OrganiCity Experimenters Communications Webinar

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Today's Agenda

13.00 GMT | 14.00 CET – Introduction

13.10 GMT | 14.10 CET – 1. *Identify* Your Story

13.20 GMT | 14.20 CET – 2. *Shape* Your Story

13.40 GMT | 14.40 CET – 3. *Share* Your Story

13.50 GMT | 14.50 CET – Any questions?

1. *Identify* Your Story

It's essential to have a clear understanding of why your experiment exists. If your key messages and vision are clear to you, there's a much better chance that they'll be clear to your audiences.

It's useful to think of these key messages and vision as your experiment's **story**.
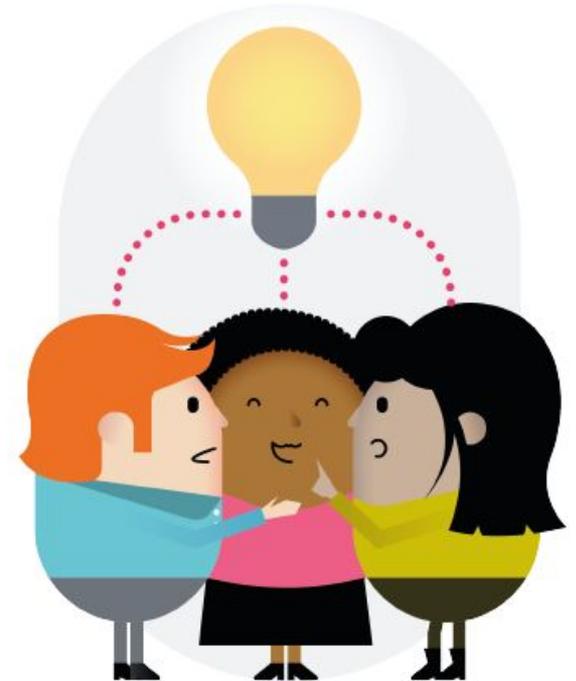
1. *Identify* Your Story

To build your story, consider the following...

1. What are your key messages?

- **Who?** Who is involved in the experiment? Partners, citizens, local authorities etc.?
- **What?** What's your big idea? What solution(s) are you proposing? What's unique about your experiment? What is your vision?
- **When?** How long has your experiment/project been running?
- **Where?** Where is your experiment located? Are you based in multiple locations?
- **Why?** What challenge(s) is your experiment addressing?
- **How?** How is your experiment addressing these challenges? I.e., what is your process?

1. *Identify* Your Story

To prioritise your communication efforts, it's useful to map the impact you want to achieve during and after your experimentation period.

2. What impact do you hope to achieve?
- Either draw a timeline or create a table and consider what you hope to achieve through the experiment now, in 3 months, and in 6 months (feel free to extend this if it is useful for you). You may want to think about the stage your product, service or concept will be at, the number of users/testers you hope to attract, your financial forecasts and the engagement you hope to achieve with your key stakeholders (on social media or at events etc.).
- Keep in mind what is realistically feasible for you to achieve with your budget and resources.

We'll come back to this later when thinking about your communications strategy.

1. *Identify* Your Story

If you remember only one thing from this webinar, remember the importance of your *audience*. Effective communication does not just involve having something to say; to achieve impact, you must consider how your message will be heard.

3. Who are your audiences?
- Don't try and be all things to all people – identify your key audiences and target your content towards them.
- Who does your story need to reach to achieve the impact you've just mapped?
- You now need to get inside your audiences' heads! You may think that of course people will care about your experiment, but your audiences are busy – they have many things competing for their attention every day, so why should they care about what you have to say? How does your experiment relate to them?
- Create a reason for your audience to care.

1. *Identify* Your Story

What do your audiences care about?

- Do research into who your audience(s) are. You could carry out desk research, have phone interviews, do street surveys or run focus groups to learn more about your audience(s). You don't need to spend lots of resource doing this – even speaking to 10-15 people can give you a lot of information about what's important to your audience or how they feel about your product or service.

- You could also do an empathy exercise, where you put yourself in your audiences' shoes and consider what's important to them. You may want to create a persona for each audience and make some notes about what their priorities are, what their lifestyle is, what they struggle with, what their interests are and what they might want to learn more about. This is quick way of building a rough picture of who your target audiences are.

- You can then reference your research or personas when developing your content.

