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COLLECTIVE DEFENCE
CRISIS MANAGEMENT
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

INSIGHTS FROM THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

THE NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

As NATO member states strive to develop Strategic Communications (StratCom) capability there is growing recognition of the need to draw upon the experience and expertise of commercial marketing and communications companies. Unfortunately, a lack of real understanding as to how the two sectors can best support each other still constrains progress. Government organisations often assume that commercial companies are driven solely by financial profit, yet many are involved in achieving complex behavioural change in humanitarian and political arenas. There is also a perception that the commercial sector is less bound by constraints of classification and bureaucracy and does not possess the specific expertise to enter the security domain. In summary, we are too often held back by the notion that the commercial sector doesn't understand NATO's definition and application of StratCom. This misunderstanding cannot continue if we are to match the capabilities our adversaries seem to have already achieved.

> Our adversaries have skilfully adapted to the new information environment and effectively combine activity in the virtual and physical space to change behaviours, perceptions and attitudes.
>
> "The Weaponisation of Social Media"
> NATO StratCom COE

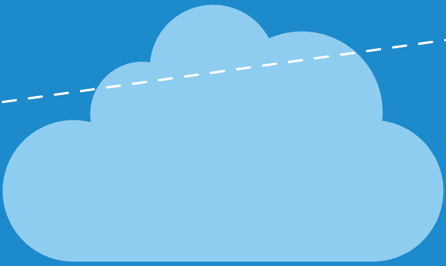
> In the age of the citizen-consumer, all marketing is political, and all politics requires marketing. As war is a continuation of politics by other means, it follows that war also involves marketing.
>
> Professor Paul Baines

In 2016 the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (StratCom COE) recognised that it could play a key role in bringing the commercial and military StratCom communities closer together.

This project was the result. Bringing together renowned commercial experts and NATO StratCom practitioners in a ground breaking seminar, it aimed to answer the following questions:

- What can NATO learn from the way in which the commercial sector has adapted to the challenges of the information revolution?
- Can we approach “citizens” in the same way as “customers”?
- Which commercial techniques can be used to complement government communications?
- How does the commercial sector develop and sustain expertise?
- How can we create better partnerships between the government and commercial communications sectors?

We conclude that the results of this research will benefit all defence personnel who are working to develop and sustain StratCom capacity and capability, not just established specialist StratCom practitioners. We therefore hope it will be afforded a wide circulation.



ABOUT THE REPORT

ABOUT THE REPORT

In order to address the questions outlined in the previous section, the project was conducted in 3 phases.

RESEARCH AND SCOPING ATTENDANCE.
A baseline study of critical capability gaps in NATO StratCom capacity and capability was first conducted, drawing upon key NATO and COE StratCom research documents. Key observations were used to construct a question matrix, which can be found at Annex A to this report.

As questions were identified, the COE reached out to commercial experts in these fields inviting them to present their views at a seminar in Riga. At the same time, invitations were sent out to all COE member nations to send delegates to the seminar.

THE RIGA SEMINAR.
In August 2016, the StratCom COE conducted a two day expert seminar in Riga, split into four sessions which represented a generic communications model: "Research-Plan-Implement-Evaluate". Two of the four identified sessions were conducted on each day of the seminar with a panel of up to 5 experts giving short introductions and then inviting questions from delegates. Over 50 delegates from 16 NATO nations attended the conference indicating the high degree of interest by the NATO StratCom community. It would have been tempting to draw our experts solely from the point at which government and commercial communications intersect. Instead the COE felt that more powerful insights could be captured by reaching deeper into the corporate sector. We therefore enjoyed listening to the accounts of market research agencies and PR representatives from the retail sector as well as the commercial agencies wholly or partially engaged in complex governmental communications challenges.

The list of experts is given below. Full biographies of the contributors can be found in the conference programme at Annex B to this report.

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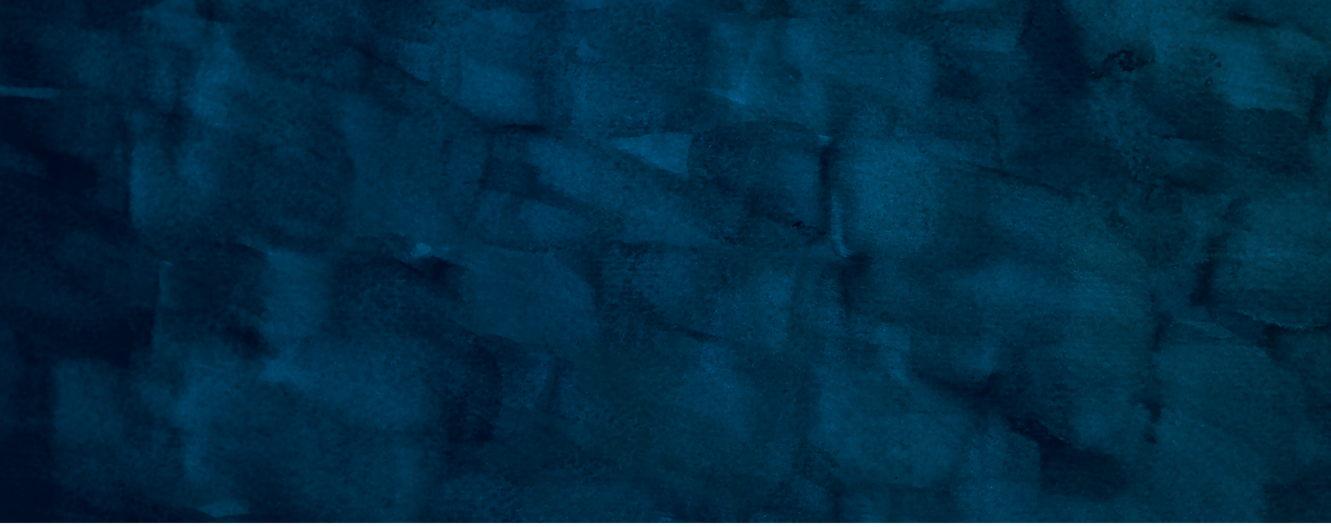

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JOHN-PAUL GRAVELINES (CAN),
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Aktis Strategy

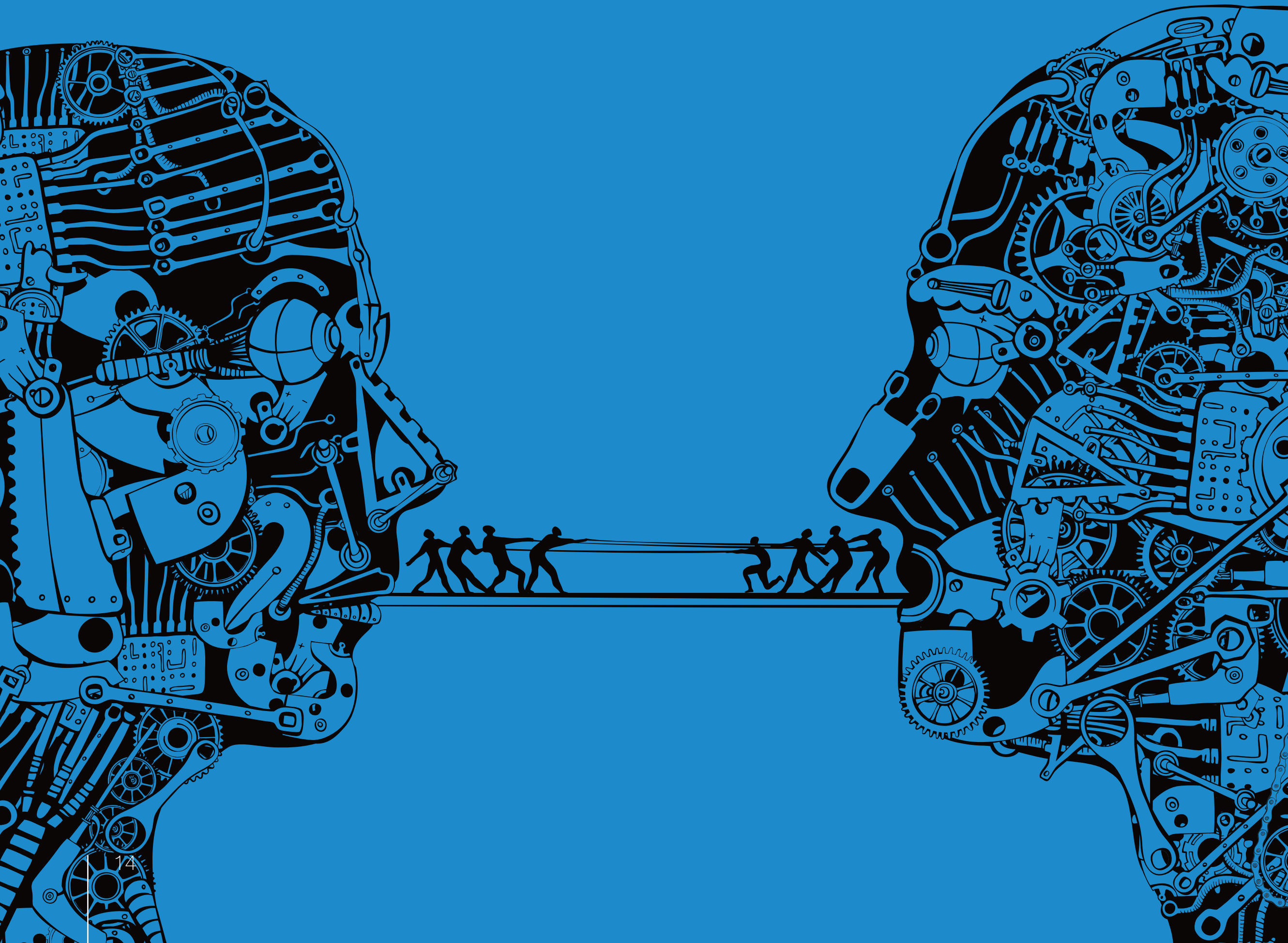
For brevity, the term "NATO StratCom" also refers to those working within Strategic Communications and related functions, in government or military institutions at the national level.

