COMMUNICATING
EUROPE

+ Strategic Communications for EU projects.

Keys to Effective
Project Communication

KARELIA

CBC // Cross-border cooperation

COMMUNICATING
EUROPE **+** Communication Skills. Training. Strategy.

We are a communications training company with offices in London and Brussels.

We train people to speak and write about their issues, policy areas, products and services. You are welcome to share these notes with your friends and colleagues but not for commercial purposes.

For information on how we can help to train you and your staff contact us at
info@communicatingeu.com

Trainer – John Holland

John Holland

Internationally recognised journalist; former CBS News correspondent; Bureau Chief and Senior Correspondent at CNBC Europe.

Brussels-based, he consults and trains senior officials, civil servants and diplomats from a range of EU institutions, agencies and governments across Europe.

His driving passion is for clearer, more visual project communications, demonstrating real-life benefits and impact.
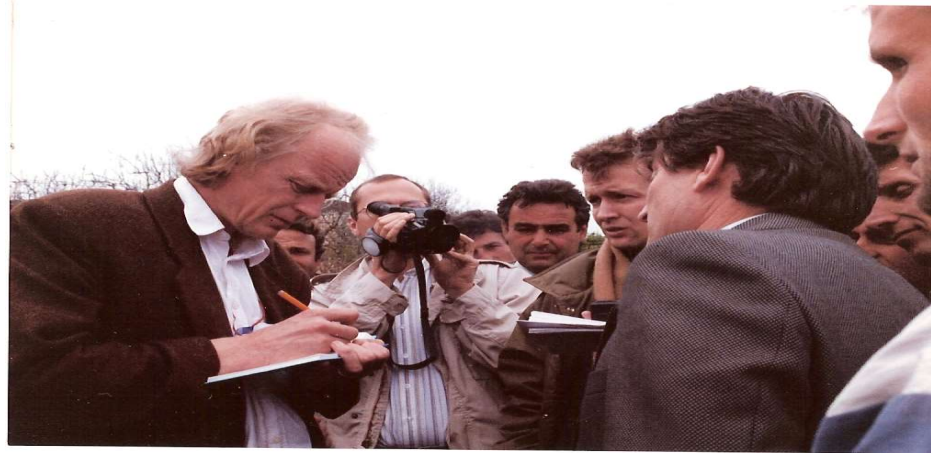
Communication planning, media relations and dissemination

- How to draft a communication plan
- Tips on media relations and dissemination
- How to target our messages

How to tell the project story

- Story structure – the who, the why and outcome
- How to make the stories of your projects relevant

Journalists <u>relate best</u> to figures for:

- **Trends**

- **Compare and contrast examples**

Communications Objectives…

Are not the same

as Project Objectives

(Broadly, it is a statement describing what an individual or organization hopes to achieve)

Specifically:

Raising audience awareness and engagement in the project in the host country and the EU

Audience targets including:

- Public groups most likely to benefit
- Policymakers, NGOs
- Relevant influencers and multipliers

The aim of reaching a target audience: Either Inform, Convince or Inspire Them

Different Aspects of Communicating to an Audience

| HAS HEARD (AWARENESS) | KNOWS (UNDERSTANDING | FEELS (BELIEF) | DOES (BEHAVIOUR) |

Anatomy of a Communications Objective (1)

Should indicate change, for example:

- Increase
- Decrease
- Improve
- Change
- **Others?**

Anatomy of a Comms Objective (2)

Should relate to either:

1. **Awareness**
2. **Influence** (opinion change)
3. **Action**

'SMART' OBJECTIVES

Must be:

- **Specific** (who, what, where, when, how)?

- **Measurable** (can be measured)

- **Achievable** (time, money and people?)

- **Relevant** (does this matter to audience?)

- **Time Bound** (milestones)

Anatomy of an objective:
Sample Outcomes

- **Increase awareness** of PROJECT X so +90% of *very important group* know of its existence & goals

- **Shift positive perception** of PROJECT X amongst very important group by 30% in next 12 months

- **Double sign up/participation** of PROJECT X by *very important group* by December 2019

First and Foremost…

- Talk about and demonstrate <u>real tangible benefits</u>, NOT processes, for real people impacted by your work

- **"This is what my project is doing to improve the everyday quality of people's lives"**

- <u>Prove it </u>with your strongest, simplest and most compelling numbers and actions

- *Verifiable financial and economic actions can and must be communicated to ordinary people*

EXERCISE 1
CHOOSE ONE PROJECT IN YOUR GROUP AND MAKE IT 'SMART'

- **Specific** (who, what, where, when, how)?

- **Measurable** (can be measured)

- **Achievable** (time, money and people?)

- **Relevant**

- **Time Bound** (milestones)

Can start with:

