

The right wavelength

Why tuning in to your audience is everything

Joe Barrell

eden stanley

Produced for

 **CharityComms**

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There are countless people out there right now who want to engage with your cause. People looking to make a connection. To make a contribution.

But now imagine, just for a moment, what it's like to be them. Can you *get on their wavelength*, and see your charity, or your issues, from their perspective?

First, there's the noise. I'm being hammered every day with a myriad of messages – from brands, media, strangers, and friends – often conflicting, sometimes fake. Which will I notice... or remember... or believe?

???

And now what? Perhaps I want to act. But do I have the headspace? What can I afford?



*What does this charity want from me,
and will it make a difference anyway?*

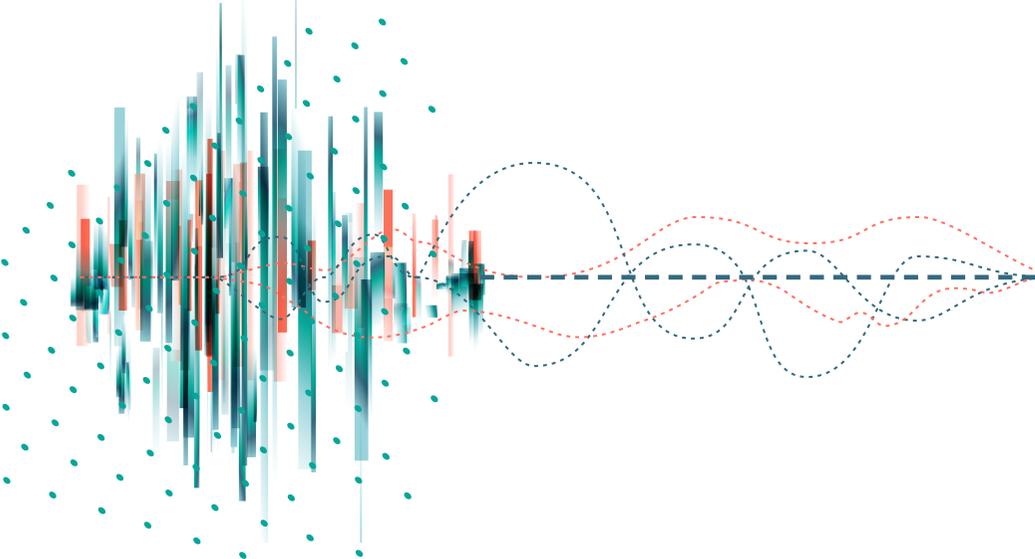
***Above all,** can this charity
help me achieve my aims?*

OK, now you're back in the room. You're you again – the person that has picked up this little book. The chances are, if you're reading this, you're thinking about how to persuade more people to support your cause, access your services, or be won over by your policy ideas. Perhaps all three. The answer to these questions is always the same:

Put your audiences at the centre of everything and don't assume they're just like you. Find them, get to know them, ask what they want from you, and give it to them.

So we've pulled together some ideas from colleagues working in charity engagement to help you organise your thoughts. Some familiar, some perhaps less so. Plus some comments and case studies from charities that have put audiences at the centre of their strategies and transformed themselves as a result.

We hope you enjoy them. Let's tune in...



Why do this?

This section asks why so many charities are moving to audience-centred external engagement strategies.

We've described eight main motivators for this change, some new, and some very old. And we've suggested ways you could make the case in your organisation for a new approach, and included two case studies from major UK charities.

- **Why does this matter now?**
- **Making the case**
- **What is an audience-centred strategy?**
- **Two case studies**

Why does this matter now?

There may once have been a time when charities could get away with not thinking much about their audiences. With fewer media channels available, strategies usually mixed a relatively small palette of options – a few friendly news outlets, mailings to the supporter base, a website, and the occasional hit in lifestyle media if they could line up the right celebrity.

These channel-driven approaches became entrenched in most charities, which organised themselves on the basis of ‘ownership’ of audiences with one team or function owning donors, another looking after website users, and another talking to newspaper readers. The fact that these audiences were often the very same people (just doing different things) was brushed aside.

Charities have talked about ‘getting better at audiences’ for a long time, but until recently, few have done much about it. Many have continued to work in siloes, chasing ‘general public’ awareness, and baffling audiences with conflicting messages. And too often we’ve assumed our audiences share our view of the world – even as public attitudes began turning away from some of our great causes.

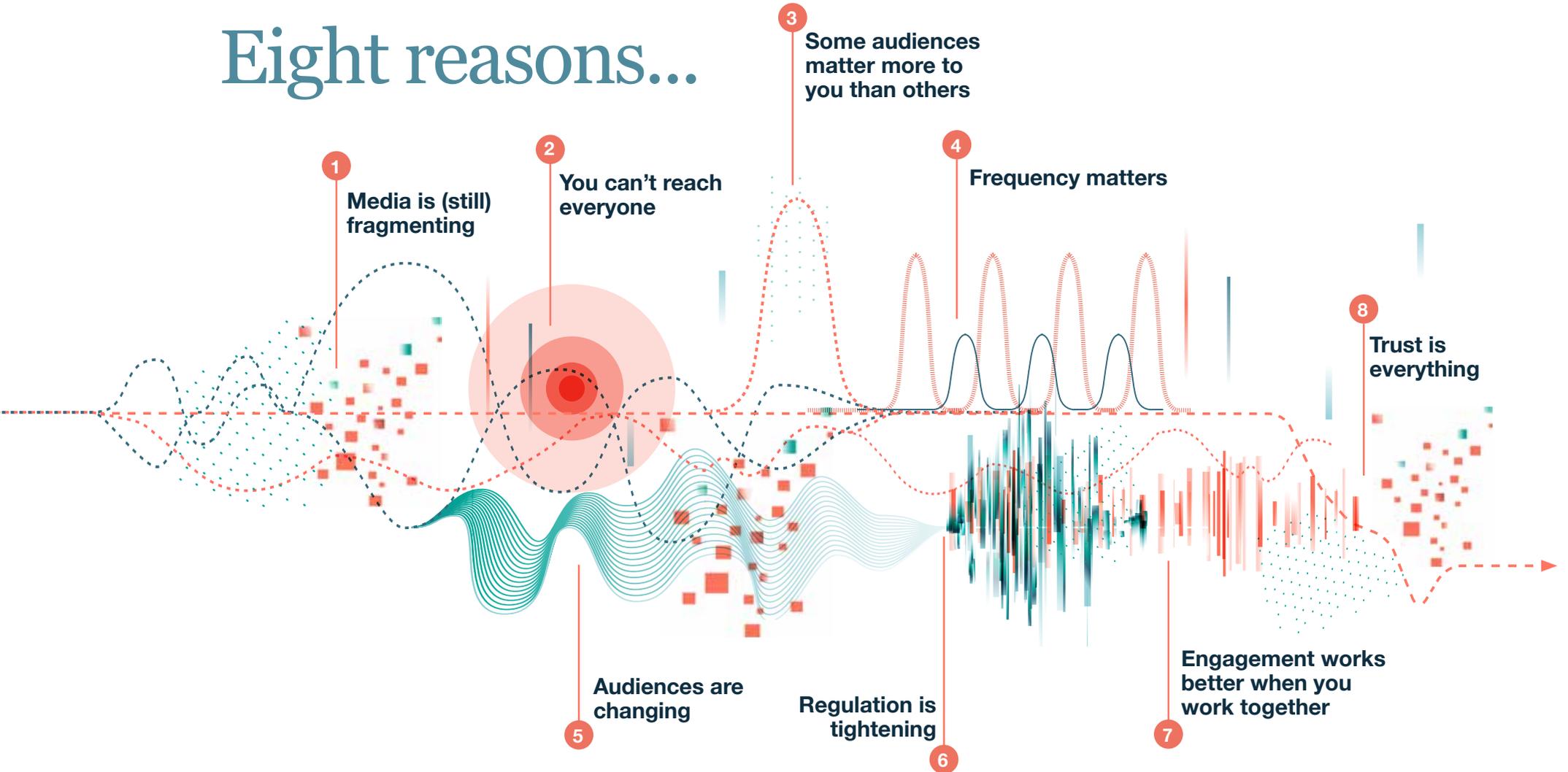
The good news is we are moving past that now, because we’ve realised things have to change. Some charities took this step a few years ago, while others are making the change now. These are exciting times. We seem to be entering a new phase of audience-centred engagement.