OUTPUT GENERATION.

Transcript evidence was captured in outline to deliver a short presentation to the NATO Information and Communicators Conference in Tallinn in mid-September 2016. This report aims to pass on key insights from the Seminar in greater detail. It is constructed in two parts:

The New Commercial Communications Environment – Key insights of our contributors on essential considerations to foster competitive advantage.

Advice for NATO StratCom Practitioners – Techniques and approaches that are applicable across the state vs commercial divide.



THE NEW COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENT

The Age of the Customer (Citizen)

The Role of the Communications Professional

Agility Across all Channels

THE AGE OF THE CUSTOMER (CITIZEN)

> If you want to change modern behaviour, you have to know how modern behaviour is being changed.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

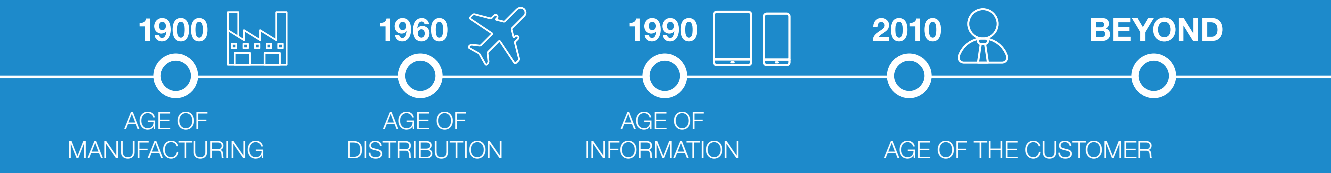
The power that customers have to influence corporate marketing behaviour in the modern world is unparalleled in history. The emphasis companies must, therefore, place upon the customer experience directly determines their survivability. *Forrester Research* has mapped the evolution of this era since the beginning of the last century, citing the influences of the ages of manufacturing, distribution and information on customer empowerment.

The most recent epoch in this evolution has been primarily driven by mobile technology granting people the ability for unlimited media creation, distribution and consumption. Not only are companies therefore forced to make a shift in ethos from Marketing Communications (demanding attention) to Communications Marketing (earning attention), but they are having to achieve customer resonance in a much faster and more competitive attention space.

The client experience or "cohesive customer journey" now sits at the heart of most commercial organisations' strategies. Google states that such a journey can be as short as 70 seconds – if you cannot get the right message in front of a person at the right time, it will not be "contextual" and the opportunity to communicate with the target audience will be lost.

Customers have a strong sense of what

Empowered customers have given rise to new era –
The Age of the Customer



SOURCE: FORRESTER RESEARCH, 2016

> Human decision making is not based solely upon rational thought…. In influencing hearts and minds, hearts are much stronger…. Good argument often loses out to powerful emotion.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

they want to hear and are now “only one click away” from reinforcing or deconstructing an organisation’s reputation, not to mention revenue. Most importantly, they can do this from a device which they carry in their pocket.

The Age of the Customer has become synonymous with the “death of expertise” or “post truth” era, where rapid peer review is more powerful than endorsed doctrinal thought. Customers, therefore, have more power to encourage endorsement or rejection of narratives than ever before and are less reliant upon the influence of established experts to form their opinions.

Customers are also people, and people respond far better to emotional than logical stimulus, particularly when under pressure.

It therefore follows that an emotional message will have greater impact within a shorter customer journey. The Quiliam Foundation has found that DAESH have exploited this to a far greater degree than their adversaries. As well as being fast and high reaching, at least 50% of DAESH media content focuses on the utopia of a potential caliphate. Coupled with a resonant call to action and an emotional message that “Western governments simply don’t get Islam” DAESH is particularly successful in targeting tech savvy, impatient and respect seeking millennials in this way. They know how and what they think and feel, how they want to be perceived and how they wish to receive information.

The citizens that NATO and other military organisations wish to influence are, in communications terms, the very same people that the commercial sector views as customers. They respond to the same emotional stimuli. They create and share the same online content. They are attracted to and distracted from defence and security narratives just as quickly as they are to commercial marketing campaigns.

> DAESH appeals at the emotional level first. Only once you have connected at the emotional level can you start to apply logic to the argument.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

The *Age of the Customer* can therefore be

> In terms of the customer versus citizen debate, physically we need to realise they are the exact same individual. NATO is an organisation whose goal is to help people. They don't put a citizen hat on some of the time and a customer hat the rest. They are the same people all of the time.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

considered to be in some ways similar to the *Age of the Citizen*. Resonance with audiences requires a communications approach centred on what audiences want to hear, just as much as what the originator wants to say.

There is, of course, sufficient difference between the type of content used to communicate with the customer and the citizen to warrant a nuanced approach. However, the NATO StratCom community should embrace the need to analyse "the citizen journey", the diminishing relevance of information gatekeepers, the need for dialogue and the dynamics of change.

There is no doubt as to the predominance afforded by the commercial sector to the customer journey in the Information / Social Age. The significant knowledge and insight possessed by commercial companies about customer audiences can only be of interest to the NATO StratCom community and should be accessed.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

There is clearly a "need for speed", which translates into a need for cutting edge technology. The challenge of "19th Century military organisations, working with 20th Century technology to address 21st Century problems" is therefore significant. No matter how good the quality and impact of NATO communications content, long winded and over bureaucratic military procurement systems will always place NATO StratCom at a disadvantage to smaller organisations able to leverage more dynamic, flexible and disposable technology.

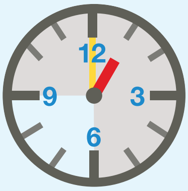
The speed at which messages can be delivered in the contemporary information environment is at least as important as their content. The first message delivered in audience dialogue is the loudest and sets the pace in controlling the subsequent debate. Wider understanding from the commercial sector identifies the importance of when to deliver the message to a specific audience and for how long you wish that message to resonate. It is importance to recognise that neither of these factors can be wholly controlled.

Estimating the best times to deliver messages is increasingly possible through online audience insight, particularly when data regarding the media habits of the audience can be captured. Due consideration must also be given to when, and by how much, primary audiences are already

What are the best times to post on Social Media?

FACEBOOK

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO POST



THE OPTIMAL TIME TO POST IS EARLY AFTERNOON*.

*Data varies from different source.

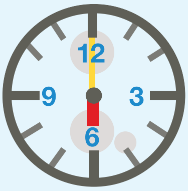
1pm to get the most Shares.

3pm to get the most clicks.

Broader suggestion for anytime between **9am – 7 pm**.

TWITTER

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO TWEET



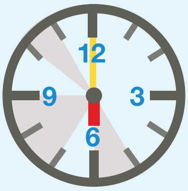
5PM FOR THE HIGHEST RETWEETS.

12PM and **6PM** for the highest CTR (Click Through Rate).

This could be due to lunch breaks and people looking for something to keep them occupied on the commute home after work.

LINKEDIN

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO POST



ACCORDING TO LINKEDIN, **WEEKDAYS** DURING **BUSINESS HOURS** ARE THE BEST TIME TO POST.

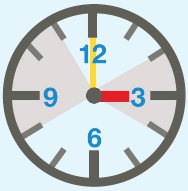
After analysing data from 14 million users, ADDTHIS stated that you get the most clicks and shares on **Tuesdays**, **10am–11am**.

According to FANNIT, the best times to post are **7am–8am** and **5pm–6pm**. The worst times are Monday and Friday for US based time zones.

93% of B2B marketers rate LINKEDIN as the top B2B social media lead generation source.

PINTEREST

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO PIN



According to FANNIT, best times to pin are Saturday, 2AM–4AM and **8AM-11AM**.

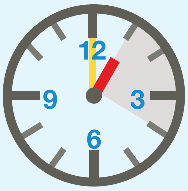
According to SEJ, PINTEREST activity peaks approximately at 9PM.

According to 10ALIKE, best times to pin during a day are between **2-4PM EST,** and **8PM–1AM EST**.

The peak time to post on PINTEREST for fashion and retail is Friday at **3PM.**

INSTAGRAM

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO POST



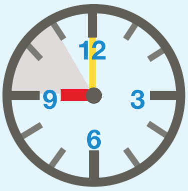
OFF WORK HOURS

FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES overwhelmingly put photos up on INSTAGRAM during business hours, with post spiking between **1PM–4PM EST**.

During work hours, an average of 22.5 per 1,000 Instagram followers interacted with videos posted by *Fortune 500 companies.* During off-hours, 33.4 per 1,000 followers interacted with content.

GOOGLE+

BEST TIME OF THE DAY TO POST



Posting on Wednesdays at **9am** are the best in terms to get social applause and engagement on GOOGLE+.

According to BUFFER, the best time to post on GOOGLE+ is late morning during weekdays.

