



Communication for Public Affairs

Strategy, Tactics & Tools

February 22, 2024

THE EXPERIENCE I BRING

JOÃO SOUSA

- Public Affairs Council
 - Managing Director (EU office & Global practice)
- Ex-spokesperson & Head of Communication for EU CSDP missions (in DRC, Kosovo, Brussels, The Hague)
- Communication consultant for intl' companies & EU projects (Europe, Africa, Latin America, AsiaPac)





TODAY'S AGENDA



Introduction



**Strategic planning – Context,
objectives and stakeholders**



Tactics, tools & messaging



Process and measuring impact

DEFINING THE CONTEXT - GEOPOLITICS



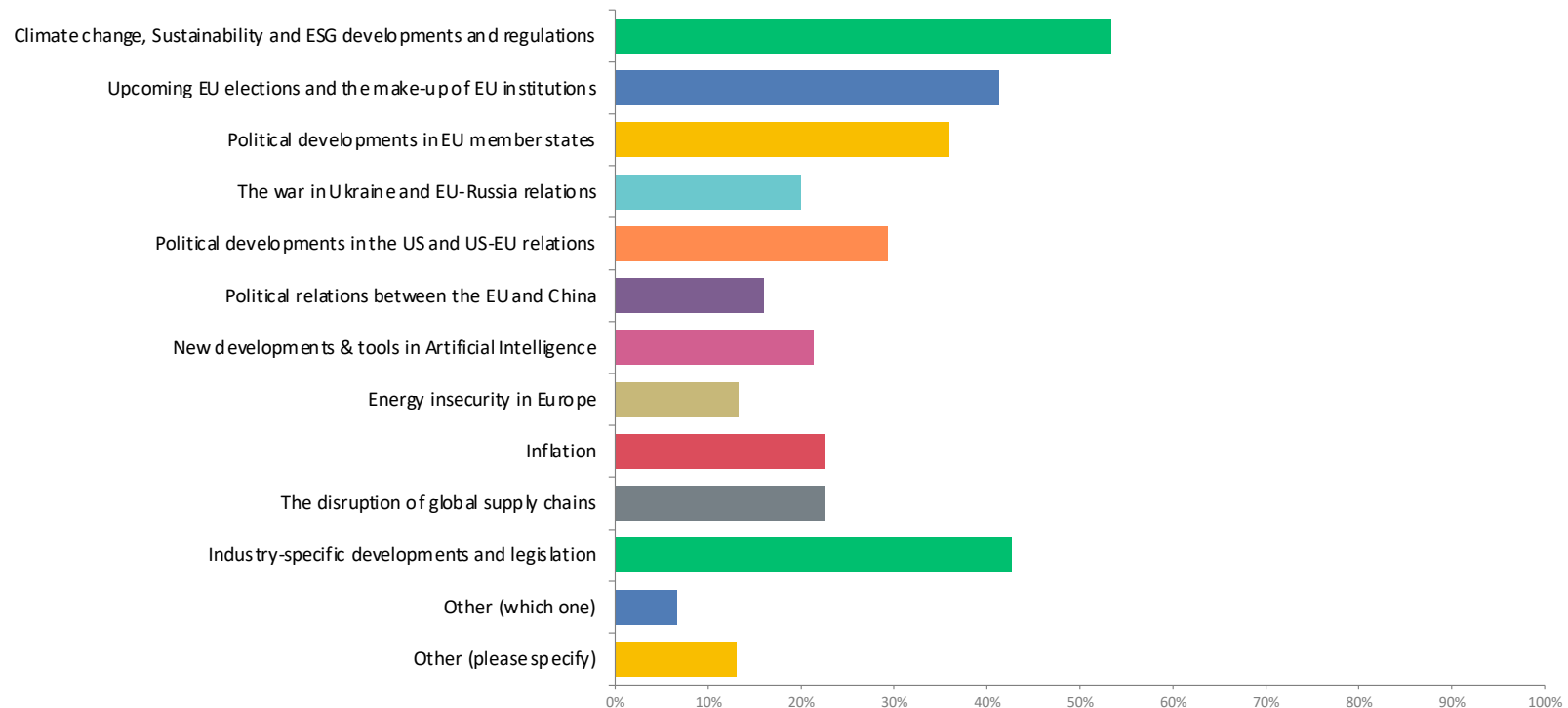
Hungary blocks 50 billion euros in EU aid for Ukraine following approval of membership talks

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Friday blocked 50 billion euros in EU aid for Ukraine, after leaders side-stepped his opposition to agree to open talks with Kyiv on joining the bloc.

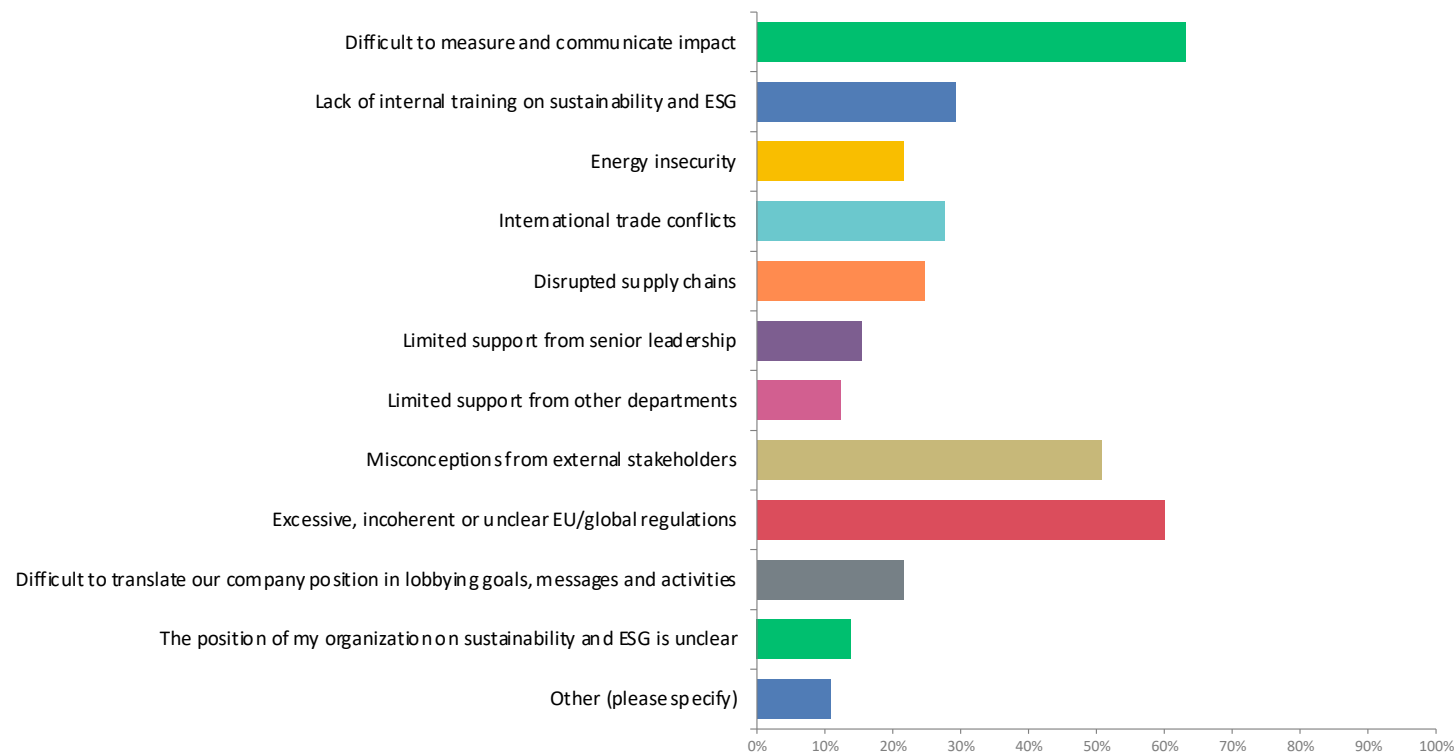
Issued on: 15/12/2023 04:08 3 min



DEFINING THE CONTEXT – WHAT WORRIES PA LEADERS?



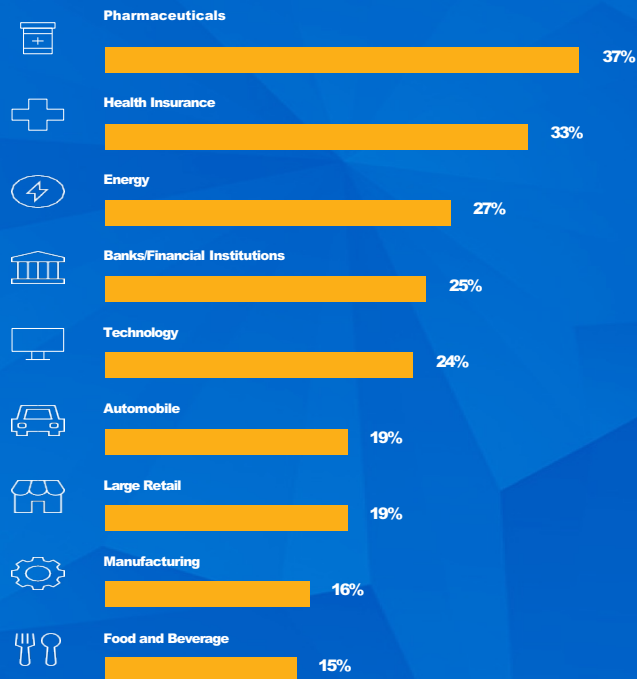
“What are the main challenges you have when engaging with external stakeholders on Sustainability-related issues?”