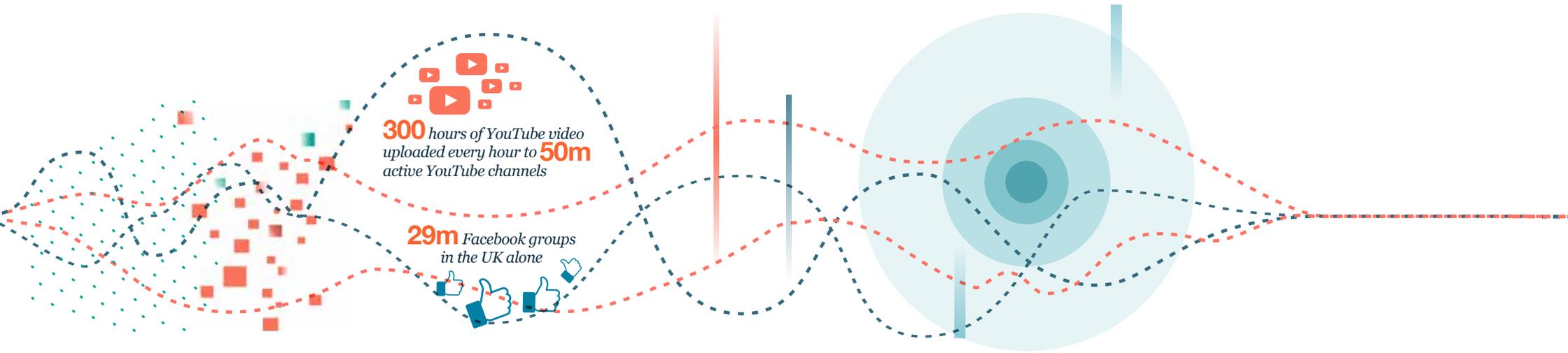
Why the change? We’ve thought of eight reasons. You’ll likely be familiar with most of them and will be able to think of a few more. All point back to the same thing. For charities to adapt and thrive, we have to put our audiences first.

“Often in the sector we’re talking to the people who are ‘most like us’ – closest to us. We tend to over-estimate the knowledge and understanding that people have of our issues. That matters if huge swathes of a population see things differently, whether we’re working on the environment, human rights, or any just cause. We need to know what our audiences think, and we need to know how to engage them.”

**Nicky Hawkins, Communications Strategist,
FrameWorks Institute**

Eight reasons...





1 Media is (still) fragmenting

OK, we've all been saying this for years: we can no longer expect to reach a large audience through a single channel.

The average person is exposed to 10,000 brand messages a day, across multiple online and offline media and channels.¹

In the UK alone, there are over 70 digital terrestrial TV channels, and up to ten times that many through subscription packages like Sky. And research shows individuals can switch between screens (TV, computer, tablet or phone) up to 21 times in just one hour.

More recent consolidation of digital traffic around a few major providers has been offset by fragmentation within those platforms. The proliferation of Facebook groups, YouTube channels, and hyper-targeted search marketing have enabled the emergence of filter bubbles, with audience groups increasingly isolated from one another.

Charities, more than ever, have to be aware of the multitude of alternative narratives on their causes, and not allow themselves the comfort of communicating only with like-minded groups. Media fragmentation means we have to make daily choices about where to place our content, and therefore who to target.

2 You can't reach everyone

Even the world's biggest brands don't expect everybody to hear their message. Charity communications and marketing budgets are very small by comparison – even among the largest.

Sky	£175m	Wickes	£13m
BT	£11m	Wilko	£11m
Cotton Traders	£20m	Viking River Cruises	£9m
Dyson	£15m		Oct 16 - Sept 16 UK media spend

Take Wickes for example, the DIY store. Their £13m annual marketing spend² is matched only by the very largest charities. Do you have a clear understanding of the unique benefits of Wickes, and the values driving the company? The key differentiators expressed through their tagline, 'Let's do it right'? If so, you are probably in their bulls-eye audience segment. If not, it's because they don't think you're going to buy rawlplugs or multi-finish plaster any time soon, or at least not from Wickes.

You know you have limited reach. Whether you like it or not, you have to decide who is most important to you.

3 Some audiences matter more to you than others

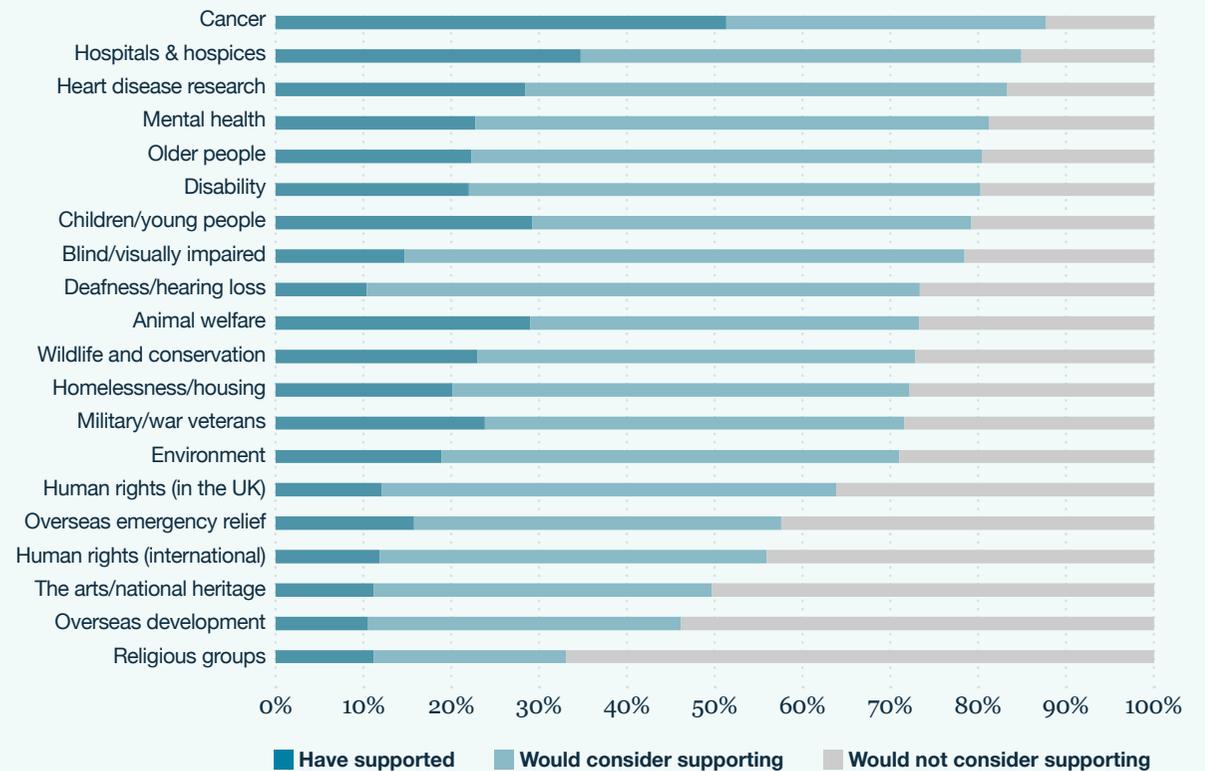
Wouldn't it be great if everyone knew about the great work you do and spontaneously stepped in to help? In reality, you need to prioritise. But how?

To start with, someone already inclined to support charities like yours will be a more important target than someone who isn't. If you're looking for people to spread your message, avid social media sharers will be more important than those that seldom log on.

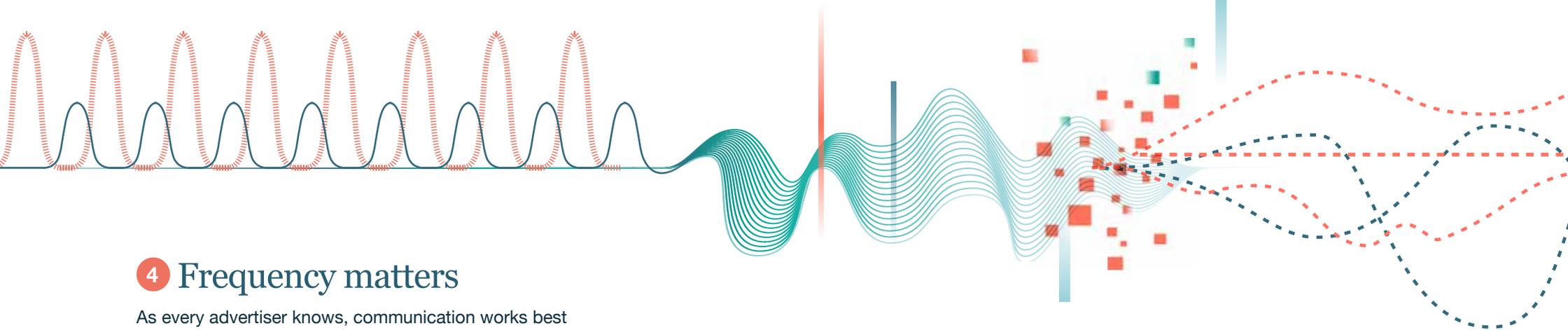
Being audience-led helps prioritise those you need to reach, and whose minds you want to change.

At the simplest level, the 'addressable audience' size for different causes varies significantly. Some have moved a little over the past two years (more on this later) but remain fairly stable. You may have longer-term plans to broaden engagement, but the daily reality is that most of your support will come from those already predisposed to your cause. For each cause, these are often quite different people with different motivations.