Increase, decrease, improve, change
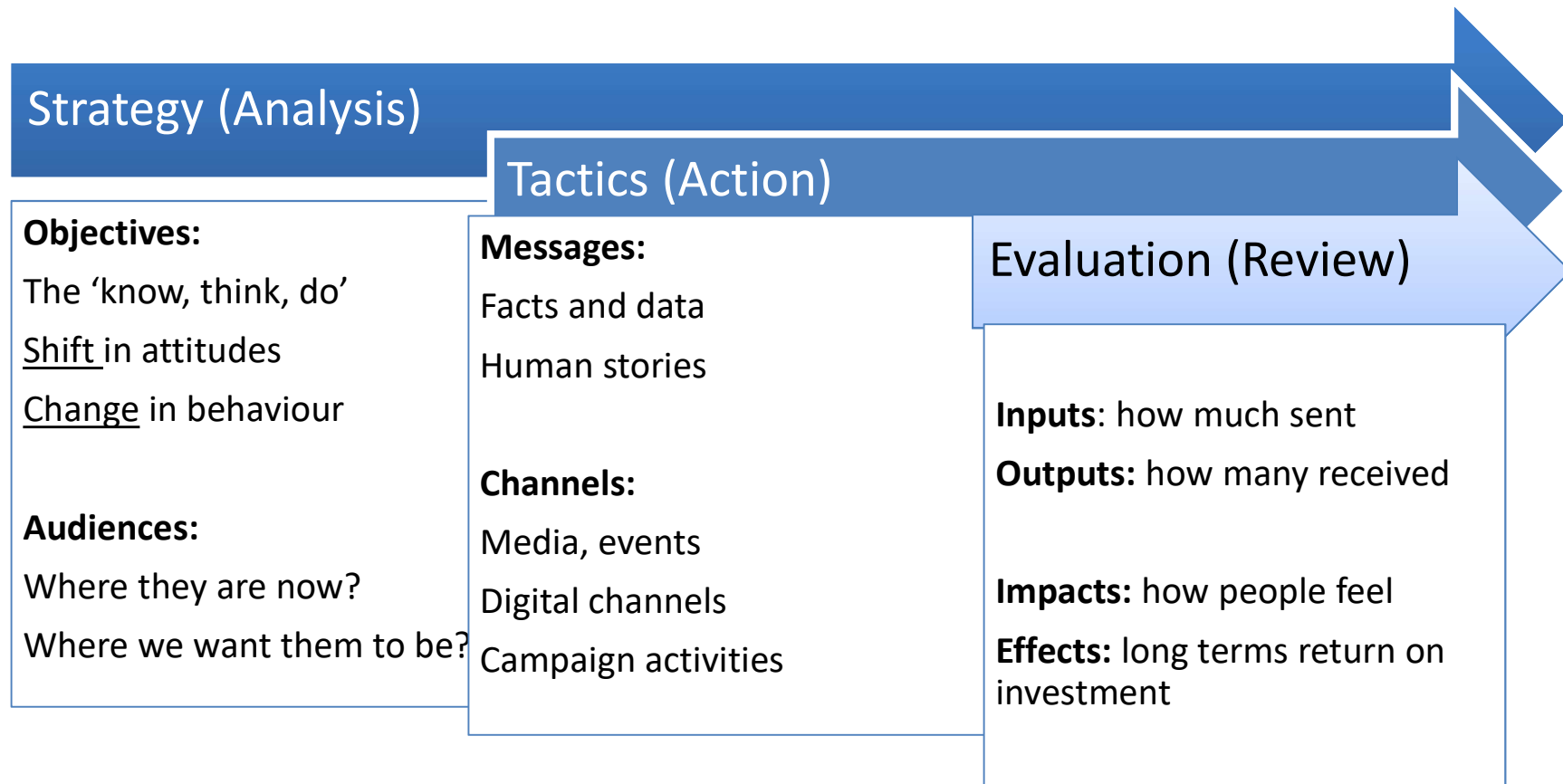
Should relate to:
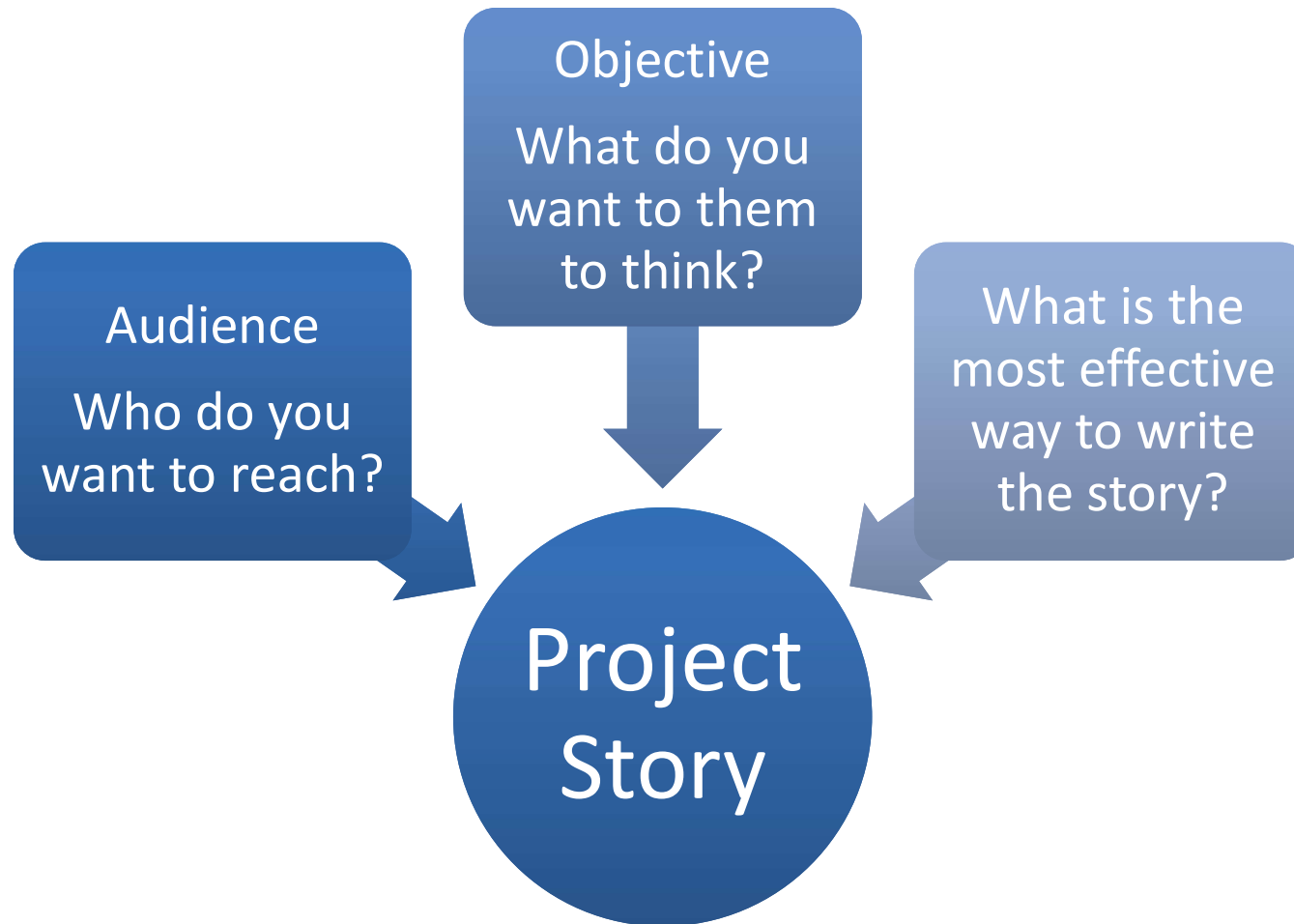
Awareness

Influence (opinion change)

