriate.

A successful communication strategy depends on the full support of senior leaders. Rather than being a 'top down' exercise, there needs to be two-way and multi-directional dialogue, so that people have meaningful opportunities to feed their views upwards and discuss them with colleagues. This is central to developing more effective and agile organizations, through innovation and responding to operational issues.

10.5 Role of employees

Given an efficient flow of information, both relevant and timely, employees will better understand the statistical institution's rules of operation and its priorities and responsibilities for future implementation. Through well-developed internal communication, employees can be prepared for any changes and can closely identify with the organization. Employees who know what is going on, what activities are planned, and who will be responsible for what, feel respected. Their approach to their tasks is then much more robust.

Employees have a crucial role to play in ensuring effective communication internally and externally. It is each employee's responsibility to:

- communicate effectively
- be mindful that communication is a two-way process and to ensure that appropriate information is shared and understood
- promote a positive corporate image at all times
- act professionally, with courtesy and regard for service users
- not act in a manner which could bring the organization's reputation into disrepute.

Chapter 11: Assessment and monitoring

Regular measurement and assessment of internal communications enables a statistical organization to analyse a variety of trends:

- Demonstrate the value of communication interventions
- Determine how and to what extent communications activities and products are making a difference for the targeted audiences
- Increase the skill and expertise of the organization's communication staff through continuous learning
- Inform decision-making about future communications initiatives and outreach.

Perhaps most importantly, measurement, assessment and monitoring can provide both immediate and long-term feedback on communications initiatives, allowing course corrections to be made in time to be effective.

In conducting assessments, there are two types of data to consider:

Quantitative data: information that can be measured. These data reflect 'how many'.

Qualitative data: information that can be observed and expressed as descriptions, perceptions, or feelings. These data reflect the 'what' and 'why'.

There are many tools available that can help an organization collect valuable employee information, such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools can improve understanding, trust, commitment, and communications among team members and facilitate more productive teams throughout the project.

The following table proposed by Paul Barton offers suggestions on the strengths/weaknesses and best use of the various tools.

Tools	Anecdotal Feedback	Focus Groups	Online Polls	Digital Analytics	Surveys	Communications Audits
Type of data collected	Qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative	Qualitative and quantitative
Methods conducted	Feedback requests, unsolicited comments, observations, personal interviews	Informal or formal facilitated discussions	E-mail, online	Tracking software	Paper or online	Surveys, focus groups, observation, interviews, analysis
Primary strengths	Inexpensive and easy to gather, may point out other needed research	Illuminates issues, adds colour to quantitative data, uncovers issues	Inexpensive, easy and fast way to get a snapshot of employee attitudes and interests	Built into most systems, multitude of data	Versatile way to collect wide range of information	Highly accurate, complete picture
Weaknesses	Not statistically valid	Group dynamics affect data quality	Doesn't provide context, self-selected participants	Requires analysis and context	Can be expensive, time-consuming	Expensive, time-consuming

The guidelines in Chapter 3 (Evaluating external communications) apply to internal communications, as well. Rather than repeat the guidelines, this chapter presents a case study approach to discuss several aspects of employee climate surveys that could be relevant to a statistical organization's monitoring efforts.

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Case study 5:   United States Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

The U.S. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)[25] is a web-based survey administered to most U.S. government employees that measures their perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characteristic of successful organizations are present in their agencies. The FEVS provides results at high levels of aggregation (government-wide, departmental, and agency-level), but also at the lowest level at which respondent confidentiality can be preserved, often work groups of 25 or so employees. The results provide agency leaders insight into areas where improvements have been made as well as areas where improvements are needed.

A precursor of the FEVS was first administered in 2002, and then again in 2004, 2006 and 2008. The survey was revised in 2010 to focus more on actionable items and has been administered annually since then.

Though the FEVS undergoes small periodic revisions, in 2018 it consisted of 94 items that measured Federal employees' perceptions of broad topic areas:
- Personal Work Experiences
- Work Unit
- Agency
- Supervisor
- Leadership
- Work/Life Programs
- Satisfaction.

Of interest to internal communications and employee engagement, the FEVS reports on several special indexes that aggregate responses to individual items.

One of these is the Employee Engagement Index, where engagement is defined as "An employee's sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission." This index is further broken down into three component sub-indexes: Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience.

The Leaders Lead sub-index is intended to reflect employees' perceptions of the integrity of leadership, as well as leadership behaviours, such as communication and workforce motivation. It is an aggregation of responses to:
- In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce
- My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity
- Managers communicate the goals of the organization
- Managers support collaboration across work units to accomplish work objectives
- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor?

The Supervisors sub-index is intended to reflect employees' perceptions of the interpersonal relationship between worker and supervisor, including trust, respect, and support. It is an aggregation of responses to:
- Supervisors in my work unit support employee development
- My supervisor listens to what I have to say
- My supervisor treats me with respect
- I have trust and confidence in my supervisor
- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?

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25   The survey instrument, methodological detail, and government-wide results going back to 2004 are available at: https://www.opm.gov/fevs/.

Discussion

Employee climate surveys are tools used to solicit and assess employee opinions, feelings, perceptions, and expectations regarding a variety of factors related to organizational health, such as opportunities for growth, relations with management, working relationships, and overall environment.[26] Climate surveys such as the United States FEVS can have significant value in measuring employee engagement over time.

In order to have value, climate survey results must be taken seriously by senior management. The issues such surveys bring to light must be addressed. Without both the reality and the perception of responsive action, employees will quickly become disillusioned and the effort will have been wasted.

The FEVS, administered annually to approximately two million U.S. federal employees, is clearly a substantial undertaking. An effort of this magnitude would be excessive for most statistical organizations looking for a measurement tool to use internally. Nonetheless, the FEVS might serve as a useful point of departure for organizations just getting started, or as a comparative point of reference for organizations who are looking to improve the instrument they currently employ.

Though the FEVS allows U.S. statistical organizations to assess themselves against other parts of the U.S. federal workforce, this is actually of limited value. There can be a thrill in finding oneself ranked higher than a bureaucratic rival, but the department-level (or ministry-level) comparisons are only a very rough guide to whether internal communications and employee engagement initiatives as a whole have been relatively effective.

Much more useful are the internal division-level and workgroup-level results, which allow mid-level managers and supervisors to assess their own effectiveness and give upper management some insight with which to examine potential differences in approaches and outcomes across organizational units.

Like with any survey, methodological matters, such as instrument design, and operational matters, such as response rates, play a huge role in the ultimate accuracy and representational quality of the results. Thus, any climate survey instrument needs to be evaluated by survey methodologists and field tested before widespread use.