Addressable audience size by charity category



From Eden Stanley's charity trackers. Fieldwork January to March 2018. N=3,086 UK adults.



4 Frequency matters

As every advertiser knows, communication works best when audiences see your message more than once. They argue endlessly about the perfect number, but most agree that **eight or nine impressions is about right to make a message stick.**

Effective communications balance **reach** with **frequency** – exposing the right number of people, the right number of times. That means persistence – and targeting the same groups over and over. **To make the most of your investment, that may mean focusing on quite a small ‘bullseye’ audience to achieve the frequency you need.**

“Repetition also increases (for a while) the authority and believability of what you have to say. Listeners go from awareness of the message to understanding to trust. Yes, the step after that is annoyance, which is the risk the marketer always faces.”

Seth Godin, author of Permission Marketing

5 Audiences are changing

New generations of supporters are emerging – the ‘digital natives’ who expect a much more personalised relationship with the causes they support. These are the Millennials, who, along with their younger sisters and brothers, Generation Z, are demanding something different. They also set trends that shape others’ expectations.

So whether we’re targeting under-40s or not (and probably most of us should), we need to understand the influence they are having on wider audience expectations. People make brands work harder now **and many will give up on us easily if we don’t meet their expectations.**

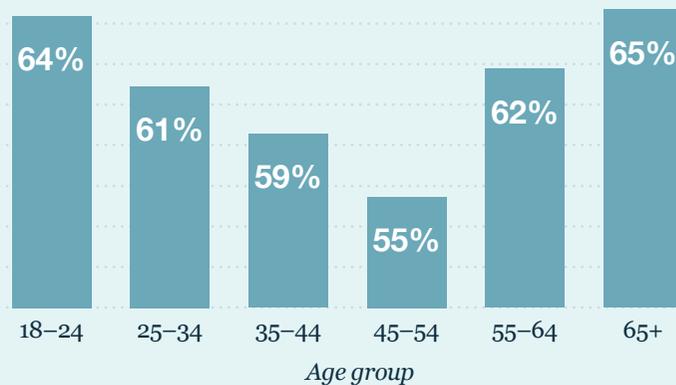
Charities are responding to these changes. International NGOs like Save the Children, UN-OCHA and others have created virtual reality experiences of emergencies, or offer direct contact with communities through social media. Another great example is Breast Cancer Now, who in 2017 tried something a bit different on Wear it Pink Day, by sending supporters personalised video content to thank them when they tweeted #Wearitpink.

These simple and thoughtful engagement ideas say to audiences: *you matter to us*, and they provide more memorable, and more meaningful, moments of engagement. We’re seeing a lot of tactics like this being tried out by charities. **They won’t all get it right first time – but they are responding to changing audience expectations, and new norms for public engagement are emerging.**

The appetite for evidence

The need for reassurance shows significant differences across age groups, with both the oldest and youngest groups most likely to want evidence of impact. We have looked more closely at these numbers and found the motivation to be different for different age groups. Broadly, older audiences are more sceptical, while the younger Millennials and Gen-Z groups tend to be more trusting – but want to feel more involved.

When considering supporting a charity, I look for evidence that the charity is making a difference



From Eden Stanley's charity trackers. Fieldwork 2016-2018. N=21,000 UK adults.

6 Regulation is tightening

New regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), more strongly assert individuals' rights to control how their personal data is used. This makes it more difficult to communicate with people that haven't given us permission to contact them. Most charities have realised that the best way to survive the new regulatory environment is to work harder to hold on to the people they know, and offer more targeted content to win over the people they don't.

To do that, you need to know your audiences better.



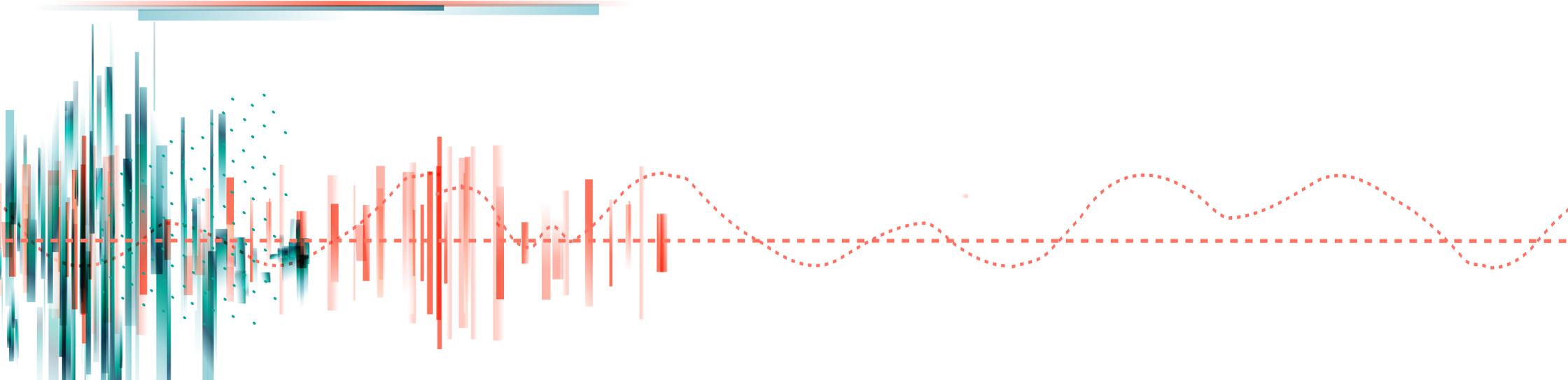
Acquiring a new supporter is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one³.



Donors who score in the top 25% for commitment to a charity give 131% more than those in the bottom 25%⁴.

3 | The Value of Keeping the Right Customers, Harvard Business Review, 2017

4 | Commission on the Donor Experience, 2017



7 Engagement works better when you work together

It is a simple truth that those who know you and like you are more likely to help you – whether that’s through donating, building your issues or making decisions that improve the lives of the people you exist to help.

But if you don’t harness your resources to target the same audiences, you’ll never make the most of this. If your communications team’s breathtaking content is making Jamelia love and trust you, but then your fundraisers are asking Jim to donate, neither team benefits from the other’s efforts.

Just think what you’d achieve if you filled Jamelia’s world with your stories, issues and asks, and maybe left Jim until next year.

Similarly, can you define your top 10 or 50 influencers or decision makers, and work together across all departments to win them over to your cause?

“If there’s one thing above all that makes public engagement strategies fail, it’s when internal teams work in isolation and claim ownership of their audiences. It’s ridiculous when you think about it, isn’t it? We have to do better than that, and consider our audience needs ahead of our job titles.”

Tracy Griffin, Executive Director of Marketing, Fundraising and Communications, Scope



“One of the big questions for the sector at the moment is how we engender more trust into our audiences and what is the role of communications in doing that?”

Tracey Pritchard, Executive Director of Engagement, Prostate Cancer UK

8 Trust is everything

Most charities have been guilty in the past of taking public goodwill for granted. But no longer: the age of innocence is over.

As a sector, we’ve weathered a lot of scrutiny and criticism in recent years – some fair, and some perhaps less so – some of which has come from vested interests who wish to clip the wings of the charity sector. Meanwhile other organisations are moving into our space – particularly cause-driven consumer brands that have broken the ‘charity monopoly’ in recent years⁵.

These factors, and others, have contributed to a decline in trust in charities – and now few audience groups will assume you’re doing great work if you can’t prove it. The good news is that trust has been recovering in the past year or so, since a low point in 2016, but media storms at the start of 2018 show how vulnerable we still are.

5 | See our 2017 report, ‘Whatever Next?’ for more on this.

The great project for charities in the coming years will be to continue rebuilding trust, not by doing what we’ve always done, but by responding to the changing context. And the best place to start? By understanding your audiences’ concerns and working out how to reassure them and reignite their support.

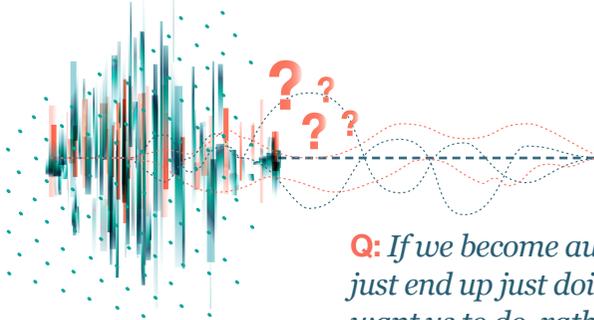
Support and consideration to support (average across 20 charity categories)



From Eden Stanley’s charity trackers. Chart shows average scores for support and consideration to support, across 20 categories tracked. The line gives three-month moving averages of 3,000 UK adults.

Making the case

So you know why being audience-centred matters more than ever. But perhaps you still need to persuade colleagues. Here are some of the challenges you may face – and how to address them.