Action

1. Communication Plans
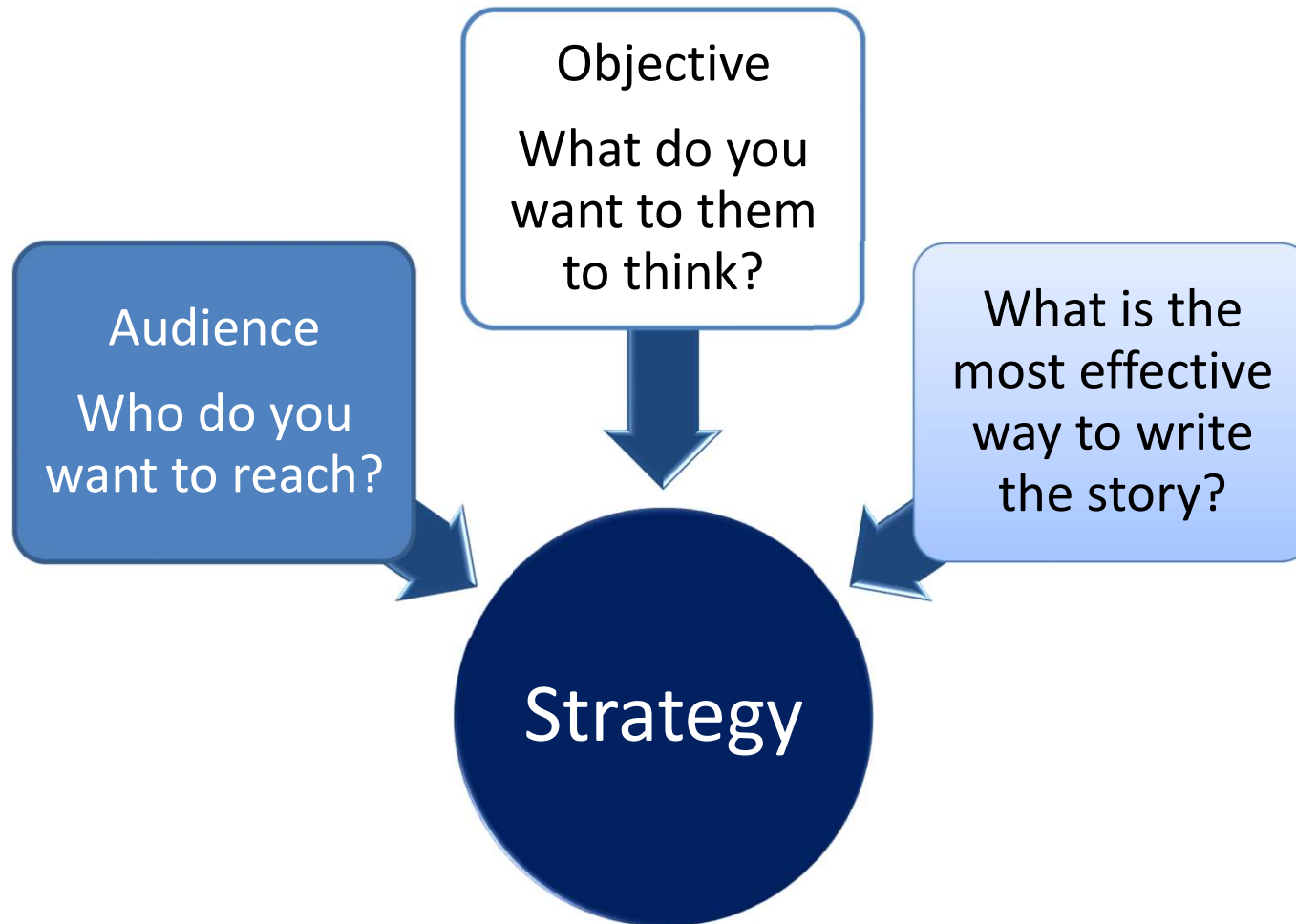
Tools that you can use to plan your
project communications

Strategic Communications - elements

Strategy (Analysis)

Objectives:

The 'know, think, do'

Shift in attitudes

Change in behaviour

Audiences:

Where they are now?

Where we want them to be?

Tactics (Action)

Messages:

Facts and data

Human stories

Channels:

Media, events

Digital channels

Campaign activities

Evaluation (Review)

Inputs: how much sent

Outputs: how many received

Impacts: how people feel

Effects: long terms return on investment

Communicating Europe+ 2019

Project Communications

Objective

What do you want to them to think?

Audience

Who do you want to reach?

What is the most effective way to write the story?

Project Story

Strategic Communications

Objective
What do you want to them to think?

Audience
Who do you want to reach?

What is the most effective way to write the story?

Strategy

1. How to Draft a Realistic Communication Plan

It's not rocket science, but there is an approach we can follow

Strategic Communications – Main Principles

Visual	Audience first
Digital first	Full re-use of content
The website as hub	Consistency of messages

Communicating Europe+ 2018

One Example

Project ID: Ka10020

Name of the Project: PeatStop – Sustainable Runoff Water management solutions in Karelia and Kainuu

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY PLAN

Communication is an integral part of the project implementation. In the Communication and Visibility Plan the objectives, target groups, means, resources and indicators are shortly defined and described.

A separate timetable of the communication activities is created at a later stage.

Objectives

The most important communication objectives for the project are defined as follows:

- To ensure thorough and equal dissemination of project goals, activities, progress and achievements between consortium participants and to all relevant stakeholders and general public
- To make the project results reachable for professional stakeholders
- To increase the awareness and understanding of policy on the significance of runoff water management, and to enhance their abilities to adapt, utilize and further develop the concepts, methods and models developed in the project
- To rise the awareness and understanding on runoff waters and their protection from emissions of the general public
- To strengthen the cooperation between and with different international actors
- To ensure adequate scientific reporting on relevant domain-specific forums
- To safeguard a thorough mutual understanding in the consortium by active internal communication measures
- To establish and ensure continuation for the work done in the project

Target groups

The target groups for the communication objectives are defined as follows:

- Professional stakeholders:
    o City planning experts, city technicians, environmental management professionals, RDI partners, companies with direct collaboration possibilities
- Policy stakeholders:
    o city administration professionals, regional and local authorities, environmental authorities
- General public:
    o private people interested on environmental issues, companies with indirect collaboration possibilities, RDI partners with indirect collaboration possibilities

- Internal communication:
    o The project partners and the managing authority

The above-mentioned target groups also from outside the programme region in other EU countries are taken into account, whenever there are shared interests e.g. with other EU-funded projects. Interaction with them is important in order to spread the information and create new co-operation initiatives.

