

Working paper for Listening Group

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Two years after the Stockholm Accords, one of the main challenges of the PR profession remains establishing a balance: between achieving overall societal legitimacy on the one hand and value for the specific organisations in whose name it operates on the other. Communication managers remain committed to fostering dialogues with stakeholder groups and – where necessary – prompting the necessary cultural and organisational changes to better meet stakeholders' expectations. Nonetheless, the profession's value is most frequently derived from its contribution to an organisation's license to operate.

In Melbourne, the public relations profession acknowledges that a listening policy is pivotal for any communication that ultimately serves both organisations and society.

The Melbourne Mandate encourages public relations practitioners to **enable and sustain** their organisations' listening policy by

1. Encouraging organisational leaders to actively support and exemplify a culture of listening within their organisations.
2. Striving to build trust through enduring and respectful relationships with stakeholders and the wider community.
3. Pursuing policies and practices based on internationally recognised standards for corporate social responsibility, sustainability, financial and governance reporting and performance transparency.

The Melbourne Mandate encourages public relations practitioners to **generate and implement** their organisations' listening policy by

1. At all times understanding the organisation's overall strategy and license to operate
2. identifying all stakeholder groups who are - currently and in future- affected by the pursuit of an organisation's strategy
3. identifying all stakeholders groups who - currently or in future - affect the pursuit of the organisation's strategy
4. identifying these stakeholder groups' expectations and encouraging their inclusion into an organisation's strategy
5. identifying all stakeholder groups who are affected by an organisation's current or future actions and enabling their expectations to be considered before organisational action is taken

6. providing legitimate reasons in cases where stakeholders' expectations can't be considered in an organisation's strategy or action
7. demonstrating at any time during the pursuit of strategy and during organisational action that the organisation is genuinely listening
8. developing appropriate methodologies that provide a metric to measure an organisation's capacity to listen; applying these metrics before and after the pursuit of an organisation's strategy as well as during any of its major actions.