SOURCES:

marketingprofs.com
socialmediatoday.com
business.linkedin.com

blog.bufferapp.com
blog.kissmetrics.com
mashable.com

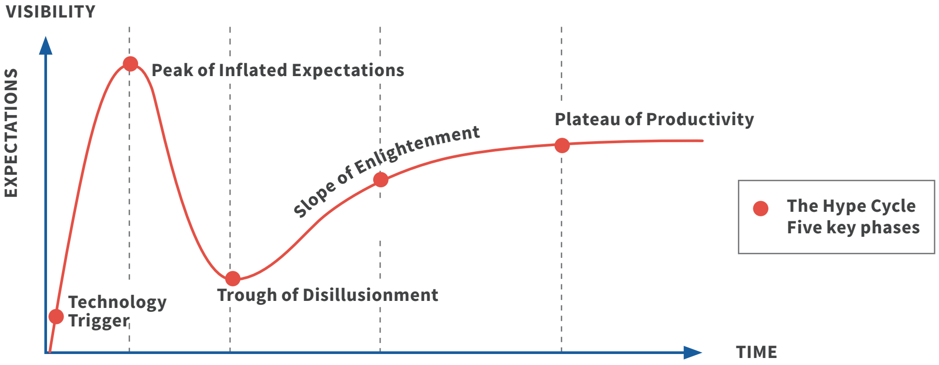
danzarella.com
addthis.com

SCHEME 1

> You don’t have a content problem, you have a distribution problem.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

“tuned in”. For example, there is little point in launching a public health campaign to encourage healthy eating and exercise during a national holiday which traditionally involves excessive consumption. Such campaigns may, on the other hand take a real hold in the run up to the summer holiday season. These facets of timing are well known. More precise information is now readily available on the optimum time (day and time of the week) to post on social media as the example demonstrates *(scheme 1, previous page)*.

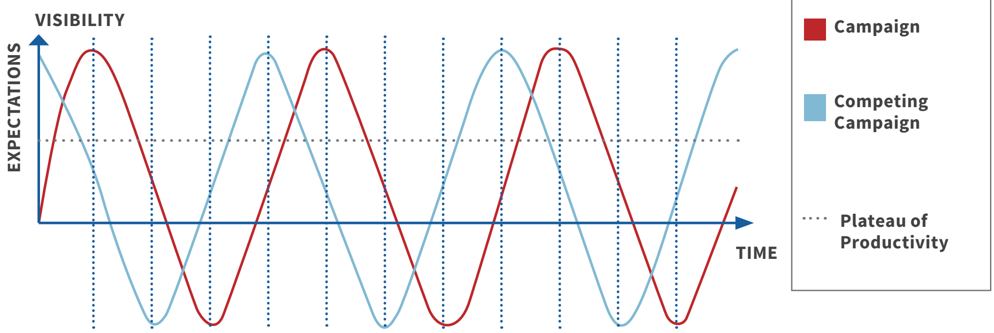
The question of sustaining message resonance requires understanding of another facet of the modern communications environment – *The Hype Cycle,* shown below.


VISIBILITY
EXPECTATIONS
Peak of Inflated Expectations
Slope of Enlightenment
Plateau of Productivity
Technology Trigger
Trough of Disillusionment
TIME
● The Hype Cycle Five key phases

Originally developed by Gartner™ to track the popularity and impact of technology throughout a product lifecycle, this model very accurately maps the profile of information introduced in to the modern communications environment.

Well-crafted messages typically achieve an early peak of popularity (Gartner calls this a “peak of inflated expectations”) as audiences coalesce behind popular emotional narratives. Very soon, however, critical voices uncover over-inflated assertions and the message gets “taken down” to a “trough of disillusionment”. Eventually advocates of the original message act to re-establish its logical credibility

> There are a raft of [commercial] tools governments can use. ...You can start to see when a story has peaked and when it is starting to fall. If you can see that you can see if you want to wade in again and redirect the conversation.
>
> Caitlin Hayden


PEAKS AND TROUGHS WITHIN THE HYPE CYCLE

more incrementally to a “plateau of performance”. Whilst logic is initially trumped by emotion, it pays a significant role later on. Understanding this process allows expectations of communications campaigns to be better managed.

It is important for StratCom teams to consider not only the shape of the *Hype Cycle*, but also the effect of consecutive issues and themes over time. Since no campaign ever occurs in isolation, one of the most common reasons that a message will be “taken down” is the introduction of a related or competing narrative, as shown in the diagram above.

This is often referred to as the “nearest shiny object theory” where organisations are forced to react to consecutive issues, rather than proactively planning and prioritising communications effort on strategic objectives. It need not be the case. A threshold of attention can be added to the diagram (as depicted by the dotted line) depicting the level above which the organisation assesses the audience will “tune in”. Although subjective, this enables organisations to plan for the various peaks and troughs within the *Hype Cycle* and make balance of investment decisions over time (noting that the point at which the theme emerges above the threshold for the second time is just as important).

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL

Commercial companies usually seek to maintain marketing budgets at 2-6% of gross company revenue in order to maintain market position. It is generally accepted that an increase to 30% is required to grow business. General practice is to maintain this figure at 10%.

Whilst a comparison with non-revenue creating government institutions is difficult, it is unlikely that any country currently allocates such a proportion of its defence budget towards communications.

In the *Age of the Customer,* commercial companies are also changing parameters of business management structures. Chief Marketing Officers, as guardians of company reputation and customer experiences are fast becoming regarded as the cornerstone of company strategy. Whether or not a revolution in Chief Executive Officer career development is imminent (such as in the 1980s when CFO status became regarded

> Marketing is rapidly becoming one of the most technology-dependent functions in business. In 2012 the research and consulting team Gartner predicted that by 2017, a company's chief marketing officer would be spending more on technology than its chief information officer was. That oft-quoted claim seems more credible every day.
>
> Harvard Business Review,
> July 2014

> Having communicators at the table at the beginning – not being an afterthought. These things don’t work when communicators are brought in after the fact rather than being a part of the policy making process.
>
> Caitlin Hayden

as the key path towards CEO) remains to be seen, but the indicators are already visible. Certainly, the commercial view of marketing departments and agencies – as critical custodians of capital – would suggest that greater steps have been made in this sector than in NATO to place communications at the “heart of strategy”. At the very least, NATO should facilitate earlier StratCom participation in planning.

Defence and security institutions have little time to embrace this evolution and catch up. Already the role and influence of the CMO is changing to reflect the co-dependencies of marketing and IT departments and many organisations have established the position of Chief Marketing Technologist.

> ...Because those people who are at the planning table are the ones with the voice. The ones who are able to sit with the senior leaders are the ones who are able to shape what we say and do. Those are the ones who are able to have some influence around how we craft the messages, how we craft the strategy. And so, when I think about planning strategic communication, I wonder – who has the power? It’s those at the table.
>
> Kim Osborne

AGILITY ACROSS ALL CHANNELS

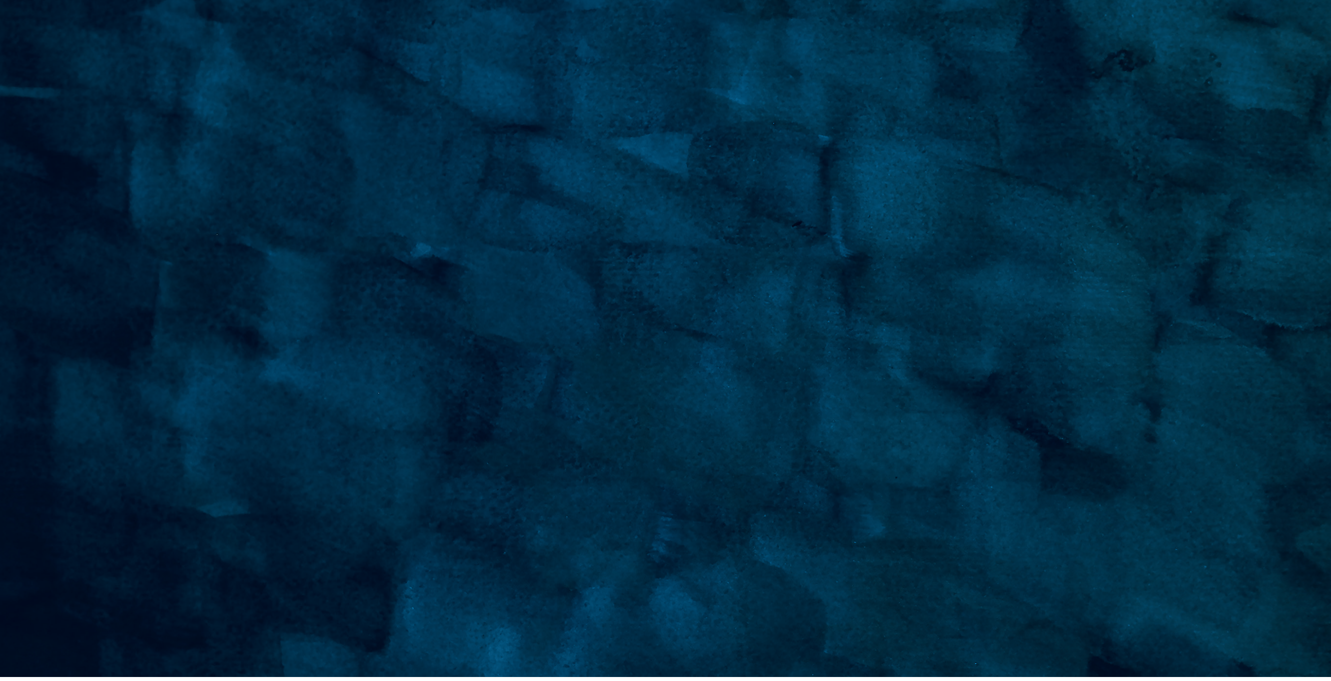
> Agility is the only way to keep up with content demands of the modern marketing world.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

Technology Proliferation.