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26   Definition adapted from: http://the-definition.com/term/climate-survey.

Respondent confidentially is also critical. Statistical organizations may want to consider having a climate survey administered by a third party to ensure that management cannot identify individual employee responses.

FEVS results can be fairly variable from year to year, especially at the workgroup level. With a sample as small as 25 respondents, one or two unhappy employees, or just a few new employees, can have a notable effect on an annual score.

One disadvantage of a survey as broad as the FEVS is that it cannot address the idiosyncrasies of any particular organization or drill down to give nuanced measures of individual initiatives. As such, a statistical organization considering a similar regular organization-based climate survey might want to include a set of broad questions, which are repeated every cycle, along with a set of specific questions addressing current issues and initiatives that change from cycle to cycle.

On a related note, statistical organizations must make decisions concerning the periodicity of climate survey administration. The benefits of annual or possibly more frequent administration should be weighed against the costs of operations and respondent fatigue.

Finally, results from a periodic climate survey are not sufficient in themselves to present a full picture of an organization's internal communications and employee engagement. Ideally, the quantitative results of a climate survey should be coupled with qualitative results from structured focus groups or informal conversations. Note that the FEVS does not include any text entry fields for comments. With a smaller survey population, statistical organizations might have the resources to read and interpret free-form input that would enable employees to express more nuanced views on matters of significance.

Chapter 12: Summary and recommendations – Part II

The High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics has recognized that effective internal communication and employee engagement are critical to an organization's well-being. Even the most compelling vision for the growth and development of a statistical organization cannot inspire or motivate employees unless it is shared with every staff member in a form that resonates with them both individually and collectively.

Within the context of today's ever-changing data environment, many statistical organizations are in the process of developing or reviewing their strategic objectives and their business models. With this comes the articulation of a new or refined mission, vision, and values statements – the organization's roadmap. Engaged employees, can and should be the conduit through which the statistical organization engages with the outside world. To do that, employees need to be informed, feel a part of the organization, understand their role and that of the organization, and embrace the values established by its leadership.

This component of the Strategic Communications Framework proposes a number of elements a statistical institution can consider to engage effectively with its employees. The following summarizes the recommendations presented throughout the document.

Recommendations

1. Knowing your employees is an essential first step. Employees are critical to the organization's success as they: directly impact organizational productivity; influence one another; and influence external audience perceptions, especially those of stakeholders and users.

2. Effective internal communication is one of the primary tools management has to engage staff. An effective internal communications strategy must be grounded in the reality of an organization that is genuinely driven by its mission and values. Strong internal structures consisting of a well-motivated and effective team of key players in the organization can only be created through planned and thoughtful communication.

3. Every statistical institution, regardless of its level of communications maturity, should have mission, vision, and values statements. These statements, developed with the input of staff, should be part of the strategic planning process that statistical organizations use to describe their present situation and future goals.

4. Used consistently, the mission, vision and values statements become an important tool for consulting with or educating employees about an organization's existing culture and what kind of culture it would like to have.

5. Statistical institutions can use the Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Maturity Model as a diagnostic tool to assess their current capabilities with respect to internal communications and employee engagement. It can also be used to identify areas for organizational development and/or improvement.

6. An effective internal communications strategy distributes the responsibilities among identified roles. Each role carries its respective responsibilities and accountabilities – from the

Chief Executive to the employees - thus promoting a culture of cooperation and consistency. Information circulation should be well planned and guided by internal procedures.

7. Regular measurement and assessment of internal communications, using both quantitative and qualitative data, provides both immediate and long-term feedback on communications initiatives, allowing course corrections to be made in time to be effective.

8. Statistical institutions can consider the use of a variety of available tools to collect valuable employee information, such as attitudinal surveys, specific assessments, structured interviews, ability tests, and focus groups. These tools can improve understanding, trust, commitment, and communications among team members, and facilitate more productive teams throughout the organization.

9. Information gathered through the use of these tools should be analysed and the results shared with all staff. Informing and commenting in real time will build trust between employees and the organization.

Statistical institutions should promote actions that remind employees that their voices are being heard and that they contribute to the decision-making process.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Developing a new brand – Case Study Statistics Canada[27]

Developing and embedding a new brand should be an exercise in inclusivity, where the resulting brand is one that immediately resonates with those who encounter it. It should feel familiar, but also fresh and exciting with. Statistics Canada describes some of the steps that are being taken to develop their new position, all of which are transferable for national statistical organizations and should be considered best practice:

1. **Public opinion research:** In 2018, Statistics Canada conducted research to collect feedback from Canadians on the Agency and its programs. These findings were then complemented with secondary research in Canadians' perceptions of government, their media consumption habits and engagement patterns.

2. **Setting the vision for Statistics Canada:** Through consultations with employees (Town Hall sessions) across the country, the Communications and Dissemination Branch (CDB) was able to create vision and value statements for Statistics Canada. These were then submitted for senior management approval. The vision took into account public perceptions (from public opinion research), and employees' views (Town Halls), thus ensuring it resonated with the public and aligned with internal values. Employee consultations also provided information to assist in modernisation efforts including perceptions of the Statistics Canada organizational culture.

3. **Branding and recognition:** Using the insights gathered with the above research, along with the vision and confirmed values, a visual identity is being developed and messaging guidelines to be distributed and aggressively promoted internally and externally. This will optimize message cohesiveness and impact every time Statistics Canada reaches out to and engage with Canadians.

4. **Engagement:** Creating new engagement platforms and tools and developing a framework to coordinate all engagement and communication activities and – more importantly – identifying and fostering synergies to increase reach and impact.

5. **Market intelligence:** Continued guidance and facilitation of targeted communications activities and stakeholder relations, through the establishment of a business intelligence body that will leverage internal and external datasets. This will support the identification of behavioural, social, demographic, geographical, attitudinal, and other characteristics that are relevant to the target audiences with which the Agency engages. The Centre will guide Statistics Canada's communications with partners, stakeholders, and the public through better understanding of information needs, growth opportunities, and information consumption habits.

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27   Case study provided by Statistics Canada. For questions or further enquiries, please contact Statistics Canada.

Annex 2: Issues management – Case study Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) established a comprehensive issues management framework to categorize, manage, coordinate, and respond to issues arising from program operations. This included appointing a designated Issues Manager and a small team comprising at any time between 4 to 6 staff members.

The issues management team established strong working relationships across all work program and developed issue management plans for each work stream. These plans were in place early in the process to enable the efficient handling of issues as they arose.

