

# INCOME TARGETS

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Comms Entrepreneurs, Income Warriors  
and Three Paths Forward



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“Of course innovation is sometimes associated with risk, but a failure to innovate poses far more risks at this juncture than the process of innovation itself. The risks faced by local government are outweighed by the potential payoff that an entrepreneurial and innovative approach might grant to the sector.”

- *Localis Think Tank*

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# Introduction

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A Granicus survey shows the full picture of where public sector communications teams are today in terms of the need and ability to commercialise their services, evaluate the impact of their activities using financial metrics, and help others within their organisation bring in more income.

The results depict a divided landscape from which the new school of comms entrepreneurs is emerging. But the data also points to three bold ways forward. All require change.

In this whitepaper a selection of case studies reveal how communicators in the public sector are already responding to the challenge of budget cuts by bringing in their own income and supporting other teams across the organisation to adopt more entrepreneurial approaches too. For some this has become a matter of survival.

This new focus on commercialisation - particularly in local government - means many organisations are reassessing and adapting their services both to generate income and save money. Aligned with these objectives (and programmes which aim to achieve financial outcomes), strategic communications are playing a critical role in helping the sector mitigate the impacts of austerity and reduced funding from central government.

# Survey and Results

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## Public sector communicators' income targets: the haves, have nots, comms entrepreneurs, income warriors, strugglers, and three paths forward

Hacked-to-the bone communications teams are being asked to deliver their day job and bring money pouring in to their organisation, without the skills to deliver. This scene is the fear for many in the public sector. But what is the true picture?

Our survey of more than 400 communications and PR professionals revealed what's really happening in 2017/2018. The picture is complicated, fractured, exciting, worrying, experimental and split.

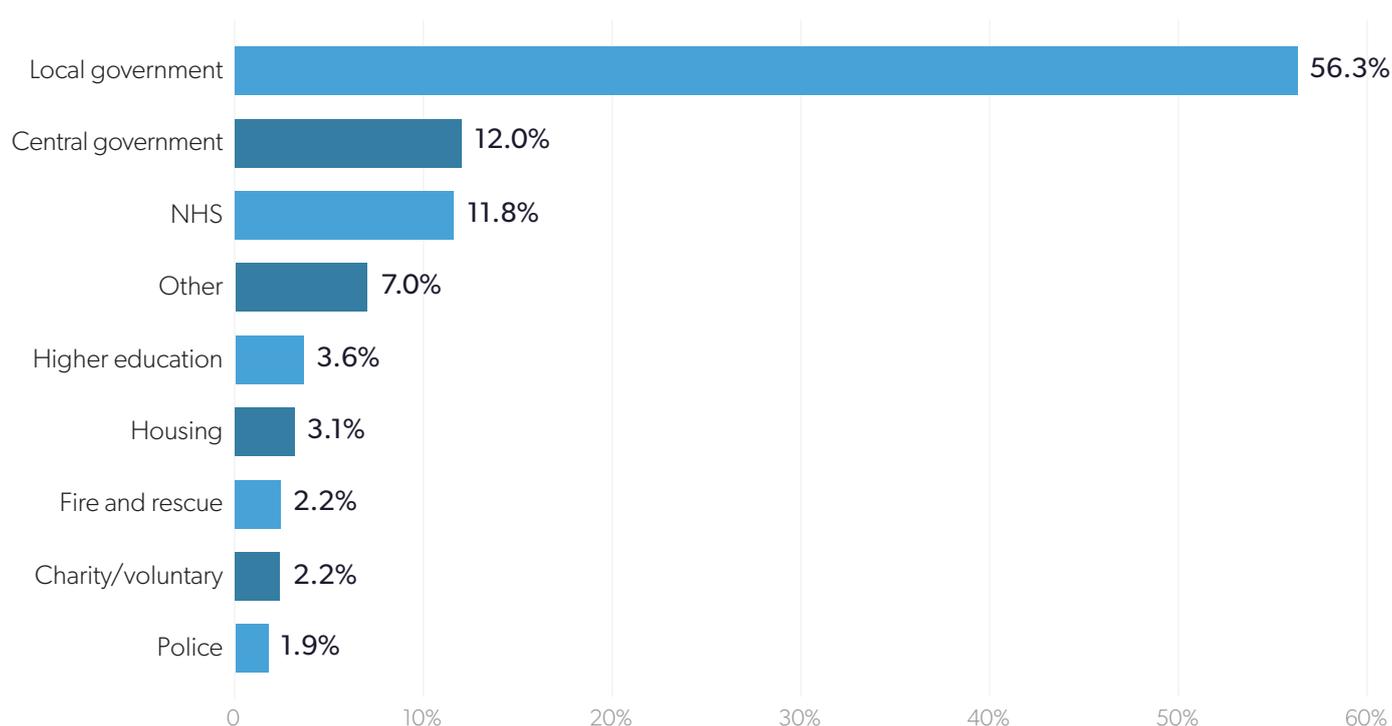
The data points to a landscape of haves and have nots where some are hemmed in by the dead weight of a £500,000 income target to find. Others do not