The need to be agile in communications is well understood by NATO StratCom capabilities but is too often outplayed by the pathologies of bureaucracy and therefore not fully exploited. There is no doubt that the commercial sector exploits a broader spectrum of tools to aid agility (marketing analytics, *'zero-click'* web personalisation, Customer Relationship Management software, etc) than military StratCom practitioners. *Salesforce* estimates the average number of tools used by the best private sector campaigns to be 12. The worst companies use 5. Most military organisations fail to reach even this target raising a critical capability gap in StratCom development, let alone accounting for the exponential expansion in technology that is expected in the future.

Such an explosion almost belies our understanding of exponential growth and presents a major challenge for StratCom teams to engage with audiences who are being overwhelmed with information 24/7/365. Information is the new currency of trade in the commercial world, communications capacity is the new capital and company reputation is the new bottom line.

> Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most popular media owner, creates no content. Alibaba, the most valuable retailer, has no inventory and Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. Something interesting is happening.
>
> Tom Goodwin, Havas Media.
> Cited by Paul Smyth



Mobile.

In 2014, Marc Andreessen of *Andreessen Horrowitz* stated that “Software is eating the world”. One year later, Benedict Evans, from the same company, amended this to say that “Mobile is eating the world”. The effect this has had upon the commercial sector has transcended mere communications.

Mobile technology places more power in the hands of more people than ever before. The rapid decline in software, hardware and bandwidth costs amplifies this effect. Indeed, Evans predicts that within the next billion people to acquire a smartphone, a significant number will have never owned *an electric* device, let alone *an electronic* device. His proposition that mobile’s usefulness increases the lower your income is exhibited by the number of Middle Eastern refugees who, despite having lost everything, still have a smartphone. The average American spends 12.8 hours in front of a screen each day. In the UK that’s 12 hours. We are spending more time in front of screens than we are spending asleep. Quite simply, StratCom practitioners cannot afford to ignore this.

> “For the first time in history we can unequivocally say that people now behave digitally.”
>
> Paul Smyth

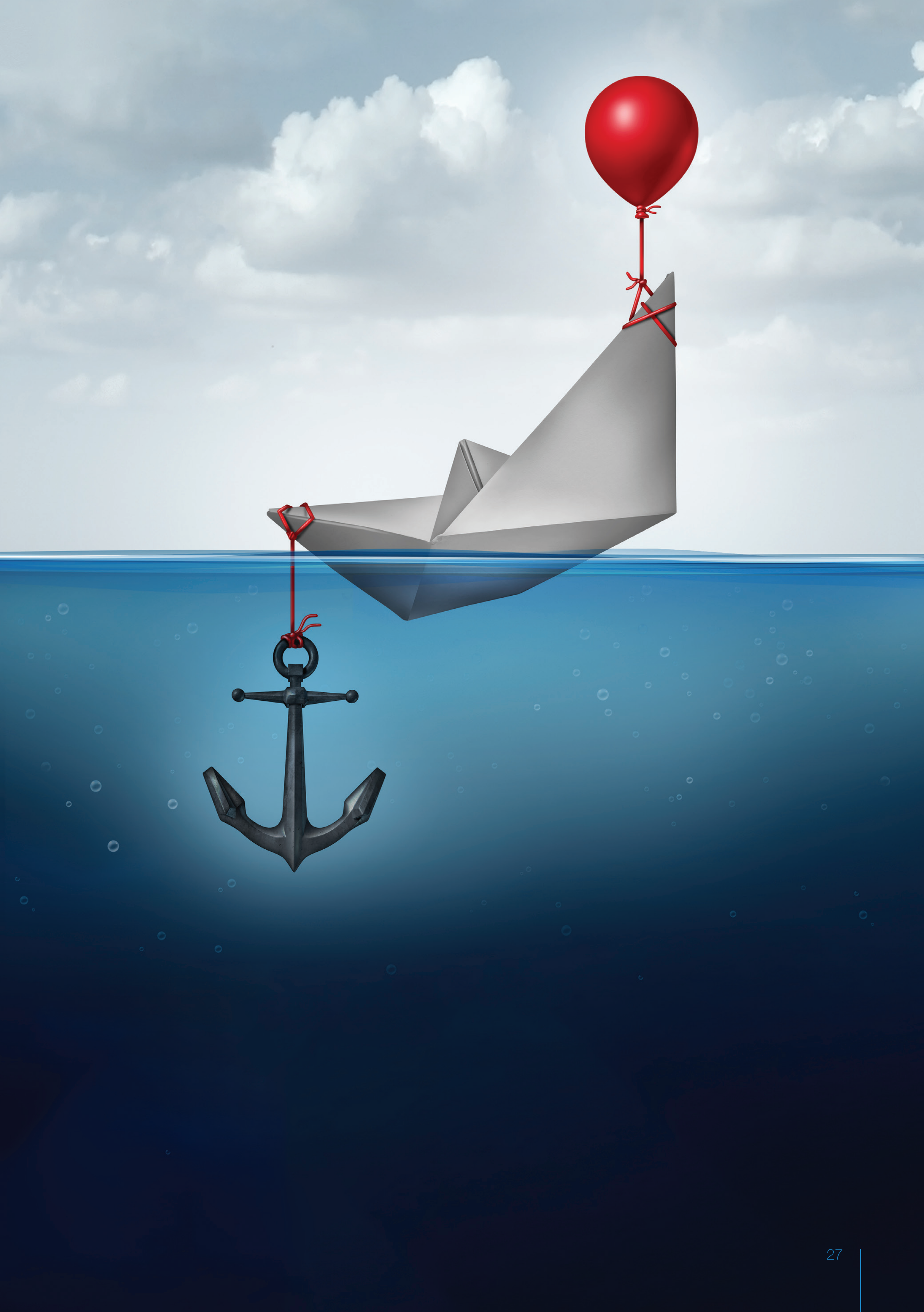
An added effect of mobile proliferation is that people now “behave digitally”. They meet, discuss, create and share content online, much as they have previously in the physical domain. This is not surprising considering the amount of time people now spend in front of a screen.

It is only possible to capture the attention

> The unconnected are disappearing.
>
> Paul Smyth citing Benedict Evans

of contemporary audiences by engaging them via these channels. To do so, NATO StratCom practitioners, like commercial companies, must either employ or outsource the expertise that will keep them at the forefront of technology. Our adversaries certainly will not miss this opportunity.

> Sustaining engagement is not feasible to do in-house, so we work with outside social media experts. With almost half a million followers and fans on Facebook, you can’t afford to not be there or answer their questions.
>
> Jacek Mirenski



ADVICE FOR PRACTITIONERS

OBJECTIVES (in Communications Terms)

AUDIENCE (Insight)

STRATEGY (Creating the Connection)

IMPLEMENTATION (and Orchestration)

SCORING (Measurement & Evaluation)

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

ADVICE FOR PRACTITIONERS

The commercial sector adopts almost identical steps to most government and military organisations in the process of designing, implementing and evaluating communications campaigns. The insights gained from the seminar in this section are therefore grouped according to the components of the UK Government's OASIS (Objectives, Audience Insight, Strategy, Implementation, Scoring) model adopted by NATO, with an additional category to address capability development.

> You need to start with the end in mind.
>
> Kim Osborne

- OBJECTIVES (IN COMMUNICATIONS TERMS)
- AUDIENCE (INSIGHT)
- STRATEGY (CREATING THE CONNECTION)
- IMPLEMENTATION (AND ORCHESTRATION)
- SCORING (MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION)
- CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

SETTING OBJECTIVES (in Communications Terms)

Commercial companies, like government departments, often suffer from activity led planning – considering the *means* by which to achieve a campaign before the *ends*. This approach is widely recognised to be flawed, not just because it can waste valuable time and resources, but because it denies organisations the opportunity to define their parameters of success in communications terms at the very start. Successful companies fully integrate communications into organisational objective setting, linking projected business performance to the interpretation of success in the information environment.

The need to identify what we're trying to communicate before considering the levers that will be used bears a strong resemblance to the concept of strategic narrative in NATO StratCom. The commercial sector, however, doesn't regard this as an incremental step in the planning process. Central themes emerge from customer dialogue and previous experience rather than stated strategic aims such that the development of narrative is concurrent to the setting of objectives in a more participative customer-focused world.

> Strategies have to look at the underlying drivers of the problem at hand and not manifestations of the problem.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

A common approach to generate customer dialogue at this stage is to form communities of interest. This recognises that every set of individuals, networks, and companies has their own narrative and is keen to promote themselves. If used well this approach results in priority target audiences indirectly helping to shape strategy. It is perhaps antithetical to traditional "adversary focused" military objective setting.

The commercial sector's focus upon dissecting the client brief at the start of

> Clients frequently come to us and ask us to make them a video. Well, of course, we can, but to what end? What is it you are trying to say and to whom? Only once we have determined that can we think about which channel to use.
>
> Paul Smyth

planning is illuminating. It is similar in many ways to one of the first stages of the military planning process – mission analysis. The key difference is that it is not a step that is considered as an incremental part of a wider process. Planning, as the communications campaign itself, must be participative, dynamic and flexible.