Two companies were contracted to provide external expertise in business continuity and issues management and to assist with developing issue recovery plans. These plans complemented the issues management framework and provided independent assurance over processes.

The Issues Manager worked closely with the Risk Manager to monitor emerging issues that potentially required a risk management strategy to resolve. Equally there was a strong working relationship with the Fraud Manager in the event that issues involved suspected fraud.

The issues management framework ensured a common understanding of terminology amongst all work streams and a clear understanding of the escalation path.

The Operations Management Team included all work stream leads and was responsible for reporting issues at the daily operations meeting. This ensured that all work streams were aware of the issue and any possible impact on other work streams.

Figure A1 Issues management process
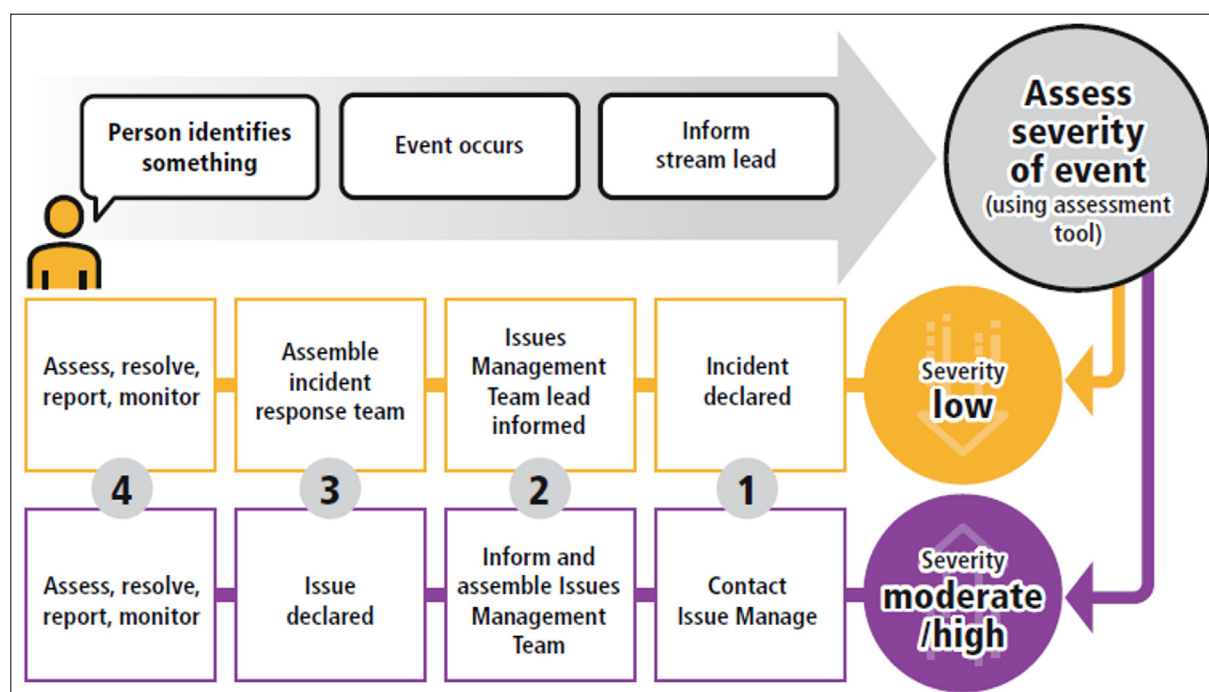
The Issues Management team was responsible for:

- overseeing the execution of issues management plans and determining actions required to delegate and respond as appropriate
- monitoring the resolution of issues
- identifying crises for escalation to the Crisis Management Team.

The Crisis Management Team was responsible for ensuing business continuity in the event of an issue impacting on the organization's reputation.

The issues management framework adopted agile processes to work through issues and used a Kanban board to facilitate conversations with the Issues Management Team and work through the priority areas; people, security, integrity of data, communication and reputation, processing, customer experience and business as usual. This process was useful in identifying key priority areas requiring action and quick resolution of issues.

Issues Management Kanban

To effectively and efficiently manage issues that occurred outside business hours, a secured virtual conference number was established, with a supporting 'virtual' Kanban board to guide the discussion.

An Issues Response Room was established and equipped with video conferencing; communications media monitoring; workstations; whiteboard to allow the Issues Management team to work through issues in a secure location. Utilization of tools such as Skype Chat Rooms; SMS group contacts; and external conferencing enabled communication to flow effectively and efficiently.

A total of 8 issues arose during the operations of the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey (AMLPS) with the majority of issues occurring in the early stages of the program, in particular the period where survey forms were being mailed out (between 12 September 2017 and 25 September 2017). All issues were resolved well before the close of the survey, with the majority closed within a day of the issue occurring.

Throughout the AMLPS there were no issues elevated to a crisis situation.

Issue management case study: 1

Attempts to sell survey forms online

On 30 August 2017, the media reported the sale of survey forms online via sites such as eBay and Gumtree. This action raised serious security concerns.

The ABS engaged quickly with online marketplaces such as eBay, Facebook, Gumtree, Amazon, Alibaba, and Digital Industry Group seeking their assistance to remove any listing and an assurance that future listings would be blocked and promptly removed.

The sale and/or purchase of survey materials or responses may be an offence under the Census and Statistics Act 1905 or the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Penalties for these offences range from fines to imprisonment.

All allegations of fraud or criminal actions were investigated by the ABS and where appropriate referred to the relevant authorities for investigation. A total of 18 matters were referred to police for investigation.

Bogus Australia Post worker using torch to identify No responses

On 13 September 2017 an individual claiming to be an Australian Postal worker tweeted that they were using a torch light held against the reply paid envelope to see the response on the survey form and throwing out No response surveys. This raised issues around tampering with survey responses, privacy concerns and the integrity of Australian Postal workers.

Australia Post investigated and confirmed that the person was not an Australia Post employee and noted that tampering with mail is a Commonwealth offence and carries serious penalties. Examining the contents of a person's mail that is not approved to do so is punishable and could face imprisonment of up to two years. The criminal consequences were highlighted in responses to media questions and in media appearances by the Taskforce lead.

There was no visible identifying information on any response form such as a name or an address to identify an individual and therefore there was no breach of privacy.

This fake claim about Australia Post's handling of forms was an isolated report and there were no such incidents at any point in the process.

Crisis management simulation

The ABS engaged a public relations agency to facilitate an issues workshop to test the Issues Management team readiness to prevent, prepare, respond and recover in a crisis situation. A set of scenarios were used that focused on the management of likely crises and the efficiency and effectiveness of the public and internal communication channels.

