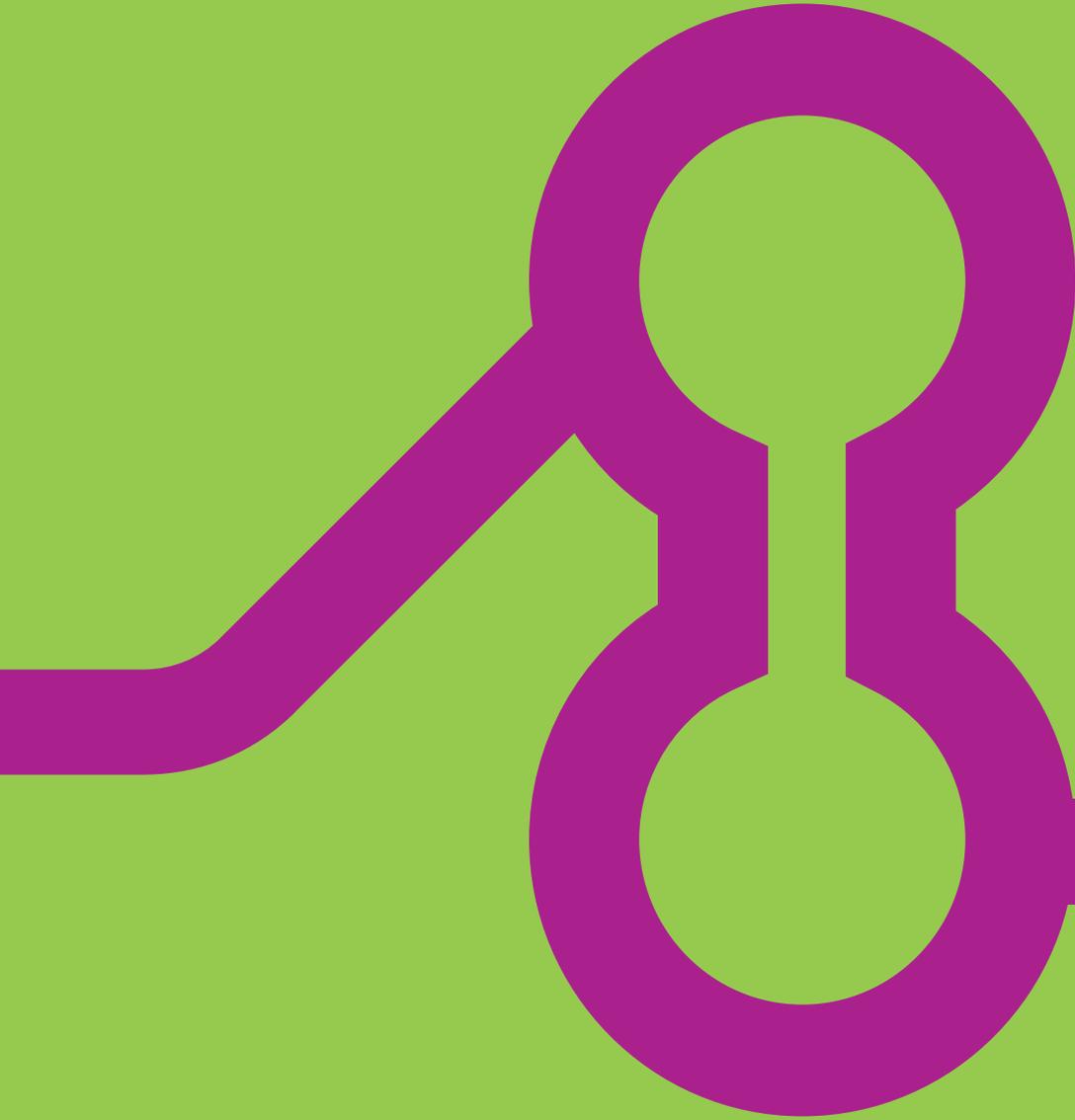


Directors



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Introduction

If you're like most Communications Directors I know, you barely have time to go to the bathroom. One of my clients compares the frenzied energy of her communications team to "squirrels at a rave" which pretty much sums it up!

