

# 5 keys to cut- through.

Discover five easy ways  
to help your brand grab  
attention and **inspire action**



# 5 keys to **cut-through.**

We are living in an era of information saturation. The key challenge for organisations of all sizes, is for their communications to cut-through all of the noise, and inspire action in their customers, staff and partners. This white paper explores five key lessons to achieve cut-through, sourced from my interaction with leading organisations that consistently do this well.

## **The new normal:**

Globally, on a daily basis\*, we are:

- Seeking information through 6 billion Google searches
- Communicating through 4.3 billion Facebook messages and 500 million Tweets
- Uploading 4 million hours of content to Youtube.

From the moment we wake, we are scrolling social media platforms, receiving push notifications interrupting our momentary focus from the 1.5 million apps we can access on our smartphones. An incomprehensible amount of content is consistently being generated online by the global community. We're living in an exciting era, unprecedented in the opportunities we have to connect and communicate with a global network of customers, consumers and even co-workers.

The way we access information is dynamic, intuitive, seemingly organic, and from multiple channels somewhat seamlessly. From the more traditional approaches marketers have gained our precious attention (from television ads to radio, billboards and print media), to apps, social media platforms, websites, blogs and other community generated content, to Google algorithms guiding our content consuming path. It can feel that we are bombarded with information and messaging from the moment we wake til when we put our devices down to catch some sleep.

## **Getting Cut-through**

For the purpose of this white paper achieving 'cut-through' is getting the attention of and inspiring action in your chosen audience through your communication. Getting cut-through in these times of information overload requires intentionality and commitment to these 5 keys:

- 1. CLARITY**
- 2. SIMPLICITY**
- 3. CONSISTENCY**
- 4. CREATIVITY**
- 5. RELEVANCY**

Regardless of aim, whether it be a new product launch, a change in strategic direction or your next fundraising campaign, intentionally considering each of these keys will increase the value and success of your communication.

<https://www.gwava.com/blog/internet-data-created-daily>



# 1. clarity.

## know who you are

Before we begin communicating to both internal and external stakeholders, it is essential that we have taken the time to know who we are.

To demonstrate this, ask yourself the following questions to see if you can craft a succinct response to each of these questions. To really test this, ask the same questions of your partners, staff and customers to see if this is consistently understood across your organisation:

- What is the core purpose for which we exist?
- What are we here to do?
- What do we want to become?
- What are the unique points of difference that define us?
- What are the behaviours or our organisation, informed by our values that shape our culture?

The first stage in our process at Hello Clarity when helping organisations position to strategically engage is to ensure they have a clearly defined purpose, vision, mission and values statement by working through these questions.

Whether the organisation is a startup, or has been operating for decades, it is an extremely worthwhile process to review and define these core areas. At times, organisations have a written purpose, vision, mission or values statements but they are not an accurate reflection of the lived reality.

Workshopping these areas with executive, leadership and key team members often only requires the investment of about a day – and is incredibly beneficial in clarifying the following:

**Purpose:** What is the core purpose for which we exist?

Responding to this question highlights the organisations reason for being. Like all communication, purpose statements are often most effective when communicated succinctly.

**Vision:** What do we want to become?

Vision is about what you would like to become. A vision statement describes the desired future state of an organisation – what the organisation could look like in five to ten years or beyond.

**Mission:** What are we here to do? What are the unique points of difference that define us?

A mission statement articulates ‘how we will accomplish our vision’. It encompasses three key questions:

1. What do we do?
2. How do we do it?
3. Who are we doing it for?

An example of a clearly articulated mission statement is from Google: “Google’s mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful”.