Means

The project's communication activities are based on the detailed communication plan, that will be updated annually during the project and reviewed by the project's Steering Group.

The project will be started by a kick-off meeting that includes a half-day seminar, that launches the project and starts the discussion with essential stakeholder groups. The project's final conference (during spring 2022) will summarise the project's results and include a visit to the pilot site.

The project's website will be the main source of information about the project and the first and most immediate point of reference for all target audiences. The website will allow efficient and effective communication with the target groups as it can be rapidly updated with the latest information. In addition to website, videos, professional social media and blog channels are also used as digital dissemination activities.

A logo will be created for the project to enable a homogenous and distinctive visual identity for all visibility actions.

For disseminating the project results for professional stakeholders, e.g. for city planning experts and technicians, the project organizes activities such as 2 site visits and demonstrations that provide possibilities to gain practical hands-on experiences on monitoring and selected runoff water management solutions. The communication with professional network gives answers e.g. to questions for selected physical structures, costs, requirements for infra. Printed material and digital activities (videos to present runoff water management solutions and contaminant monitoring solutions, professional social media, professional blog channels, project website) are also used.

Policy stakeholder communication is carried out with recognized partner associations and regional authorities. The project aims to get visibility in relevant business or policy events (4 events) hosted by the partnering associations. Examples of such associations and communication organs are association for North-Western cities in Russia, association for water and soil technologies (maa- ja vesitekniikan tuki ry) in Finland, Euregio Karelia activities and other annual/biannual business events in programme area.

2. Tips on Media Relations and Dissemination Strategies

Media (i.e. people)

love a good story.

PRESS RELEASES:
GRAB JOURNALISTS' ATTENTION...

- Only send PRs containing NEWS
- Craft clear, short sentences containing key message(s)
- Grab readers with punchy headline, strong sub-headline and strong lead paragraph
- Use memorable quotes
- Keep it less than a page
- A telling photo really helps

LEADING THE STORY OR EVENT – 'HOW TO'

MEMO/06/387

Brussels, 19 October 2006

SAVING 20% BY 2020

ACTION PLAN FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY: REALISING THE POTENTIAL

Change our electric bulbs, our boilers and our refrigerators, insulate our houses, buy low pollution cars, use public transport: these are some of the things we should do if we want to protect our environment and guarantee a stable supply of energy for our children.

Yet, in spite of record high energy prices, increasing environmental concerns and concerns over security of supply, Europe continues to waste a whopping 20% of its energy – possibly even more. By the year 2020 this could cost us well over €100 billion, as well as cause further damage to our environment, a cost which cannot be expressed in monetary terms. But lack of energy efficiency also affects each and every one of us on a far more personal level: by using outdated energy-consuming equipment and failing to take simple measures to save energy, we are driving up our energy bills and inadvertently raising our cost of living.

2.2 Channels of Communication

Business tools that communicators
use formulate strategy and tactics

Audiences – Where do they pick up your Messages?

Events	Media	Digital
• Trusted (because they trust you) • Detailed and targeted • Opportunity to check and scrutinise • Open to discussion or contention	• Trusted source (or not?) • Not in control of the message • May be spun for editorial bias • Needs to follow journalistic rules of style • Stories, people facts	• Trust? • Control the message (up to a point) • Messy - open to comments • Viral - can drive campaigns • 'Twitterised' messages into 280 charachters

Dissemination of Content

What choices we have with digital web and print to disseminate our messages?
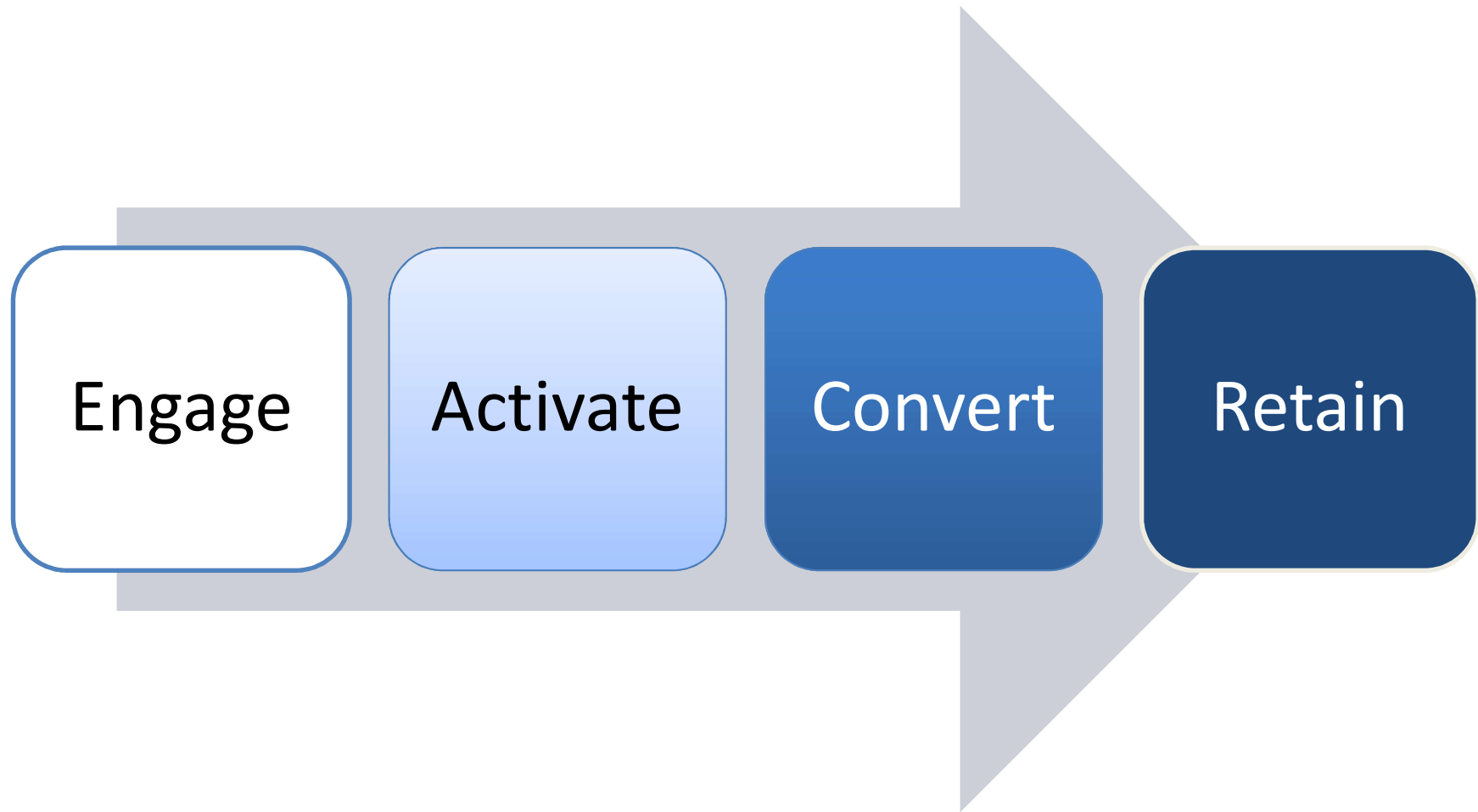
Digital Content