DEFINING THE CONTEXT – REPUTATIONAL CHALLENGES

Which Industries Are Least Trustworthy?

Percentage of public saying an industry is less trustworthy than average



Which Industries Are Less Trustworthy?

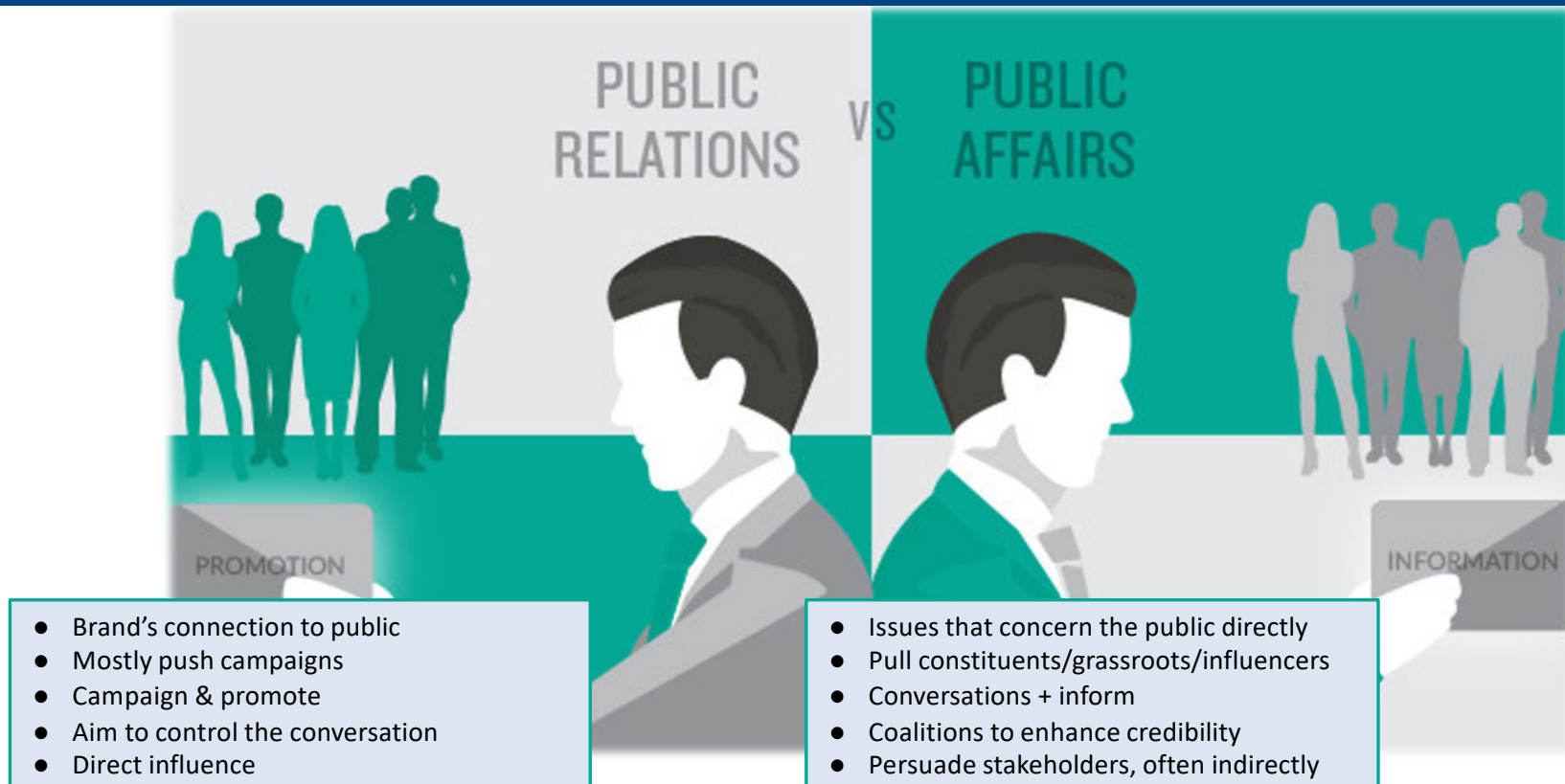
Percentage of public saying an industry is less trustworthy than average

Source: Public Affairs Pulse Survey, Public Affairs Council, 2023

YOUR VIEWS

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE “POLICY COMMUNICATIONS”?

PUBLIC RELATIONS vs PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/public-affairs-relations-lynn-lowel/>



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN




1. Priorities, Issues & Objectives

- Prioritizing issues and goals
- Defining SMART communication objectives

2. Audience & Intelligence

- Stakeholder, position, audience mapping
- Identify policy influencers, journalists, multipliers

3. Define channels

- Social media
 - Direct email outreach
 - Traditional media
- 



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN

4. Content creation & curation

- Thought leadership content (own & curated)
- Visual formats (infographics, videos, memes, articles, webinars)
- Find (or create) a community of like-minded individuals

5. Track, analyze, evaluate

- Communications output metrics
- Advocacy impact metrics

6. Implementation

- Who, when, process
- In-house and/or outsource
- Own assets (website, channels)
- AI tools



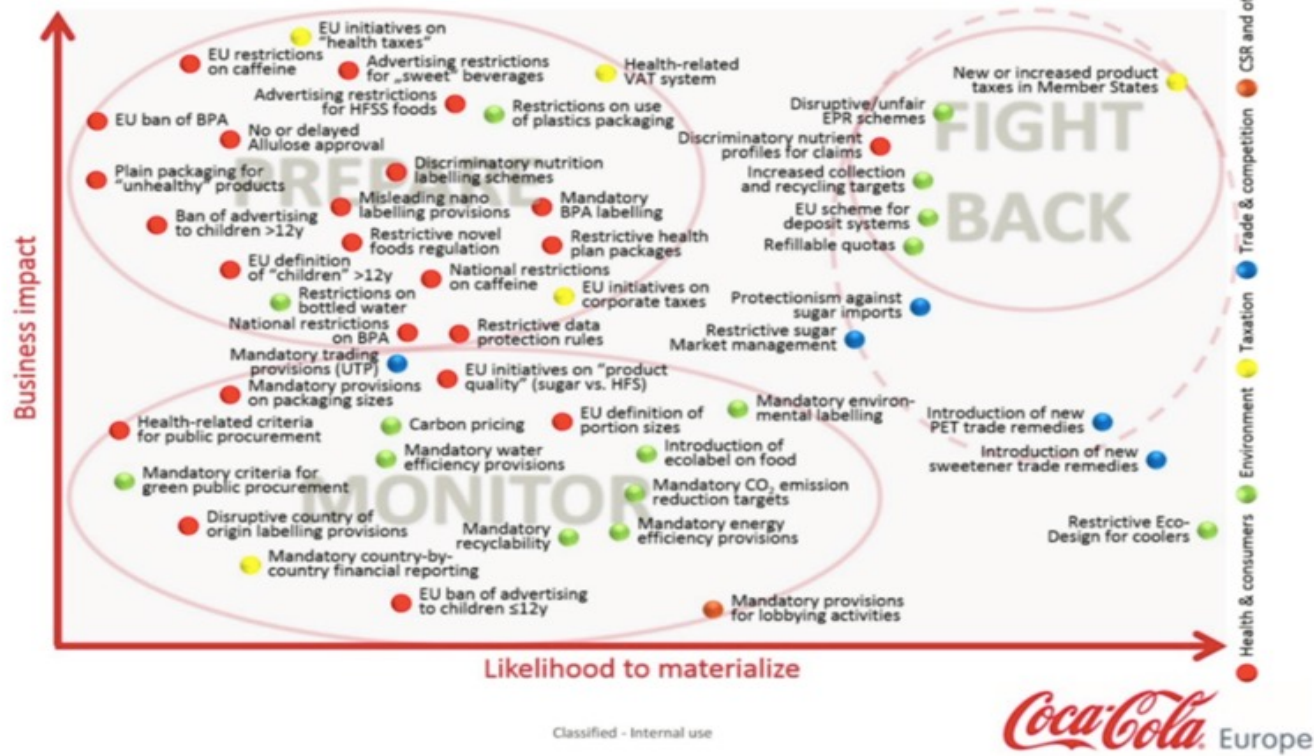
Why is prioritization so important?



