



THE MELBOURNE MANDATE:

A call to action for new areas of value in public relations and communication management

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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The mandate of public relations is to build and sustain strong relationships, developing mutual understanding and benefit between an organization and its publics.

The Global Alliance’s 2010 Stockholm Accords affirmed the characteristics of the communicative organization and the value of public relations and communications professionals in management, governance, sustainability, internal and external communication.

Today, unprecedented public access to communication presents new challenges and opportunities for organizations – and for global society. And it presents a new mandate for public relations and communication management: a set of roles, responsibilities and principles hereby endorsed by delegates to the 2012 World Public Relations Forum in Melbourne, Australia.

Roles

In building and sustaining essential relationships, public relations and communication professionals are actively involved in defining and maintaining an organization’s character and values; building a culture of listening and engagement; and instilling responsible behaviours that support and sustain relationships linking individuals, organizations and society.



Responsibilities

Public relations and communication professionals demonstrate responsibility by upholding a personal commitment to highest standards of integrity, which adhere and often go beyond professional codes of conduct, rules, laws and policies that meet societal expectations and preserve the integrity of our organizations and represented organizations.

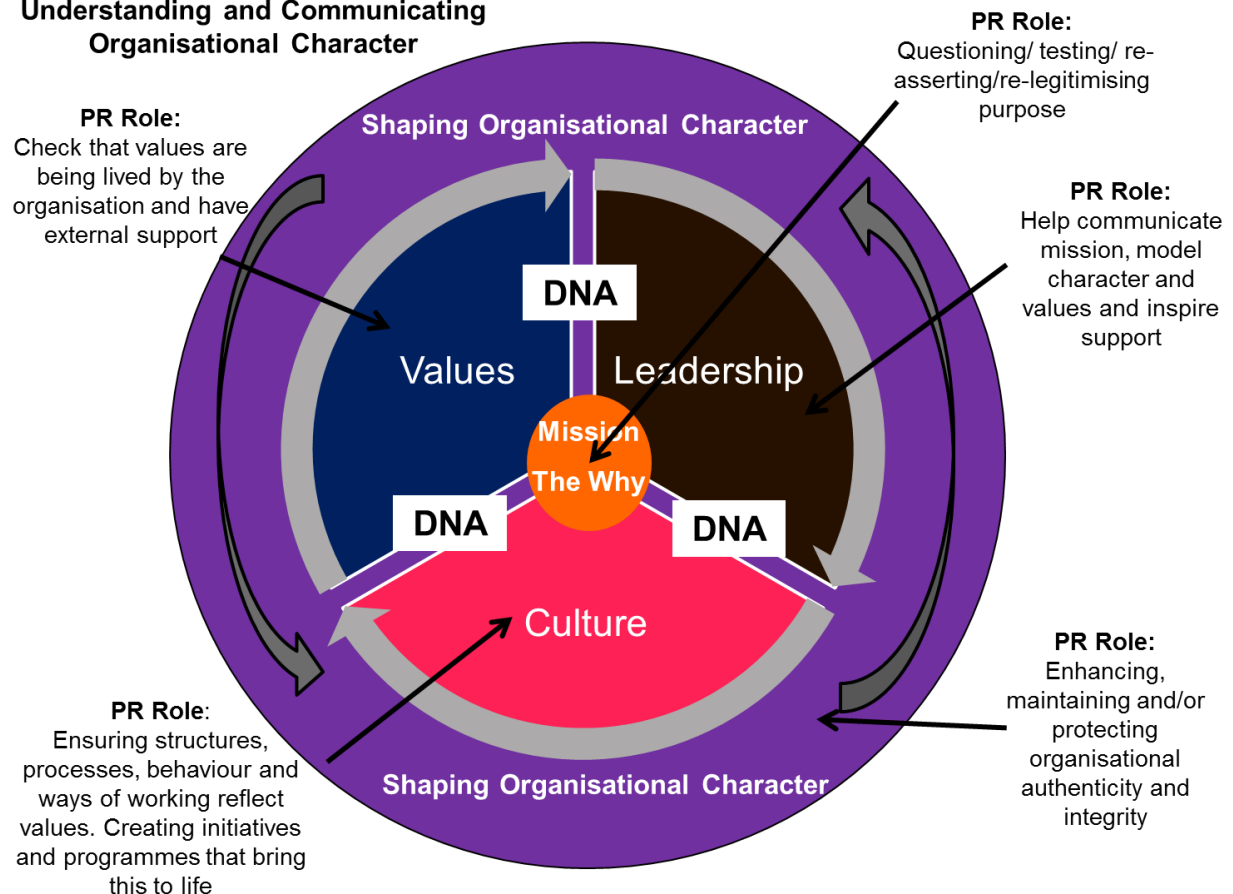
Principles

Defining an organization's character and values.