Q: *If we become audience centred, won't we just end up just doing what our audiences want us to do, rather than being led by our mission and values?*

No. The first question you should ask when developing an audience strategy is: 'Who can help us achieve our aims?' Only when you've decided that do you then figure out who you want to engage and how to win them round. Your values and purpose should always guide your work and how you communicate. **But you still need to express yourselves in a way that is relevant to the outside world. Otherwise, you'll be ignored.**

"It's a simple logic. If you are clear about your organisation's strategy and the impact that you want to achieve, you can then consider the role of different audiences in achieving that impact, and prioritise those audiences according to the ones that will help you make the biggest shift."

Tracey Pritchard, Executive Director of Engagement, Prostate Cancer UK



Q: *Won't it be expensive to invest in lots of audience research?*

Not necessarily, but even a small investment is worth it. Developing an understanding of your audiences – who they are, what they want and how to engage them – does take some investment of time and money.

If you're expending resources creating and putting out content, but you're not targeting the right people, a lot of your effort will be wasted.

If you're a large organisation, you are probably already investing in audience insight, and your challenge will be persuading colleagues to act on it in a consistent way – which can take time and effort. If you are a small charity just starting to think about audience insight, this investment is no less important, because you can least afford to waste your resources. **No charity is 'too small for strategy'.**

“It’s been an eye opener to do audience research, even without a big budget or expensive technical solutions. I just talked to our audiences about their needs and wants. No charity is too small for strategy.”

**Zoe Williams,
Communications Manager, Kidscape**

Q: *Isn’t our most important audience always the people we serve? Shouldn’t they be at the centre of things?*

Yes.

Your audiences should include the people you exist to help. And of course, your services or programme colleagues should be thinking about who they need to reach, and how they can be sensitive to their values, expectations and needs. Being audience centred just means applying those principles systematically across all your external engagement to the way you approach supporters, funders, advocates and campaign targets too.

An audience-centred approach can also further strengthen your relationships with beneficiaries. **For example it can help broaden your horizons to find people who would benefit from your help, but whom you haven’t yet reached.**

Q: *But don’t our audiences change depending on what we’re doing? Won’t being audience-centred limit our ability to respond to events?*

Well... yes and no.

When you think about it, most of your communication is designed to engage target groups over a period – whether winning fundraising support, or building trust and influence among media, opinion leaders or within communities.

It goes back to the ‘frequency’ point. If you persist with the same audiences, you’ll achieve more than if you keep changing course. But you are right, your strategy should not be a straightjacket, and should be flexible enough to respond to new possibilities.



What is an audience-centred strategy?

At the heart of all great communications, marketing or engagement strategies, you will find something insightful about audiences – about who they are and what they want.

Audience-centred strategy makes these insights a starting point, not an afterthought, allowing what we know about audiences to shape the decisions we make about our objectives, messages and tactics.

Audience-centred strategies tell us:

- The **roles** our audiences play in achieving our organisation's aims
- **Who** we need to target to have the greatest impact
- Which **audience groups** represent our 'base', and which new audiences we should aim to reach
- What we want each audience group to **think, feel or do**
- **Insight** about these audiences – their values, what they know, and what they want
- Clarity on how to **frame our issues** to make them relevant and engaging to each audience group
- Information about **how audiences use media**, with ideas for how to reach them
- **KPIs** to help us measure how effectively we're engaging our audiences, and the mechanisms we'll use to track progress
- And perhaps something about how we **organise ourselves** to achieve the above

“If you are a communicator, you are about making change in people. For me, it’s about being mindful, and thinking about the audience and the change you are seeking to make – you should be doing this in everything you communicate.”

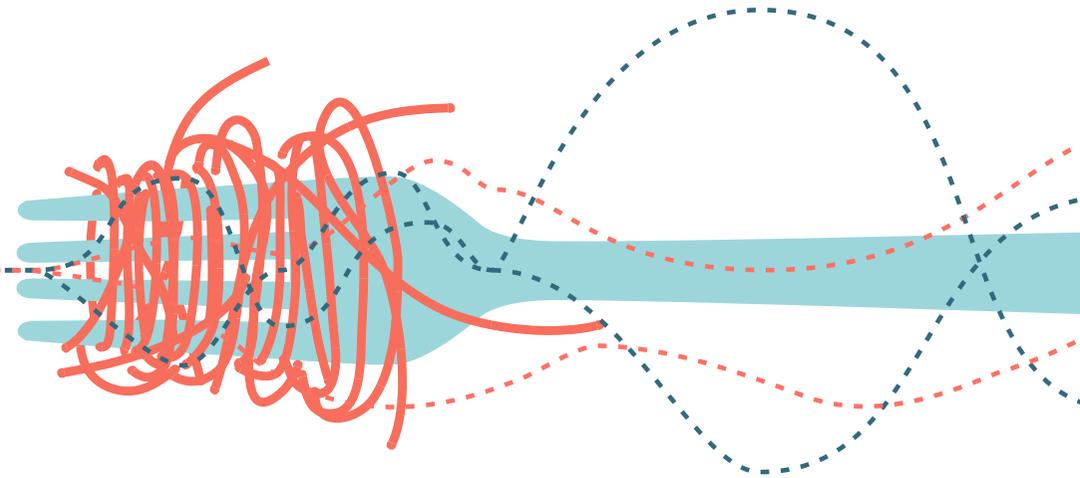
**Adam Cormack, Head of Communications,
The Wildlife Trusts**

Who does it well?

There are lots of famous examples of audience-centred strategy in the private sector. For example, Coca-Cola once carved up the world according to who loved them and who hated them, but let’s not go there. Probably our favourite example from the commercial world is described in Malcolm Gladwell’s famous and funny TED Talk: **Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce** (find it on Google).

In it he shows that the food industry’s search for the perfect spaghetti sauce recipe, back in the 1970s, led to the insight that **different people want different things** (who’d have thought?), and that there is no perfect spaghetti sauce. This seem obvious now, but at the time it led to a revolution in audience segmentation – and showed that putting people at the heart of your strategy can be transformative. It also paved the way for chunky, spicy and creamy spaghetti sauce.

Closer to home, in the following pages we’ve included a couple of case studies from UK charities Amnesty and Scope, who have put audiences at the heart of their strategies to great effect.



“This is how I try to explain digital transformation to people: it’s the process an organisation begins when they put audiences – beneficiaries or supporters – in the centre of their planning and operations. Once you start thinking about audiences and put your audience hat on, and try to plan around that, well that’s where the whole piece comes together.”

**Brani Milosevic, Founder and Managing
Director, Digital Leadership**

Case study

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S UK COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In 2016 Amnesty International made a commitment to double its supporter base in the UK by 2020, with the aim of growing political influence, reach, and impact. As a starting point, they needed a new strategy for public engagement, centred on understanding which audiences they should engage, and following that, which communication channels to invest in and how to frame their issues.

But they had a unique challenge. In the 17 years since the Human Rights Act came into force in UK law, popular support for human rights had fallen through the floor. This was largely due to a sustained campaign from a hostile section of the media, hell-bent on positioning human rights as a threat to the UK public: as a mechanism for terrorists to evade justice, an instrument of control from a European super-state, or a legislative loophole through which luxury goods were passed to the UK prison population.

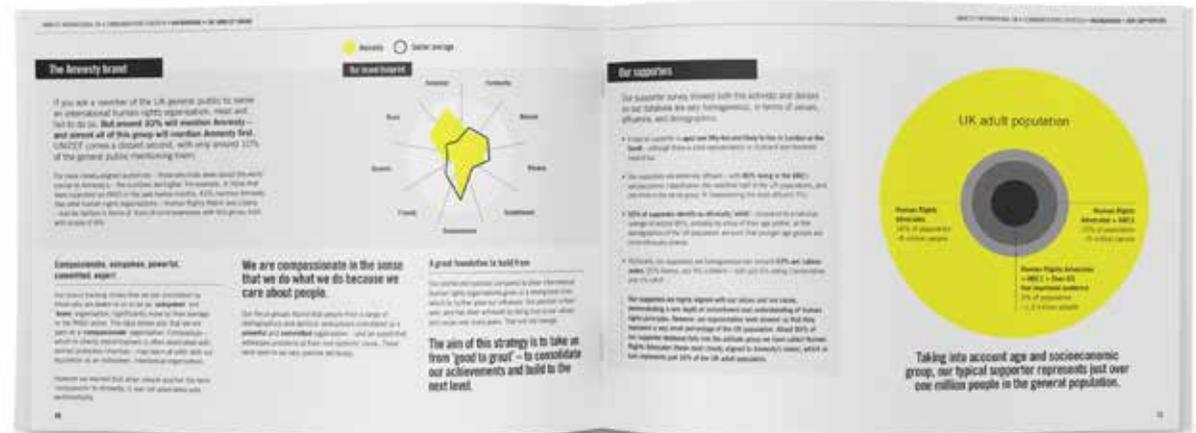
So, growing their supporter base in an environment where their cause was in decline would take more than upping their email marketing spend. **They knew that success would be transformative, but to achieve it would demand a radical rethink of their approach and message to the UK public.**

The project began with a large research programme. They conducted a UK national survey, and surveyed Amnesty supporters, asking hundreds of questions about their attitudes, behaviours and values. This included

an in-depth questionnaire about human rights, testing agreement with divisive statements like, “We should protect the rights of those that wish us harm”. Their analysis of the resulting data set used cluster modelling to create a ‘**typology**’ of attitude groups. From here they built an audience segmentation, and compared their existing supporters with the broader population.

