Capacity building for corporate communication

Time to raise our game

Companies and organisations that recognise the value of reputation are progressively empowering their communication function as the custodian of this business-critical asset.

Communication departments need to build capacity and constantly raise their game to live up to growing responsibilities and expectations.

Meanwhile, the business of communication is also evolving rapidly.

Communication departments are expected constantly to adopt new technologies and best practices, while adapting to rapid changes in the media and social media landscape.
Communication directors are expected to constantly reinvent resources and workflows while continuing to deliver day after day.
Our approach is to be an empowering partner. We work closely alongside communication teams on a shared mission to make their work more effective.
Capacity building services

Communications audit

Many projects begin with a thorough analysis of existing communication structures, practices, capacity and resources.

We evaluate what is in place already against the outcomes management expect and require the department to deliver.

We apply a systematic process including benchmarking against resources and practices at other comparable organisations.

This expert external perspective almost always yields actionable insights that were not visible from the inside.

The result is a gap analysis with practical recommendation for how to raise capacity and help the department to perform against its targets most efficiently.
Restructuring

In cases where a communication department needs to be restructured, we advise on the redesign.

This normally includes team structures – roles, responsibilities and reporting lines – as well as budgets and external resources such as retained agencies.

Process engineering

There are almost always improvements to be made in day-to-day operations. When we drill down into the detail of how communication departments execute their work, we almost always find simple improvements that can be made.

Ways of working in many areas from media relations to campaign planning and online monitoring are often not formally defined, or inherited from legacy systems and out of date.

We help define standard operating procedures that streamline everyone’s work consistently.
ISOC methodology: how it works

**Map**

We apply a proprietary competency mapping system to identify the specific skill areas and levels that a given communication department needs in order to serve its mandate.

This is researched in consultation with senior management and communication directors, and presented as a matrix of generalist skills (interpersonal communication, writing skills, etc) and specialist PR skills (media relations, event management, multimedia design, etc).

**Measure**

The next step is to measure the skills profile of the existing team using interviews and testing.

The objective is to produce an empirical assessment of the skills gaps that need to be filled in order for the team as a whole to perform optimally.

We communicate carefully so that the existing team feel that the company is investing in their skills, rather than feeling threatened by testing.

**Plan**

Finally, we propose a practical plan for how to fill these gaps.

This normally includes customised individual development plans for team members, which may be linked to in-house or external training programmes.

Where skills gaps exist that existing teams cannot fill, we may give guidance on outsourcing for urgent needs and create a targeted recruitment strategy for the long term.
Human capacity is the primary success factor for most communication departments. Build it.
Resource development

Policies and procedures

We have produced communication handbooks in hard-copy and electronic (intranet) formats for dozens of companies and organisations of all sizes.

A typical structure would be first to define a Policy defining core principles for each topic (e.g. Press Release Policy).

Under each Policy will be one or more Procedures defining operational processes (e.g. Press Release Distribution Process).

Beneath that may sit a set of Templates facilitating quick and consistent output (e.g. Holding Statement Template).
CASE STUDIES

We have helped to raise capacity at communication departments worldwide for organisations of all sizes, including:

- National governments
- Fortune Global 500 companies
- International institutions
- Charities and NGOs
- SMEs

Effective communication departments benefit from clear and comprehensive written policies and procedures that define the principles and practice of their work.