See · Think · Do · Care
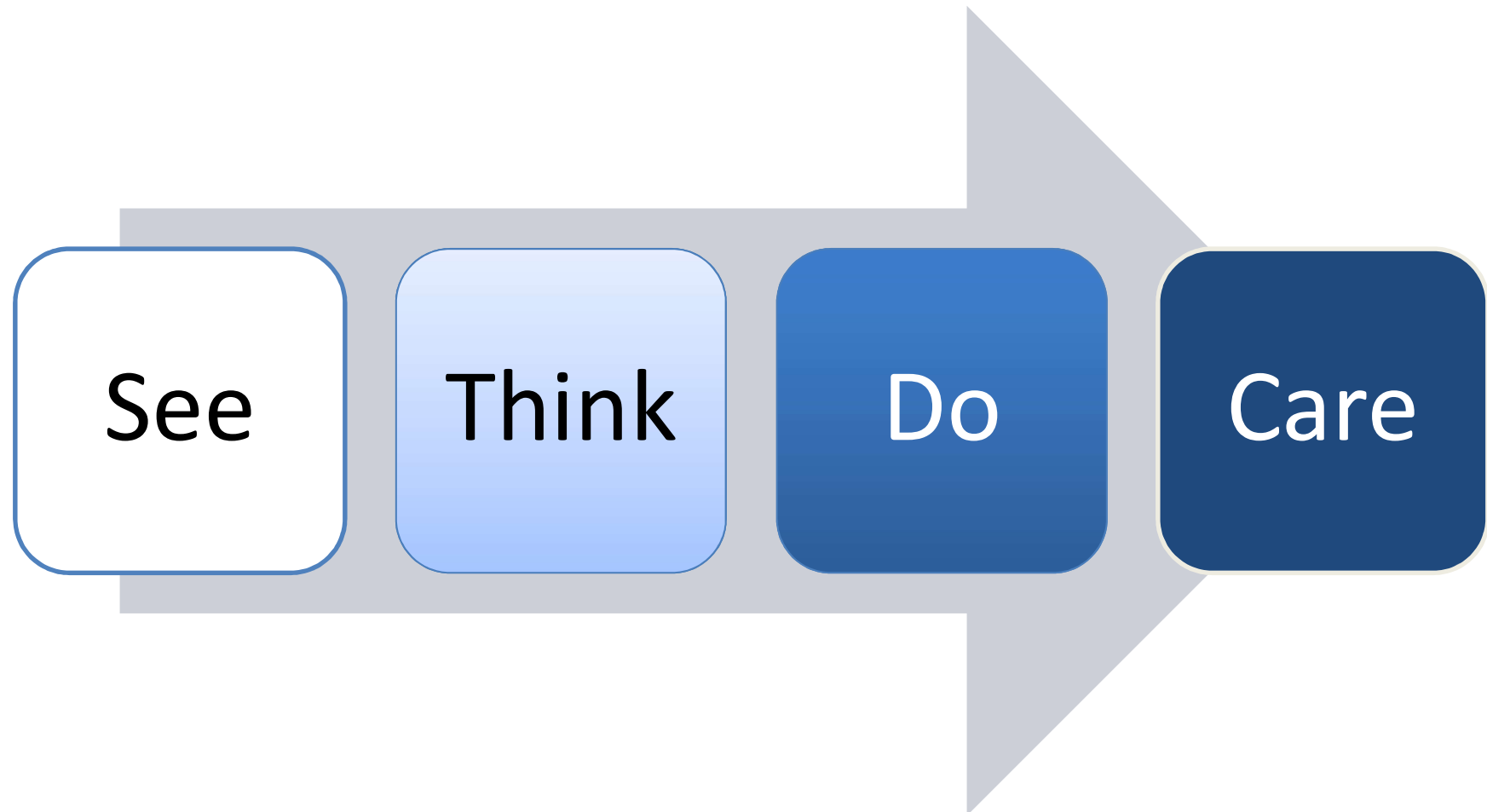
Digital Web Content

Phases	Channels	Aim of the content
See	SEO, banners, social media, Adwords	Inspire
		Inform – raise awareness
Think	Blogs, web, social media	Change perceptions / alter opinions
		Convince
Do	Website, social media	Call to action
		Share with your network / friends
Care	Email, web, social media	Support