Immediately they realised two things. First, that they had saturated the ‘typical’ Amnesty supporter profile. Second, that if they wanted to grow their reach, they’d have to target people with misgivings about human rights – people who may share Amnesty’s basic values, but for whom the language of human rights had become toxic.

Through qualitative research they learned more about these groups, and discovered that to engage them they needed to remake the case for human rights in terms of the tangible benefits to them. **Human rights were not a remote, difficult, cause – but the very thing that gave UK families the security and freedoms they cherished.**



The resulting strategy, *More People*, became much more than a roadmap for growth. It became Amnesty’s foundational strategy for social and political change.

The strategy has led to a profound shift in how they approach their work, far beyond communications. It has led to changes in both the issues they work on, and the way they work.

As human rights campaigners, Amnesty is faced with a new paradigm – with dehumanising politics and social division on the rise. In the UK people face further threats to their rights with the proposed abolition of the Human Rights Act, increased surveillance and xenophobic violence. Amnesty’s work is more vital than ever, and the strategy has allowed them to take on these issues boldly, and in terms their audiences would relate to.

It has enabled them to build more accessible, mainstream campaigns against the surge of hate crimes after the Brexit referendum, where many others were slow to respond, and to be the only major UK NGO to speak out and mobilise against Donald Trump’s Muslim ban.

Most recently, Amnesty applied its new insights to its refugee campaign – promoting the Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill, which seeks to recognise in UK law the right to family life among refugees. Amnesty realised that to build support in the UK’s political mainstream, they needed to mobilise a ‘centrist’ audience segment on an issue (refugees) that had proved divisive in the past. This time, they tried something different. Instead of citing technical legal instruments, they focused on the ‘unfair rules’ that were stopping families being together, knowing how these audiences valued family life and fair play. **The mobilisation was a huge success, and led to their private members bill achieving cross-party backing.**

The hard numbers are impressive too. In the first few months following their strategy launch, Amnesty’s social media engagement doubled, and the number of new people taking action almost tripled year on year – topping 300,000 in 2017 and beating their public engagement targets. Most significantly of all, most of Amnesty’s growth has come from new audience groups, putting them on the right path to restoring public support for inalienable human rights in the UK.

Case study

SCOPE'S AUDIENCE-CENTRED APPROACH

Scope is on a mission to drive social change so that disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else. That means the charity has to dramatically broaden its reach over the next few years.

Scope has big ambitions for public engagement, making the most of its position as the UK's leading pan-disability charity. It aims to be supporting at least two million disabled people by 2022; while also massively increasing the number of people involved in everything from changing public attitudes, to fundraising.

In 2017, Scope began its journey to becoming an audience-centred charity. By mapping the external market, Scope identified three 'addressable audiences' to prioritise in marketing and communications. These were identified through a combination of demographics, proximity to disability, and attitudes towards disability as a cause. The segmentation process also factored in behaviours connected with charity and community support, including donation preferences, activism, and previous support or consideration for Scope.

Focusing on the external market also gave Scope an opportunity to understand in much more detail the relationship between proximity to disability and support for Scope.

Scope had long understood that people with a closer relationship to disability – those disabled themselves or who knew others who were disabled – were more likely to support them. Their segmentation model showed that the likelihood of supporting the charity financially is highest among a group unlikely to be disabled, but likely to know or care for others who are. Meanwhile, disabled people are far more likely to support Scope's campaigns – for example by petitioning.

By getting to know each of its three addressable audiences, using a mix of survey data and focus group research, Scope has a much fuller understanding of how to engage them, whether as service users, supporters, advocates, or as participants in behaviour change campaigns.

Focus group research allowed Scope to explore how their audiences view both their own and wider societal attitudes towards disabled people. **As a result, Scope knows its audiences share a spirit of optimism and believe society has taken great steps towards equality for disabled people. But they also feel there is a long way to go before the worlds of disabled and non-disabled people are truly unified.**

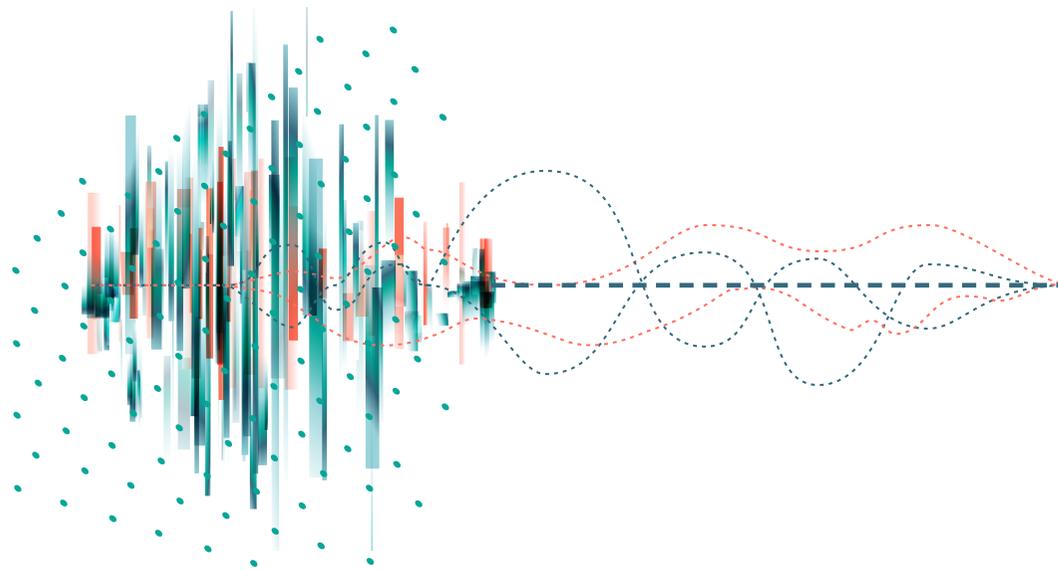
And while 'equality' for disabled people is something all audiences support, it means different things to different people. Some see it in ideological terms – a high principle essential to a fair society. For others, it's simply about practical ways for people to work, study, travel and participate in society.



These and other insights have informed Scope's new brand strategy – shaping its proposition and new strapline – and are at the centre of its new digital, marketing and fundraising strategies.

Scope now has the task of embedding audience-centred decision in every part of the charity. They have also made structural changes to support a greater audience focus.

Scope has just started this journey, and is confident its enhanced audience focus will prove to be a major step forward in relationships and reach, accelerating the journey to equality for disabled people. Watch this space.



How is it done?

This section is a primer on some of the methods used to build audience segmentations, gather insights, and create strategies.

We hope all charities will find it useful. In the ‘Things you can do’ section we’ve emphasised DIY or low-cost approaches that can be tried by charities without big research budgets or specialist expertise.

- Audience segmentation
- Things you can do
- A new approach

Audience segmentation

You're going to need evidence

There are many different ways to approach audience segmentation. But something they all have in common (at least the good ones) is a basis in sound evidence. At some point in the process you will find yourself standing around a flipchart with a group of colleagues. That's inevitable. But if you don't bring in some external research, you risk repeating old, untested, assumptions. So, evidence is important.

“Successful audience-centred strategies are built on evidence, insight and continuous learning. They are not built on hunches, habits or fear of change.”

**Joe Morrison, Craft & Scale consultancy,
and former Head of Business Improvement &
Innovation, Plan International UK**

Research methods

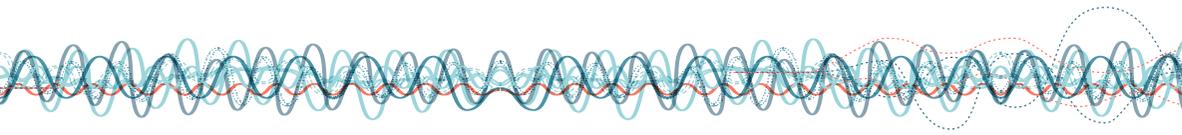
Usually, segmentation is based on *quantitative research* – that is, survey data. This allows you to analyse what different audience groups think about your issues, or are likely to do for you, confident that the data represents the population you are segmenting.

Surveys might take the form of national online polling, or in the case of specialist or localised groups, telephone or face-to-face surveys and consultations. Sometimes, to keep things affordable, you might be able to find existing data sets, or consortium-based research projects where groups of similar organisations pool resources.

Many organisations try to inform their segmentation of new audiences with what they know about existing audiences – and so any past insight about who you have successfully engaged will help. That might come from looking at your supporter database, or reflecting on the characteristics of your most successful influencer relationships.