The scenarios ranged in complexity and covered threats to physical security, data integrity, sabotage, staff safety and theft. This approach proved highly useful and was able to inform the ABS's approach to risk management, issues management and fraud control.

Complaints

Members of the public were able to lodge feedback with the ABS through the marriage survey website. The ABS received 800 complaints from the public through this form. The complaints related to:
• the fact that the survey was being conducted
• concerns about personal privacy
• a broadcast SMS message sent by a campaign
• skywriting by a campaign

Where appropriate the ABS referred complaints to relevant areas within the ABS and to relevant government departments and agencies.

Annex 3: Crisis Communications Team Charter and Strategy Development – Case study U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics[28]

As identified in Chapter 2; section 2.2 – **Guidelines to develop a crisis and issue management strategy**, three groups are traditionally involved in the development and implementation of a crisis communications strategy:

- The **Executive Oversight Board** strategically plans the organization's crisis communications policy, including developing the Crisis Communications Strategy and chartering the Crisis Communications Team.

- The **Crisis Communications Team** determines and enacts the communications tactics best suited to the crisis situation. More specific responsibilities are outlined in this charter and in the Crisis Communications Plan.

- The **management in charge of the area** that is involved in the situation that brought about/ most impacted by the crisis is responsible for resolving the situation and for keeping the CCT informed with the latest information on the status of the crisis. The Senior Executive for the affected program (if program-specific) or designee joins the Crisis Communications Team for the duration of the crisis.

Crisis Definition

A crisis is a significant event that prompts substantial, often sustained, news coverage and public scrutiny and has the potential to damage the organization's reputation and image. A crisis could be precipitated by an emergency or a controversy.

- An emergency is a fire, hurricane, crime or other event that presents a threat and typically involves a response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel. These types of crises are typically handled by the Office of Administration as part of the organization's Emergency Response and Evacuation procedures.

- A controversy better describes events such as a case of early data release or questions of data veracity from prominent figures.

This example focuses primarily on controversies and the approach to address external communications for high-profile emergency situations.

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28 This example is based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Crisis Communications Plan. It has been edited to remove personally identifying information and to clarify some of the specifics of the U.S. statistical system. For questions or further enquiries, please contact the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Crisis Communications Team Charter

Mission
The Crisis Communications Team is the central element in the organization's Crisis Communications Plan. The Team determines and enacts the communications tactics best suited to the crisis situation.

Authority
The Crisis Communications Team has the authority to:
- Communicate with political appointees and other agencies on the situation
- Activate a crisis communications response
- Communicate with stakeholders during a crisis
- Determine when a crisis is over

Membership
The Team will consist of the statistical institution's senior management officials. At a minimum, the core team will include:
- Head of the statistical institution
- Deputy head
- Director of Public Affairs
- Senior Executive for Communications or designee
- Senior Executive for Administration or designee

Additional members may be called upon when deemed necessary by the core Team:
- Senior Executive for Information Technology or designee
- Senior Executive for Field Operations or designee and Regional Executive (if in their Region) or designee
- Senior Executive for affected program (if program-specific) or designee

Roles and Responsibilities
Once developed, the specific duties of the Team will be found in the Crisis Communications Plan. In summary, the Crisis Communications Team will:
- work with the appropriate key personnel responsible for managing and resolving the crisis
- gather information and identify what, if any, actions should be taken
- determine whether it is in the best interest of the institution and the public to issue a response;
- if action is required, tailor the response to that specific crisis by creating and disseminating key messages and working with the media
- respond to key audiences in an open and honest manner
- identify and implement necessary corrective actions to address the situation and protect the mission and reputation of the statistical institution; and
- evaluate the crisis communications process and improve methods for potential future crisis communications.

Annex 4:   Communication Crisis Response Examples

Overview

When a statistical organization is faced with a communication crisis situation, the following steps can be followed to ensure the situation is handled effectively and efficiently.

In any situation, it is best to first check the Crisis Communications Contact List for names and phone numbers. Keep in mind that all statements must be approved before they can be used. Below you will find examples. Please insert information or select alternative wording when you see **(statements in bold)**.

Standby statements are initial announcements stating what is known and what has been verified. They provide the institution with time to properly assess the situation and organize appropriate responses specific to the event.

Example 1 – Generic Communication Crisis Scenario Response

The following example offers advice on how to **generically approach a communication crisis situation** and the steps to be taken within the first eight hours.

Steps to take:

1. Determine if this is a crisis. If media are involved or if the statistical institution's reputation could be impacted, it should be handled as a crisis: Notify Crisis Communications Team (within 5 minutes of report).

2. Verify the facts of the situation (who, what, when, where and how) (within 10 minutes).

3. Depending on the urgency of the situation, post an initial statement on appropriate channels (e.g., website, Twitter) and share the same statement with the media (within 10 minutes):

> We are aware of recent public reports concerning the Agency. We are reviewing the situation and will provide more information as it becomes available.

4. Conduct the appropriate notifications (within 10 - 30 minutes). If the media are involved, notify political stakeholders immediately (e.g., the Minister's Office).

5. Issue a **standby statement** to the subscription list, place it on website and place a link on Twitter or other appropriate social media platforms (within an hour or when confirmed):

> The Agency is aware of **(what happened)** at **(location)** involving **(who)** that occurred today at **(time)**. We have no further information at this time. If and when we do, we will issue another statement.

6. Internal communications: Use the **standby statement** with an additional paragraph, to notify employees and to allow them to answer calls (within one hour):

> The Agency confirms that **(what happened)** at **(location)** involving **(who)** occurred today at **(time)**. We have no further information at this time. If and when we do, we will issue another statement.
>
> All questions from the public about this statement should be directed to the Director of Public Affairs, **(name and phone number)**.

7. As more information becomes available, the Director of Public Affairs will issue an additional statement (within an hour or as information is available):

> Regarding **(what happened)** at **(location)** involving **(who)** which occurred today at the Agency, further review shows **(reasons for event)** and **(resolutions of event)**.

8. Prepare **key messages** explaining what happened. These key messages should also be used as recommended speaking points for political stakeholders, if deemed appropriate by senior management (within three hours):

> **What happened (clear, concise and factual information) and action to be (or has been) taken.**

9. If the statistical institution is taking action, monitor mitigation actions taken by the management in charge of the crisis area to determine if any additional communications are warranted (ongoing).

10. Monitor media coverage throughout to determine what is being said, by whom, how and when. Keep political stakeholders, the Crisis Communications Team and appropriate officials informed and determine when the crisis is over (ongoing).