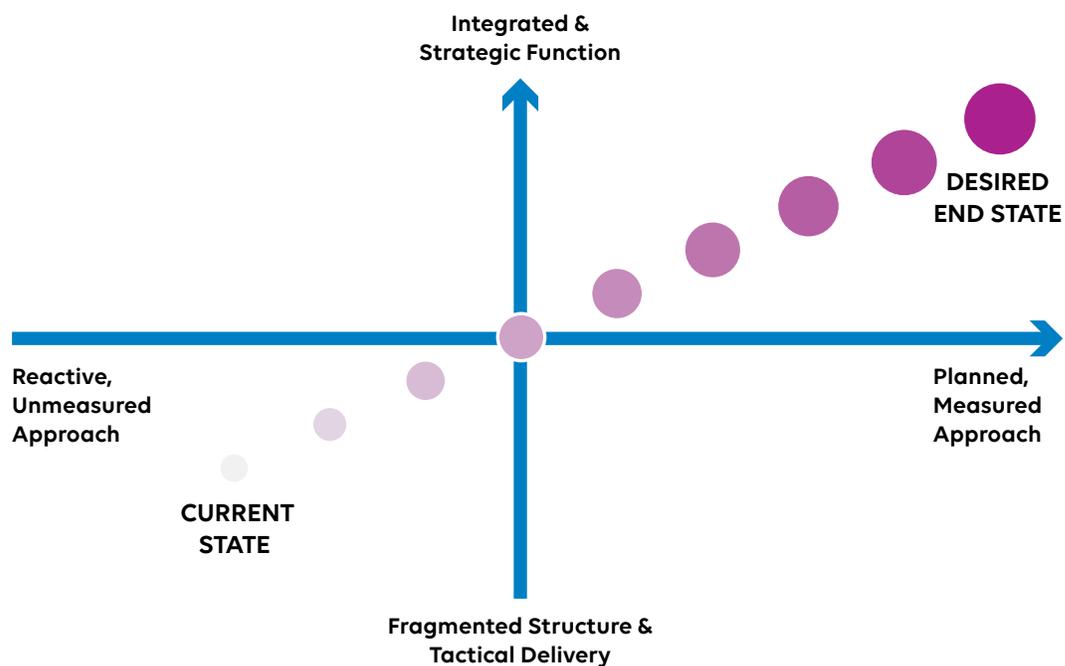
You'd like to spend more time thinking about your team and how they're doing, but the frenetic pace is often all consuming. Not only do you lose sight of how you're playing the game; but you lose sight of the game you're playing. You can save yourself (and your team) a lot of pain by setting aside some time to

take a step back and really assess how the group is performing – how the team relates to internal clients and whether it has the necessary conditions to succeed. I often find that the communications team's culture, structure and governance are relics of another time that no longer serve current business demands. This is an insidious, costly issue – and one that feeds into the self-fulfilling prophecy where internal clients are chronically dissatisfied with the communications function, because it is not set up to succeed.

Elevating Your Communications Team

I often use the following diagram as a way to get a high level snapshot of a communications team's performance. If you assess your team against the axes below, where do you find yourself on the continuum toward the desired end state?

Assessment Framework: Communications Function



This is a useful exercise to do with your team as it often yields important conversations and observations. If you find that your current state does indeed reside in the bottom left quadrant, rest assured you are in good company! This is usually what I find among my client organizations. The key is to step back, take stock of progress you've already made, and then set a practical course to move your team toward the desired end state.

Communications Function Maturity Scale™

The diagnostic diagram on the previous page provides a general temperature check of how your team is doing. Now it's time to shift to a more specific assessment using a maturity scale. This exercise can give you more precise insights on which operational areas of your organization are working well, and which parts require attention to elevate your team to a high performing strategic communications function.¹

Fill out the scale based on the best available information you have today. Keep in mind that the exercise is designed to capture your current state, not your aspirational future state.

Answer each question, tally up your score first by section, and then calculate the total for all answers.

1. Organizational Design

- a. Is the reporting structure for the head of communications appropriate (e.g. reports directly to the CEO or most senior executive level)?



- b. To what extent does your organization integrate internal and external communications strategically (e.g. in setting priorities, planning and aligning messaging)?



1. *The Communications Function Maturity Scale™* is based on our research and experience with hundreds of client organizations, mainly in the public and para-public sectors, such as institutes, associations and not-for-profit organizations. While it can apply to a private corporation, sales and marketing issues are not covered within the scope of the tool or subsequent recommendations.