**Values:** What are the behaviours or our organisation, informed by our values that shape our culture?

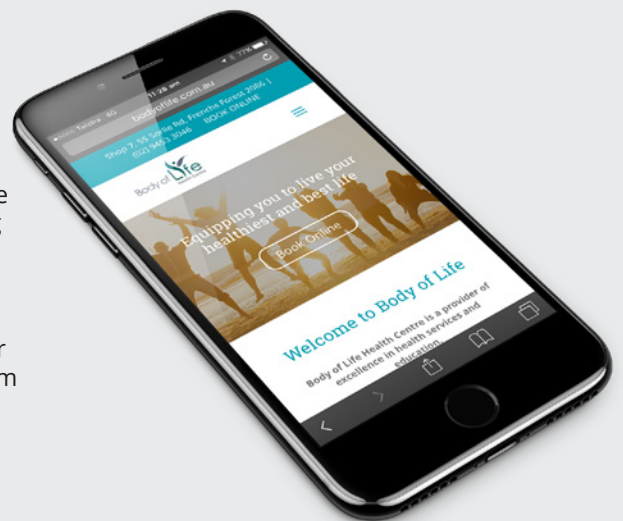
Values are the behavioural compass of an organisation – they define the desired culture. Values act as the guiding principles or rules of conduct that articulate what the organisation will be known for and how it will behave.

In summary, having clarity as to who you are as an organisation will provide you with the guidelines by which all communications can be crafted, so take the time to do the work on clarifying who you are.

## case study

Hello Clarity worked with the Directors at a multidisciplinary health centre, Body of Life Health Centre, to clarify their purpose, vision, mission and values. The process involved considering the broad range of services they offer that meet a diversity of client needs. The workshop resulted in clear statements across these areas, including their purpose statement: “Equipping you to live your healthiest and best life”.

These statements have become the foundation to build on for other marketing and communication materials, as well as for building team culture.





## 2. simplicity.

### **remove the complexity**

Once we have clarified who we are, the second key is to simplify how we communicate. The most well known brands are the ones that can be summed up in a sentence.

Imagine a conversation between two people discussing what an organisation is about. It usually takes place in all of ten seconds and conveys their impression of the brand

A brand about everything is a brand about nothing.

In a time-poor society, we need to do the hard work on our communications for our consumers so that when they receive our communication it is straightforward for them to interpret and understand.

Simplicity involves understanding around what we are really trying to say. Who are we really trying to communicate with? What is the message we really want our audience to hear and understand? Are we saying that in the most effective and efficient way?

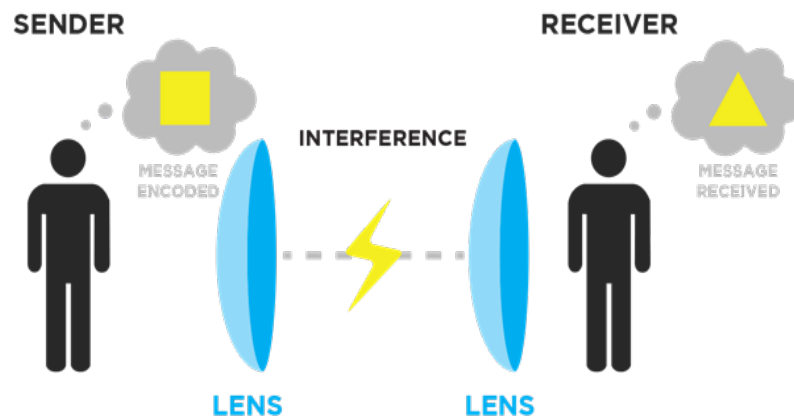
We can often assume people have pre-existing knowledge about what we are talking about- but in reality it might be the first time they have heard about it. People are receiving multiple forms of communication consistently throughout a day. Having simplicity around why you are telling them the information, and what you want them to get out of it can make it more effective. Do you want to inspire them? Inform them? Update them? And are you saying it in the most effective way? Could you use less words to say the same thing?

We can fall into the trap of trying to say everything every time we communicate. For example, the home page of many websites can be overwhelming as users try to trawl through a bombardment of topics, information and content, not even being sure if the website or organisation is even the right place to be.

Simplicity allows you to intentionally take people on a journey to clearly find out more information if and when they desire. It helps people know straight away if they are in the right place for the product, service or information that they need.