In summary, the more participative communications environment means it is not enough to consider "what good looks like" to your own organisation when setting strategic objectives. Strategy must be tailored to have a harmonised impact on all key audiences (adversaries and allies). The degree of change required in the attitudes and/or behaviours of these audiences and how this will be measured determines the direction and tone of your strategic narrative but should not be allowed to set it in stone. Organisational objectives need to be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound but also **Audience-Focused** before any further planning takes place. Whilst no universal algorithm currently exists in the commercial world, there is broad consensus that the outcome of the campaign and how it will be manifested should be considered way before the means to achieve it. Defence and security institutions probably under-play this aspect and could do more to analyse how we will be seen and what parts of our collective character will have the greatest effect on the target audiences before detailed planning commences.

> There is no room for stagnant thinking.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

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AUDIENCES (Insight)

Insight vs Understanding.

There is a a crucial difference between “Insight” and what military organisations might call the “understand”. The word “understand” is quite an arrogant term – it implies a phase which is performed at a single step of a process after which “understanding” is complete. The contemporary information environment does not offer this luxury. It is constantly changing in size, scope, speed and saturation. “Insight” on the other hand implies the continual, progressive and targeted comprehension of all audiences at all stages of the campaign – not just who and where they are, but what they are saying, how they are saying it, in what density and with what frequency and regularity. Insight sits at the heart of all communications campaigns in the commercial sector and is referred to at all stages of the planning process.

The global increase in smartphone penetration is gifting new opportunities in audience insight. Big data analytics offers the ability to baseline audience perception and track a new generation of high reach influencers and advocates in the digital domain.

Making a Connection.

We have already discussed the impact of the mobile revolution upon the contemporary communications market and the audiences that need to be reached within it. StratCom teams must embrace connectivity within target audiences, accepting that we cannot totally control the dialogue or ccompete with information flow all of the time. We just need to get used to it!

> People want a dialogue with a brand. Not just being messaged to but having a chance to interact with an organisation.
>
> Caitlin Hayden

As people behave increasingly ‘digital’, we

> Research constantly backs up each step of the process.
>
> Vilma Scarpino

must also accept that the manner in which they are drawn together, interact, review content and disperse in the online environment will be different from our traditionally held views of human behaviours. New techniques such as topic modeling and sentiment analysis seem to fit this requirement to understand online behaviour, but people still live in the real world. So we must monitor behaviours in the physical domain, accepting that these too may be influenced by habits learned from digital interaction (consider the day to day language of modern teenagers – #Whatever!). Social media is not the panacea of all future audience insight but it is starting to provide an interesting dimension in spotting emergent target audience behaviours – be they brand preferences or pathways to radicalisation. The information it provides can also be flippant, changing on a daily basis due to its uncontested nature. This presents additional challenges for insight, which must be addressed or at least accepted.

Context “It depends!”

In a more participative communications environment it is important to remember that learned procedures from one campaign are unlikely to achieve similar results in the next. Campaigns are individually nuanced by culture and regulation as well as geopolitical individualities. NATO StratCom capabilities cannot afford to merely seek a single approach or formulaic outlook to insight. Practitioners must come to accept that StratCom interventions cannot be repeated or redeployed across even seemingly similar environments and audiences must be analysed afresh. In the commercial sector this leads to the employment of product testing strategies for messages such as focus groups and online market research. The government sector is restricted in its ability to do this as people expect to be told the “truth” rather than what the government thinks is “the best version of the truth”.

Against the backdrop of ever changing context, it is still critical to assess emotional audience drivers during insight. This involves understanding the pressures on people that generate emotional reactions. It can be modelled from historic data but requires continuous capture and analysis and takes time (even vloggers take time to gain

> We base strategy and implementation on integrated research, analytics and measurement.
>
> Caitlin Hayden

followers within their community). Starting small and spreading outwards is a recognised approach in the commercial sector.

The broad mix of models and approaches used commercially to address these insight challenges raises added NATO capacity issues. The collection and analysis of images as key demonstrators of sentiment for which technology cannot yet provide a complete solution is a case in point. Images, unlike text, still require interpretation by culturally attuned human analysts (for example to assess facial expression) and this must be factored into any insight collection plan.

Only by adopting a mix of techniques can organisations hope to grasp the *meaning* rather than just the *metrics* of insight. Here again, the military must either establish or outsource capability. The commercial sector has greater capacity (including freedom of action) to overcome constraints upon audience insight, identify a knowledge gap in research (before or after campaign launch) and push harder to overcome it.

The Ethical Dimension.

This freedom of action leads to essential discussion of an area where the commercial sector falls behind. The lower profile of customer data generally does not warrant the same amount of legal scrutiny as data required for NATO StratCom campaigns. NATO suffers a far greater risk of reputational damage than any commercial company if ethical considerations to insight are not approached correctly. There is evidence to suggest the commercial sector should take greater notice of this in the future to maintain customer confidentiality and privacy, especially online. The huge range of insight tools now available, including exploitation of big data analytics and automated data collection means this is a concern that both sectors will need to address.

STRATEGY
(Making the human connection)

The disparity in interpretation of the term “Strategy” between the commercial, government and military sector is inconvenient. Within the OASIS model it refers to the creation of communications strategies – the design of campaigns – to achieve optimal impact. The most important aspects of this in the commercial sector are creativity and production, and smart business leaders understand that both are a blend of art and science. The commercial sector places great importance on finding those people who are able to develop concepts and ideas that provide a competitive advantage in a very unforgiving marketplace. Their business model would simply fail without it. Creativity is viewed as the essential means by which companies can create emotional connection with their audience to achieve influence. Unhelpfully, it is not a quality inherent within bureaucratic organisations such as the military nor is it a process that can be easily learned by the people in them.

Our adversaries know what they seek, and what emotional buttons to push. They find

> “It’s a mindset – creating the circumstances where people can think creatively.”
>
> Stephen Harley

> “Messages should be evoked as a realisation or a conclusion rather than perceived as a just as message.”
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

> ISIS present very simple solutions to complex problems. Not just a message but an imminent, immediate, directly actionable call to action that comes off the back of the narrative.
>
> Jonathan Russell

the emotional touch point, because they realise the power creativity affords and develop messages that are perfectly in tune with the feelings and thoughts of their target audiences. Simplicity is important in achieving this impact.

Creating an emotional audience connection requires finding messages that will take hold quickly and remain in audience consciousness for the longest possible period of time. This can only be achieved through the simplification of messages – something the PowerPoint imbued military is not generally good at.

Trust and risk tolerance are both implicit to embracing true creativity. Both are generally encouraged military leadership qualities and yet both have suffered at the hands of increased public scrutiny and approvals processes in recent military experiences – something which the commercial sector has not suffered to the same degree.

It would take a revolutionary transformation of operating models and structures to redirect military thinking on these issues in the years to come. As such an increase in the numbers of mainstream military creative talent cannot be realistically expected. More important is the requirement to educate full time military officers in the benefits of creative talent and procedures to outsource it when required. This too involves a genuine leap of faith – leaving creative development

> It is easier to complicate than simplify. Simple messages enter the brain quicker and stay there longer. Brutal simplicity of thought is therefore a painful necessity.
>
> M&C Saatchi ethos

> The approvals process does a very good job in killing creativity.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham

in the hands of free-thinking, creative people, walking away and being prepared with an open mind when the resulting idea is presented. No matter how antithetical this may appear to bureaucratic military structures, the commercial sector’s tangible past performance in this space and keenness to be involved is hard to ignore.

> The business world definitely sees the idea of ‘failure’ as a step towards success.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

IMPLEMENTATION (and Orchestration)

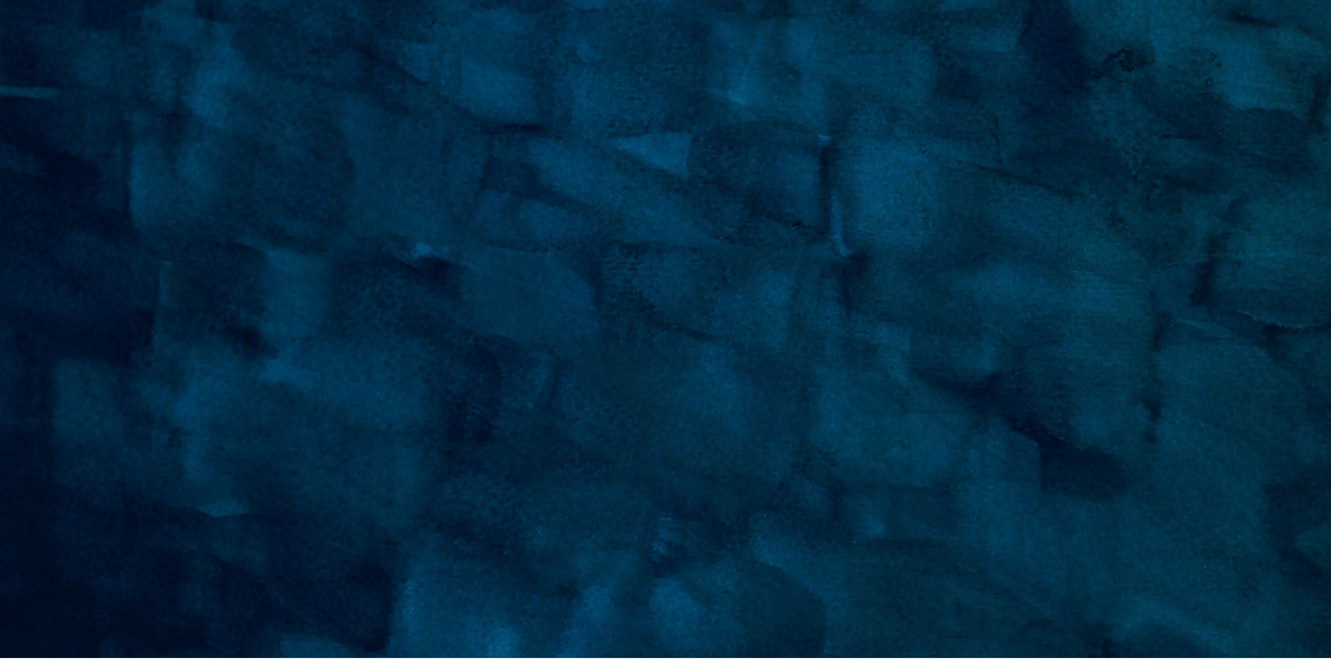
The commercial sector has a clear advantage over NATO StratCom in implementing strategy. The tighter focus of commercial campaigns tends to bring clarity of vision to all levers employed in its execution, better enabling them to match words with images and actions, or “walk the talk”. This also makes the achievement and demonstration of cognitive change easier than in military scenarios. However, the complexity of defence StratCom projects should not be used as an excuse for inaction. NATO’s StratCom content generally has a high moral component, is often well founded in analysis, well meant and very well produced. NATO’s key capability gap is in bringing this content to the audiences it wishes to influence. For this you need to be available, personal and authentic.