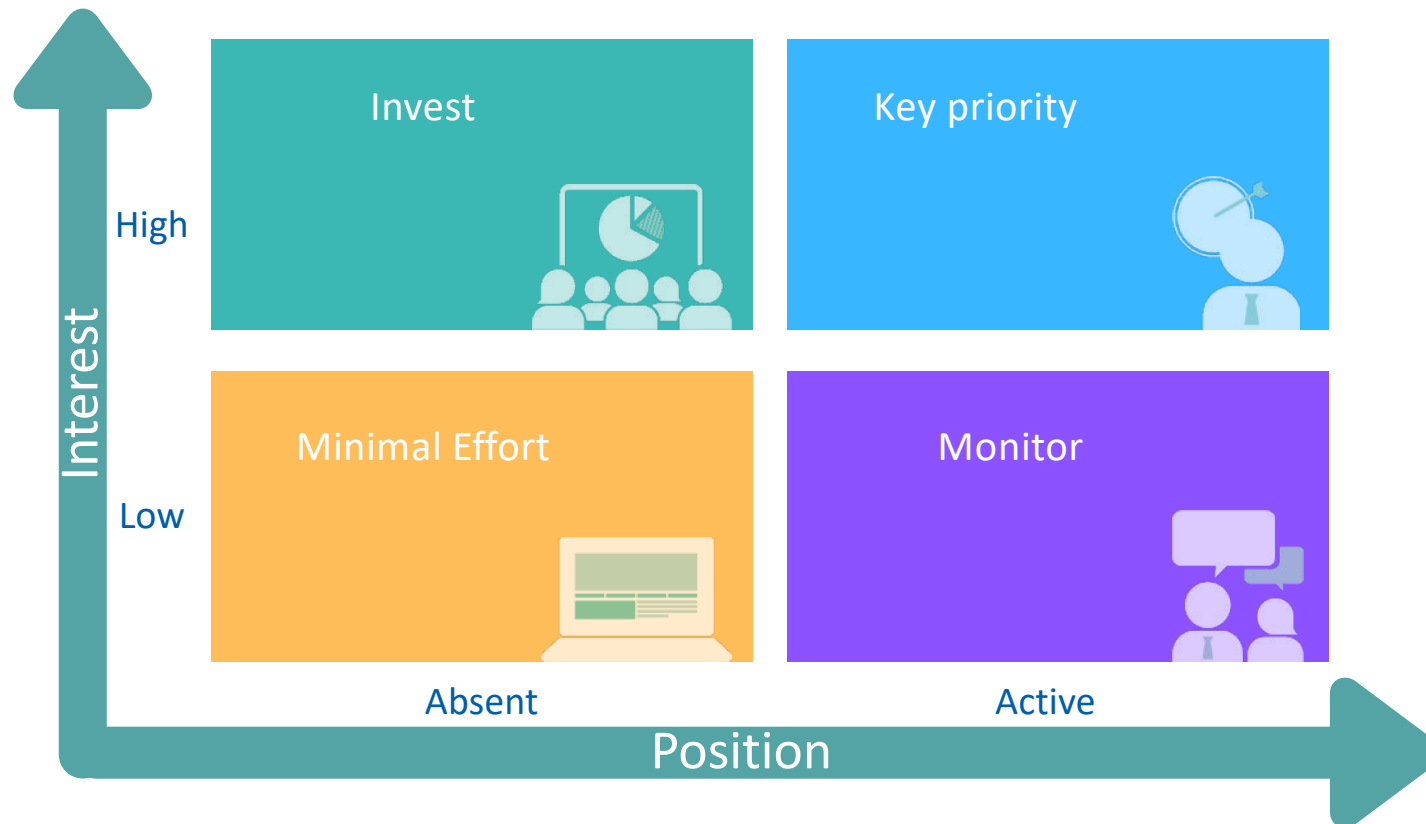
Source: Alan Hardacre, workshop on "Strategic Planning" for the Public Affairs Council, 2024

Visualizing priority issues

Public policy risk matrix & lobby focus



Visualizing priority issues



Be S.M.A.R.T. - Ask the right questions

Specific

- Who is involved? Whose actions do you want to influence?
- What do you want to ensuing action to be?
- When do you want this action to materialize?
- Which are the constraints or limitations on your actions?

Measurable

- Describes objectives in terms that can be clearly evaluated
- Identify concrete outcomes expressed in figures
- "What can't be measured can't be improved" (nor accomplished)

Achievable

- Identify an objective that focuses on achievable actions.
- Do you have enough financial resources?
- Do you have enough staff / expertise?

Relevant

- Do your objectives align with your organization's mission and vision?
- How does it help your organization achieve its broader (business and lobbying) objectives?
- Objectives must be challenging, but not unrealistic

Timebound

- An objective should be grounded on a timeframe?
- When will I achieve this objective?
- When will the activities be undertaken?
- When can I expect to see outcomes?
- How do the activities align with the policy process?



YOUR VIEWS

- Is this a framework you use?
- How do you translate organization priorities into comms objectives?
- Do you present them to your broader organization?



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN




1. Priorities, Issues & Objectives

- Prioritizing issues and goals
- Defining SMART communication objectives

2. Audience & Intelligence

- Stakeholder, position, audience mapping
- Identify policy influencers, journalists, multipliers

3. Define channels

- Social media
 - Direct email outreach
 - Traditional media
- 



Tracking tools for European teams

The Best Government Relations Tracking and Analytics Tools for European Public Affairs

Last updated 27 January 2021

As the public and government affairs function has become more professional and data-driven, a number of companies and tools have appeared on the European scene.

Their mission: to help lobbyists, regulatory managers and corporate affairs professionals track, monitor, analyze, log events and trends, and/or connect and engage with policymakers at EU institutions, government officials at local or national level, and stakeholders at large.

Below is a non-comprehensive list of tools/companies offering digital public affairs tools of some kind. If you run a service that should be on this list, let us know and we'll update it.

Important: Tools are listed alphabetically. The blurbs were given to us or taken from the respective companies' websites, without any comment or evaluation from us. We only include social media tracking tools that have links to government or corporate affairs, or Europe.

Content:

[Borealis](#)
[DeHavilland EU Monitoring](#)
[Dods Monitoring](#)
[Elif Lab](#)
[EU Insider](#)

WHO ARE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS?

Audiences & stakeholders

INTEREST GROUPS

- Trade Unions
- Consumer organizations
- Trade Federations
- Professional Associations
- Companies
- Regional Representations
- Religious groups
- Think tanks
- NGOs
- Consultancies & Law Firms
- Media

POLITICAL ACTORS

- European Commissioners & Commissioner Cabinets
- National Ministers & Senior Civil Servants
- European Parliamentarians

TECHNICAL ACTORS

- Secretariats
- Civil servants in DGs
- Permanent representatives & Attaches
- National experts & political advisors
- Legal Services & Translation

Source: Alan Hardacre "How to Work With the European Union"

MAPPING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

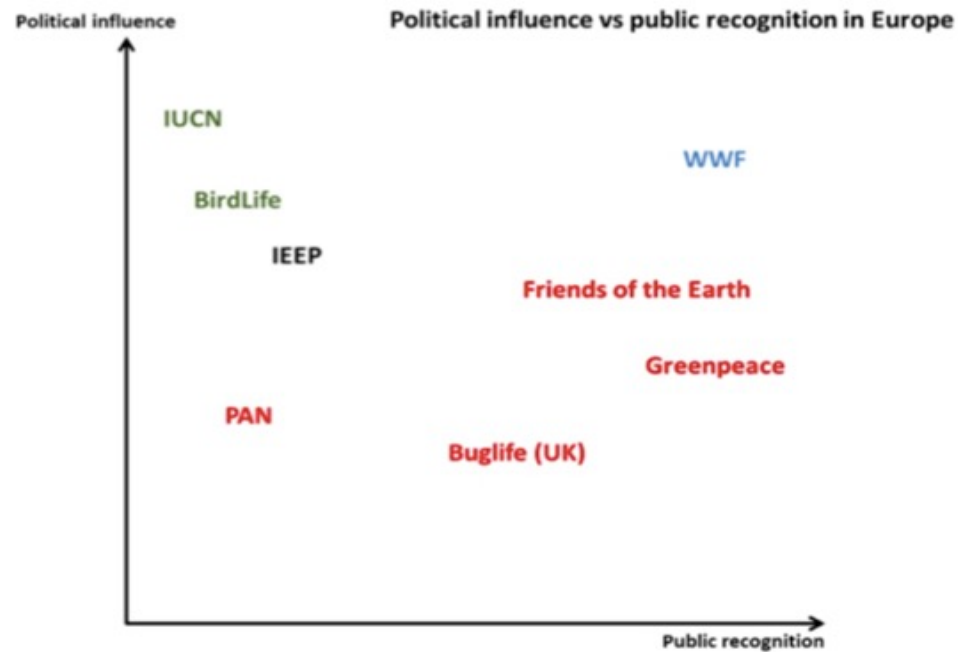
Stakeholder Name	Contact Person Phone, Email, Website, Address	Impact How much does the project impact them? (Low, Medium, High)	Influence How much influence do they have over the project? (Low, Medium, High)	What is important to the stakeholder?	How could the stakeholder contribute to the project?	How could the stakeholder block the project?	Strategy for engaging the stakeholder
EXAMPLE Nurses & Midwives Union	Carlos Davida cdavida@nu.org 0998 765 287	High	High	Maintaining working conditions for nurses	Agree for union members to implement the new reforms	Going on strike	Monthly round- table discussions
Patient Advocacy Group	Viki Chan vchan@pag.org 888 587 101	High	Medium	Maximising quality of care for patients	Communicate with other stakeholders to express their support for reforms	Making complaints about quality of service after the reports	Information and feedback meetings every 6 months
Sunday Times Newspaper	Jane Smith jsmith@stn.com 888 587 101	Low	High	Getting a good story	Print stories that support the new reforms	Printing stories that oppose the new reforms	Quarterly press meetings

