

## Notes Day 6

**Session name:** Communications Strategies

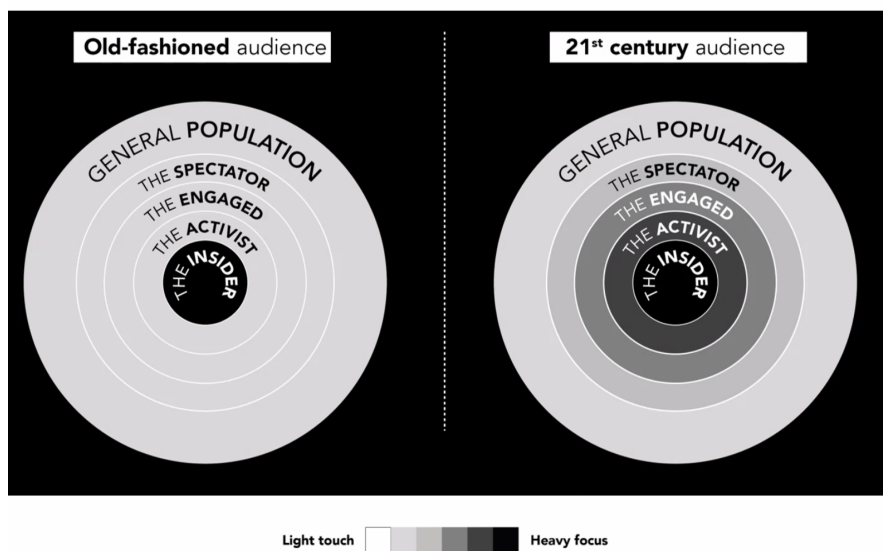
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In these times of multi-project management and cross-cutting challenges in the think tank sector, we must keep in mind that we need specific strategies and campaigns as targets and goals we might have. The aim: communicating with power for impact.

The discussion was bi-directional: think tanks with policymakers and journalists/media. With social media, there was a huge rise in public discussion creating a tripolar dynamic.

In this new world, the best story wins. Policymakers don't want facts, they want arguments:

### Influencing policy today



Once we successfully allocate our resources, ideas and people to our communications campaign (the plan) we also need to think about our personality/brand while communicating.

Our main goal as think tankers is to contribute to the evidence-based policies building, right. Research is our core, and intellectual rigour and excellence are our engagement. We share our innovative research with policymakers, discover new angles, and improve theses. But, what is our final goal and who are our targets? How will we convince them? Think tankers need to adopt narrative strategies, to become in some way storytellers.

Yes, it is a challenge to keep our excellence and research profile and to take a badge as storytellers. It seems that being a storyteller is not coherent with being a serious scientist of solutions for policies.

How can we innovate in this challenge?

On the other hand, we have this other challenge that is, in my view, more critical: the goal of researching (in the think tank sector) is not just to add a new idea over others in the past (and to multiply data). We are researching because we have the need to offer solutions, we research to catalyze action, to improve ways to do, to inspire at least.

So we need to convince. We need to map the content we need to guide policymakers along their journey. We need to think about how people can understand our ideas. So our persona is not someone just reading a paper, it is someone executing, analysing a problem.

And what about your funders?

People need to trust you to accept a grant or integrate the board.

And what about our strategy? What is a strategy?

The power of strategy is in the permission it provides to say no.

The public wants experts to help them understand issues of the day, but we need to correctly engage with the audiences: take people as they are, not how we want them to be.

Our perception is warped. See the example of the graphics of immigration: when people were corrected, and shown data, they refuted the correction as the data does not support their argument.

We need to tell stories, but tell them from where they are, aligned with the audience. Our suggested communications model puts the story - not the report - at the heart of communications strategy. But don't we take the risk of oversimplifying the story?

## RESOURCES

<https://wonkcomms.net/2017/08/16/defying-gravity-why-the-submarine-strategy-drags-you-down/>

<https://castfromclay.co.uk/models-research/the-think-tank-storytelling-series-part-1/>

<https://castfromclay.co.uk/commentary/leading-your-team-toward-better-research-communications/>

<https://castfromclay.co.uk/commentary/beginners-guide-to-paid-social-media-advertising/>

<https://castfromclay.co.uk/commentary/should-policy-organisations-do-paid-social/>