

ASCATs Strategic Communications Techniques

The use of humour and cartoons to change behaviour and beliefs



“Whilst one may have difficulty in remembering what you were taught in maths class you will have no problem in recalling a joke told to you at school”

- John Baggott

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The power of humour in communication

Simply making people aware of legislation or standards is rarely enough to ensure a sustainable implementation - often entrenched mindsets and historical practices have to be replaced with new values that will support the essence of the legislation or standard.

We have developed strategic communication techniques which are utilised to support the Communication and Risk Management aspects of our behavioral change projects in large organisations.

The approach we use is to firstly identify the Strategic Destination (where we would ideally like to end up) and the key mind set criteria (opinions and values) of role players in that ideal environment.

We then identify the current status of our target people groups in each of the Mind Set Criteria and design a communication and advocacy campaign making use of cartoons and even film scenarios to capture their hearts and minds and take them from where they are presently, to where we intend them to be. A key aspect of the process is the identification of interim measurement tools to track the efficacy of the campaign to allow for mid-course corrections.

We make use of our own, or Tim Mostert's, collection of characters to subtly persuade people to another point of view through the use of humour (Tim Mostert is the creator of the 'Speedy' comic strip, which is read by six million people a day in the Daily and Sunday Sun newspapers).

In order to discredit the behaviour of not using hard hats we utilised the following cartoon:



Another example was where we identified a risk that there was resistance to National Government interfering in their local affairs and the Municipal Officials were probably not going to take the time to understand the benefits of the new Waste Management Act, we needed to discredit that behaviour in their own minds and used the following cartoon:



The use of humour not only ensures that the information is retained but through this medium we can subliminally persuade our target audience to change their views on certain behaviours or topics.

Wherever there is talk of change there will be Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (the FUD factor) amongst those people likely to be effected. The reason for this will vary from person to person as each will have a different perception of how the change will threaten their work environment or future.

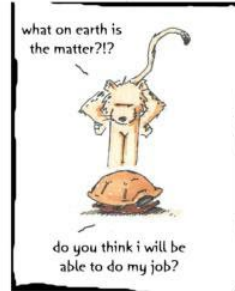
Management, for instance, may be concerned as to whether the changes could undermine their objectives and goals where-as more junior staff may feel their

positions may become redundant or that they will not be able to function in a new role.

The use of humour can be used very effectively to address these fears by having a weak cartoon character voice them and be made to look foolish by a strong character – in this way people are persuaded to laugh at their own fears and believe them to be ridiculous:

FUD

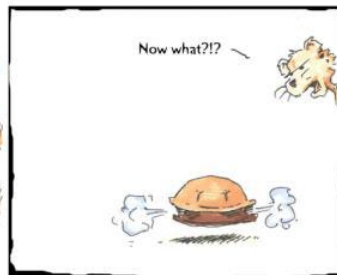
I gather the Business Focus Programme is going to be looking at our roles...



Of course, silly! And they're not getting rid of anyone. It's only going to make it easier and more fun for us..



Come on! Let's get a coke - do you have any change?



I can't help it Leo - you said 'change'.



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