MAPPING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	STAKEHOLDER	ORGANIZATION	WEBSITE	FACEBOOK	FOLLOWERS	TWITTER	FOLLOWERS	YOUTUBE
14	EU Institutions, agencies and CSDP operations	European Security and Defense College	X	X	3,875	N	N/A	X
15		EU Joint Cyber Action Plan	X	X	34,993	X	26,46	X
16		European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)	X	X	4,136	X	7,597	X
17		EUROCONTROL	X	X	60,910	X	113,1K	X
18		EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA)	X	X	6,815	X	16,7K	X
19		European Cybercrime Centre	X	N	N/A	X	26,7K	N
20		EU Cyber Effect	X	N	N/A	X	3,15K	X
21		European Police Service Training	X	X	5,023	X	4,427	X
22		EU Cyber Security Building Blocks	X	N	N/A	X	24K	N
23		GLACY+ project	X	N	N/A	N	N/A	N
24		CyberKO	X	N	N/A	X	759	N
25		MAEC CSDP project	N	N	N/A	N	N/A	N
26		ENISA (EU) - Cybersecurity Institute for the EU and the World	X	N	N/A	X	1,165	X
27		Strengthening Resilience to Global Cyber Threats in Asia - G	X	N	N/A	X	N	N
28		Go Blue project	N	N	N/A	N	N/A	N
30	EU Member states (MFA, MOU)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Germany	X	X	284,702	X	233,1K	X
31		Ministry of Defense - Germany	X	N	N/A	X	45K	N
32		G2 - Germany	X	N	N/A	X	55,9K	X
33		DF - Germany	X	N	N/A	X	1,385	N
34		German Institute for International and Security Affairs	X	X	15,149	X	21,8K	N
35		German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA)	X	X	11,541	X	8,771	N
36		German Federal Academy for Security Policy (FFAS)	X	X	3,173	X	4,488	N
37		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - France	X	X	36,905	X	106,2K	X
38		Ministry of Defense - France	X	N	N/A	X	15K	N
39		Superior France	X	X	39,107	X	7,66K	X
40		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Italy	X	X	177,113	X	213,4K	X
41		Ministry of Defense - Italy	X	X	268,099	X	340,1K	X
42		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Spain	X	X	174,743	X	17K	X
43		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Spain	X	X	754,07K	X	677,9K	X
44		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Netherlands	X	X	11,809	X	86,7K	X
45		Ministry of Defense - Netherlands	X	X	25,403	X	10,7K	X
46		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Sweden	X	X	237,068	X	53,6K	X
47		Ministry of Defense - Sweden	X	N	N/A	N	N/A	N
48		Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	X	N	N/A	X	41,8K	N
50	Non-EU countries institutions and policymakers	Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Republic of Korea	X	X	60,511	X	27K	X
51		Ministry of Defense - Republic of Korea	X	X	132,470	X	6K,1K	N
52		Department of the European Union for the Republic of Korea	X	X	7,513	X	3,07K	N
53		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Vietnam	X	X	2,632	X	25,9K	N
54		Ministry of Defense - Vietnam	X	X	20,020	N	N/A	N
55		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Indonesia	X	X	34,750	X	105,9K	X
56		Ministry of Defense - Indonesia	X	X	188,348	X	227,8K	N
57		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Singapore	X	X	41,386	X	44,6K	N
58		Ministry of Defense - Singapore	X	X	170,816	X	20,1K	X
59		Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Japan	X	X	147,151	X	80,7K	X
60		Ministry of Defense - Japan	X	X	157,033	X	10K	X

VISUALIZING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Relative political / public influence



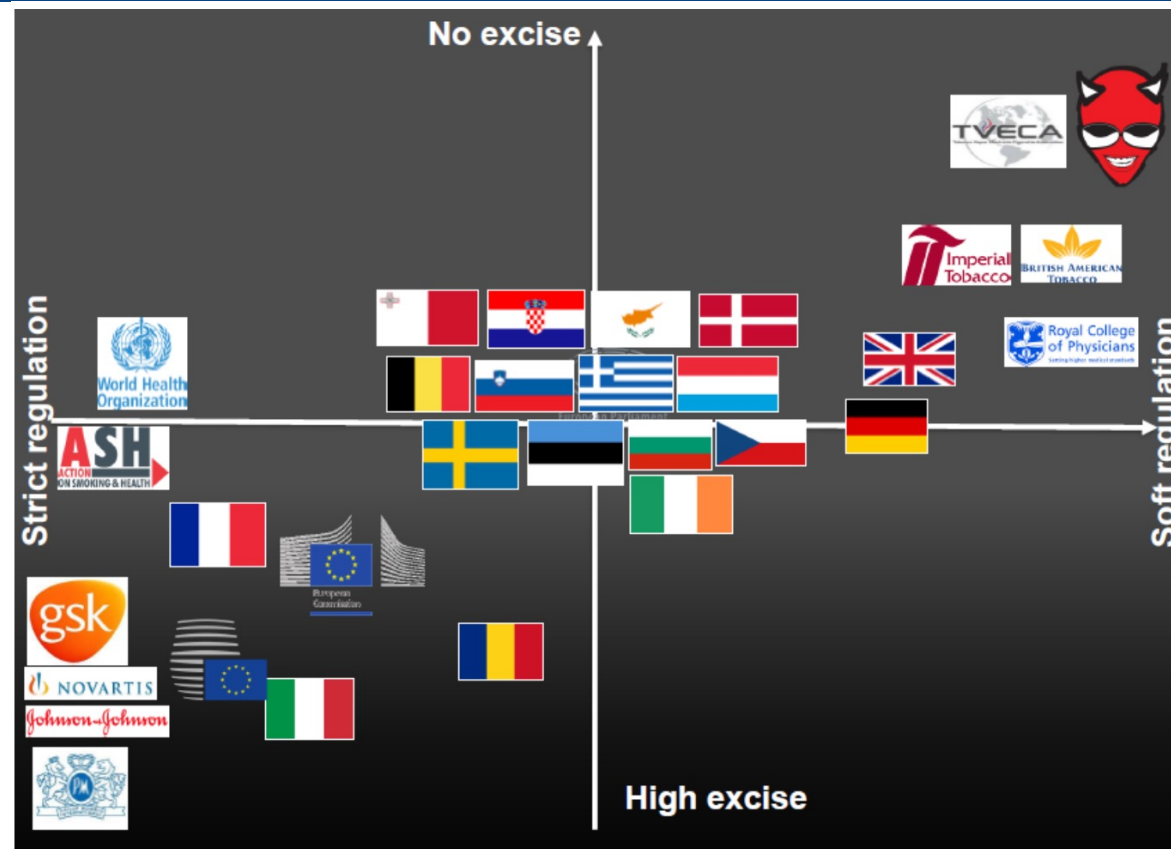
Key: Red=Difficult to engage; Blue=Usually engageable;
Green=Known to be engageable on biodiversity issues; Black=Highly engageable.

8

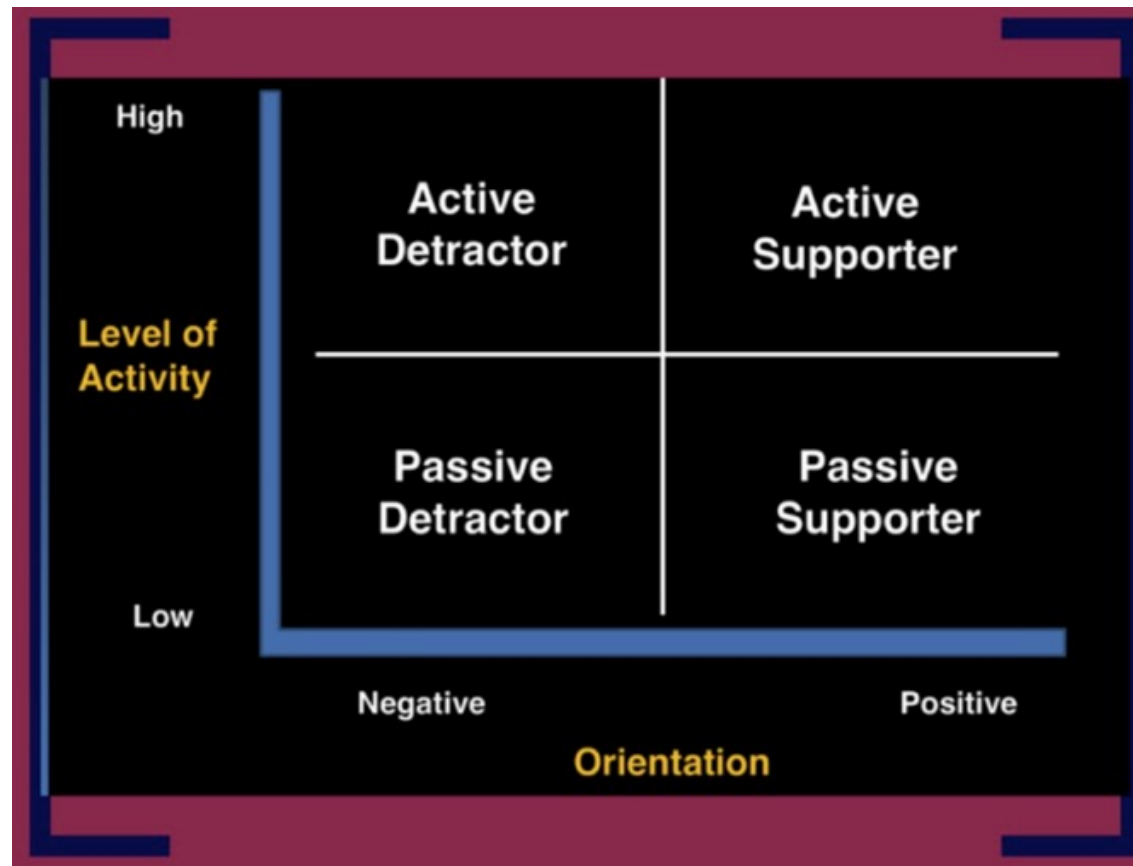
SIGWATCH | NGO TRACKING & ISSUES ANALYSIS



