

Implementing the Global StandardSM of the Communication Profession into the Every Day

World Conference 2014

GLOBAL STANDARD^{SM*} OF THE COMMUNICATION PROFESSION

Communication professionals around the world embrace a shared career purpose and six core Principles as the building blocks of their work. Informed by our passion for engaging audiences with strategic communication, our purpose and Principles focus our work and form a global standard. Applying that standard enables us to cross all borders, align with diverse cultures and effectively serve organizations of all types and sizes.

THE CAREER PURPOSE OF A COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONAL

Communication professionals represent the voice of an organization as it interacts with customers, clients, employees, partners, shareholders, competitors and the community. The communication professional brings the organization to life with a brand voice that aligns its verbal, visual and digital messages and activities with its mission and vision. By clarifying the brand, communication professionals also help ensure the organization runs efficiently and effectively.

Communication professionals build a strategic communication plan based on thorough research, they communicate with a variety of audiences in a range of styles, they develop and edit content, and they assess where and how to communicate and how to evaluate the results of their work. They act as the organization's conscience and strive for its financial, social and environmental sustainability.

The Six Principles of the Communication Profession*

Principles	Definition	Context
Ethics	Communication professionals adopt the highest standards of professional behaviour. They always: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with sensitivity to cultural values and beliefs; • Act without deception and in accordance with the law; • Represent the organization truthfully, fairly and accurately. • Enable mutual understanding and respect; and • Adhere to the "IABC Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate cultural values • Communicate in accordance with law • Represent organization truthfully, fairly and accurately • Enable mutual understanding and respect • Adhere to Code of Ethics for communication professionals
Consistency	Acting as the organization's voice, a communication professional expresses a single, consistent story for internal and external audiences. This narrative is clear and compelling, it reflects the input and perspectives of diverse stakeholders, and it furthers the organization's mission. A communication professional integrates information and inspiration for this narrative from people with diverse perspectives and ensures that communications are culturally appropriate to each audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using single, consistent voice for internal and external stakeholders • Establishing clear and compelling narrative • Recognizing diverse stakeholders • Integrating information from diverse perspectives • Ensuring culturally appropriate information for each audience
Context	The communication professional is sophisticated about the organization's internal culture and external environment. Deep familiarity with the organization's vision and goals and how its elements function together – from accounting to production to human resources - is crucial to interacting successfully with other leaders of the organization and communicating effectively about the organization. Advocating successfully for the organization also depends on a thorough understanding of its political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal context -- and of how to interact with representatives of other organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding internal cultures • Understanding external environments • Understanding organization's vision and goals and how operations function together • Advocating for the organization • Understanding political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal context • Interacting with representatives of other organisations
Analysis	Communication professionals research and evaluate how to serve and promote the organization most effectively and then offer recommendations supported by direct and secondary evidence. They develop and implement communication plans and gauge their results using clear qualitative and quantitative measures that can be duplicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding research • Understanding evaluation • Developing communication plans • Implementing communication plans • Using qualitative measures • Using quantitative measures
Engagement	A communication professional identifies and communicates with employees, customers, shareholders, regulators, government agencies and other groups with an interest in the organization's activities. All these groups have the potential to change the organization's results. So the communication professional fosters and nourishes relationships with them that will support the organization's mission and goals. The communication professional uses dialogue to tell the organization's story and garner support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying with various stakeholders • Fostering and nourishing relationships to support organization's mission and goals • Using dialogue to tell the organization's story and garner support
Strategy	With rigor and discipline, a communication professional identifies opportunities and challenges both inside and outside of the organization. Addressing communication challenges and opportunities with a thoughtful strategy allows the organization to achieve its mission and goals. The communication professional systematically manages communication activities, making decisions based on research, analysis, planning and evaluation. The professional also has the flexibility and creativity to adjust to change inside and outside of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding communication challenges • Managing communication activities • Making decisions based on research • Making decisions based on analysis • Planning communication strategies • Conducting evaluation

Career Paths of the Communication Professional



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Foundation

This is the entry level of the profession. At this level the communication professional attains the education and develops the core skills required to be competent within all Principles of the Global Standard and to work across disciplines.

Foundational skills are required to do the job and understand the organization's culture, structure and function.

At this milestone the professional is expected to contribute under relatively close supervision and direction from a more senior person, and is expected to exercise initiative and creativity within a well-defined area. They must master basic and routine communication tasks, and demonstrate competence on a portion of a larger communication project or task.



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Generalist/Specialist

At this level the communication professional branches into a role with either a specific or a generalist focus, where work experience provides opportunities for a more strategic and problem-solving approach. The communication professional will apply a deeper understanding and practice of the Principles.

Here, the communication professional begins to refine their career choices. They can be satisfied as a generalist or specialist for a number of years or for a whole career, but expertise and responsibility will continue to grow. Some professionals never need or want to move away from this milestone, thriving on interdependent work. They will build expertise in at least one area of the industry. They will develop credibility and a reputation while building strong internal networks of relationships related on their area of expertise and gain greater ability to develop strategic focus and problem solving techniques.



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Strategic Advisor

Maturing as a communication professional through consistent application of the Principles, at this milestone they are expanding expertise and innovation. The communication professional assumes increased responsibilities, including resource management.

They are interdependent, taking responsibility for work other than their own and developing others within the organization. To accommodate their personal development needs, they seek to build additional areas of expertise. They have strong interpersonal skills, broad business perspectives, stimulate others through ideas and knowledge, and effectively represent the organization's clients and external groups. They have expanded their expertise in niche disciplines and explored innovations within these disciplines. They are highly skilled and confident, providing strategic communication advice and counsel to the organization's leadership.



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Business Leader

The communication professional at this milestone demonstrates the ability to serve at a senior peer level, leads within an organization by providing counsel, and helps to set organizational direction at a strategic level. They set a standard for application of the Principles.

As business leader, they play a key role in shaping the future of the organization by sponsoring promising people, programs and ideas. At this milestone they have developed a distinct competence in several areas of expertise and often have a regional or national reputation. The professional influences the future of the organization through original concepts that often lead to changing the way business is done. They are adept at seeing new business opportunities, motivating buy-in and gaining resources. They competently represent the organization on critical strategic issues, and are sought after to provide counsel and function at a peer level with other senior executives.

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