Social Media and Corporate Sales

Engage	Activate	Convert	Retain

Communicating Europe+ 2018

Divide Up Your Content

Updates about your project

In the news

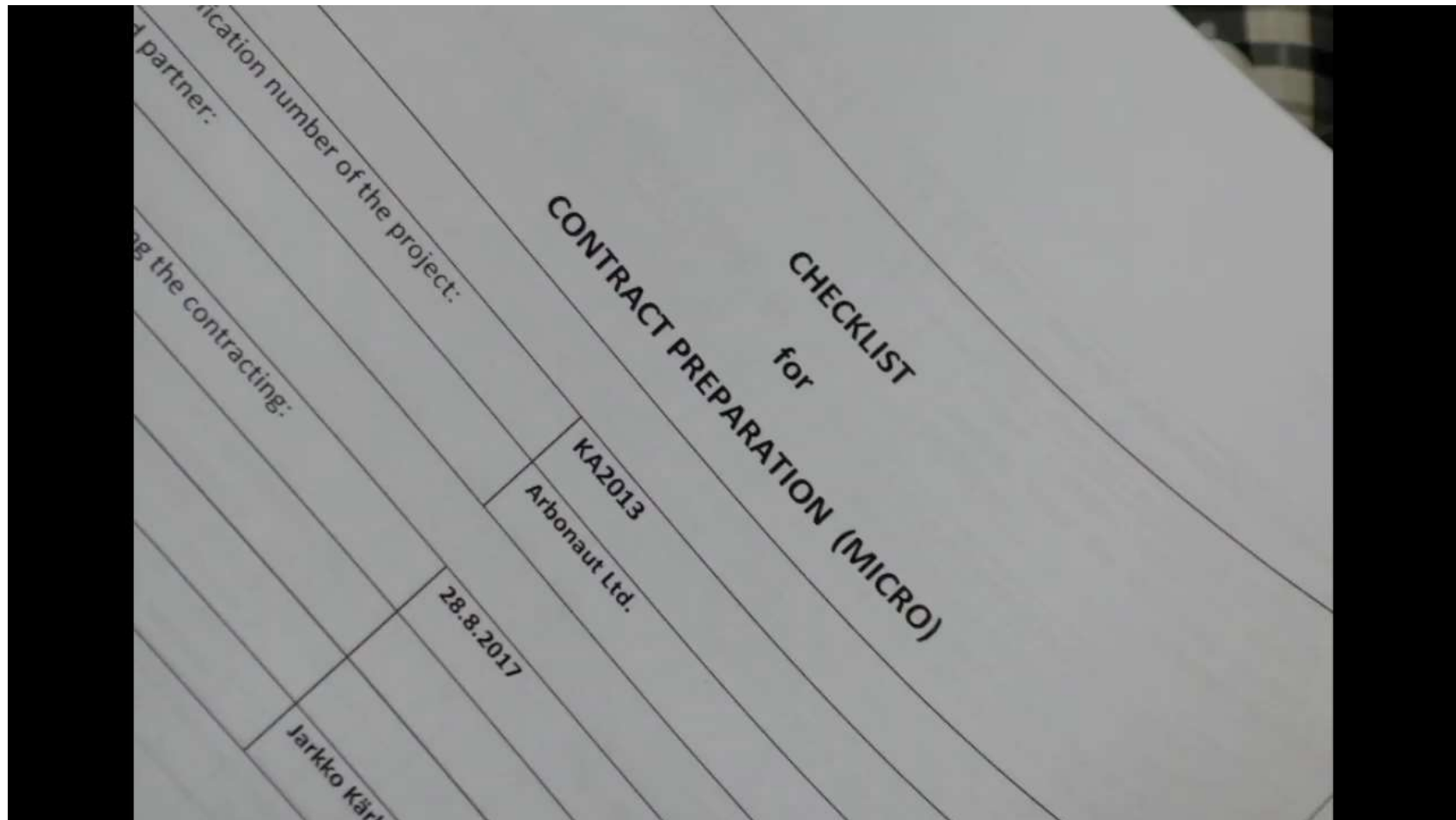**Your opinion**

Event or happening now!

Communicating Europe+ 2018

IT'S BUSY
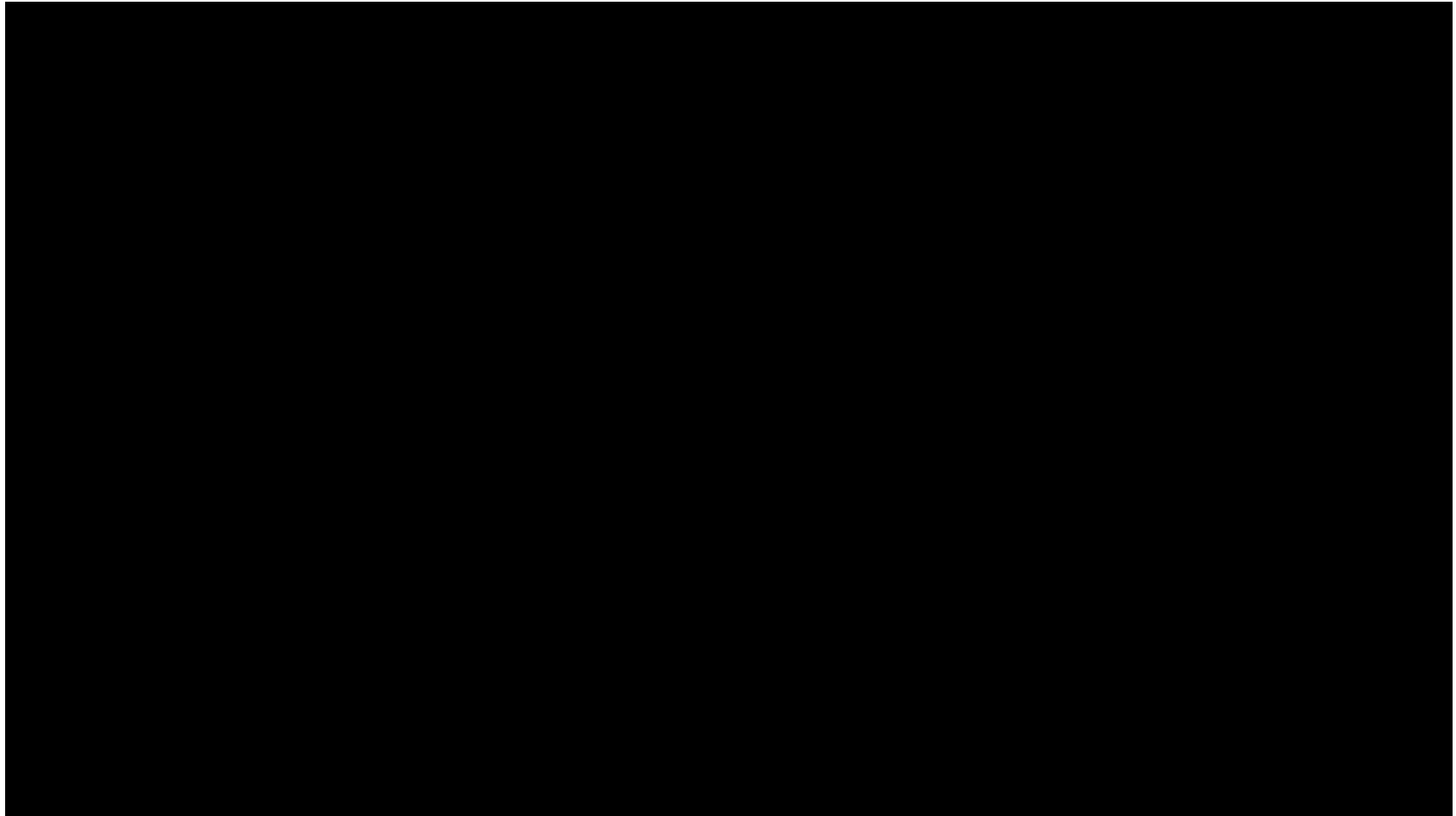
Look For the Human Touch

Task 1
What Channels Do We Choose?