> If government organisations cannot be there at the right time with right information, this is the same as not being there at all.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

> You have to walk the talk.
>
> Jacek Mirenski

Available.

The channels that NATO and national governments currently choose to distribute messages often fail to reach the means by which contemporary audiences access the majority of their information. People (citizens and/or customers) seeking a cohesive



communications experience need answers to their questions instantly. Again, dialogue is key.

Personal.

There is also an imperative for communications to create a personal connection, not only in their content, but in the means by which they reach the audience.

If we accept that the customer experience is as critical as the message content, then audience insight must guide the way in which the message is disseminated. Again, the campaign is no longer just about what you want to say – it is about what they want to hear and how they want to hear it. The commercial sector is addressing this by focussing upon employee engagement, regarding employees as frontline ambassadors and credible spokespeople for their organisations. In other words the best way to create the customer experience is through the voices of similar people in a seemingly one to one dialogue. Military organisations generally recognise the ambassadorial power of servicemen and women to impart their message but are still risk averse to putting them in front of the camera due to the constraints of security and reputation. To reduce this risk, an organisation needs a credible and convincing narrative, understood by individuals at all levels who are empowered to engage and communicate.

> Focus on employee engagement, because employees are your frontline ambassadors and credible spokespeople for your organisation.
>
> Caitlin Hayden

> …The use of mouthpieces serve to fuel the narratives of western puppetry. Often these approaches actually do nothing more than to appease our own need to feel that we are upholding our side of a moral argument.
>
> Sarah-Jean Cunningham on the
> “Think Again, Turn Away” project

Authentic.
Authentic does not mean genuine. Authentic means what is expected by the audience. Too often governments seek to use a regional mouthpiece in an attempt to create resonance. The results often fuel the very narratives it seeks to counter.

There are 2 critical components of authenticity:

Credibility.
The commercial sector seeks to ensure credibility through the use of incremental implementation strategies and the use of thematically or geographically separated control groups. This helps to understand the effect generated by activity early in the campaign and could be exploited more in NATO StratCom campaigns. It also offers the opportunity to test baseline metrics and provides evidence for refinement of measurement strategies before full rollout.
Demonstrating causality or cause-effect is inherently difficult in both the military and commercial sectors. In the commercial sector it is non-discretionary.

Consistency.
In the commercial sector the matching of words, images and actions is regarded as critical. Not doing so is regarded as one of the most common causes of short term market share reduction and/or reputational loss, either through customer disgruntlement or exploitation of, and by competitors. NATO StratCom practitioners are alive to the need of matching words, images and actions, but their senior planning staffs’ focus upon activity first and the tendency to see communication as an afterthought to explain actions, increases the “say-do” gap, undermining confidence and giving the impression of being inauthentic. Deeds should match words but one is not subordinate to the other.

SCORING
(Measurement and Evaluation)

How / What to Measure.
Experience has led commercial companies to realise what can be measured with evidence (and is therefore worth measuring) and what cannot be measured but can be ‘felt’. A similarly pragmatic approach would afford NATO StratCom practitioners better outcomes than chasing the panacea of measuring behavioural or attitudinal change. StratCom teams must therefore focus upon collecting **evidence suggesting change** and comparing it to a tangible baseline to **assess** (rather than confirm) causality. This direct relationship between input and output measurement reinforces the view that that “measurement should occur at the beginning” and emphasises the importance of quantifiable baselining and objective setting.

Measurement of effect is far more difficult in grass-roots or organic campaigns because dialogue is more unpredictable. Commercial experts are thus more accepting of amending baselines and, if necessary, narratives, as they develop a better understanding of the impact of their activity on audiences. This concept of an “Agile Manifesto” is, again, possibly antithetic to current defence planning principles.

Making an assessment of causality depends equally on the quality of comparative or control data describing potential external

> We should always link communications with business performance.
>
> Dagnija Lejina

> The majority of marketeers thought their marketing was very effective but they couldn’t measure the actual evidence.
>
> Chris Ryder

influences as it does upon the campaign in hand. The commercial sector is equally aware of this challenge but can access a far more concentrated bank of data within specific markets to enable this. The magnitude of this task in defence strongly suggests the need to put more resources into a centrally driven insight capability for key audiences. It is another reason that insight must sit at the heart of StratCom capability and feed every part of the planning process and not be a single, isolated stage of "understanding" the information environment.

Collecting and validating data.

Data collection methods are as important as the data itself in ensuring that a StratCom project achieves the authenticity outlined in the previous section. A key part of this comes from demonstrating that data has been collected ethically, for which the military and commercial sector are in similar states of learning. Laws which are implemented by governments to facilitate surveillance and intelligence gathering for security purposes are open to interpretation. This can have implications for risk tolerance in the insight and measurement phases.

The credibility of data to represent behavioural change has undergone a significant change in the information revolution, particularly in the virtual domain. "Likes" and "Shares" in social media platforms are temptingly quantifiable and unescapable indicators of sentiment but digital data must form only part of the story. Social media should be measured in context with grass roots dialogue, polling and focus groups. A qualitative and quantitative mix is still best.

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

There is no doubt that NATO StratCom enterprises will need increasing assistance from the commercial sector in the future. The sheer scope and magnitude of the task to compete with our adversaries in this sphere belies any current system of military resourcing – and yet it requires far less funding than traditional defence. In addition to a fundamental review of specialist training and mainstream defence education, militaries can embark upon various programmes of integration to further optimise capability:

Greater use of Reserves.
Communications offers an ideal career field in which to recruit either full or part time reserves. The UK’s 77 Brigade has already made inroads into this option, but is perhaps inaccurately focused upon deployed force options rather than the more pressing “back office requirements” of research, creativity and production, where deep specialists could be employed alongside civilian marketing employment.

Commercial Outsourcing.
The most prevalent capability gap in addressing the commercial military divide is to improve the agility, flexibility and transparency of military contracting mechanisms. Approaches such as the “Whole Force Concept” work well to bring together military, commercial and academic resources, mostly in the training environment. More transitory arrangements to acquire deep specialist skills for specific tasks and regions are necessary for shorter term, shorter notice projects.

> “Militaries should perhaps focus upon optimising external contracting arrangements rather than hoping to develop StratCom related capabilities in house.”
>
> Paul Smyth

Exchange / Work Placement Schemes. Commercial organisations are keen to foster partnerships with defence, incorporating mutual work exchange placements to help train creative thought among military specialists and close the gap between the two sectors.

Whichever method is chosen, increased commercial convergence has the potential to greatly increase the motivation and self-respect of the StratCom sector by teaming the diverse skills and competencies of military and civilian professionals.

> Creating a better team with agile work flows and creative freedom will help you keep your best people.
>
> Mathew Sweezey