Qualitative research – usually focus groups or interviews – is often used in segmentation projects alongside the quantitative analysis. It can provide more nuanced insight to help you get to know the people you want to reach, and provide deeper insight to inform your creative and messaging work. Some people use qualitative research to understand how to frame issues, by exploring the underlying beliefs that inform attitudes. Both Scope and Amnesty did this in the projects we described earlier.

Usually people hire professionals to do qualitative research. But if you're good with people you might enjoy doing it yourself. **There's nothing quite like talking to your audiences directly to really help you understand what they want.**



What to consider

The best segmentations consider a range of different factors. We've outlined some of them here:



Values

Certain sectors or causes will attract people who share similar values. For example, international aid tends to be a polarising issue in the UK – mobilising both passionate champions and sworn enemies. Understanding the values of your most important audiences will help you both to find them, and to communicate with them on their terms.



Attitudes and beliefs

There will be certain attitudes that make people more likely to engage with particular charities. This might include their perspective on particular issues, or beliefs about their own role in helping others. Bear in mind that most people don't think about charities much. So understanding their attitudes to things they do think about is important. With expert audiences, attitudes will be more informed, and they'll often be motivated by the values and purpose of the organisation they work for. Just like we are.



Behaviours

Audience behaviours tell us what they are likely to do, and what kind of engagement has meaning for them. This may include their preferred ways of donating to charity. Or it might be something about their cultural practices, or how actively engaged they are in policy forums, or their local communities.

This chart shows a simple model that we sometimes use at Eden Stanley as a starting point for segmentation, particularly when we're thinking about market sizing. It compares – in the broadest terms – the behaviours and attitudes associated with supporting charities and engaging with causes, and shows the approximate size of each group as a percentage of UK adults. Different causes have different profiles. This chart relates to 'health or disability charities providing care, research or information'.

Attitudinal and behavioural typologies

		Cause engagement (attitudinal typology)							
		Give-and-forgetters	Be-the-changers	Community actives	Clicktivists	Faith-based givers	Casuals	Considerers	Rejectors
Charity engagement (behavioural typology)	Sign-up-and-stay	4.6%	0.5%	1.9%	0.6%	1.4%	1.7%	0.9%	0.3%
	Cause campaigners	0.6%	4.0%	2.8%	1.5%	1.6%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%
	Community self-starters	0.3%	1.9%	1.2%	0.7%	0.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.1%
	Give-as-you-go	7.9%	1.7%	3.7%	2.8%	2.9%	11.3%	4.0%	0.3%
	Sporadic supporters	0.0%	0.7%	0.9%	1.5%	1.4%	5.7%	9.0%	3.5%
	Leave me alone	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%



Relevance

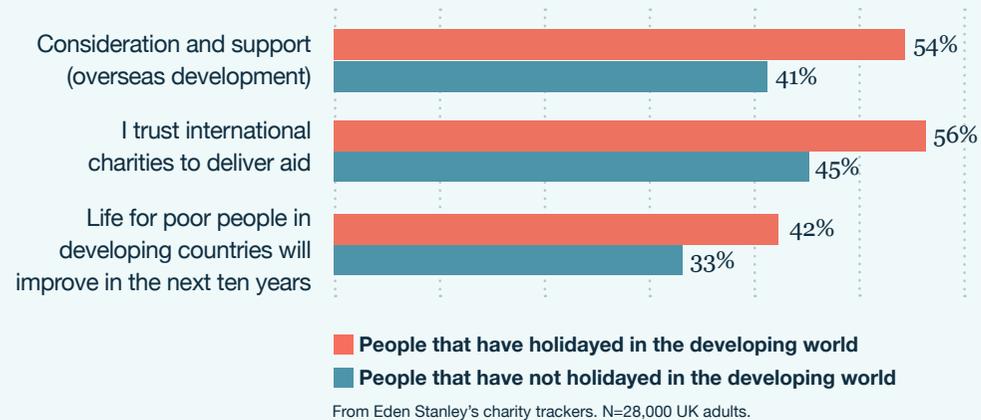
Your charity will seem more relevant to some people than others. This may be because they are exposed to or have a connection with your cause – particularly if it’s a health condition or disability. This can range from people who are directly experiencing a condition to those caring for a family member, or who have a more distant connection through a colleague or friend. Exposure to a cause can have other origins too – for example, we know that people who holiday in Africa, Asia or Latin America are more likely to support an international NGO, and that people who’ve experienced homelessness are much more likely to support a housing charity.

“Your charity is not an end in itself. You simply offer a bridge between your audiences and the cause you represent. From your audiences’ perspective, you exist to help them achieve their goals, so they’re more likely to choose you if your cause is relevant to them - if it’s something they personally care about. Too often we forget that the features of the bridge itself matter much less than where it leads.”

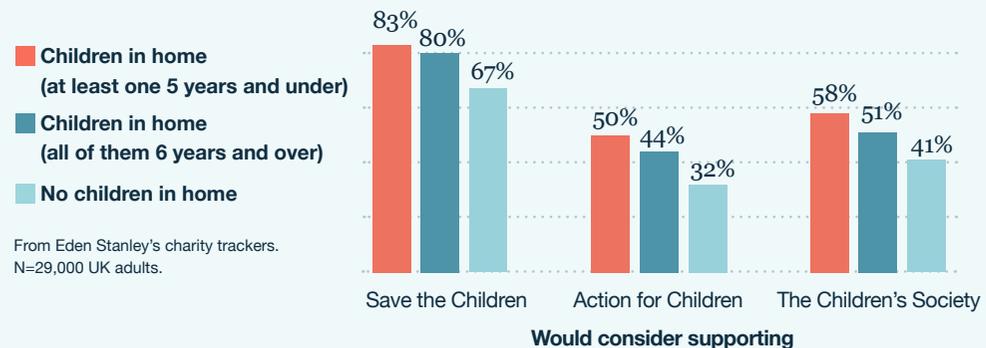
Simon Turner, Fundraising Consultant

In our 2017 report, **Whatever Next?**, we showed how to quantify the links between experience of a particular health condition, and likelihood to support a charity associated with that condition. These correlations – measures of relevance – can be found in all charity categories.

Exposure to the developing world predicts support for international charities



Family stage predicts consideration to support children’s charities





Influence

In the case of smaller, specialist audiences – for example, advocacy targets – you might use power mapping techniques, identifying key decision-makers and the people that influence them. With bigger, public audiences, those with political influence (often affluent, older voters) or who have strong social influence (for example, through their social media networks), can be important targets for different reasons.



Media use

The way people use media is an important consideration – not just when thinking about how to reach them, but in deciding if you have a chance of reaching them at all. If you want others to multiply your message, you'd probably look for groups likely to share causes on social media. If you want to engage with young families, what are the 'family time' moments, when you could offer something relevant and engaging?



Demographics

Used on their own, demographics are too basic for segmentation, but can be a good starting point. When combined with other factors, like attitudes or behaviours, demographics like age, gender, family composition, or affluence, can help define and identify groups you want to reach in the public. Generational differences can be strong. Within your selected target audience, you will almost certainly find younger and older groups who differ in their reasons for engaging.

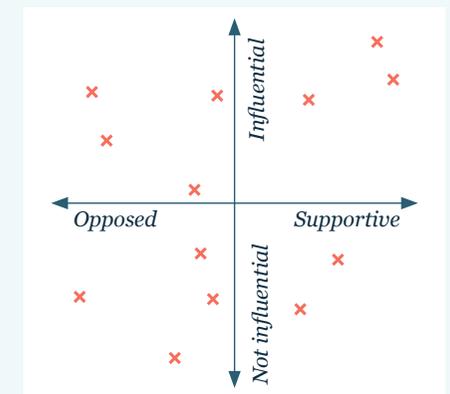
Power mapping

Most campaigning organisations use power maps and influencer maps to design their strategies. They help **identify priority audiences, and work out how to influence them both directly and through intermediaries.** Attitudinal insight is important here too of course – understanding your target's position on your issues, and what will motivate them to act.

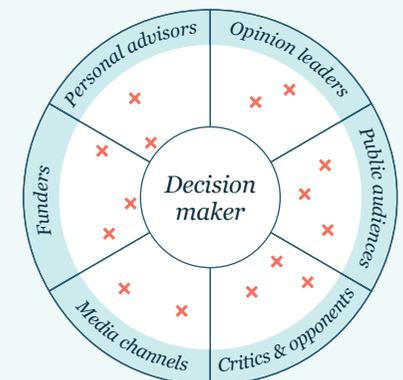
This is not just a paper exercise. In an integrated audience-centred strategy, your digital team (for example) will know which media, and which public audiences will have the greatest influence on the decision maker your policy team wants to move. **That's how Amnesty achieved their breakthrough on refugee rights described in our case study earlier.**

Crosses in the diagrams represent named individuals or audience segments.

Power map



Influencer map



Things you can do

Some of the things we've talked about here are specialised, and – let's be honest – most larger charities hire strategy or research companies to do the work. But if resources are tight there is a lot that you can do yourself, either alongside an agency, or on your own. We've listed a few ideas here.