have to bring in a penny. Some are coasting with their income targets while others are in the water and struggling to keep a head above water.

There are three paths forward for comms. All require change. One is to embrace entrepreneurial thinking. The other is to argue for a different path that sees teams transform what they do and how they evaluate their work. The third is a hybrid. All offer the same prize: making a difference and permission to carry on.

### COMMUNICATORS FROM ACROSS THE UK PUBLIC SECTOR SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE OF INCOME TARGETS IN RESPONSE TO GRANICUS' RESEARCH SURVEY:

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# Survey and Results

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## A divided landscape: the budget haves and have nots and the shrinking teams

Income divides public sector comms teams. A minority are prospering with almost 15 per cent enjoying an increased budget. But three times as many - almost half - report a falling budget this year. The snapshot of a divided sector is reflected over the past three years. Those that have lost have lost almost a quarter of their budget. Those that have gained are up a similar amount.

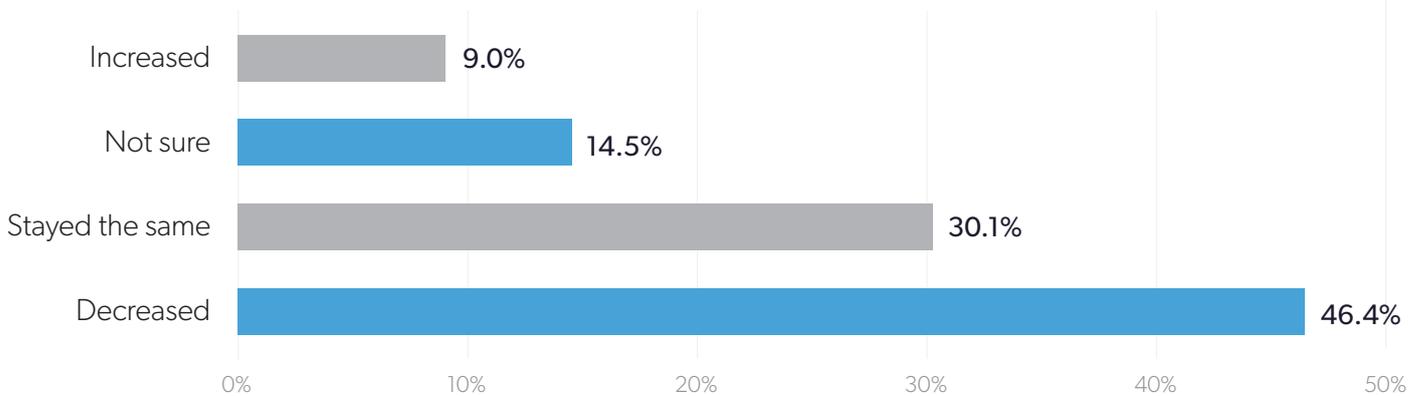
Almost a quarter of teams have grown, but twice that number have seen team size shrink. How are those

cuts being made? Aside from less staff, fewer events are attended, less printing and design are ordered, and there's a reduction in the use of external agencies.

