



CHAPTER 6

Measurement is not optional – not for the UK Government – not for your organisation



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To not measure communications is lazy and shows a lack of pride in the work being done. It is the equivalent of your doctor shrugging their shoulders and dishing out any old pills and potions for whatever complaint you have, and caring not if they cure or kill you.

The fact that you are reading this PR Guide suggests you already know this. The quack doctors of the communications world are likely to avoid AMEC and best practice. They dismiss measurement of communications as too hard or not relevant to their work. This damages all of us true communication professionals.

I want to set out for you the way in which we can cure the world of this quackery by showing that measurement is not an option for the UK government or your organisation. Next time someone says it can't be done remind them that if the UK government can measure it, with the complexity of what it is trying to do, then everyone should rise to the challenge of proving the value of their work.

Governments across the world spend public money on communications. If it wasn't spent on communications then it could be spent directly on other priorities, such as housing, education or healthcare services. Our evaluation therefore not only has to show an impact from communications but also that it stacks up to being at least as beneficial to society as spending directly on other priorities. **We use a rigorous campaign model for all our work that ensures we avoid uncoordinated, sporadic communications activity. This sets out transparently what we are doing but also helps us focus clearly on our objective and the impact we are looking to achieve with each audience.**

Our Evaluation Council was set up in 2013 to support government's continuing commitment to the development, understanding and implementation of evaluation best practice across all government communication activity. The Council brings together expertise from the commercial sector, NGOs, academia, local government and central government. The members meet every two months to act as a sounding board for new GCS evaluation thinking, to review





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evaluation plans and outputs from government communicators, and to consider evaluation-related developments. Their advice helps GCS improve evaluation practice and to optimise campaigns.

The UK government's communications is a power for good, from our work on road safety to blood donation, driving beneficial behaviour changes and saving money for taxpayers. For example:

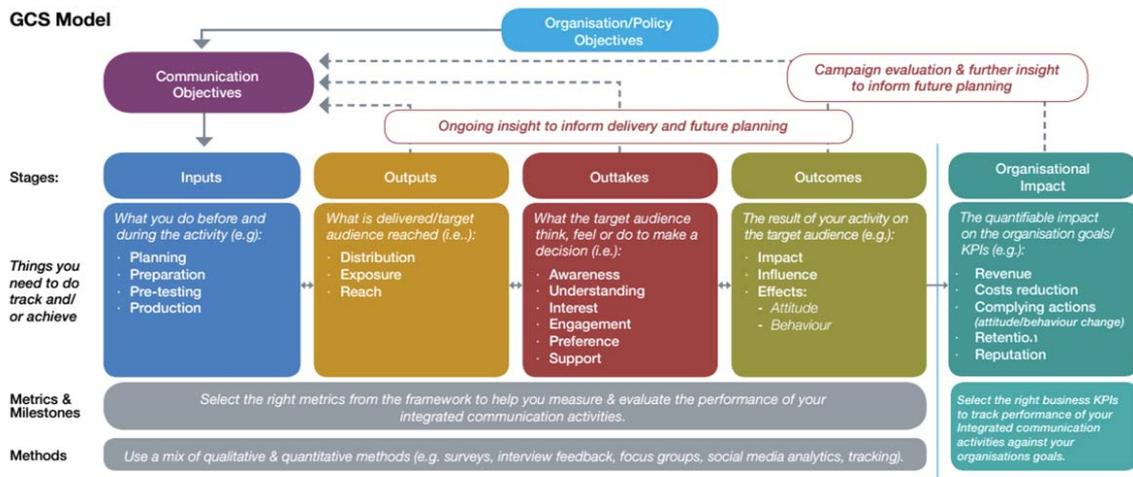
- The GREAT Britain campaign aims to increase the levels of trade, investment and tourism, and high quality students coming to the UK. GREAT unifies the international growth promotion efforts of 17 government departments and organisations under a single, high-quality and powerful brand. It has led to measurable economic impact of at least £1 billion over three to five years and the creation of over 10,000 direct jobs for the UK economy. <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/case-studies/>
- The NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) 'Missing Type' campaign almost doubled the number of people registering to donate blood in the campaign period and increased donations amongst a specific target group, those from Indian and Black Caribbean communities, even more. <https://amecorg.com/case-studies/NHS-Blood-and-Transplant/>
- Public Health England Change4Life Sugar Smart campaign reduces sugar intake amongst children. It showed a decrease in sales of sugary cereals and drinks during and after the campaign period. Three in ten of all mums of children aged 5-11 said the campaign made them reduce their child's sugar intake. <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/platinum-award-winner-phe-sugar-smart/>

Evaluation is woven deep into our campaigns focusing on what we will achieve and how. There has to be enough evidence to convince others that there is a chance of success. It may be a near certainty the plan will work, based on strong previous evidence, or there might be more risk as we have developed new ideas. By being transparent and setting out our evidence we can make an informed decision to proceed. Measurement helps us make bolder decisions, take more risks and be more confident of success.

A lack of communications measurement is lazy as there is so much guidance out there to help. The AMEC evaluation model follows established best practice in communications and the social policy and academic world. The approach is known as a logic model, or a theory of change, and is the basis of how the trickiest problems in the world are approached and dealt with. I'm not saying communications evaluation is easy but it is never impossible. An evaluation model is there to help drive out uncertainty. It brings together the best evidence you have to evaluate whether your activity is making an impact. The model should be continually improved as you work harder to understand what is going on and respond accordingly.



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I often suspect that those who don't measure communications are also a bit lost over their career development. A true communication professional knows how they will make a difference each and every day. Others are simply hoping no one notices that they don't critically assess their work, and cross their fingers that the communications will work. How can you handle appraisals or job interviews if you don't know what difference you have made? Indeed, who employs or hires anyone that can't show they make a difference?

Pride in your work comes from wanting to continually improve and challenge yourself, as well as those working around you and across your profession. In UK Government communications, everyone, including myself, has a set of clear personal work objectives and a career development plan. Measurement of communications includes measurement of yourself and doing things better.

The more we can challenge those who don't measure communications properly the more we can ensure that our profession is ethical, dynamic and a source of great pride. Most importantly we can be assured that we make a difference and increase trust. Communications can genuinely help address some of the most complex issues our societies face, as well as drive the economy and support businesses and their employees.

The early pioneers of modern medicine set in train a period of learning and evaluation that means we can now treat illnesses they never imagined we could. We are on the same path as we discover more each day by properly measuring communications to reveals to us the power of the work we do across the private and public sectors.



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Alex's Top 3 Measurement Tips

1. Set out transparently what you are doing and focus clearly on your objective and the impact you are looking to achieve
2. Follow best practice and use the measurement tools that are out there
3. Take pride in your work by continually improving and challenging yourself, as well as those working around you and across your profession



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