

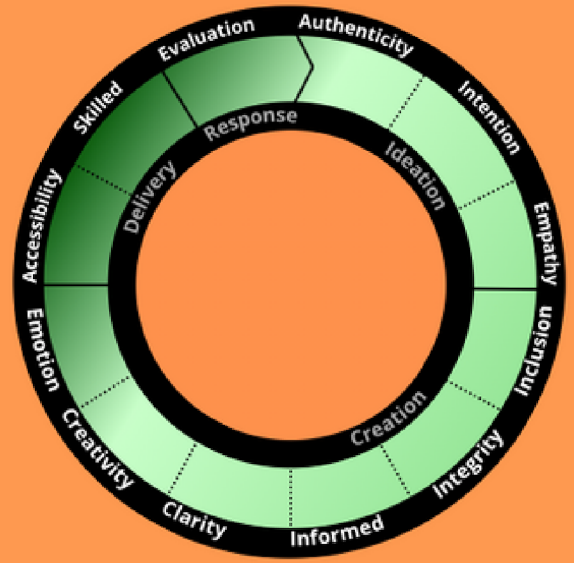


The Communications Doughnut

A framework for effective and ethical communication

The Communications Doughnut is a simple but urgent framework that any organisation can use to achieve greater influence and impact. In a clear, visual format, the Doughnut's 12 principles are easy to understand and apply. Harness them to realise your ambitions for leading positive change, whilst also helping to end the destructive consequences of poor & unethical communications.

Check out the main ingredients for the 'dough' below, then read on to page 2 for how to put it to work.



The 12 Principles of the Doughnut

The Doughnut guides you through the four stages of communicating: ideation, creation, delivery and response.

- 1. Authenticity:** Ensure your communications are always representative of a strong, living brand. Your brand must be clear in its promise (mission, vision, values, value proposition and story) and personality (the way you look, sound and act).
- 2. Intention:** Have a clear and sincere, motivating purpose behind your communications. This purpose (how you want them to think, feel & act) must be clear to the audience. Have an intent to add to an idea, not just to serve personal gain.
- 3. Empathy:** Understand your audiences and their true needs before you create anything. Truly know them so you can relieve their pains and realise their desires using the channels and methods (and partners) that will be most effective.
- 4. Inclusion:** Involve and account for diverse voices and needs in your communications culture, creative processes and messages. This might include: gender, ethnicity, identity, geography, ability, culture and age.
- 5. Integrity:** Be fair, decent and honest at all times. And abide by appropriate ethical and professional standards. Do not mislead, manipulate or cause harm. Be open. Be obligated to 'truth' with bravery.
- 6. Informed:** Ensure communications are credible and evidenced, and audiences are responsibly informed. Truthful representation of facts, proportionate and accurate, being very mindful of language use (and the implications of words).
- 7. Clarity:** Use simple language and design to maximise the opportunity for understanding. Always aim for concreteness, conciseness and simplicity over complexity. Active language. Avoid jargon, technical language & euphemism.
- 8. Creativity:** Continually strive for new approaches and diverse methods of communicating. Do this to grab Attention, spark Interest, awaken Desire and call to Action. Apply freshness to language and visuals, avoid cliché, use storytelling.
- 9. Emotion:** Provide both factual and emotional connection to you and your ideas. Facts are not as motivating as emotions, so trigger these responsibly with language, stories, images, tone and body language. Have passion, convey hope.
- 10. Accessibility:** Give more people the opportunity to receive (or engage with) your communications. Use multiple channels and methods, re-appropriate messages, provide resources and tools, ensure everyone can take action in response.
- 11. Skilled:** Communications must be delivered skillfully, and these skills continuously developed. Ensure standards in writing, PR, public speaking, design and personal communication, with investments in training / external support.
- 12. Evaluation:** Understand the effectiveness of your communications to optimise your efforts. Assess the ways you connect, inform and influence your audiences with a robust methodology and open feedback loop. Then go back to Step 1.

“This is excellent; an ethical framework for transformational communications that would not only work at an organisational level, but also a societal level.” - CEO for a UK charity

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Why do we need The Communications Doughnut?

Communication is the foundation of society; it is how we build connections, share information and bring about action. A positive, constructive approach to communicating (i.e. that is both ethical and effective) is therefore essential in supporting human and planetary progress. **And no organisation can fully realise its ambitions for positive impact unless it also commits to constructive communication.**

However, too often, communication - whether that's from brands, the media, in politics, or even in our work and personal relationships - is either poor (and therefore ineffective) or deliberately destructive: used as a tool to divide, mislead or suppress. And we don't have time to waste with anything other than positive action.

The Communications Doughnut is the only tool of its kind. It is essential, impactful and versatile; providing a simple guide or a robust framework for transformative communications. It finally makes it easier for you to communicate constructively; ensuring greater outcomes for the three main purposes of communication: *connecting, informing and influencing*. Importantly, it also helps us to recognise and repair - or call out - destructive approaches to communicating.

How can we use the Doughnut?

As a guide: use it to build your understanding and work step-by-step to develop a credible voice and brand, powerful messages and optimal approaches, ensuring you boost your positive impact. It will also ensure you stay on the right side of increasing communications regulation.

As an evaluation tool: the key points in each principle can be used as a scoring checklist, allowing you to note where you're excelling or falling short. It can then provide a visual representation of this score. (See the full tool for more.)

As a mark of standards: the future intention is for public commitment to the principles of the Doughnut to provide an assurance and quality mark, reflecting a recognised commitment to effective and ethical communication practices.

It provides a floor of standards below which no one should fall and a ceiling of ethics, above which no one should rise. It is based on academic and professional insights, whilst being uniquely practical. (And it is inspired by the design of the brilliant Doughnut Economics model - see www.kateraworth.com.)

Simply get to know the 12 Principles to start using the Doughnut now

This document is a short overview of The Communications Doughnut, created to help you get going with the key ideas right now. Check your approach against the principles and make a plan for how to bridge the gap, aka fill the dough.

The full, expanded tool provides much more detail on the ideas informing the Doughnut, more behind each principle, an outline for how effective communication can be evaluated through the Doughnut, and explores how we can better *receive* communications. View it at adamstones.co/doughnut

Help to progress the Doughnut: share your feedback at adam@adamcomms.com