VISUALIZING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS



VISUALIZING YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS



Group exercise & feedback

1. Who are your key stakeholders?
2. How would you help your organization & team visualize them?



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN



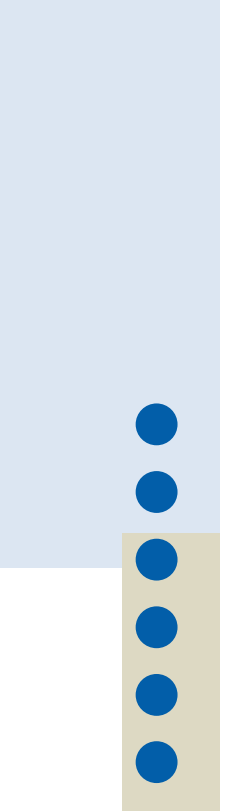
1. Priorities, Issues & Objectives

- Prioritizing issues and goals
- Defining SMART communication objectives

2. Audience & Intelligence

- Stakeholder, position, audience mapping
- Identify policy influencers, journalists, multipliers

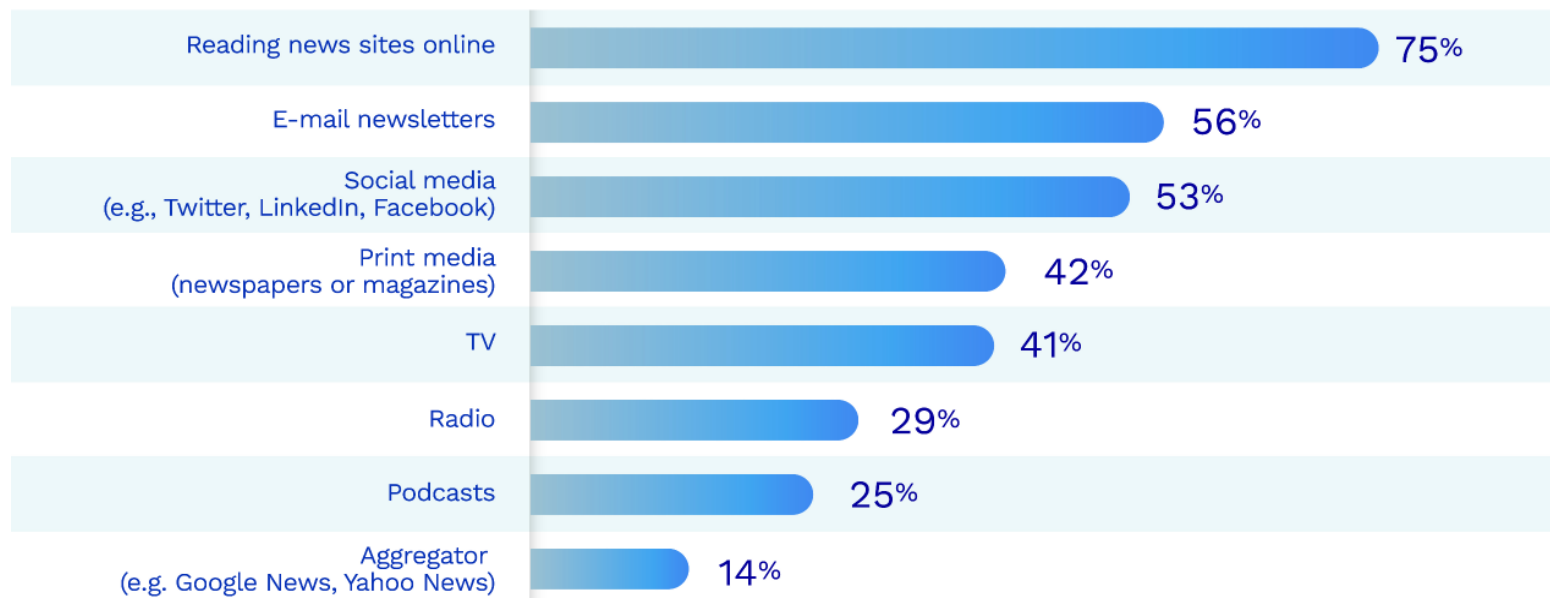
3. Define channels

- Social media
 - Direct email outreach
 - Traditional media
- 



HOW DOES YOUR AUDIENCE CONSUME INFORMATION?

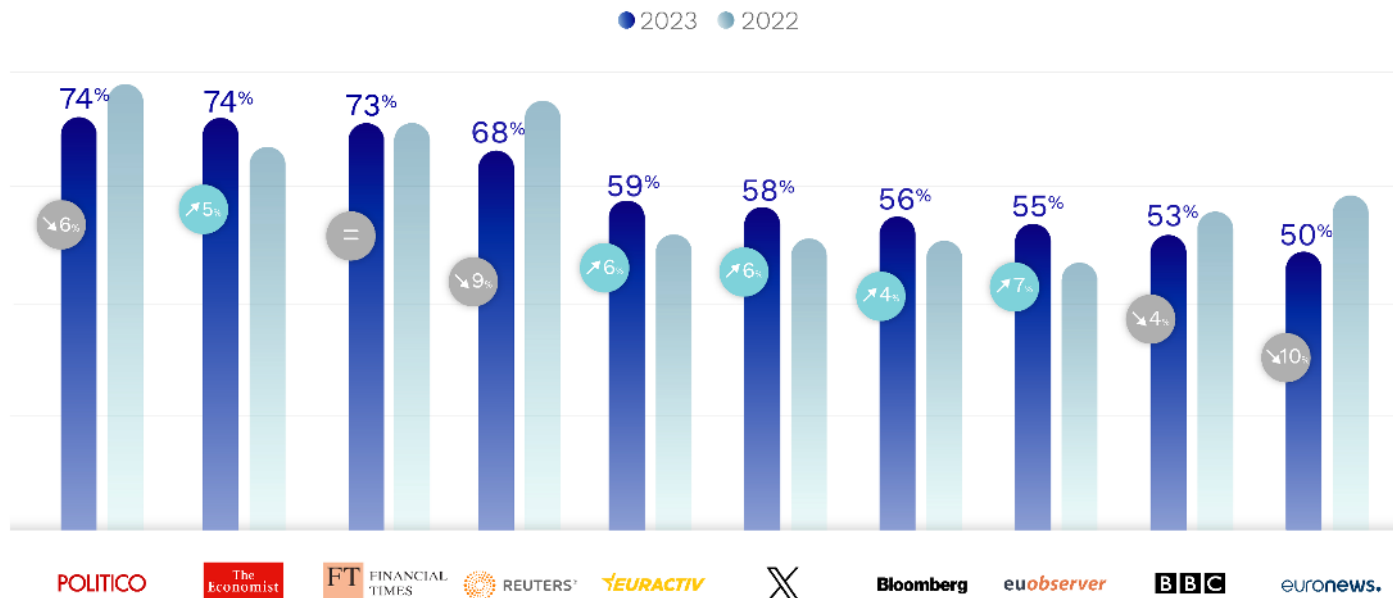
Accessing EU news and information



Source: BCW, EU Media Poll, 2023

Most influential news sources in Brussels

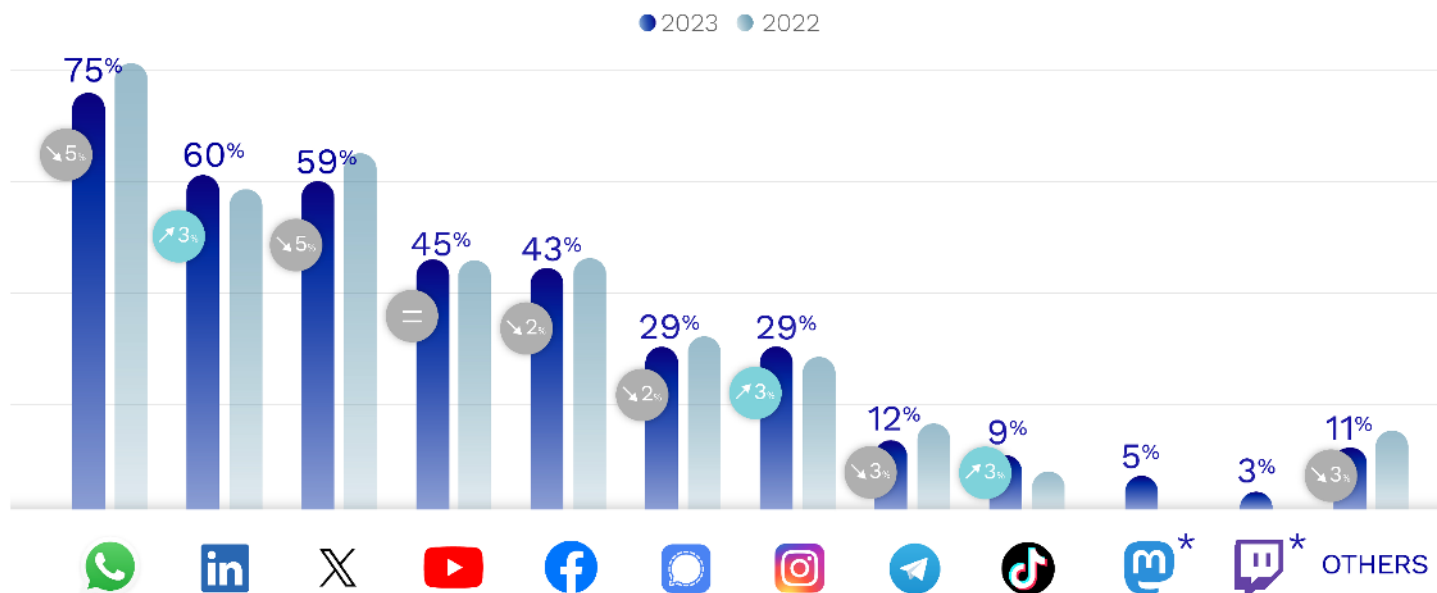
Most influential news sources (comparison with 2022)



Source: BCW, EU Media Poll, 2023

WHERE ARE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS?