CONCLUSIONS

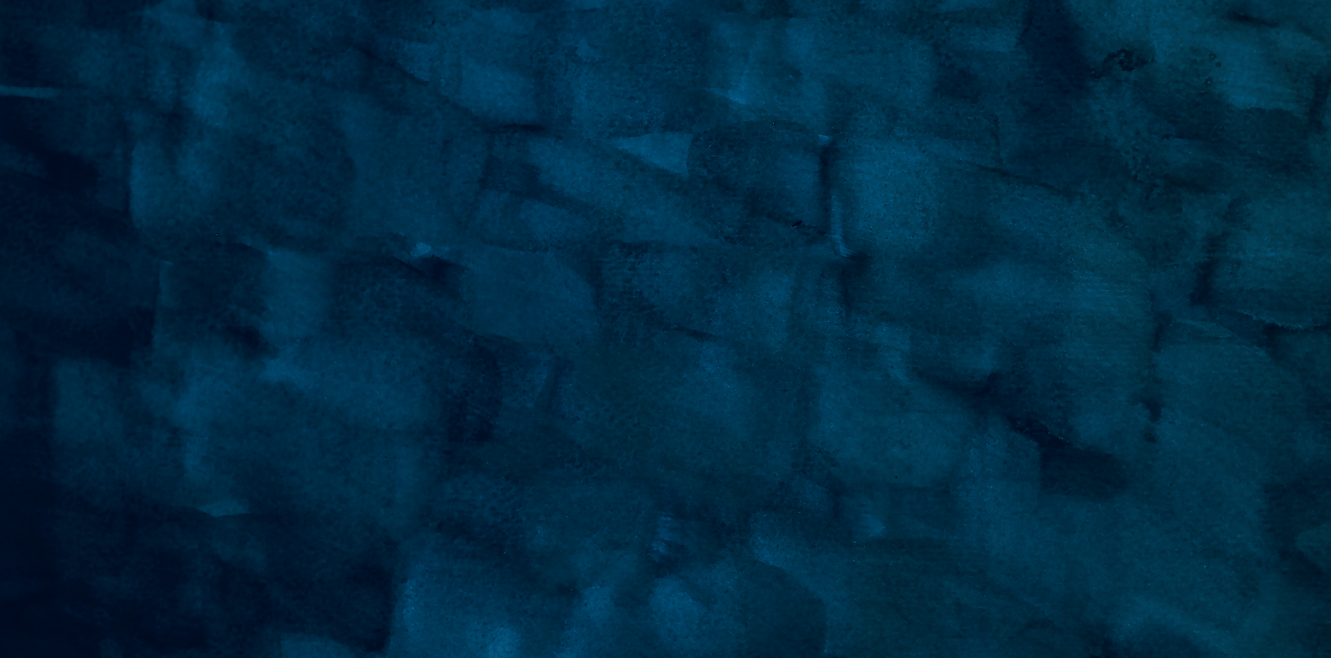
CONCLUSIONS

This groundbreaking event has enabled the NATO StratCom COE to capture a wealth of information from colleagues with varied experience and skills in the commercial sector. Presentations and discussions provided eye-opening insights into the contemporary communications environment for senior leadership and evidence to reinforce current initiatives by StratCom practitioners to transform military structures, processes and organisations. Most importantly it instigated an essential dialogue between the two sectors in which defence has previously been reluctant to fully participate.

Complexity. Up front, we have discovered that the commercial communications sector is grappling with similar complex issues to NATO StratCom teams as information becomes the currency of success and communication sits more at the heart of strategy. The key difference between the sectors lies not in their appreciation of this context, but in the way in which they address it. Commercial organisations are far more comfortable working within, rather than against uncertainty, whereas military organisations, as demonstrated by repeated questions to the panel, still seek a formulaic approach to address complexity in multiple contexts.

Competitiveness. The commercial sector has certainly stolen a march upon military organisations in terms of agility. Commercial companies much more actively promote initiative and creativity in communications and demonstrate more trust in employees to show these qualities. They are more confident to reframe task parameters in quick time to accommodate changes in the marketplace and less likely to be held back by bureaucracy. This greater appetite for risk promotes a far more actively competitive environment in commercial communications, which is seen as essential to development and success.

Customer/Citizen Focus. In human terms there is little to distinguish the people that the commercial sector views as customers and governments regard as citizens. They are open to the same behavioural motivations, primarily from emotional rather than logical stimuli. They expect to be engaged in a participative dialogue and have high expectations on response times. Organisa-



tions, military and commercial alike, that cannot keep up with the pace of the cohesive customer journey will struggle to thrive and possibly survive in the future.

Creativity. Avoiding the temptation to explore the limitless definitions of creativity, there is certainly a broad gap in perception of its nature and application between commercial and defence communications sectors. Implicitly linked to the issue of risk, there is great benefit in leaving creativity of content in the hands of genuinely creative people, walking away and trusting the output as a principal means of connection to key audiences. The structures and processes inherent in military organisations are generally not conducive to this kind of approach.

Confidence. With a proven track record of quantifiable success, the commercial sector has much greater confidence both in its professional lexicon and in its ability to link impact, outcomes and available resources. Such confidence amplifies levels of trust in the commercial sector – actively promoting the military concept of Mission Command.

Corporate Leadership. The commercial sector leads in developing strategic leaders who recognise the business benefit and opportunities of a communications centred approach. The military can learn valuable lessons here to mainstream influence within all activity. It is possibly incomprehensible to commercial organisations that the military actively sanctions communications related disciplines in career development in favour of more traditional job roles.

> “There are differences…
> but I think we have more in common than we have that separates us.”
>
> Seminar Delegate

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Understand Your Own Bias. Defence would do well to reframe its previous perceptions that the act of commercial marketing is simpler than achieving behavioural change in military scenarios. It must evolve more common comparisons between citizens and customers who expect a cohesive experience of engagement. It must also recognise the pathologies of an activity led approach in the modern world and how the structures, processes and organisations this has formed over the years are ill-equipped to address contemporary communications challenges. Military transformation is required to place communications in a *supported* rather than *supporting* role in policy and strategy making. Military success, in whatever form, will always be demonstrated in the communications environment and "what good looks like" in this domain must be considered at the start, not after the fact.

Think Audiences, not just Adversaries. Commercial expertise strongly advocates a new approach to audience analysis for military organisations. Defence must move from "doing the understand piece" to placing "insight" at the heart of StratCom, referring to it at every step of communications planning and never assuming it to be complete. Insight should guide the creation of SMART, but also *audience-focused* objectives, clearly bounded communications frameworks and structured application and measurement of physical and virtual effect. Strategic transformation of thought from a purely adversarial to an audience-focused approach in the planning process is essential.

Operate 24/7, Tomorrow and Global, not 9-5, Today and National. The global information environment never stops for a break – a fact that NATO's adversaries, in addition to the commercial communications sector, have embraced to a far greater degree than allied military organisations. Military organisations must possess structures and processes to ensure constant engagement within the information environment. This should include proactive strategic communications frameworks to pre-emptively place resonant narratives into key conversations, a 24/7/365 ability to create contemporary content and reach a "whole force" approach to audience insight at all stages of

> 99.9% of all things that have ever lived on this planet are extinct because they did not change.
>
> Mathew Sweezy

the communications cycle. Organisations set up solely to counter malign narratives are no longer fit for purpose.

Establish and sustain “the business of doing the business”. These factors, coupled with the ever increasing challenge faced by military organisations to expand human expert resource makes commercial convergence in the future essential. There is good news in the range of opportunities that are available here. Commercial colleagues are keen to promote cross-pollination of information, ideas and insights and suggest that military organisations could be bolder in approaching them for training, education and exchange employment opportunities. Military organisations must respond by increasing the agility of contracting arrangements in the short term and reducing military staff turnover in communications roles through appropriate career incentives within communications roles to create a longer term cadre of professionals.

ANNEX A

Researched Questions to the panel of Commercial Experts

Strategy and planning

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap	**Observation / Perceived Capability Gap**
The importance of balancing “the coordination of military efforts with the requirement for full political ownership of communication *Allies made clear that NATO would be well served by forward-looking communications goals that are clear and coherent, guided by political leadership* *NATO Review*	*This report finds that improved StratCom did not, and does not, temper the effects of bad policy and poor operational execution.* *COE Report on ISAF StratCom*
To discover how the negative aspects of bureaucracy upon communications can be mitigated. *To identify ways to be less formal and more targeted in communications.* *Poland Ministry of National Defence StratCom Branch*	*Information Strategy – Various [commercial] tools, including social media propaganda, direct physical actions, and computer network operations are used to access or target potential audiences. Twitter is used as an umbrella media platform that connects various media sources into one easily browseable and searchable information index. DAESH uses the Twitter community as a defensive structure against account deletion and suspension. The structure is able to recover quickly by organising in a number of small communities and some larger ones.* *COE Report on DAESH*

QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

- **How important is placing communications at the heart of strategy?**
- **How early are comms people involved in product cycle?**
- **Put another way, to what degree is communications a supported or supporting component of the corporate strategy making process?**
- **If communications sits at the heart of strategy, who is in charge?**
- **How should success be defined?**
- **How do delegates address the need to deal with the pathologies of bureaucracy in corporate communications?**
- **What structures and procedures are employed by the commercial sector to optimise innovation and creativity?**

Strategy and planning

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap

It is our view that StratCom is still not embedded at the core of operational thinking.
StratCom is a mechanism of influence. Its continued residency in the NATO PDD is unequivocally a problem…
…The focus of attention should not be paid not to the second part of the term but to the first – strategy.

Tatham and LePage

Within the political-military leadership and even within the communications community there are factions of passionate supporters for StratCom and just as many opponents. All seem to agree conceptually of the need for better coordination as long as they are the 'coordinators' and not the 'coordinated'.

COE Report on ISAF StratCom

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap

Recommendations – When communicating to the outside world, emphasis should be placed on the effectiveness of a global coalition, as well as every loss and defeat suffered by Daesh.

COE Report on DAESH

- **This definition of an information strategy comprises a list of message delivery means. It highlights the preponderance among government organisations to "rush to delivery" when structuring information campaigns, perhaps paying too little attention to the atonement of objectives in communications terms, audience analysis and the establishment of creative audience touch points. What is the commercial view?**

- **Can delegates provide examples of where positive narratives outstrip the effect of negative narratives? Is this always the case?**

- **What is the relative importance of each in the commercial world?**

Implementation and operations

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap	**Observation / Perceived Capability Gap**
Across national and international definitions there exists an inherent belief that the process of Strategic Communication will be successful. Yet, academics and practitioners argue that the complexity of the task means that success should actually be considered the exception and not the rule. *Professor Steve Corman* *Tatham and Le Page*	*It is our view that StratCom is still not embedded at the core of operational thinking.* *Tatham and LePage*
Revise guidelines related to NATO's use of social media. *Recommendations from the External Review*	*Russia and Daesh have skilfully adapted to the new information environment and effectively combine activity on the virtual and physical space to change behaviours perception and attitudes.* *Weaponisation of Social Media*

QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

- **To what degree does the corporate sector view communications as a specialist capability?**
- **Do the military capabilities of PD, PA, MPA, Info Ops and Psyops map across to corporate equivalents?**
- **How do corporate communications agencies train and develop their people? What structures and processes work?**
- **How do we close the 'say-do' gap?**
- **What is the role of leadership?**
- **How is the CMO engaged with the management?**
- **How closely do separate entities in the corporate delivery cycle interact to ensure that actions words and images are matched? Is the military better at this?**
- **Internal communication – making employees promote values / company. Employees as the brand. How does industry approach the need to**

Implementation and operations

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap

Ensure that only qualified Public Affairs Officers are accepted to fill billets in NATO's Military Public Affairs offices.