Communication is far more than just the words we use – it's the context of what is said, the tone, the purpose, the intentionality, non-verbal cues and the consistency of how we communicate which shapes the bigger picture.

Communication always involves the “sender” and the “receiver”. Effective communication is measured by how closely the “receiver” understands the message the “sender” was intending. However we are always shaping and analysing messages we receive through our own lens, through our own worldview – and there is also interference which gets in between a message being encoded by the sender and understood by the receiver. In our increasingly busy lives we are constantly interrupted with information and constant messages, so more than ever



before, being intentional and effective with our communication is critical. Simplicity reduces interference and guarantees a more accurate process of the receiver understanding the intended message from the sender.

Remember – simplicity involves considering **why** we are communicating. What is the purpose of this communication? What are we trying to achieve? Are we wanting to inspire? Motivate? Educate? Inform? Developing key phrases and messages that you can build on is incredibly beneficial.

## case study

Hello Clarity worked with Mount Annan Christian College to identify the unique strengths of the College and communicate it in a simple way.

A Prep- Year 12 College, they offer countless programs to their student body. Through the process of assisting in positioning the College to effectively engage with stakeholders, a simple phrase was developed and rolled out across creative materials:

**Nurtured for Life. Prepared for Purpose.**





# 3. consistency.

## say it again

Consistency is about **how** we communicate – ensuring we select the right medium for the message, and that our tone and method of communicating builds a strong and trusted relationship between the sender and the receiver. As an organisation you are constantly building a relationship with your stakeholders, consumers, staff, community. Consistency of personality and some sense of predictability around your brand and how you relate is key. This doesn't limit creativity – it just builds an expectation and clarity around who you are, what you believe in, what values you have.

You have done the hard work of clarifying who you are, why you exist. You've simplified your messages so you have key phrases and concepts you can build on. Consistency then involves saying the core, essential messages to your stakeholders in such a way that they are continually reminded of what you offer, and how they can engage with your organisation.

Different mediums communicate certain messages more effectively. Consistency involves staying message true – but this will be best rolled out across different mediums in different ways. For example, the style and type of content you put on Facebook or Instagram will be different to LinkedIn, different again to your homepage, and different to the printed brochure you are developing. Consumers are used to seamlessly moving across different platforms to engage with brands and organisations in different ways. Having a presence across multiple platforms, when done well, will strengthen customer engagement.

Consistency is not just about the words used, but in having a consistent visual identity. We're in an increasingly visual world. Our brains can absorb and retain and recall information in visual forms more easily than in written or auditory. In an era of information overload, so need to get people's attention through all the noise, and also keep their attention long enough to understand your message, and move closer to the point of action and engagement with your brand or organisation.

Remember: consumers expect organisations to communicate across multiple platforms. Using the right platform in the right way and ensuring consistency of message and visual identity builds higher trust and engagement with stakeholders.



## 4. creativity.

### be different

Creativity brings your brand and organisation alive. Bland, static brands, or poorly executed campaigns and communication pieces can do more damage than good.

You have clarified why you exist, simplified the messaging, developed a consistent message and visual identity – but prior to pressing “send” on that e-newsletter to your client database or launching your new product, stop. Take some time to think outside the box. Gather some great minds around you and talk about how this could be done differently. Is there a better way? A more fun way to get stakeholders on board with our journey?

From creative website landing pages to radio ads that cut through and get people’s attention, to videos that make people laugh – creativity – doing things in new, fresh ways brings life and engagement.

Your organisation will need to have multi-channel engagement with your audience. Some are scatter seed approaches – broad awareness raising, others are more targeted to defined audiences and demographics such as Facebook ads. So take some time to get creative for each platform.

### case study

Working with one of our close charity partners, the challenge was to develop a creative and shareable acquisition campaign that would cut through the clutter and bring in brand new donors to the organisation. Drawing on the nostalgia of a well loved Australian Cottées commercial, our team created a light hearted, fun music video. Focusing on telling the story of the organisation using an entertaining form, allowed us to harness the distribution power of social media spread the word for us.