“It's not always easy to find the time or resource to refresh your audience research but without doubt it sharpens up your message and gives you the confidence to try new approaches.”

Annabel Davis, Head of Communications and Marketing, Mind

Using digital analytics to identify audiences

Many digital platforms, like Facebook and Google, and some social listening tools, provide data about the demographics and online behaviours of people who are liking or sharing your content, or visiting your website.

This is useful up to a point. It will tell you something about who your current audiences are, but remember, they might be a bit different from who you most want to reach. Defining your audiences simply as 'the people who are engaging' is allowing the market to completely dictate your strategy. Not a great idea.

So it's better to use digital analytics to get an understanding of your existing 'base', and then track whether you are engaging new priority groups.

Quantitative research and segmentation

If you want to run large surveys of the public, you will have to pay an agency to do it – there is no way around it.

But if you have a large email list, for example of supporters, campaigners or professional contacts, **there's nothing stopping you building your own survey and canvassing their views.**

Once you have the data available you will need **statistical analysis software** to build your segmentation. Simply cutting data – for example, splitting the survey by age, gender or response to an attitude question – isn't too complicated. More sophisticated data models using cluster and correlation analyses might be a stretch without expert help.

Qualitative research

Why not assemble some groups of people representing your audiences and talk to them? Or try one-to-one interviews?

Key things to remember are:

- 1 | Be really clear on what you want to find out. Don't make the mistake of looking for 'general insight', as it will likely be fruitless. What's your question?
- 2 | Have a pre-written script and develop stimulus for participants to respond to.
- 3 | Don't interrogate. Use open questions that encourage people to describe their thoughts and feelings without fear or embarrassment.

Take care when using qualitative research in isolation, as you can't be sure participants are representative of your target group. Qualitative research participants may present an idealised image of themselves, and it's unlikely they will act in the real world exactly as they say they will. They may want to impress you, or reassure themselves, or try to figure out the 'right' answers. Projective techniques, that introduce discussion topics obliquely, can help you sidestep these 'socially desirable' responses.

Qualitative research can provide insight at a depth that you won't achieve in quantitative research alone, if you approach it skilfully, and understand how to interpret the findings. Using established social psychology frameworks may help.

"In our research we don't ask people 'what they think they think'. Instead we test attitudes of people that have been exposed to our message, then compare with a control group that has not been exposed. It gets us closer to objective observation."

**Nicky Hawkins, Communications Strategist,
FrameWorks Institute**



Social psychology and behavioural economics

Most market researchers use established frameworks to test and segment audiences, and understand their motivations and values. There are numerous such frameworks available, and you might enjoy reading up on some of them.

The Mindspace model

There's a great model called '**Mindspace**' developed by the Institute for Government⁶ about ten years ago, that lists a range of motivations that *change people's minds* (like incentives, social norms, or emotional triggers). Mindspace shows the importance of people's **pre-existing commitments**, and this may prompt you to explore how you could help your audiences achieve their goals.

The Mindspace model⁷

Messenger	We are heavily influenced by who communicates information
Incentives	Our responses to incentives are shaped by predictable mental shortcuts, such as strongly avoiding losses
Norms	We are strongly influenced by what others do
Defaults	We 'go with the flow' of pre-set options
Salience	Our attention is drawn to what is novel and seems relevant to us
Priming	Our acts are often influenced by subconscious cues
Affect	Our emotional associations can powerfully shape our actions
Commitments	We seek to be consistent with our public promises, and reciprocate acts
Ego	We act in ways that make us feel better about ourselves

"By drawing on Mindspace in our focus group work, we identified that our female audiences were most inspired to act when they heard from women they felt an affinity with, who were speaking from personal experience. We're now piloting a survivor ambassador programme to raise the voices of more women who have experienced violence."

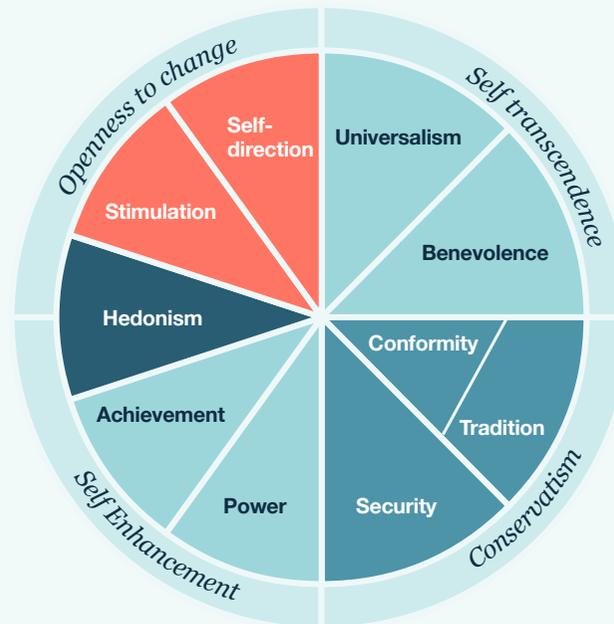
**Alex Siepel, Communications Manager,
Solace Women's Aid**

Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values

Another popular model is the Schwartz Theory of Basic Human Values, which describes 10 values (like power, security or conformity) that guide our behaviours. Shalom Schwartz argues that 'when values are activated, they become infused with feeling', making them a very powerful tool for communicators.

Schwartz's Theory has been influential, and has been copied, adapted and repackaged many times. Of the numerous models now used, most seem to have their origins in Schwartz. His framework⁸ can be used as a basis for audience-centred communications. For example each of these ten universal values can inform stimulus for research, to understand which are most likely to engage a particular group with a particular cause.

Schwartz's Basic Human Values



"The work by Schwartz is great and it's behind the different values models that people are using. Most of them come from the same research."

**Michaela O'Brien, Principal Lecturer,
University of Westminster**



Pen portraits and audience scenarios

The mere mention of ‘pen portraits’ is enough to bring some communicators out in a rash. Others love them, and see them as a practical and creative way of bringing your audience segmentation to life and promoting them with colleagues. You’ll need to find an approach that works for you.

A pen portrait is usually just a few pages, often nicely designed, distilling your audience group to a single, named person. Almost certainly you will have used (or at least seen) a pen portrait already. If so, you will have seen how they can give you a sense of ‘knowing’ your audiences in a way that a survey report can’t.

Why not go a step further, and write some audience scenarios? This is an exercise where you take one of your pen portraits and imagine a day in their life. As you follow them through the day, what are the moments they encounter your charity? What are they thinking and doing in that moment, and how does their interaction with you make them feel? What is the moment that makes them act?

Tracking

Tracking an audience-centred strategy means measuring outcomes with different segments, and comparing them, both with each other, and over time. Ideally you will find improved engagement among your target groups relative to the general population. This will give you a much stronger indicator that your strategy (and your targeting) is working, than looking for movement in the general population – which only a handful of charities can achieve, and which can indicate untargeted communications.

When tracking your brand performance or issue awareness, looking at ‘buzz’ metrics is usually where you will see the greatest movement. Asking, ‘Have you seen or heard of this charity in the past three months?’, or ‘Which of these issues have you noticed in the news most recently?’, and then correlating these with shifts in attitudes, will help you understand the results of recent activity, and reduce the effect of latent awareness, which tends to ‘flatten’ results. This makes attributing outcomes to your marketing or media activity more achievable. If you are able to compare these external factors to concrete results, for example acquisition of certain supporter profiles, you will have a very powerful toolkit.

Tracking your audiences – whether you are getting their attention, persuading them to act, or even changing their minds – is still best achieved through regular polling, then segmenting the results to zoom in on your specific target groups. Most do this in consortia, while some larger charities develop their own trackers.

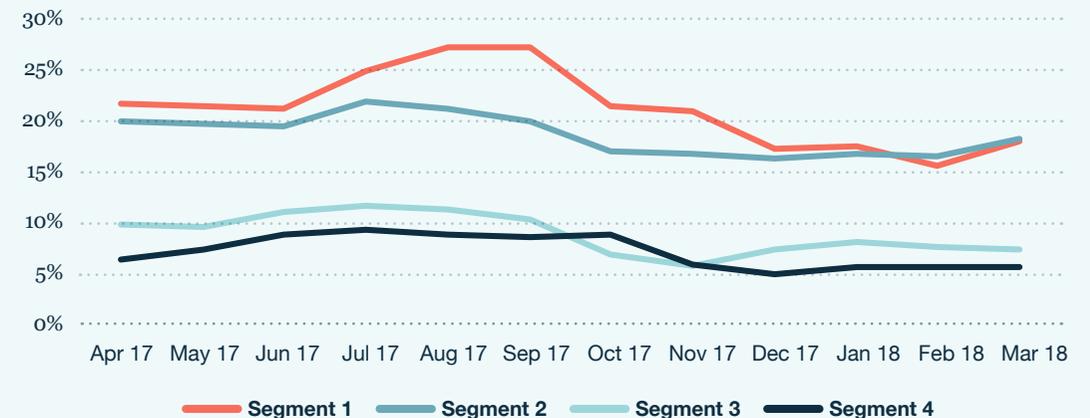
Other, more low-cost, tools are available too, that can complement public polling, and in a zero-budget situation can be used on their own if needed. ‘Output’ measures, typically looking at media impressions, can give a reasonable indication of how you’re doing, provided you can segment the results by different audience groups.