What are the Pros and Cons of the following channels for you?

1. **Media – interviews, articles**

2. **Events – outreach**

3. **Digital – social media, web content**

3 How to Target our Messages

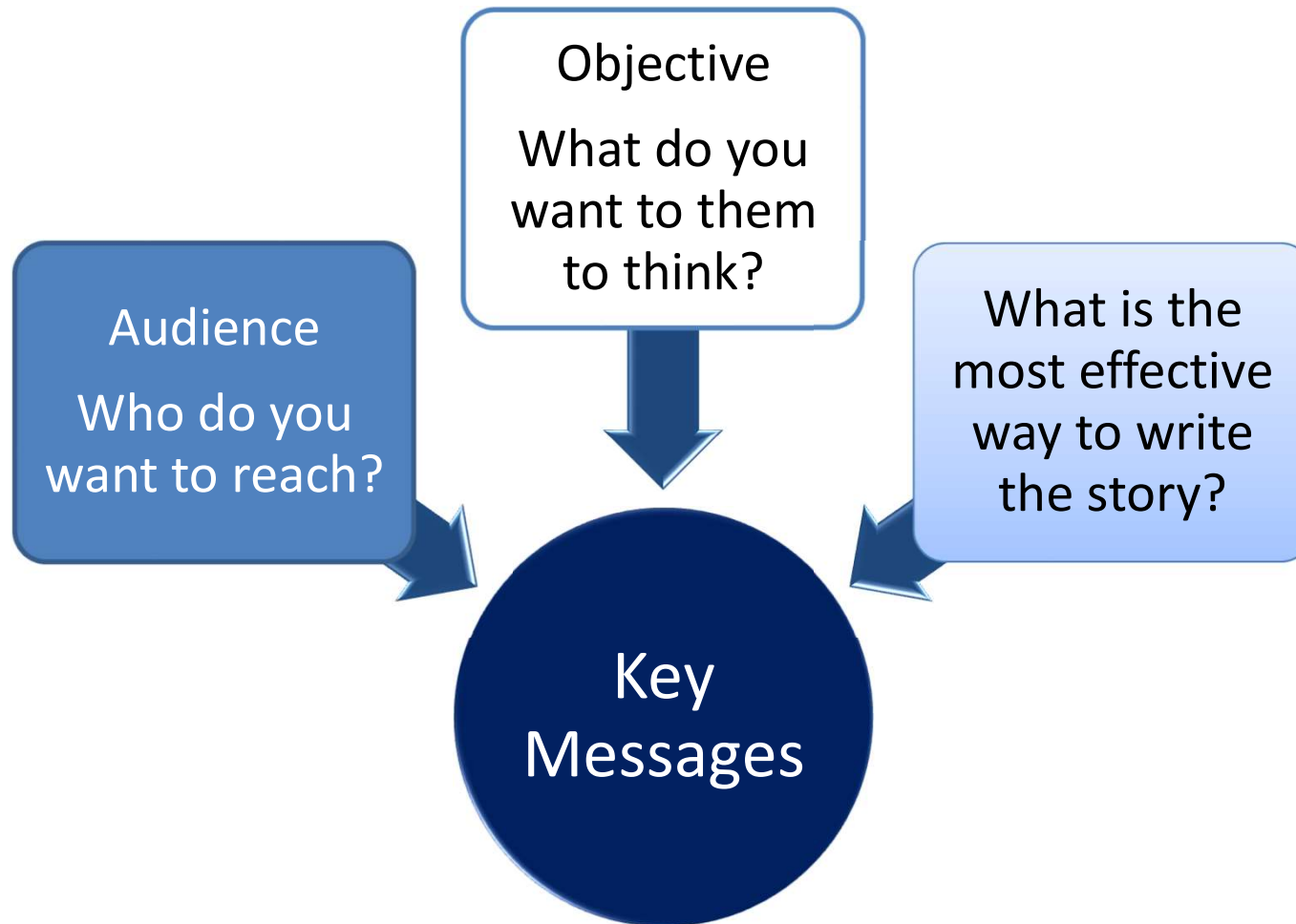Messages are the Words that deliver
Your Strategy

Messages

> "A piece of information that you want your audience to know and act upon."

Effective communications

revolve around

<u>two or three key messages</u>

Communications to Change Minds

Objective
What do you want to them to think?

Audience
Who do you want to reach?

What is the most effective way to write the story?

Key Messages

Communicating Europe+ 2019

How do you feel about this?

"Today the European Commission is launching the European Solidarity Corps, providing new opportunities for young Europeans to engage in solidarity activities across Europe."

Great Idea Perhaps, But Why?
What's the Impact?

Communicating Europe+ 2019

PROVE IT. SHOW ME. MAKE ME CARE.
European Solidarity Corps:
Geraldine's Story

Communications to Change Minds

Objective

What do you want to them to think?

Audience

Who do you want to reach?

What is the most effective way to write the story?