Most used social media apps on a weekly basis

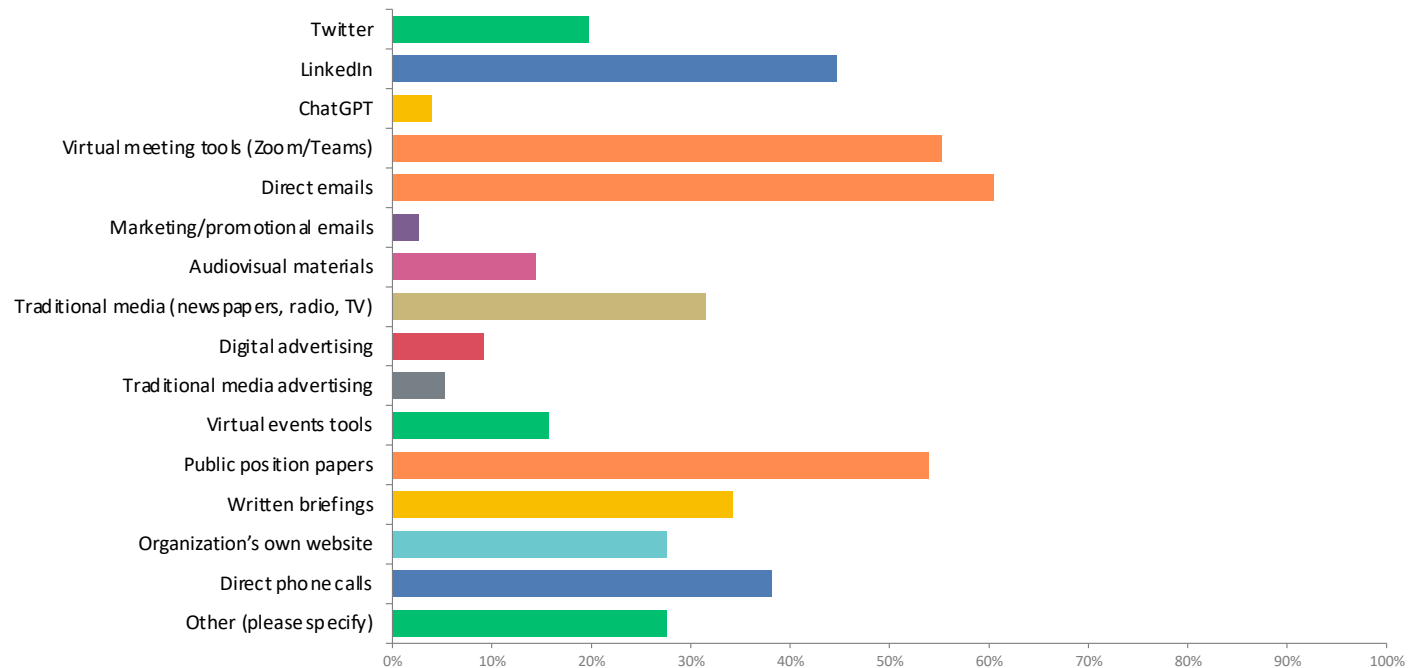


Source: BCW, EU Media Poll, 2023

*new entrants to the poll

TOP TOOLS FOR EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

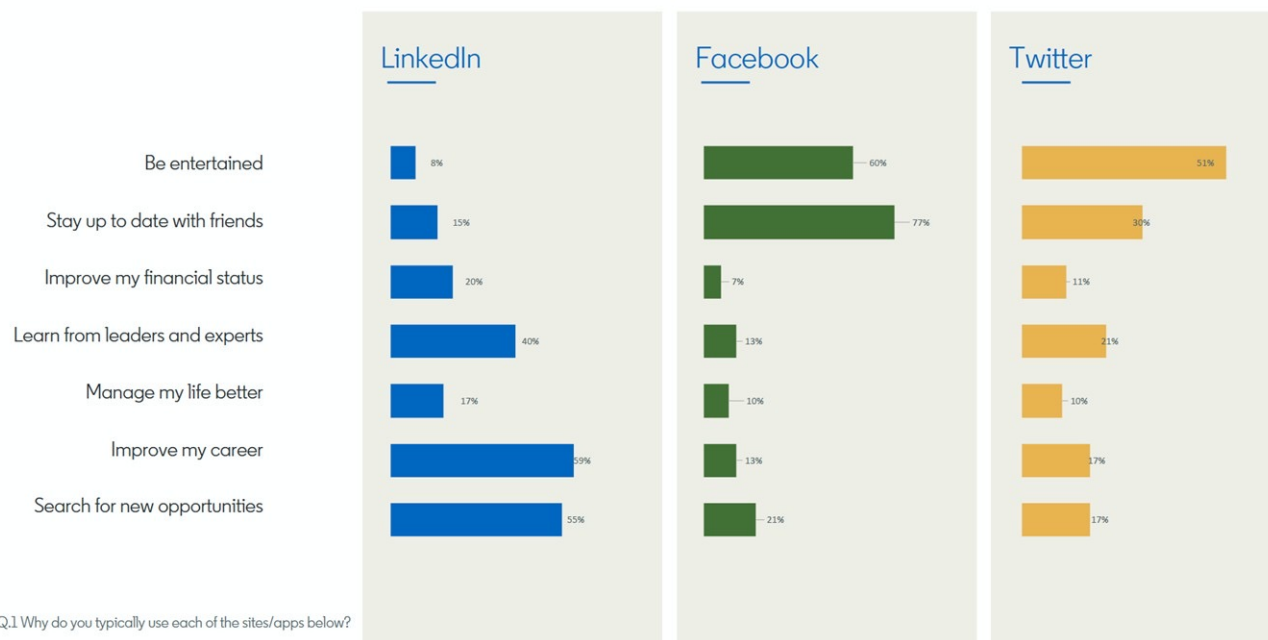
Which of the following tools do you consider as the most critical for your organization's successful engagement with external stakeholders?



HOW DO AUDIENCES USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Consumers approach platforms with **distinct intents**

People come to LinkedIn to achieve their ambitions, not just to be entertained



interpret

YOUR VIEWS



Which social media channels are you in? Why?

Are you satisfied?

Are you exploring others?



BREAK



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN

4. Content creation & curation

- Thought leadership content (own & curated)
- Visual formats (infographics, videos, memes, articles, webinars)
- Find (or create) a community of like-minded individuals

5. Implementation

- Who, when, process
- In-house and/or outsource
- Own assets (website, channels)
- AI tools

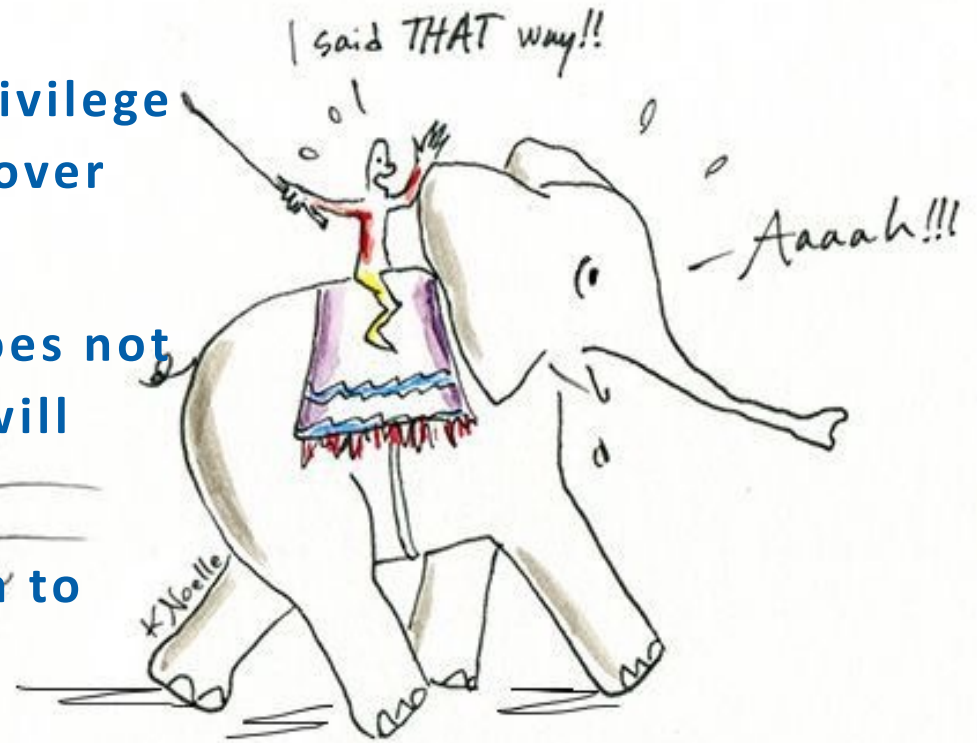
6. Track, analyze, evaluate

- Communications output metrics
- Advocacy impact metrics



Emotions VS Reason

- The human brain has evolved to privilege emotion over reason, perceptions over data, in decision-making
- If the information you receive does not match your identity, your brain will challenge it
 - Facts & science are not enough to persuade your audiences



➔ You need a NARRATIVE

S.U.C.C.E.S **MESSAGING**

the 6 ingredients

**SIMPLE
CONCRETE
EMOTIONAL**

**UNEXPECTED
CREDIBLE
STORIES**



SIMPLE

“ The coordination issues inherent in a highly regionalized structure put emphasis on an efficient organization of public governance, as the presence of multiple networks, layers and actors may lead to duplication of structures with weakened governance and higher administrative costs.