Example 2 – Specific Communication Crisis Scenario Response

The following is an example of a **high impact crisis situation involving an employee of a statistical institution**. This example offers advice on how to approach the situation and the steps to be taken within the first eight hours.

Steps to take:

1. If there is media coverage, Contact Crisis Communications Team as soon as the issue has been identified (within 5 minutes of report).

2. Verify the facts (who, what, when, where and how), identify who, if any, police authorities are involved, and obtain the contact person's name within these authorities (within 10 minutes).

3. If it is a law enforcement matter, contact the Solicitor's Office (within 10 minutes).

4. Notify political stakeholders (e.g., the Minister's Office) (within 10 minutes).

5. If it is a law enforcement matter,

    a. The Director of Public Affairs will use the following **standby statement** using the appropriate or all available medium (e.g., phone, email, text) (within 30 minutes or as needed):

> We are aware of the incident being reported in the media with potential involvement by an Agency employee. Because this is a law enforcement matter, **(name/title)** of the **(law enforcement authority)** will be handling all further inquiries about this case.

    b. Internal communications: The Director of Public Affairs will notify the Senior Executives of the event and will remind managers to direct questions about this statement to the Director (within 30 minutes):

> We are aware of the incident being reported in the media with potential involvement by an Agency employee. Because this is a law enforcement matter, **(name/title)** of the **(law enforcement authority)** will be handling further inquiries about this case.
>
> Any additional questions from the public about this statement should be directed to the Director of Public Affairs, **(name and phone number)**.

6. If it is not a law enforcement matter (such as a social media blunder by an employee), but media are requesting information, direct all inquiries to the Director of Public Affairs.

    a. **Initial statement** to be used by the Director of Public Affairs using the appropriate or all available medium (e.g., phone, email, text) (within 10 minutes):

> We are aware of the incident being reported in the media with potential involvement by an Agency employee. The Agency will look into this and we will get back to you as additional information becomes available.

    b. Once the facts are confirmed, the Director of Public Affairs will issue a **standby statement** using the appropriate or all available medium (e.g., phone, email, text) (within 30 minutes):

> We are aware of the incident being reported in the media with potential involvement by an Agency employee. The Agency can confirm that this person is an employee. I cannot provide further comment on personnel matters.

    c. Internal communications: The Director of Public Affairs will notify the Senior Executives of the event and will remind managers to direct questions about this statement to the Director (within 30 minutes):

> We are aware of the incident being reported in the media with potential involvement by an Agency employee. The Agency can confirm that this person is an employee. I cannot provide further comment on personnel matters.
>
> Any additional questions from the public about this statement should be directed to the Director of Public Affairs, **(name and phone number)**.

7. Monitor media coverage throughout to determine what is being said, by whom, how and when. Keep political stakeholders, the Crisis Communications Team and appropriate officials informed and determine when the crisis is over (ongoing).

Annex 5: Re-Branding – Case study Statistics Poland[29]

Background

At the end of 2017 – after years of using a well-known and recognizable, yet very outdated and old-fashioned logo - Statistics Poland introduced a new logo and visualization system. Additionally, apart from the old logo, there was no coherent visual language used in the organization, nor did it have any formal visual identity system.

The inspiration to propose a change in visual identity was two-fold:

- to adapt and align the logo with other initiatives and activities aimed at rebuilding the image of public statistics as a modern institution responding to the needs of users;
- the centennial of the creation of Statistics Poland.

The objectives were:

- to be perceived as modern, innovative, open and approachable for users of data and as an essential element of the state's information infrastructure and information market;
- to build a uniform visual identification for all statistical products, including publications.

We adopted a multi-faceted approach to the rebranding process, including many internal stakeholders.

The first step was an open competition for the new logo and visual identity.

- The whole process was preceded by a call for tenders that lasted approximately six months.
- The competition was open for everyone, and the criteria were published.
- The jury consisted of lecturers of fine arts from a well-known academic institution and statisticians responsible for our office publishing policy.
- The winner was a graduate of fine arts with an impressive portfolio who had won prizes in other competitions.
- Before we announced the winning design, we confirmed with the Polish Patent Office that the project was original and did not violate any copyright.
- The new logo was presented at a press conference with Statistics Poland's President announcing the winning design and thereby introducing the rebranding initiative.
- Along with the new logo we introduced a complex system of visual identification with specific fonts, colours, templates, a refreshed layout of printed and digital publications, press releases (one of the first changes), web pages, official letters, emails, etc.

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29 Case study was provided by Statistics Poland. For questions or further enquiries, please contact Statistics Poland.

The second step was the implementation of the new visual identity within the organization.

- Templates (of official letters, e-mails) were developed and made available to employees.
- Renewed layout of statistical publications (both printed and digital) were introduced. This was a complex process and cooperation between departments was essential, as publications are produced in many different organizational units.
- To ensure consistency across the organization, we formed a Publications' Rebranding Team with experts from various departments who analysed issues related to the rebranding of our publications.
- In 2018 we published the first output featuring the new visual identity.

The final step was the total qualitative change in the area of statistical publications. It should be noted that this change was not only about the transformation of the publication's appearance but the transformation of the publishing series. The priorities of the publication process were changed, with a one-step resignation from purely tabular publications without analytical commentary, to only analytical publications, moving the dissemination of data to database tools and APIs. The new graphical language enabled a more attractive presentation of advanced statistical analyses. Another critical change was the introduction mandatory bilingual publishing - Polish and English. These changes were made easier for organizational units to adapt with the purchase and implementation of modern desktop publishing tools, preceding and accompanying the application of the new visual identity.

Public reaction

As expected, the reaction of the mainstream media was limited and mixed. It was neither strongly negative or overly enthusiastic, as the long-used logo was recognizable and deeply anchored in Statistics Poland social perception.

Internet users (mostly anonymous and commenting on press web pages) questioned the financial aspects of the project and asked questions about its budget. Others commented on the new logo and compared it to other signs already present on the market, suggesting excessive integrity and simplicity, and lack of distinctness and clarity.

The reaction from general social media users was generally cold, and naturally correlated with the negative attitude towards public administration in Poland. The comments reflected a perception of ineffectiveness of the logo, excessive spending and questioned the need to spend public funds on visual identification.

Simultaneously, experts and authorities in the area of branding appreciated the concept of a modern logo and welcomed the visualization. Also, the transparent selection process was acknowledged by the professionals. They underlined the relatively low cost of the logo and visualization system.

The new visual approach also resulted in many positive outcomes, such gaining many new followers who were not previously aware of Statistics Poland 's presence in social media channels.