But shining through there is now a hope of stability with more than half expecting things to stay the same over the next 12 months.

### HAS YOUR BUDGET CHANGED IN THE 2017 TO 2018 FINANCIAL YEAR?

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### HOW DOES YOUR BUDGET COMPARE WITH THREE YEARS AGO?

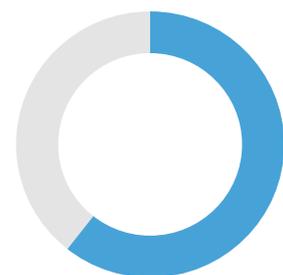
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13.4% Increased

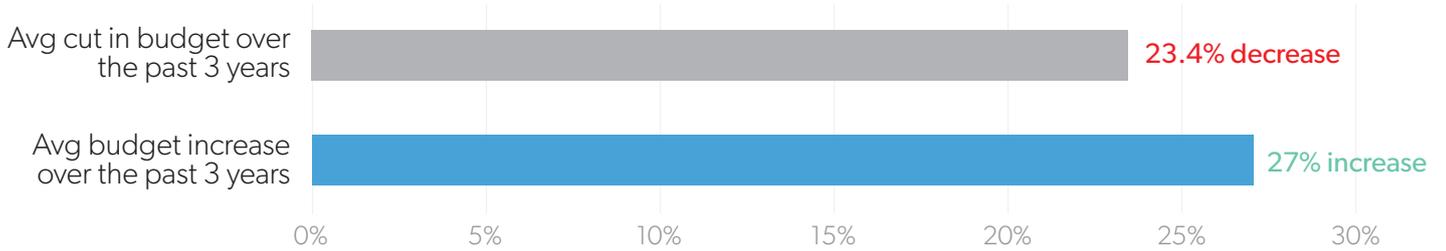


22.5% Stayed the same



64.1% Reduced

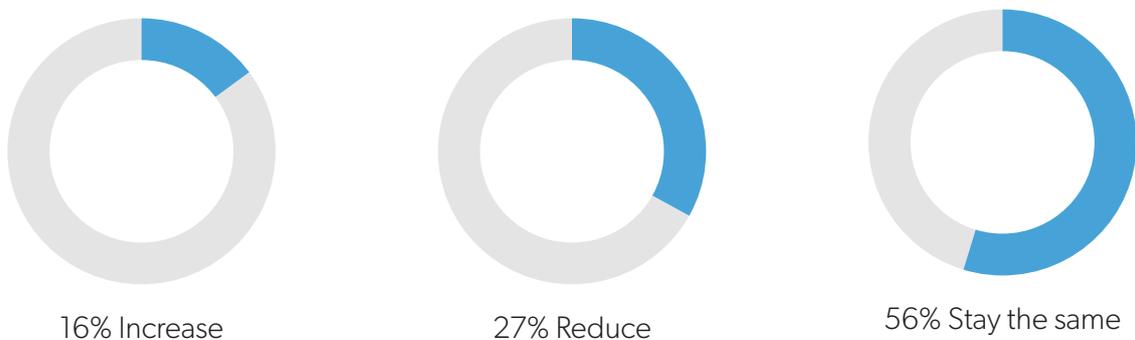
## BY HOW MUCH HAS YOUR BUDGET CHANGED OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS?