For example, if you know which media channel is heavily used by a given audience group, tracking your exposure through that channel (e.g. number of articles or impressions) will give you a rough measure of who you’re reaching. Search metrics (looking at Google Trends, or your own website) can provide similar insight, while social media tracking can get you a little closer to ‘outcome’ measures, if you go beyond counting impressions, and consider sentiment, or the persistence of certain keywords.

Whichever approach you take, the advice from almost everyone we spoke to for this report is to use tracking as a tool for continuous improvement, rather than just an inert tick-boxing exercise to satisfy the board. **If you spot patterns, learn from them. And if something works, do it again.**

This graph, showing brand performance data for a medium-sized UK health charity, shows a pronounced uplift in ‘brand buzz’ for their priority segment (1), during July to September 2017. This period coincides with an integrated campaign drive, and the graph demonstrates the effectiveness of their targeting.

Brand buzz



From Eden Stanley's charity trackers. Fieldwork April 2017 to March 2018. N=1,000 UK adults/month.

“Charities have an obligation to demonstrate the impact of their investments. Well-applied segmentation and tracking enables great teams to do this, and build continuous learning into their practice. This is how organisations learn and grow. It’s how campaigns are won.”

Joe Morrison, Craft & Scale consultancy, and former Head of Business Improvement & Innovation at Plan International UK

A new approach

Segmentation and insight are just part of the story...

...because they have no value at all if they don't change your approach to external engagement. Think back to the Amnesty case study on page 18. Their audience segmentation gave them access to entirely new target groups, fundamentally changing how they talked about their issues – and which issues they talked about – resulting in real impact. Becoming audience-centred can mean working differently too.

“Don't underestimate the need to embed audiences into your processes. Yes you need to bring them to life creatively, but you also need to ensure they're on every planning form, every brief, and every evaluation.”

Joe Morrison, Craft & Scale consultancy, and former Head of Business Improvement & Innovation, Plan International UK

It's a way of thinking

Think about it like this. When a journalist arrives at work, they ask themselves: 'What will my reader want to know?' Or when someone is marketing a consumer product – let's say, chocolate bars – they ask themselves first: 'What does my chocolate-munching customer want?'

Or let's think bigger, and think about Nelson Mandela, one of the most talented communicators of our age. When he brought the 1995 Rugby World Cup to South Africa, it wasn't just because he wanted a pitch-side seat. It was because he had asked himself: 'What will unite my divided nation?' He knew his audiences well enough to realise that rugby could be a big part of the answer.

As charity communicators, we need to think like that too. Instead of arriving at work and asking ourselves 'what shall we say today?', wouldn't it be better to ask: 'What will our audiences want from us today?'

Being audience-centred is not just about segmentation and research. It's a change of mindset. Maybe even a change of organisational culture.

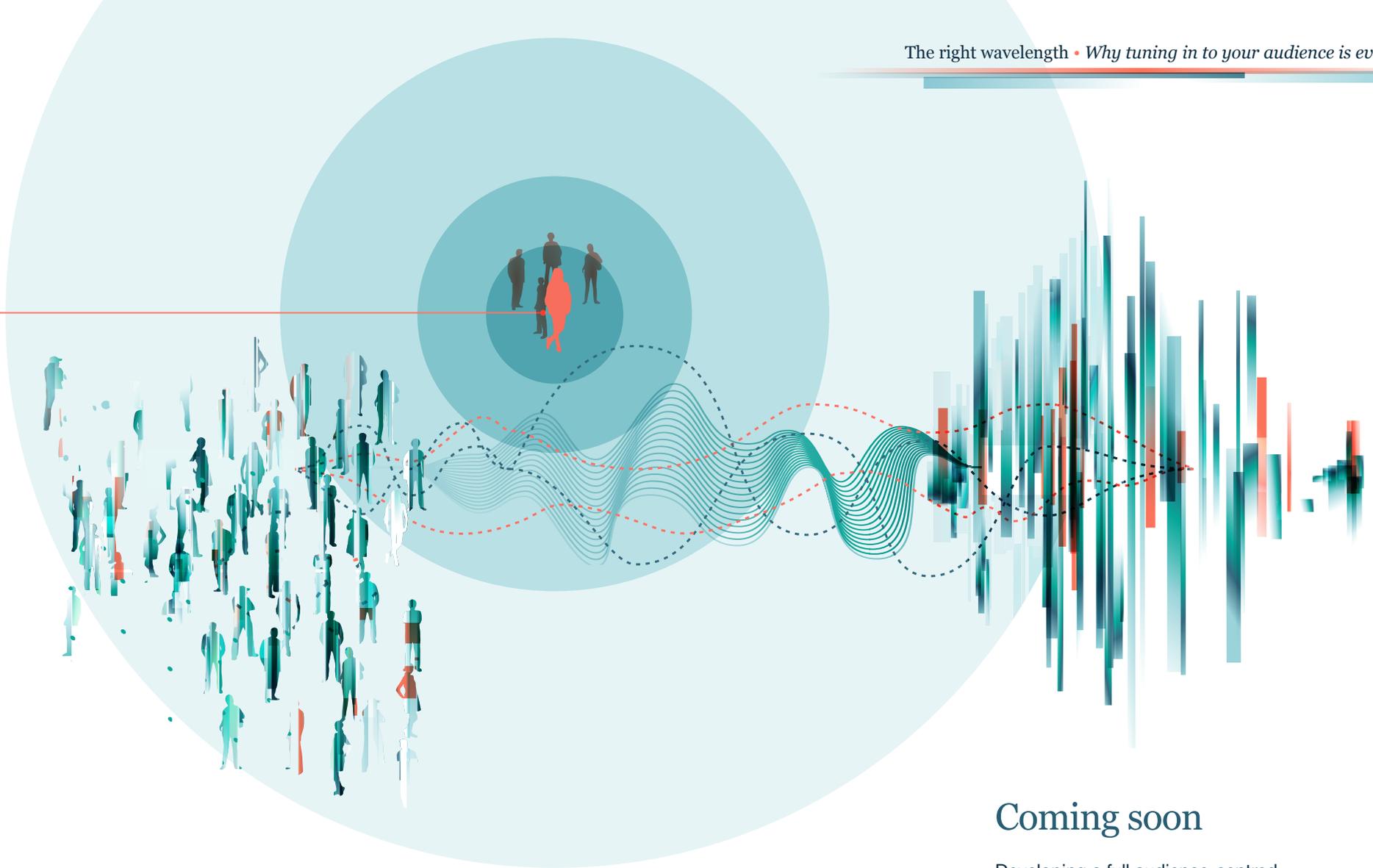
It's a way of planning

Some audience-centred organisations think differently about planning too. As we said right at the start, large charities have typically structured themselves around channels (web team, media team, etc) or around functions (fundraising, campaigns, etc). It's now more common to find public engagement departments, with multi-disciplinary teams assigned to audience groups.

For the majority of charities that still haven't made that step, some are integrating their planning systems. So even if their staff are in different teams, they have one plan for each audience group that they all work to.

While making this work can be tricky, the benefits are obvious. It just requires a bit of give-and-take. Very small charities, of course, don't have these siloes, so there are fewer barriers to audience-centred planning.

From an audience perspective, you need to come across as a coherent, singular organisation, that understands their needs and expectations. Integrated audience-centred strategies make that possible.



Coming soon

Developing a full audience-centred engagement strategy is too big a topic for a short report like this. But it will be the subject of the second edition of our book, *Make it Matter*, published by CharityComms. We're researching and writing it now, and it will be available in 2019. **Please get in touch if you have ideas or case studies to share. We'd love to hear from you.**

"Putting the audience at the centre of everything we do is a way of working, not just a one-off exercise."

**Lyndsey Johnson, Senior Designer,
Citizens Advice**

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About CharityComms

CharityComms (charitycomms.org.uk) is the professional membership body for charity communicators. We believe that effective and inspiring communications should be at the heart of every charity's work for a better world. We're here to improve the standard of communications and champion its role in the sector.

CharityComms membership gives you access to great content, examples of best practice, free seminars and exclusive networking events, plus a host of opportunities for professional development. Find out more at charitycomms.org.uk/membership

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About Eden Stanley

Eden Stanley is a strategic communications, fundraising and campaigns agency for the nonprofit sector, with a track record of achieving game-changing results for our clients.

We help nonprofits find their audiences, understand them better, and build integrated strategies around them. We do this for UK charities, international NGOs and arts & culture organisations.

We also offer a range of highly specialised, next-generation data tools that our members use for audience segmentation, media planning, attitudinal research, and brand tracking.

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