2. *Shape* Your Story

Now that you know what you want to say and have a better idea of who your audiences are, you can begin shaping your story into the most accessible and engaging form for your audiences.

2. *Shape* Your Story

Even if you only have the resources to do a light job on this, it is a worthwhile developing a simple brand to differentiate your experiment from competitors and make your story more memorable to your audiences.
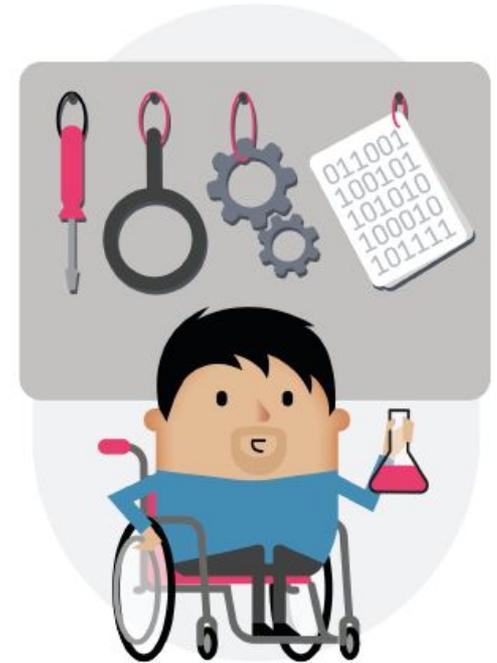
1. Create a brand for your experiment
With your key messages and audience(s) in mind, develop a clear vision and set of values that underpin your experiment.

Then...

- Create a logo that encapsulates your vision and values.
- Establish a simple colour pallet/visual identify, which reinforces your vision and values.
- Identify what tone your audience(s) will be most receptive to, e.g., professional, conversational, direct, friendly, etc.

All content you produce, whether a blog, tweet, presentation or a conversation, should then convey this brand.

2. *Shape* Your Story

2. Create a bank of good quality content

Copy

- Write out your experiment's story in clear, plain English and in the tone of your brand.
- Start by describing the purpose of your experiment in one or two sentences, i.e. [*Name of experiment*] is….
- You can then layer in additional information and details to tell the whole story of your experiment. The content of your story may be complex, but this complexity should be introduced in stages. As people are busy, they often only remember the gist of something, so if you try and say everything there is to say about your experiment at once, your audience will likely remember nothing.

If you're struggling to consolidate your key messages, consider:

- How you would communicate your experiment to a 6-year old.
- If your audiences remembered one thing about your experiment, what would you want it to be?
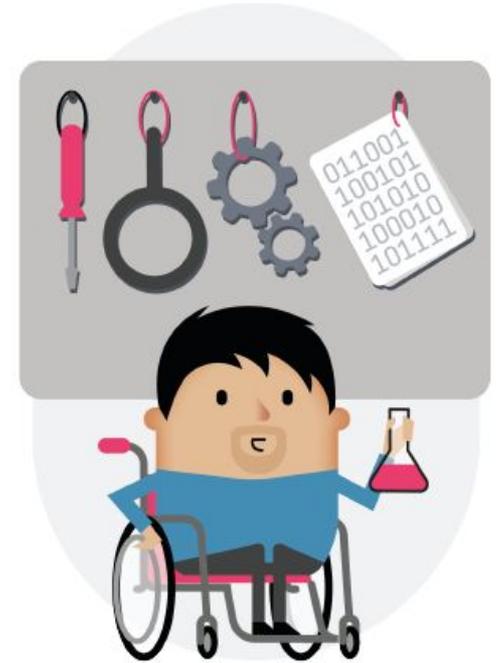
2. *Shape* Your Story

High-res visuals
- **Photography:** Take high-res photos that reinforce your key messages and brand colour pallet.
- **Illustrations/graphics:** Consider creating illustrations or graphics – also in keeping with your brand – to break down abstract concepts or visualise your vision and values.
- **Film:** Record footage of your team, location and process. Film is a highly engaging medium and can make it easier for your audience to relate to your experiment.

Capturing process
- By the very nature of your story being an experiment, your process will be one of the most engaging elements of the content you produce.
- See p.12 of your Experimenter Handbook for information on how to document your process.

2. *Shape* Your Story

You can then draw from this bank of content to develop clear and engaging materials to communicate your story to your audiences.