Statistics Poland's response

The response strategy emphasized the transparency of the competition (the criteria, the jury members, the selection process, and the winner's prize) and the cost of the project (which was relatively low cost compared to similar competitions or public tenders taking place around the same time). We stressed that that costs included the entire visualization system including the introduction of many new elements of our communication toolkit.

We also transparently communicated the rebranding process - informing people why it was necessary and the improvement of the institution's communication and dissemination activities.

Before the project started, we were aware that spending public funds for this type of initiative was particularly sensitive. We assumed the majority of the expenditures would be limited to the organization of the competition and the creation of a visual identification system. We did not anticipate the costs and timing associated with the need to change existing graphic elements (e.g., signs on buildings). As a result, we had to reduce further the project's budget to accommodate these changes. This resulted in a positive outcome as the actual cost of the project, when compared with similar projects in other public administration units, was lower.

Rebranding issues

The visual identification system changed layouts, graphs, tables in print and digital publications and press releases. The goal of these changes was to provide consistency across all organizational units (including regional offices).

However, the new system resulted in a change to employees' daily work and this resulted in several challenges.

- The change exposed some deficiencies of skills associated with the use of text editing and graphics tools and the rigorous application of rules and templates to ensure compliance with the new language of visual communication. Unfortunately, the implementation strategy did not identify the essential training needs of the employees. Due to the lack of financial resources, the decision was taken to begin implementation and accept the initial difficulties that ensued. Gradually employees acquired the skills they required to work with the new system.
- The rebranding was initially perceived by employees as an obligation - a new rule to follow. The improvements and positive values were overlooked and some staff, who generally found it hard to adapt to change, were slightly frustrated.

Externally, users were also impacted.

- The introduction of the new visual identity in publications also changed the classification of the publishing series.
- A small number of external users were unhappy about the discontinuation of old forms and the transition to electronic data dissemination.
- Some advanced users, often using data in publications, were confused. They couldn't find the desired data in its usual place in publications and press releases.

Lessons learned

The most important thing in rebranding is clear, transparent communication about why it is necessary and the benefits of the change.

A strong communication strategy should help employees understand the reason for and the purpose of the rebranding exercise. Employees need to know to what extent the change will impact their work and what kind of support they will receive from the organization (i.e. training.).

We recommend implementing a new visual identity system as an inclusive process with the participation of all organizational units that will use the new identification on a daily basis.

In the case of rebranding, it should be communicated how the new system will be chosen and the institution's rationale for choosing that approach.

Externally, it is also a good practice to consult (if possible) and communicate, in advance, the planned changes in publications/press releases with users.

Annex 6: Stakeholder Engagement – Case Study Australian Bureau of Statistics

Topic

Case Study of the Australian Government Data Reforms 2015-2019: the evolving role of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Collaboration across the Australian Government to ensure that the national data system can meet the emerging and future data and analytics needs facing the Australian Public Service.

Situational description

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's national statistical agency, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia. As an independent statutory authority, the ABS has a legislated function to be the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and to provide statistical services for the state and territory governments. In this capacity, the ABS has an important leadership role, to maximize the use of public data for statistical purposes, and to provide technical advice, develop standards and provide assistance to Australian and state/territory governments in relation to statistics.

The ABS is also the primary (but not only) Australian Government Accredited Integrating Authority (AIA) within the whole of the Australian Government reform initiative, the Data Integration Partnership for Australia (DIPA). In this role, the ABS plays a significant role in helping Government to maximize the use of public data and statistics to enable better informed government policy and service delivery. As an AIA, the ABS undertakes high-risk data linkage projects on behalf of data custodians across Governments and provides safe access to unidentified, integrated microdata to government and non-government researchers.

Over the last three years, the ABS has undertaken an increasing range and volume of work to support the evolution of the Australian National Data System.

Starting point

In partnership with Australian Government data custodian agencies, the ABS began developing a business longitudinal linked dataset in 2005 and a person-based integrated dataset in 2010. The person-based integrated asset and infrastructure was initially championed by the ABS and the Department of Health, before growing into a six-agency partnership project. Recognizing increasing interest in data by government, the ABS worked with its partners to test the feasibility of linking various cross-portfolio datasets longitudinally. However, access to these integrated microdata was limited to partner agencies for exploratory research purposes, and progress in developing integrated data methods and assets was slow without dedicated resourcing. Since 2017, the production and expansion of these assets has been further enabled by government funding for the DIPA initiative.

During this time, the Australian Government, in recognition of the growing need for enhanced management of public data, stated in its Public Data Policy Statement that data "is a strategic national resource that holds considerable value for growing the economy, improving service delivery and transforming policy outcomes for the nation". To leverage its data holdings, the Australian Government committed to:

- harnessing the value of data;
- publishing, linking and sharing data to stimulate innovation and create opportunities; and
- optimizing the use and reuse of public data.

In May 2017, the Productivity Commission released the report of its Inquiry into Data Availability and Use, providing a further catalyst for change in the Australian data landscape. This inquiry looked at options to increase the availability and use of public and private sector data and found significant barriers to data sharing including:

a. a culture of risk aversion

b. a dense web of legislative requirements

c. a lack of a whole of government approach.

An ABS senior official was outposted to work on the Australian Government's response to the inquiry, which resulted in a Government commitment of $65 million over four years to reform Australia's data system. Reforms aim to streamline and modernize how the Government shares data, while ensuring privacy and security, to support better decisions, policy, programs, services and research. More specifically, the reforms include establishing the Office of the National Data Commissioner (ONDC) and introducing Commonwealth Data Sharing and Release Legislation. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is leading these reforms, and the ABS is contributing substantially to their design through its technical expertise and advice.

Within the ABS, work to support reform of the national data system is cantered within the Statistical Data Integration Division, under the Deputy Australian Statistician, Census and Data Services. A small team of six staff provide direct support and technical advice to the Office of the National Data Commissioner, whilst approximately another 140 staff work across the end-to-end data integration process. Around half of these staff are involved in producing and providing safe access to integrated data. Remaining staff undertake governance, privacy and other risk management activities; engage with researchers and data custodians; build and enhance key people and business integrated data assets; maintain safe and secure data environments, systems and processes; develop new infrastructure; and undertake transparency initiatives to maintain public trust and social license.