The communicative organization has a clear sense of its core or 'DNA,' which consists of three strands:

1. **Values:** the set of values the organization lives by and which guides its decisions and behaviour.
2. **Leadership:** the responsibility of leaders to model the character and values of the organization and the way they believe it should operate through the decisions they take and the direction they set.
3. **Culture:** the processes, structures, collective behaviour and ways of working that are part of organizational life and that affect the way people and groups interact with each other internally and with external stakeholders.

Understanding and Communicating Organisational Character



Public relations and communication professionals have a mandate to:

1. Shape organizational character by enhancing, maintaining and protecting the organization's authenticity – its reputation for consistently telling the truth about the organization, and meriting trust.
2. Be the guardians of the organization's character and values, providing feedback to the organization on how the organizational character is being judged and received, and communicating the organizational character to stakeholders.
3. Ensure that internally the values guide decisions and actions, and that externally they are recognized and understood by stakeholders. This can be checked and assessed by regularly evaluating the organization against those values and by monitoring discussions about the organization.
4. Help leaders best communicate these beliefs to inspire stakeholders to follow, support, or change behaviour.
5. Help leaders to understand where they need to change, and ensure they are equipped to be effective communicators and to embrace their communication responsibilities.
6. Work with senior managers, human resource professionals and other management functions to ensure that structures, processes and ways of working reflect the claimed organizational character and values.
7. Research and create initiatives and programs that bring the culture to life, including recommending the most appropriate channels, content and tone for delivery.

Building a culture of listening and engagement.

The communicative organization...

1. Builds trust through enduring and respectful relationships with both internal and external stakeholders and the wider community.
2. Pursues policies and practices based on internationally recognized standards for corporate responsibility, sustainability, financial and governance reporting, and performance transparency.
3. Sees listening as a research-based process to identify both risks and opportunities, in which all internal and external stakeholders can play a role.

Public relations and communication professionals have a mandate to:

1. Develop appropriate research methodologies to measure an organization's capacity to listen, and apply these metrics before and after the pursuit of strategy and during any of major action.
2. Identify all external and internal stakeholder groups who are – currently and in future - affected by the pursuit of an organization's strategy.
3. Identify all stakeholders groups who – currently or in future – affect the pursuit of the organization's strategy.
4. Identify these stakeholder groups' expectations and consider them both in the organization's strategy and before taking any action.
5. Ensure sound reasons are communicated to stakeholders in cases where their expectations cannot be met by an organization's strategy or action.
6. Demonstrate continuously that the organization is genuinely listening as it takes actions in pursuit of its strategy.

Instilling societal, organizational, individual and professional responsibility.

The communicative organization understands the responsibility flowing from two core principles:

1. The organization derives its licence to operate from the value it creates for all its stakeholders, and for society at large.
2. The value of an organization is linked directly to its reputation, which in turn flows from building trust, acting with integrity and being transparent about the organization's strategy, operations, use of capital and performance.

Public relations and communication professionals have a mandate to...

Demonstrate **societal responsibility** by influencing decisions and undertaking action that...

1. Result from transparent - open, honest and accessible - processes and credible communication that balance public interests and organizational values.
2. Support the sustainability strategies of the communities from which the organization obtains resources and its licence to operate.
3. Define accountability metrics against which contributions to society may be proactively measured and improved.

Demonstrate **organizational responsibility** by influencing decisions and undertaking actions that:

1. Result from transparent processes and communications that balance and seek to align internal and external stakeholder interests, and organizational values with societal norms.
2. Influence and contribute to the organization's sustainability strategies.
3. Reinforce an organizational culture of improvement by engaging internal and external stakeholders in meaningful dialogue and positive change.
4. Define accountability metrics against which individual contributions to organizational performance may be proactively measured and improved.

Demonstrate **professional responsibility** by:

1. Researching, abiding by and operating in accordance with the relevant societal norms, rules policies and laws.
2. Abiding by, sharing with colleagues and operating in accordance with the relevant professional codes of ethics.
3. Maintaining competence by continually pursuing education and learning so as to perform responsibly and effectively.
4. Demonstrating business value by defining accountability metrics against which the contribution of relationships and communication strategies in achieving organizational goals may be evaluated and improved.
5. Providing strategic relationship and communication counsel to organizational leaders to ensure responsible decisions and actions.