This campaign was one of the most successful in the organisation’s history achieving over 200,000 views through social media and introduced six times the targeted number of donors to the organisation.







## 5. relevancy.

### in with the new

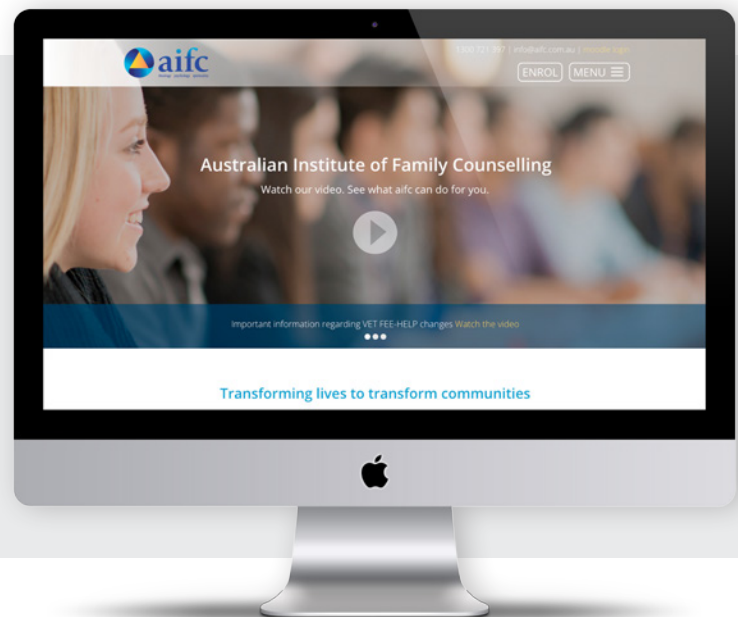
The fifth key to cut-through is running your communications and approach through the lens of relevancy. Are you speaking the language of today's culture, or is your branding and communications looking outdated? Have you adapted how you talk to your client base, or are you still sending out faxes? Technology is evolving at such a pace, as are client expectations and ways of relating with organisations – so relevancy of process, of method and of output is critical. This is where the tools at our disposal can be used to promote your organisation or brand really effectively. We have seen brand engagement significantly increase from simple SEO techniques being employed.

People will want to be able to find out more information on their own – so having the key information easy to find and taking people on a logical path of engagement is key. The brochure you're using or the TV ad approach you have used for decades might have worked in the past but the way people communicate now has changed. There are new levels of expectation consumers have around visual engagement, around accessibility and conveniences

### case study

A partner offering post-graduate education was looking for a way to promote their services ahead of the enrolment period for the upcoming school year.

By conducting a review of their visual identity (how they presented themselves through their communications and website) it was clear that their online presence needed to be updated. Through a fresh web design, dedicated allocation of effort towards Search Engine Optimisation and social media advertising - the traffic to their website doubled for the crucial enrolment period, when compared to the previous year's results.





# Next Steps.

Here are some next steps for you to put these 5 keys into action:

Review all your communications against the 5 Keys to Cut Through checklist:

- CLARITY
- SIMPLICITY
- CONSISTENCY
- CREATIVITY
- RELEVANCY

**CLARITY:** Book a time for your management team to get clarity in making sure you know who you are, what you're trying to do, and who you're wanting to engage with.

**SIMPLICITY:** Define your key communication and marketing messages and ensure all departments, especially the communications team are on the same page.

**CONSISTENCY:** Review current messaging across materials and visual identity - do they resonate with your key target audience?

**CREATIVITY:** Think outside the box, consider new mediums to communicate your key messages in new ways.

**RELEVANCY:** Check that your brand is fresh and engaging and that you are using the latest tools and platforms to maximise engagement.

The Hello Clarity team are ready to work with you to bring clarity to your organisation, bring your brand to life and position you to more effectively engage with your stakeholders across this 5 key process.