1. Develop materials to communicate your story
Consider which materials would be both engaging to your audiences and feasible for you to produce.
Here are some examples of materials you could produce:

- One-pager
- Slide deck
- Website
- Newsletter
- Film
- Blogs
- Articles
- Reports
- Case studies
- Social media posts

2. *Shape* Your Story

Keep your content clear and concise!

- Ensure that every sentence you write serves a purpose. Cut anything that doesn't.
- Use plain English. Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- Shape your content into a simple and easy-to-follow structure. Use headings, paragraphs and bullet points to break up content and make it easy for people to scan.
- Maintain focus in your text. In regards to online content and SEO, Google and other search engines will rank your content higher if it is good quality and relevant.
- Check your grammar! This will also impact your SEO. Grammarly is a free piece of software that you can download for Chrome to help with this.
- Consider how you can make abstract ideas and technologies more personal and tangible by talking about processes, skills and people.
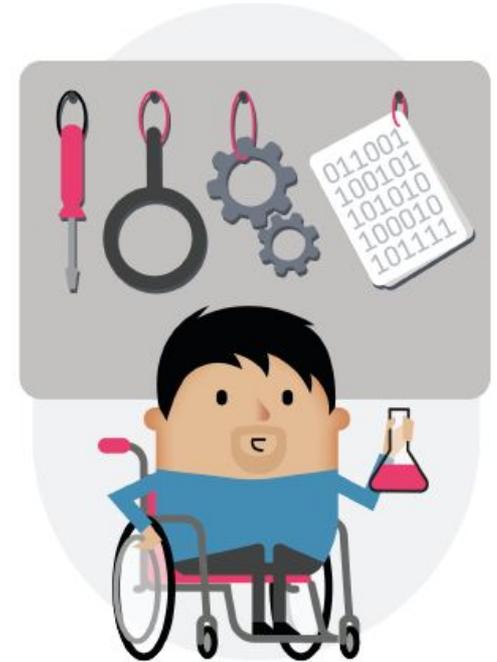
2. *Shape* Your Story

Make your content engaging!

- Make your content visual. Add high-res photography and illustrations to support your copy and reinforce your messages and vision.
- Consider the journey you want to take your audience(s) on. What emotions do you want to evoke? How can you embed your values into your content?
- What would make your audience(s) want to share your content? Is it inspiring, educational or entertaining?
- It is engaging for your audience to do some of the work in piecing your story together, so you could be playful in how you present your content or make it interactive.
- Consider innovative methods of communication – could you use virtual reality or mixed media to make your story more engaging and memorable to your audiences?
- Consider how to keep your audience engaged beyond this material. Create a call-to-action, ask questions or provide links to more content.

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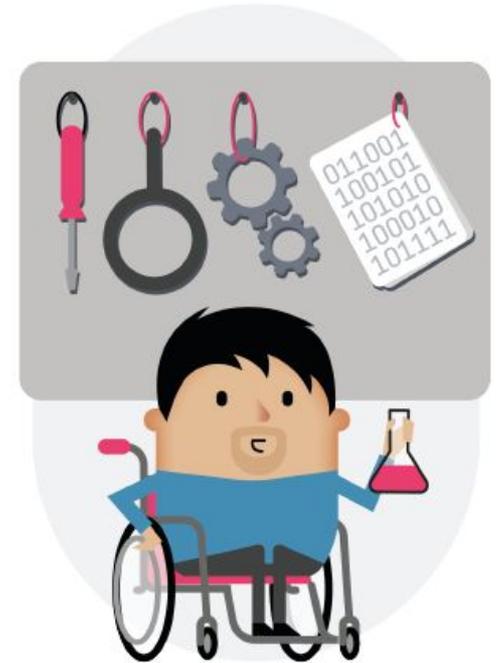
3. *Share* Your Story

Now that you have shaped your story into engaging materials, it's now important to ensure that it reaches your target audiences!

3. *Share* Your Story

Before sharing your content externally, you must ensure that everyone in your project team is clear on the story of your experiment and is familiar with how to use the materials you have developed to communicate your story.

Then, decide which channels to use to reach your external audiences
Consider...

- Which channels your audiences go to for information. Do they look online? Are they active on specific social media platforms or do they read newspapers or go to a community noticeboard for local information?
- If your audience are active online, it's worthwhile setting up a simple website and establishing your experiment on a social media platform or two. Don't worry about trying to get your content everywhere immediately. Build your audiences on those sites first and then expand.