And demonstrate **personal responsibility** by:

1. Recognizing differences between one's personal values and those of stakeholders, communities and organizations, in line with societal expectations.
2. Taking ownership of the professional standards by which day-to-day decisions and actions are governed.
3. Dealing with stakeholder expectations by informing them of the professional standards by which public relations and communication efforts will be upheld.
4. Seeking to understand the consequences and being willing to make tough decisions when circumstances, society or the organization create conditions that prevent or contradict one's professional standards.
5. Maintaining awareness of relationship and communication research and development and accepting personal accountability for ensuring that the relevant knowledge and skills are held or obtained.
6. Being accountable for decisions and actions by applying effective practices.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The 160,000 professionals represented in the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management strive to use the principles of the Melbourne Mandate to advocate, demonstrate and enhance the value of public relations and communication to their organizations and communities, and to global society.

APPENDIX:

THE INTEGRITY INDEX & TESTING VALUES

Values are the publicly declared 'contract' that an organization has with its stakeholders on how it will fulfill its mission and purpose: a declaration of what principles guide its decisions-making and behaviour. Given that values are so closely tied to and indeed, define character, the extent to which an organisation lives up its values is a test of its authenticity and integrity.

Values can be checked in one or both of two ways:

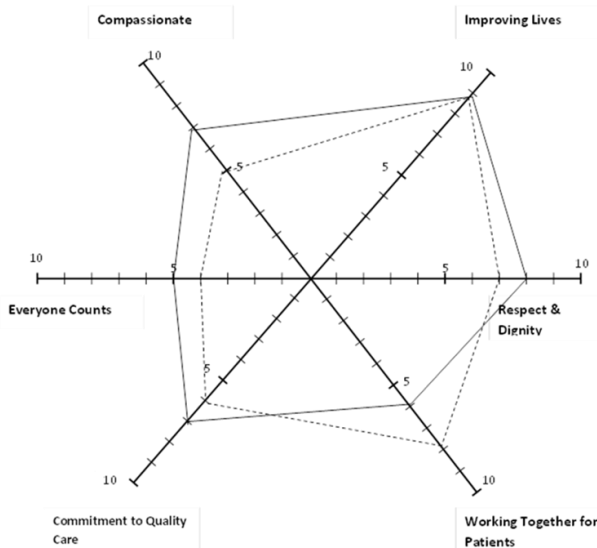
1. **Outside-in:** Where existing discussions about an organisation are analysed, values 'in use' can be abstracted. For example, by using a social media partner, it would be possible to undertake analysis of a variety of stakeholders to identify the range of values that are attributed to an organisation and by whom. It would also be possible to build an overall picture. The same principle can apply to traditional media analysis and to other forms of conversation and feedback between an organisation and its stakeholders.
2. **Inside-out:** Where the organisation asks stakeholders to rate their performance against declared values using the values spidergram.

The matching of these two perspectives brings enriched insights.

The Integrity Index: Explanation

Using the Integrity Index:

Example of a health organisation spidergram



Explanation of process

- The Spidergram method can be used to test with various groups how they rate against their proposed or actual values.
- These ratings are then used to initiate discussions on the disparities between groups on each value and between values. The ratings for an organisation are not intended to be compared against another organisation (e.g. a competitor) but to stimulate strategic discussion and act as a catalyst for positive internal change.
- An index² can be developed for each value or the combination of Values by using the algorithm:

$$\frac{\text{Sum of values rating}}{\text{Maximum possible Values score}} \times 100.$$

Example: An organisation has 6 values: they are rated on the Spidergram as 8 for two of the Values, 4 for two and 9 and 3 for the other two.

$$8+8+4+4+9+3=36.$$

$$\text{Maximum possible } (6 \times 10) = 60$$

$$36/60 = 0.6, \times 100 = 60\%$$

This calculation can be adjusted to score each Value: 5 on the scale obviously converts to 50%

- The utility of this method is that it graphically demonstrates areas of strength and authenticity when values are rated well and of areas where issues exist.

Note: The thinking behind organisational character, the Organizational Character model, and the Integrity Index are the intellectual property of the Character Working Group of the Global Alliance, which should be acknowledged when citing this work.

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