Key Messages
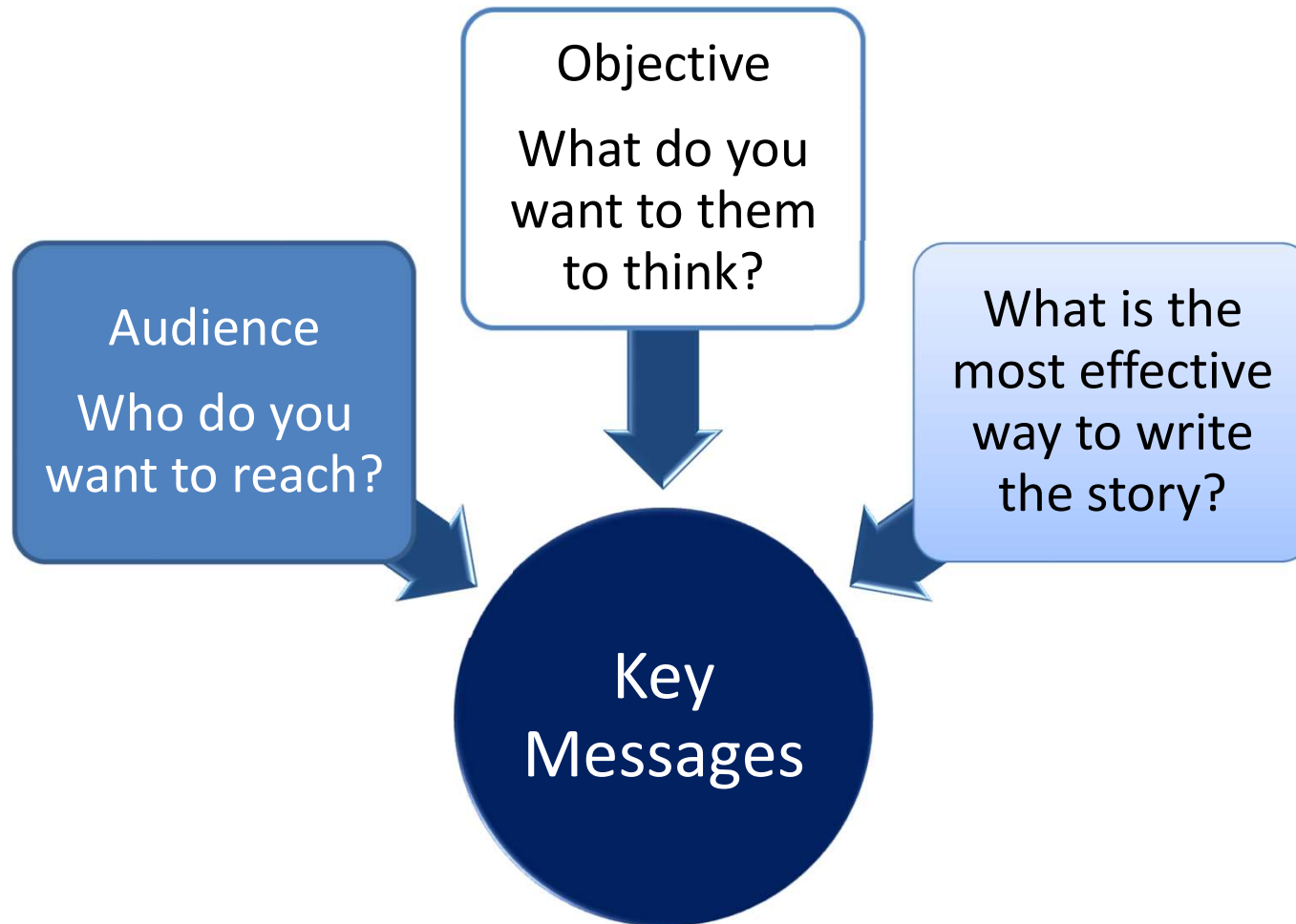
European Cooperation – The Old way

INTERREG IVC provides funding for interregional cooperation across Europe. It is implemented under the European Community's territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Operational Programme was approved in September 2007 and the period for INTERREG IVC will last from 2007-2013. This programme follows on from the INTERREG IIIC programme which ran from 2002-2006.

European Cooperation – A Better Way

Interreg Europe helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy.

We aim to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place.

Messages Must Be Simple

1. Clear, <u>active</u> sentences that we can understand
2. We need <u>examples</u> that we care about
3. We need supporting statements that give the <u>context</u>, <u>relevance</u> or are <u>unique</u>
4. We need proof – figures: interpret them

Talk About What is
Close to Your Audiences

1. What do they care about everyday?

2. What do your audiences associate with Urban Agenda?

3. What sort of language do they use? Technical, regulatory or everyday?

From a project press release:

European Commission presents study on benefits of environment protection in the Neighbourhood Region and Russia

This week the European Commission has released the results from an international study project on Socio-economic Benefits of Enhanced Environment Protection in the European Neighbourhood partner countries and the Russian Federation. According to the study, a partial, voluntary adoption of EU environment legislation could save between 50,000 and 150,000 lives per year in these countries, due to reduced air pollution alone.

EU neighbours could save up to 150,000 lives by adopting EU environment legislation

Between 50,000 and 150,000 lives could be saved due to reduced air pollution if the countries of the European neighbourhood made even a partial, voluntary adoption of EU environment legislation, with the value of other benefits ranging up to €21 billion a year. The figures come in the results of an international study project released by the European Commission, on the socio-economic benefits of enhanced environment protection in the European Neighbourhood partner countries and Russia.

Message House

Big Idea – the one thing your audience will remember. The idea that you keep repeating

Key message 1 **Context**:	Key message 2 **Relevance**:	Key message 3 **Difference**:
Why am I telling my audience this?	Why is this relevant to your audience?	What is new about this for your audience?

Proof points: data, anecdotes that prove the key messages

Messages Review – keys to success

1. **Credible** - based on information, facts
2. **Images** that people can relate to
3. **Focus** on what is close to the people
4. **Language** dynamic; appropriate to the audience
5. **Simple** – based on one idea

EXERCISE 2
'27-9-3' Method for Messaging

Max. **27 words** long, Max. **9 seconds long,** Max. **3 points** made

- Who is your audience for this specific message?
- Why should they care about it?
- What should they think/understand about it?
- How should they feel about it?
- What should they do after getting the message?

Task 3
Why Does Your Project Matter?

The importance of cooperation is……

1. **What Is The Single Big Idea?**
2. **Context, Relevance and Novelty?**
3. **Proof – Data and Human Stories**
4. **What do you want People to Think, Feel, Do?**

Communicating Europe+ 2019

This training course has been developed by Communicating Europe+.

These materials are copyright of Communicating Europe+ and for use by the participants of the training course.

COMMUNICATING
EUROPE+ Communication Skills.
Training. Strategy.

www.communicatingeu.com