3. *Share* Your Story

Channels

Website
- A website is a useful space for housing everything relating to your experiment – your key messages, your vision, links to your social media pages, a blog, steps for how people can get involved and contact information.
- If you have budget, you could hire a developer to build a website for you. Otherwise, you can build a simple Wordpress site yourself.
- Ensure that the style, tone and colours of your website reflect your brand.

3. *Share* Your Story

Newsletters

- This is an easy way to keep in contact with your audiences.
- You can set up a free account with Mailchimp, who provide a fairly intuitive platform for designing your own newsletter templates.
- Be careful not to bombard your audience with newsletters, as people will quickly start unsubscribing from your mailing list, but you might want to send a monthly update newsletter or use them to promote new communications campaigns (*see comms strategies section*) or events.

Press releases

- If you have something newsworthy to say, it's worthwhile writing a press release. Here are some tips from the Guardian on how to write a press release, but remember to keep it simple, write a catchy headline and send a few high-res images for different publications to choose from.

3. *Share* Your Story

Events

- In-person communication is always the highest engagement, so if you have the resources, an event could help you gain more support and buy-in from key stakeholders, crowdsource ideas for future development or gain feedback from your local community.

3. *Share* Your Story

Social media

Whether Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, there are a few general rules to creating engaging online content.

What to post?
- Keep content clear and concise!
  You can use Bitley (https://bitly.com) if you need to shorten a link.
- Your audience will come back to your channel again and again if they find your content valuable. It is often suggested that 80% of your social media content should be educational, inspiring or entertaining and 20% should be self-promoting. If you're struggling to share content that isn't self-promoting, you could repost others' relevant content, ask questions to prompt conversation or provide interesting insights from your field.
- Use relevant media, such as images, GIFs and videos to make your posts stand out in someone's newsfeed.
- Be specific and consistent with any hashtags you use. Don't use them just for the sake of it. Consider what your audiences will search for and what's trending.
- Vlogging is a great way to make your experiment feel more human. Sharing a short 2-min video clip of what you're up to on YouTube and sharing across your social media channels is very high engagement content.

3. *Share* Your Story

When to post?

- Post often to keep people engaged and maintain momentum.
- It's worthwhile writing multiple posts at once and then scheduling them for different times during the week or over the weekend. Hootsuite is a free piece of software for scheduling and monitoring content.
- Don't worry about posting the same thing more than once, as posts can easily be lost in newsfeeds. Just change the language to keep it interesting, e.g., pick a different key sentences from a blog/article or select a different image etc.
- Consider your audience when thinking of what time to post. Experiment with how effective they are at different times of the day/week.

3. *Share* Your Story

How we can help you...

- Remember to tag OrganiCity, so that we can reshare your content on our own channels.
- As you know, you can take over the OrganiCity Instagram account for a week. You will have already received an invitation from Katinka to take part in this. We would highly recommend doing this if you have not yet signed up. This is a great opportunity to get into a routine of capturing your process, reach a wider audience and test how engaging your content is.

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3. *Share* Your Story

Build a communications strategy

It can often be tricky working out when to share what, so it can be helpful to build a simple communications plan.

- You may want to keep it simple and, using an Excel spreadsheet, outline what content you plan to share during which weeks.
- Alternatively, if you have a lot to share, you can maintain focus with your communications by creating monthly communications campaigns.
- Your campaigns could be focused around key events or deadlines in your experiment, different audiences or the impact you hope to achieve.
- You may need to keep your plan flexible in response to changes in your experiment, but try to stick to it to maintain momentum and focus.

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3. *Share* Your Story

Measure the impact of your communications

- Don't be too hard on yourself at first. It takes time to build audiences and engagement across different channels. Publish your content and let it gain traction.
- However, it is worthwhile recording the number of followers, attendees and engagement that you receive on your various channels. As with your communications strategy, you might want to create an Excel spreadsheet, where you list each of your channels and make a note of the engagement you achieve across each of your channels each month to see which of your efforts is having the most impact.
- Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics and various Wordpress plugins can help you measure the impact you're achieving online.
- It is also worthwhile undertaking qualitative research to understand what your audiences think of your content. Just ask them! Are they finding your content valuable? How could you improve it?
- Once you have been publishing content over several months, you can start analysing the impact that you're achieving and adjust your content, timings or channels accordingly.

The best advice we can give you is… just start!

Good luck!

Any questions?