New developments

The ABS plays an important role in these data system reforms as Australia's national statistics office, with a wealth of experience in collecting, analysing and publishing data using secure and privacy preserving methods, across a suite of economic, demographic, social and environmental areas. This role has been recognized by Government, in providing the ABS with funding:

- under the DIPA to develop enduring integrated data assets, which bring together data from across the Australian Public Service, and build linkage capabilities, technical infrastructure and tools to enable greater use of public data across government to inform research and

policy. As the lead AIA, the ABS received the largest funding to a single agency under this program; and

• to provide technical support to the National Data Commissioner.

As part of the national Data System reforms, new formal governance arrangements were established across the Australian Government (Figure 1). The ABS is an active participant in all levels of data governance fora. The Australian Statistician is a member of the Secretaries Data Group and the National Data Advisory Council; the Deputy Australian Statistician, Census and Data Services is a member of the Deputy Secretaries Data Group and DIPA Board; and Program Managers and Executive level staff are involved in the Data Champions Group. Through its representation on these formal fora, ABS is a partner in driving strategy, work program and innovation in the Australian data landscape. ABS staff also participate regularly in technical working groups to progress collaboration and knowledge sharing as system changes are implemented. The ABS has established integrated data asset user groups to provide advice to the ABS on products, data use and analysis methods, and to enable members to share analytical results, work collaboratively and share knowledge.

Figure A2   Australian Government Data Governance
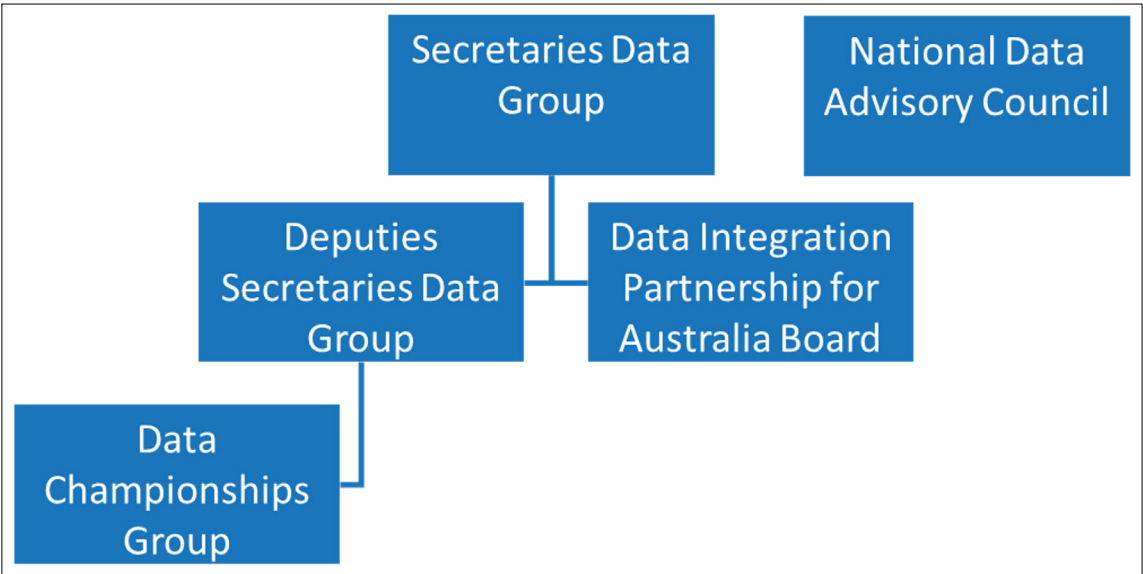
In parallel to national data system reforms, similar legislative changes and cultural reforms are occurring within Australia's constituent states and territories. The ABS has been involved in and supported a number of these initiatives in a variety of ways. The ABS provides a Director level strategic outposted officer in each jurisdiction to engage with, and support, state and territory data and statistical needs, including maximizing the value of public data. Through these staff, awareness of the availability and uses of the MADIP and BLADE key assets, as well as opportunities for data sharing between Australian and State and Territory Governments have grown. 14 linkage and analytical projects for states and territories are currently underway in 2019-20. By sharing its data integration capability, secure integration and analysis environments, and its integrated data products with jurisdictions, the ABS has been able to extend the statistical services it provides to jurisdictions as the Australian NSO.

The ABS is also working closely with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to develop interoperability methods to enable data integrated by either the ABS and AIHW to be brought together safely and efficiently. This is of particular value for state and territory data in the health and welfare sectors, which has already been shared with and integrated by AIHW, enabling it to be combined with a broader range of Australian Government data through MADIP.

Whilst provision of trusted statistics remains central to ABS' role, in recognition of the changing environment and opportunities presented by sector-wide data reforms, ABS' strategic direction has evolved to reflect the increasingly important role of partnerships in informing Australia's important decisions, and the development of new statistics to support emerging priorities, both through traditional direct collection methods and re-use of public and private sector data.

The ABS also recognizes it has an important role to play in building capability across the Australian Public Service to enable embedding of data analytics into the design of policy, program and services to best meet Australians' needs.

Actions taken

The Australian Government's response to the Productivity Commission Report on Data Availability and Use included an announcement of three reforms:
- A new Consumer Data Right giving citizens greater transparency and control over their own data;
- A National Data Commissioner to implement and oversee a simpler, more efficient data sharing and release framework; and
- New legislative and governance arrangements to enable better data use while ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place to protect sensitive information.

The ABS is providing technical advice and expertise on two of these three key reforms – advising the National Data Commissioner and contributing to new legislative and governance arrangements for better data use.

The National Data Commissioner is responsible for overseeing and regulating the data sharing system and will drive change and support best practice for data across the Australian Public Service. To support this role, the ABS has collaborated with the Office of the National Data Commissioner to develop a Best Practice Guide to Applying Data Sharing Principles, which was published in March 2019. Although the principles are a requirement for using the Data Sharing and Release legislation, they are intended to be applicable for all data sharing activities. A consultation process is currently underway to inform the introduction of Commonwealth Data Sharing and Release Legislation.

The Government has established a new governance mechanism, the National Data Advisory Council, to advise the National Data Commissioner on ethical data use, community engagement, technical best practice, and industry/international developments. The Council comprises members from the Australian government, business and industry, civil society groups and academia. The Australian Statistician is one of the Government representatives along with the Australian Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Australian Chief Scientist. The Council is working to support the National Data Commissioner to find the optimal balance between streamlining the sharing and release of data and ensuring the protection of privacy.

