

Community Scouting – Engaging Society in your business development

A scientific approach to increase the common ground between your company and the world around you

Legitimacy in a digitalized world

Digitalization changes every part of society. It leads to a level of accessibility never believed to be possible. When people become users, their traces create targetable profiles no organization will do without in the future. However, it does not replace the need for participation which is becoming ever more important to build relationships and gain legitimacy.

Communication Works helps enhance legitimacy as your most important asset to stand out in a competitive digitalized environment. We offer an approach which allows you to engage your staff and society as community in your business development.

How you benefit

Mindset: Your experts will open up for diverging opinions and expectations of a non-expert but engaged external world.

Predictability: Your organisation gets a better and comprehensive understanding of how the general public and different societal groups will react to your actions and communication ("reality-check"). You get insight into their motivations and how to involve them to develop your project.

Engagement: This understanding allows you to improve the quality of your dialogue with stakeholders, use them to shape/adjust your strategy and to mitigate undesired/enhance desired effects of your communication (maximised content relevance).

More options, less frictions: You discover new and additional business opportunities, can sharpen your selling points and gain higher acceptance for your projects with both public at large, peer and competing groups, and in particular political decision-makers.

„Decentralised energy must be people-centric. Community Scouting with Communication Works has been a refreshing and enriching exercise that has helped us greatly in better understanding the perspective of future customers and discovering new options to build supportive communities around our business.“

Tim Rotheray, Director, UK Association for Decentralised Energy

How Community Scouting differs from traditional scenario work

Traditional scenario work is based on a reduced number of worst and best cases plus a number of variants per scenario (i.e. price or technology development, political interventions). These are generally used in a static way with the purpose to predict possible futures.

Communication Works enables dynamic scenario development with the purpose to understand how stakeholders will react to specific actions and messages (i.e. what your company could do or say) and to interact with them. This is not a one-off exercise but can be repeated to refine and deepen insights. While the actual surveys constitute only the base material, Communication Works focuses in particular on the scenario development together with your experts, the joint interpretation of the results, and the follow-up actions. We turn your audience into active participants of your project.

How we work

Once we have determined the agenda, time plan and scope of the project, a project typically includes five key phases (depending on the defined scope and number of iterations the five phases will extend over six to twelve weeks).

Phase 1 - Initial research: Based on the defined task Communication Works performs media analysis, issue screening, stakeholder mapping, desk research on available reports and studies.

Phase 2 – Familiarising your experts with the approach: In a first workshop we present the results of our initial research and discuss our methodology of scenario-based surveys with you.

Phase 3 – Scenario-formulation: We take your experts on a discovery journey, developing together with them a large spectrum of differentiated, very detailed and flexible scenarios for actions you envisage to take and messages you could formulate on each aspect. In this process and based on the initial research we will challenge your own perception with the outside-in perspective in order to formulate realistic scenarios.

Phase 4 – Conducting the survey: In cooperation with a scientific partner and after quality-checking the scenario formulation with Handelshogskolan, we will survey the defined scenarios on a representative sample of the relevant constituency (Swedish society as a whole or your specific region) as well as on your own employees and selected stakeholder groups.

Phase 5 – Presentation and discussion of results: The findings of all phases are brought back to and discussed with your experts. The purpose is to understand how the different findings relate to each other and which conclusions can be drawn for what your company should do and what/how you should communicate.

In short

Organisations who are dominant in their market are strong and weak for the same reason: their own experts are leading in their field. That can make it difficult to change perspective: “Why should we look at it from the perspective of people who have less competence?”.

Communication Works helps incorporate perspectives that lie outside your own field of competence but are relevant for the success of a project and might otherwise be overlooked or not understood. Community Scouting provides a virtual laboratory to reality-check risks and opportunities. The result is increased common ground between you and your stakeholders.