”

European Commission

UNEXPECTED

This is *not*
an iPhone

(thanks to Magritte)

Product safety standards

EU Patent

International trade

Anti-Trust Laws

Waste recycling

Data roaming

Privacy issues

Internal EU market

iTunes pricing

Copyrights

Infrastructure state aid

EU Trademark



CONCRETE



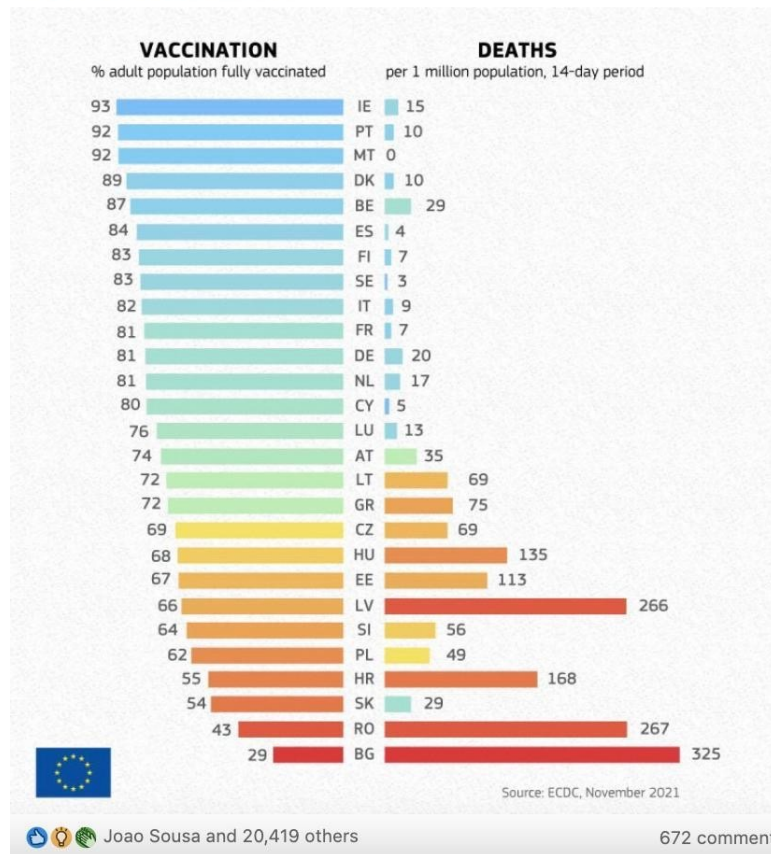


The conclusion is clear.

Fully vaccinated people are less likely to die with Covid19 than those who are not vaccinated.

The higher the vaccination rate, the lower the death rate.

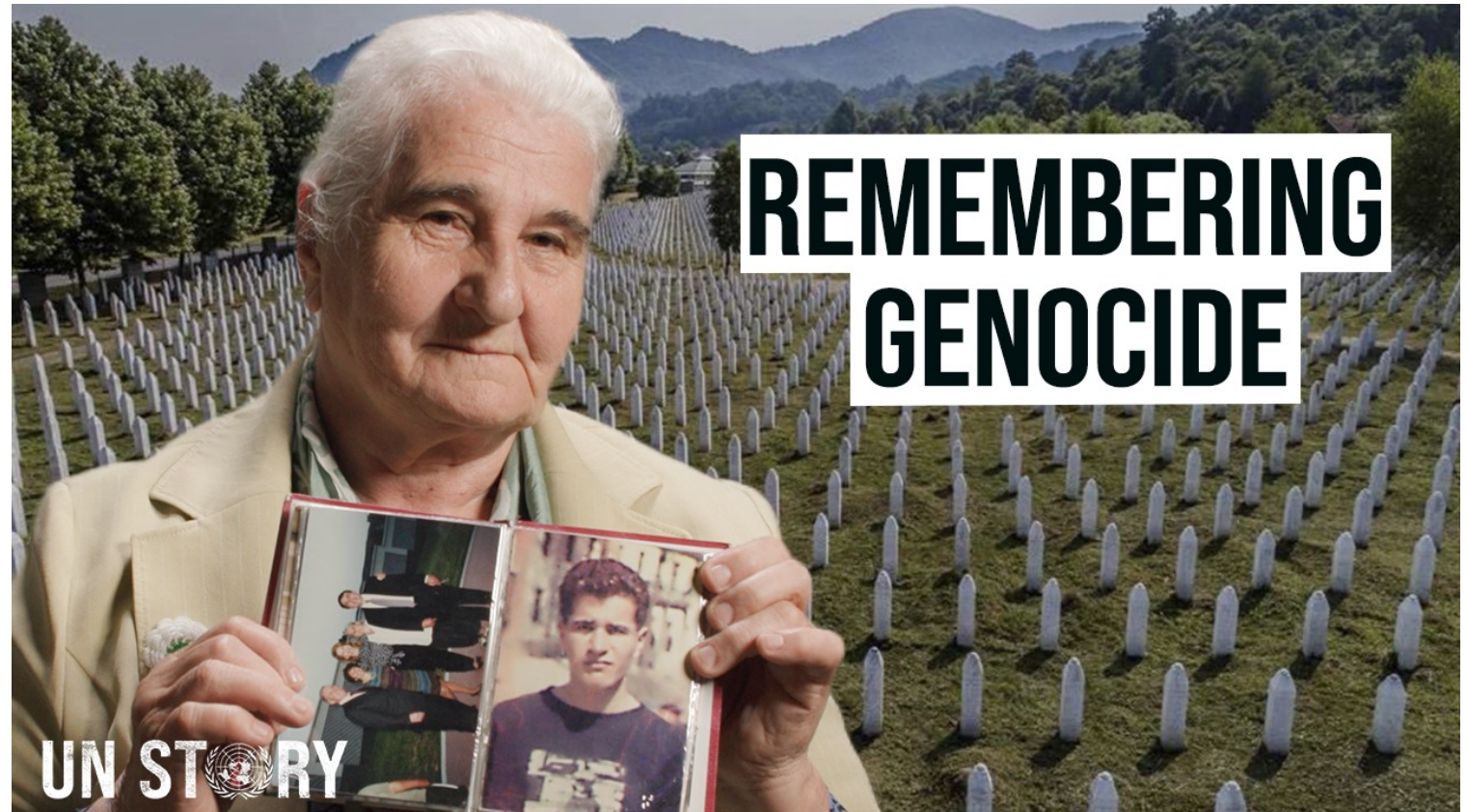
#COVID19 #VaccinesWork



Joao Sousa and 20,419 others

672 comments

CREDIBLE

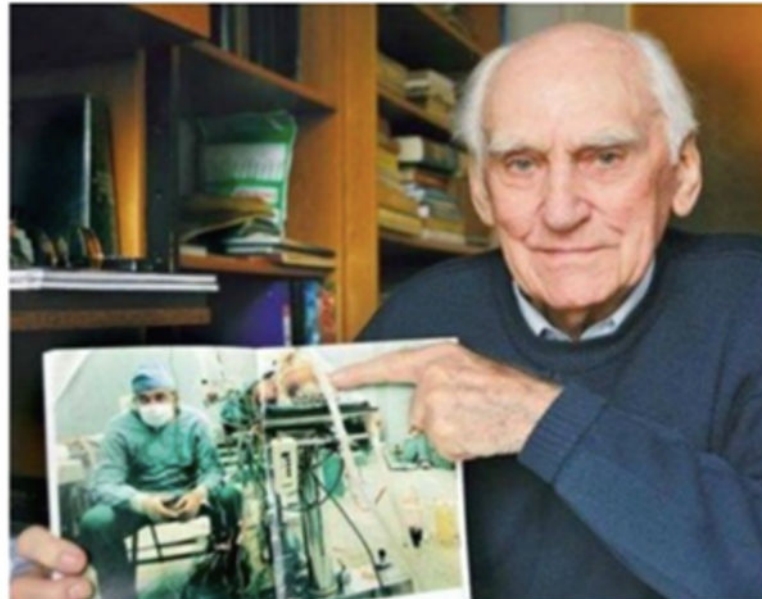
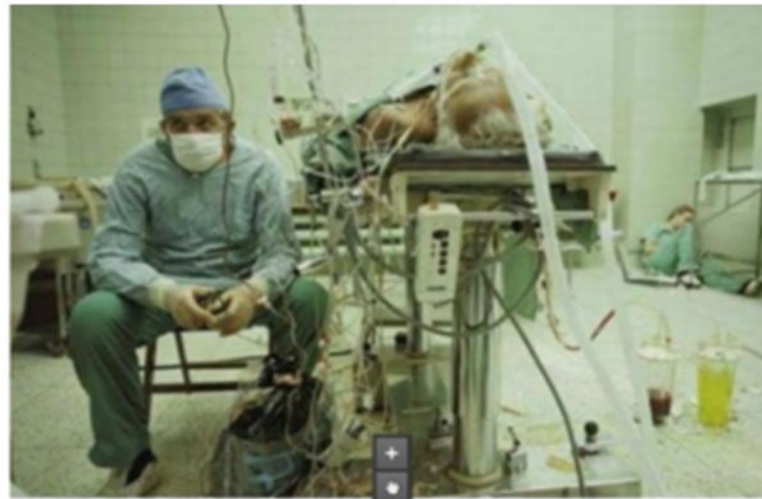


EMOTIONAL



Seal clubbing ban

STORIES



CAMPAING EXAMPLE - VELUX

YouTube ^{BE} Search

IN 160 SECONDS YOU WILL DECIDE HOW THIS STORY ENDS

In 160 seconds you will decide how this story ends.