In addition to these reforms, the ABS is also contributing to whole of government data integration capabilities. The ABS is a partner in the [Data Integration Partnerships for Australia (DIPA)](#) program, an investment to maximize the use and value of the Government's data assets, which is leveraging collaboration between over 20 Commonwealth government agencies. Through DIPA, the ABS is improving technical data infrastructure, enhancing whole of government data assets and leveraging these to support cross-portfolio analytical projects on a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

The DIPA program has provided opportunities for ABS to expand its role as an NSO. At the current time (October 2019), ABS is playing a range of critical roles within the public data system: as steward of both the business (BLADE) and person (MADIP) based integrated data assets; co-developer of new place based assets, such as the Location Index (LOC-I[30]) API to streamline data integration of geospatial data; providing data brokerage services to assist researchers and analysts ensure that their use of integrated data is feasible and appropriate as they scope their research proposals; opening up and streamlining safe access to unidentified integrated data to a wider range of government and non-government users; providing expert integrated data analysis, advice and support for cross-portfolio research projects; and developing and delivering training in integrated data linking and analysis to build this capability across the Australian Public Service.

The ABS is also collaborating with the Data Champions Network, the Department of Health and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, on behalf of the Secretaries Data Group, to investigate a range of strategies to further uplift data literacy and analytics capability. It is anticipated there will be three areas of focus:

- Implementing a data professions stream across the Australian Public Service, with consistently defined roles, skills and competencies. This would create a professional network of staff with data and analytics skills, help the public service attract and retain qualified and capable data practitioners and create clear career pathways.

- Implementing a more coordinated approach to data and analytics capability across the Australian Public Service, commencing with an audit of existing capability building activities and relevant external initiatives.

- Further increasing collaboration beyond agency boundaries, for example, by using more flexible working models.

Results

To assess progress in undertaking data reforms on a national scale, the Government commissioned a [Review of Australian Government Data Activities](#) (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, July 2018) to provide a snapshot of data activities and data resources across government agencies. The Review identified four key areas where Government reforms to the public sector data system are yielding improved outcomes:

1. Access to public sector data is improving
2. Agencies are using data more efficiently to provide agile and effective government services

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30 In partnership with Department of Energy and Environment, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Geoscience Australia and CSIRO.

3. Public sector data skills and capabilities are improving

4. Government data protections are building community trust and confidence in how public sector data is collected and used.

Undertaking reforms across a national data system takes time. While good progress has been made, further work is required to develop, implement and evaluate reforms. The ABS is working with its government partners to continue to drive change and build momentum to develop data infrastructure and capabilities for the future to expand better data sharing and data use.

In recognition of the fast-paced changing data landscape in the 'information age', the Government is currently developing a refreshed Public Data Strategy Roadmap across five pillars: legislation and regulation, governance and culture, capability, technical and trust. The ABS is partnering with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to develop the strategy and roadmap, through its role as a technical adviser to the National Data Commissioner and in its capacity as Australia's national statistics office.

With the current Part of DIPA in its final year of funding, the ABS is also working closely with its partner agencies across government to leverage the data sharing and capability building initiatives that have been built under the DIPA and create further opportunities to embed data system reform. Opportunities are also being pursued to extend data sharing, integration and access infrastructure and delivery of training to states and territories over the next few years.

Lessons learned

In seeking to reform the Australian data system, many opportunities and challenges have arisen, and will continue to arise, as the legislative environment, culture, public trust and technical capability across government change. As for many reforms, there is a general tendency to set up dedicated new structures and new organizations to move new ideas forward, rather than seek to drive reforms through existing arrangements, and this is playing out in the Australian National Data System context.

The ABS cannot navigate the complexity of the Australian public data environment successfully on its own as risks and obligations are often shared, and sometimes competing, between actors in the data system. A key learning to date has been the importance of ongoing collaboration and effective engagement with ABS' partners across Government. This is most apparent in managing the need to continually balance maximizing the public value and utility of data, with maintaining privacy and trust in the ways the Australian Government shares and uses data.

At the start of the reforms in 2015-17, there was widespread appreciation of the value of data across Government, but little understanding of the complexities and effort involved in managing its safe handling, production and use. Whilst there is a continued focus on technical solutions for safe and efficient data sharing, integration, access and analysis, appreciation of the data governance capabilities and judgments that are an essential enabler of data sharing is growing. However, it is still far from being universally mature.

The realization of the value of the volume of data continues to be hindered by the slow (but growing) recognition across the Australian Public Service of data capability as a specialized and professional capability stream. In contrast, progress in adoption of digital technologies across government, especially those that facilitate service delivery to the public, has progressed

relatively quickly. This has been supported by concerted efforts to improve the public's experience of interacting with government and enabled by the long standing (but rapidly evolving) establishment of a professionalized ICT stream across government.

The trust pact between an NSO, data custodians and the public is both fragile and essential, not only to achieving the goal of maximising the value of public data, but to its fundamental operations as an information organization. Navigating the complex legal, privacy and social licence obligations successfully requires continued effort, stakeholder collaboration, public communication and engagement, and problem solving.

Prior to the commencement of DIPA and other national data reforms around 2017, the ABS was a trusted provider of national statistics, but was not well geared towards rapid data innovation and provision of data services to government. The DIPA initiative, in particular, has provided an opportunity for ABS to work collaboratively with both technical and policy agencies to create a stronger and better functioning data system, to re-cast its role and to broaden the value it provides, as an NSO, to Government. There is more work needed, but ABS is playing an increasingly active role in building capability across the Australian Government in data governance, data linking and analysis of integrated data.

Annex 7:   Sources

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Strategic Communications Framework for Statistical Institutions

Strategic communication is a relatively new concept for most statistical organizations, which have traditionally focused their efforts and resources on dissemination practices and systems. A strategic communication function can guide the development and implementation of a communication strategy. This has particular relevance for the world of official statistics, where communication and dissemination have traditionally focused on expert users. With the changing environment, statistical organizations must learn to communicate more effectively and directly with citizens and improve statistical literacy across all audiences.

A productive, professional communication function can help position the statistical organization to succeed in this highly competitive environment. Communication professionals can work in partnership with the statistical organization's leadership board and staff to develop a communication strategy that supports the statistical organization's mission, demonstrates the value of official statistics and enhances the competitive advantage offered by the statistical organization.

This publication compiles the outcome of the Strategic Communication Framework Project of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS). Recognizing the importance of strategic communication, the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics endorsed this two-year priority project.

All the components of this framework are offered as a guideline and are not intended to be prescriptive. Statistical institutions are invited to use the two phases of the framework in their entirety, or to use only those elements that help support their business needs.
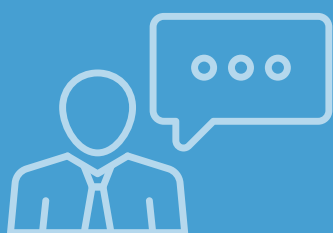
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