Recommendations from the External Review

The weakest link in the Alliance communication effort at strategic, operational and tactical levels was the profound lack of trained, expeditionary communication- and information-related military capability in almost all NATO member nations (excepting the U.S., and perhaps Germany). For NATO to be more effective, nations need to professionalise their approach to communications by abandoning the model of employing 'willing general service officers eager to learn on the job' to one that is firmly based on 'qualified, trained and experienced practitioners in all disciplines at each rank level'.

COE Report on ISAF StratCom

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap

NATO HQs had two [concurrent] strategic communications campaigns to fight during the ISAF operation, the first being for the support of domestic audiences of the 51 troop contributing nations and international audiences. The second campaign was the operational battle for the contested population and against malign actors including the Taliban.

COE Report on ISAF StratCom

Conclusions – Actions speak louder than words. Daesh knows that it is more effective to take action than to merely declare intentions. In other word, Daesh is aware of the importance of avoiding the say-do gap.

COE Report on DAESH

concurrently deliver competing communications priorities or campaigns?

- **The commercial sector is known to sub-divide the disciplines of external and internal communications. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?**

- **"We must do more social media". We assume that the commercial sector is ahead of the military sector in addressing this new environment. Can delegates give an individual perspective from their own sector?**

- **Can the military hope to compete in this space without commercial support?**

Evaluation

Observation / Perceived Capability Gap	Observation / Perceived Capability Gap
Mandate measurement and evaluation of NATO's communications activities, with the understanding that further staff tools and resources would be required. *Recommendations from the External Review*	*If success is measured against information policy aims: "...create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries and potential adversaries" (Information Operations); "to influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives" (Psychological Operations); and "to inform, persuade, or influence audiences in support of NATO aims and objectives" (StratCom), then the outcomes are decidedly more mixed, if not a failure.* *COE Report on ISAF StratCom*

QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

- **What is the relative importance of measurement of effect in the commercial communications sector?**
- **What techniques does the commercial sector employ to measure changes in perception, attitude and behaviour?**
- **What does success look like and how should it be measured?**
- **How does the relative success or failure of campaigns in the commercial sector inform future campaign planning?**

ANNEX B

Contributor Biographies

VILMA SCARPINO (ITA),
Managing Director, *Doxa*

Graduated in Political Science at the Catholic University of Milan. CEO and shareholder of *Doxa Spa*, the first marketing research company, with Italian capital, in terms of size and turnover. President and coordinator of the Doxa Group: *DuepuntozeroDoxa*, *Doxa Pharma*, *Connexia*, *iCorporate*, *Doxa Digital*. Over twenty years of experience in marketing research and opinion poll surveys. She carries out activities for national and international institutional bodies and lectures at Italian universities and trade associations.

PAUL SMYTH (GBR),
StratCom Director, *M&C Saatchi World Services*

Paul Smyth is a *Strategic Communications Director* at *M&C Saatchi* with over 20 years of in-house and consultancy experience delivering strategic communication projects and training in the UK and internationally for high-tech high-growth starts ups to government departments. He has considerable knowledge and experience of strategy development, implementation, activation and a deep understanding of social media and digital communications. He also has a parallel career in the *Reserve Forces* and 12 years Media Ops and Strategic Communications experience.

SERGEI MAKEDONSKY (RUS),
Director, Eastern Europe & Baltic States, *Forrester Research Regional Partner*

Sergei has over 25 years' experience in business strategy and market research. Since March 2015 Sergei has been Director, Eastern Europe & Baltic States at *Forrester Research*, one of the most influential research and advisory firms in the world, working with business and technology leaders to develop strategies that drive growth, with work grounded in surveys of more than 500,000 consumers and business leaders worldwide. Sergei holds a PhD from *Moscow State University* and an MBA from the *Russian Foreign Trade Academy*.

JONATHAN RUSSELL (GBR),
Head of Policy, *Quilliam Foundation*

Jonathan Russell is *Quilliam's Head of Policy*. Jonathan has been involved at *Quilliam* since 2012, first as an intern with Dr Usama Hasan, then as Fundraiser, and more recently as *Political Liaison Officer*. As Head of Policy, Jonathan runs the *Policy Department* which is responsible for several of *Quilliam's* programmes, its relations with policymakers, providing evidence-based policy advice, and managing external communications.

PROFESSOR KIM OSBORNE (USA),
C-SPAN Chair Professional-in-Residence Purdue University & CEO, *ShinePath* LLC

Professor Kimberly Osborne is the inaugural recipient of the endowed C-SPAN Chair at Purdue University's *Brian Lamb School of Communication*. Frequently sought as a lecturer and mentor, she has advised senior leaders of U.S. and foreign militaries and governments, *Fortune 500* companies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations. Before joining Purdue University, she served ISAF as the *Chief Strategic Communications Advisor* (OF-5) to the Afghan National Security Forces in Kabul.

SARAH-JEAN CUNNINGHAM (GBR),
Director, Operations & Business Development, *Lapis Communications*

Sarah-Jean Cunningham is a strategic communications and research expert with almost a decade of experience in the Middle East and Asia. She has advised a diverse range of governments and international organisations and currently spearheads *Lapis* operations in seven frontier markets. Her client base includes UN agencies, foreign aid and development agencies, ministers, and embassies.

CHRISTOPHER RYDER (GBR),
Sr. Consultant, Human Performance, *Qinetiq*

Chris joined *QinetiQ* 15 years ago to apply computational modelling methods to the representation of human decision making in operational analysis models at the individual, collective and organisational levels. Chris' first degree was in *Theoretical Physics* from *Royal Holloway*, University of London.

Chris' current primary focus is research into social science and psychological models of extreme social phenomena (like the emergence of conflicts, the emergence and innovation of violent extremist groups and grass-roots revolutions) as well as human behaviour in online environments.

STEPHEN HARLEY (GBR),
Counter Terrorism/Communications Advisor to the *Office of the President of Somalia*

Stephen Harley is currently C*ounter Terrorism/ Communications Advisor* to the Office of the President of Somalia under the auspices of the British Embassy Mogadishu. He is a post-graduate student of the Department of War Studies at *King's College*, London and authored the Strategic Communications chapter in the recent COE-DAT *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned* publication.

CAITLIN HAYDEN (USA),
SVP and Group Director – Media Services and Strategies, *Edelman*

As *Senior Vice President* and *Director of the Media Group* in *Edelman's* DC Office, Caitlin works with a broad range of clients to develop comprehensive media strategies, including *Fortune 500* companies, CEOs and other C-Suite leaders, NGOs, associations, and government entities. Caitlin also serves as one of *Edelman's* top media and speech training specialists. Prior to heading the Media Group, Caitlin worked with clients to develop and implement media strategies with a focus on international issues, technology, and data security and privacy.

JACEK MIRENSKI (POL),
Director, PR and Corporate Communication, *OTCF*

Jacek is based in Warsaw and manages communications at Polish sportswear clothing company OTCF, at a time of intense growth and foreign expansion of its flagship brand 4F. His role covers external communication, particularly corporate and management profile building, media and stakeholder relations, issues management in Poland and on foreign markets, as well as internal communication, support for employer branding and corporate social responsibility.

MATHEW SWEEZEY (USA),
Principal of Marketing Insights, *Salesforce*

Mathew is *Principal of Marketing Insights* for *Salesforce.com*, and regarded as one of the top minds on the future of Marketing. A consummate researcher and thinker, Mathew's work is often cited leading publications such as *Mashable, VentureBeat, PCWorld, CMO.com, Information Week, Forbes*, and *Huffington Post*, and numerous others.

PROFESSOR PAUL BAINES (GBR),
Professor of Political Marketing, *Cranfield School of Management*

Paul Baines is Professor of *Political Marketing* at *Cranfield University*. He is author/co-author of more than a hundred published articles, book chapters and books on marketing issues. Over the last 20 years, Paul's research has focused on political marketing, public opinion and propaganda. He is also a Fellow of the *Chartered Institute of Marketing*, *Market Research Society*, and *Institute of Directors (IOD)* and a member of *ESOMAR* and the *Academy of Marketing*.

DAGNIJA LEJINA (LVA),
Senior Partner at *Lejina & Sleiers Reputation Management*

Dagnija is a communications professional and a public speaker with more than 15 years of experience in private, public and NGO sector. She is a partner at the reputation management company *Lejina and Šleiers* and the co-founder and CEO of the tech startup, policy and lifestyle festival *Digital Freedom Festival*.

JOHN-PAUL GRAVELINES (CAN),
Strategic Communications Consultant, *Aktis Strategy*

John-Paul Gravelines has eight years of experience in strategic communications and assessment for government campaigns, focusing on evidence-based social influence. His work spans the complete lifecycle of strategic communications efforts from baseline assessment to influence campaign design to execution to rolling assessment. As an advisor to the *Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication* in *NATO's ISAF* in Afghanistan, he was responsible for understanding the impact of *ISAF* and Afghan activities on attitudes and behaviours of stakeholder groups.

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