0:01 / 3:08

The Indoor Generation by VELUX
8,478,776 views • May 14, 2018

8.4K 432 SHARE SAVE ...

The VELUX Group
11.2K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top, there's a search bar and the YouTube logo with a 'BE' superscript. The video itself features a young girl in a dimly lit room, looking directly at the camera. Overlaid text reads 'IN 160 SECONDS YOU WILL DECIDE HOW THIS STORY ENDS'. Below the video, the title 'The Indoor Generation by VELUX' is displayed, along with view counts and the upload date. The video player controls show a progress bar at 0:01 / 3:08. Below the video, there are engagement buttons for likes (8.4K), dislikes (432), share, save, and a menu. At the bottom, the VELUX Group channel name and subscriber count (11.2K) are shown, along with a red 'SUBSCRIBE' button.



YOUR VIEWS



What messages/approach do you think resonates more with Brussels audiences?

Are there differences in how companies, associations & NGOs approach messaging?



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN

4. Content creation & curation

- Thought leadership content (own & curated)
- Visual formats (infographics, videos, memes, articles, webinars)
- Find (or create) a community of like-minded individuals

5. Track, analyze, evaluate

- Communications output metrics
- Advocacy impact metrics

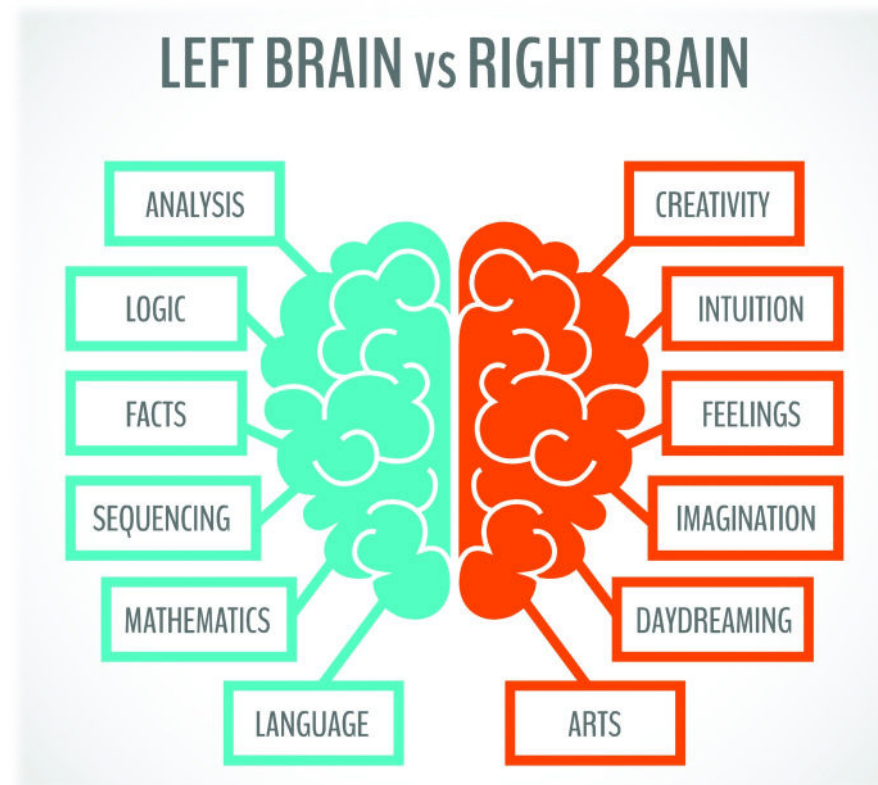
6. Implementation

- Who, when, process
- In-house and/or outsource
- Own assets (website, channels)
- AI tools



Creating a measurement system

- Metrics should serve as a means to track improvement, not as a means to justify the department's existence.
- Metrics should speak the language of senior management.
- Metrics should reflect a company's culture.
- Metrics should focus on impact, not actions/activities.



Focus should be on outcomes

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
5 newsletters; on time; on budget	Readership	Impact on behavior; increased understanding of issues
PA blog page up and current	Hits	Change in attitudes and awareness
# events organized	Attendance	Enhanced relationships
# news releases; placed stories	Coverage, recall	Changed opinions/ behavior of stakeholders
Develop sustainability report	Readership; awards	Impact on business behavior; reputation
# meetings with officials	Responses	Influence on policy

Most used measurement tools

Performance Measurement Tools Used



YOUR VIEWS

How are you measuring your communication impact?



A 6-STEP COMMUNICATION PLAN

4. Content creation & curation

- Thought leadership content (own & curated)
- Visual formats (infographics, videos, memes, articles, webinars)
- Find (or create) a community of like-minded individuals

5. Track, analyze, evaluate

- Communications output metrics
- Advocacy impact metrics

6. Implementation

- Who, when, process
- In-house and/or outsource
- Own assets (website, channels)
- AI tools

Internal procedures that can make or break your strategy

Validation

- Who has the authority to validate your strategy?
- Who has the authority to validate your messages?

Consultation

- Which departments do you need to consult with?
- Who has information that can improve your chances of success?

Representation

- Who can speak publicly on behalf of the organization (spokesperson/s)?
- Who can publish on social media?

Influence

- Who can have a negative/positive impact on your strategy?
- Whose support would make your job easier (although not critical)?

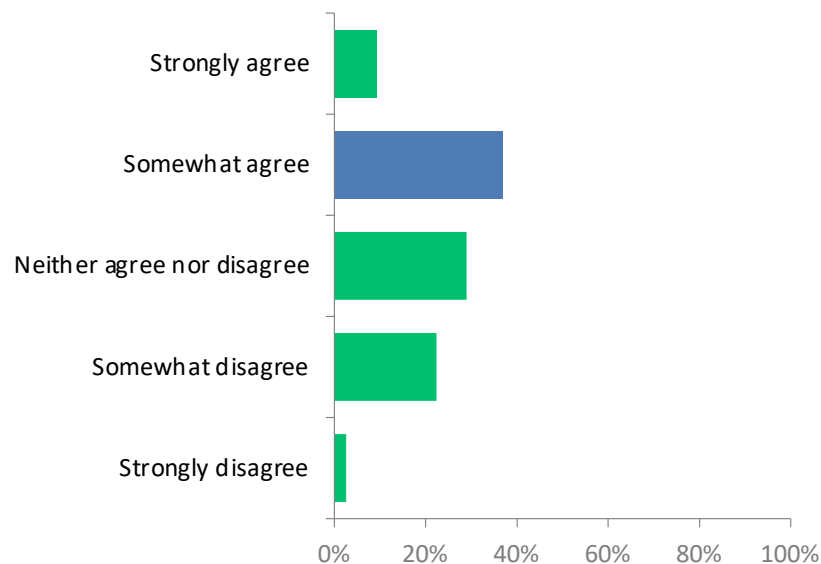


WHO ARE YOUR ALLIES & MULTIPLIERS?

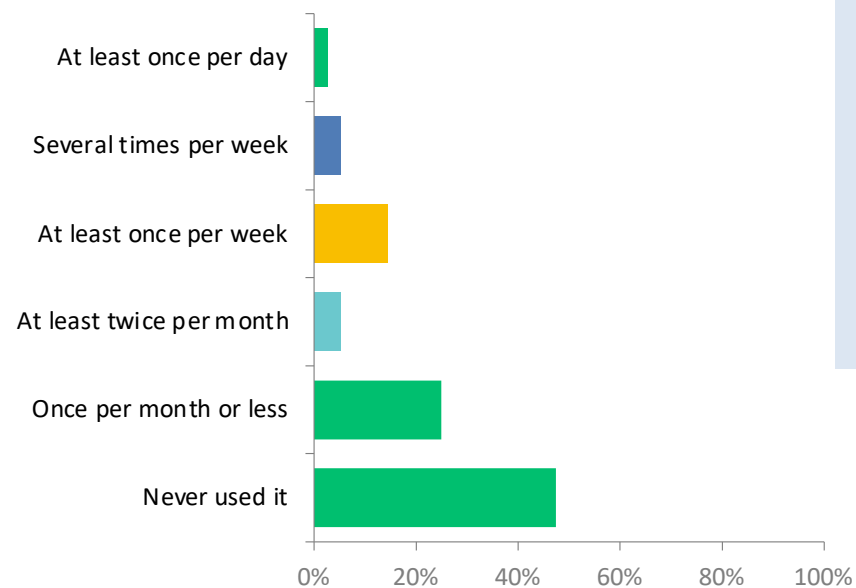


TOOLS – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI tools will be adopted by a majority of European organizations for their public affairs and communication work within the next 12 months.



Thinking about ChatGPT specifically, how often do you use it for your public affairs and communication work?



Can A.I. help?



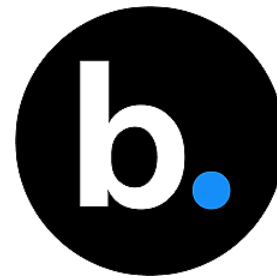
Jasper



Gemini



gable



DeepL



Bing



Prowly



LET'S CONNECT!

JOAO SOUSA
MANAGING DIRECTOR
EUROPEAN OFFICE & GLOBAL PRACTICE

jsousa@pac.org
+32.476.639.503
@joppsousa

U.S. OFFICE
2121 K ST. N.W. SUITE 900
WASHINGTON DC 20037

pac@pac.org
+1.202.787.5950

EUROPEAN OFFICE
SQUARE AMBIORIX 7
1000 BRUSSELS

europe@pac.org
+32.476.639.503