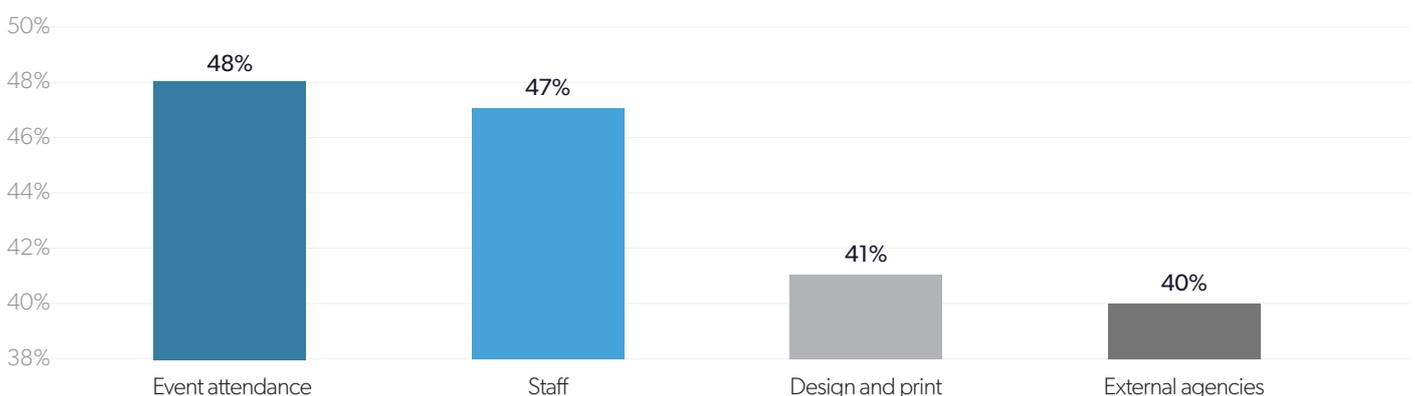
## HAS THE TEAM CHANGED IN THE 2017 TO 2018 FINANCIAL YEAR?



## IS THE TEAM SIZE TO CHANGE IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS?



## THE TOP 4 OF WHERE THE CUTS HAVE FALLEN

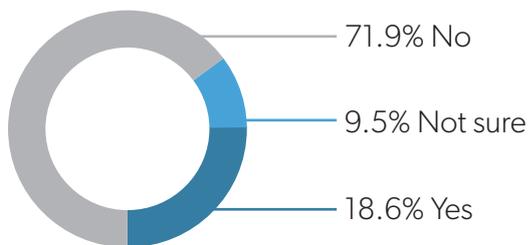


# Income targets are for the minority but once they arrive, they grow

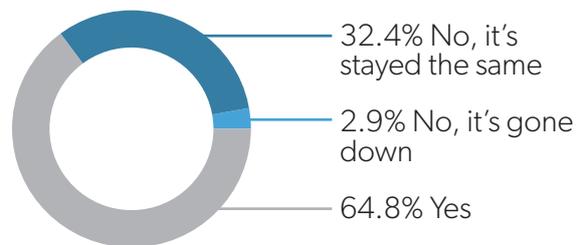
Less than a fifth of those who took part in the survey have an income target. The average income target is £75,591 - that's £6,285 bigger than service areas' own targets they are also helping. Three quarters of comms income targets are being

met. But they get bigger with 65 per cent of respondents reporting an increase year-on-year. This outnumbers more than 30 to one those who have seen their income target shrink.

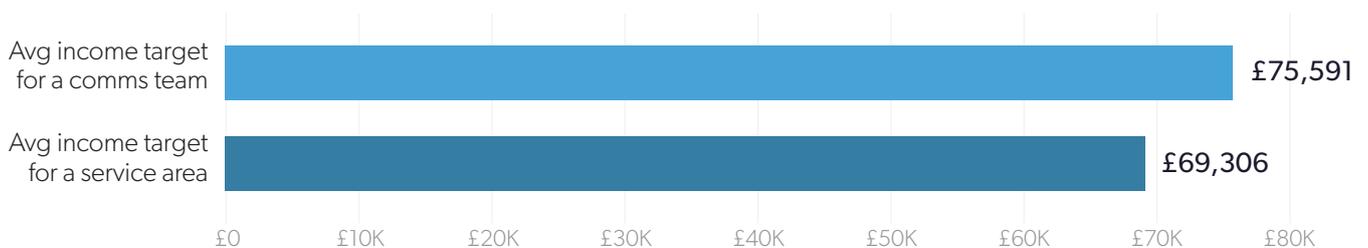
## DO YOU HAVE AN INCOME TARGET?



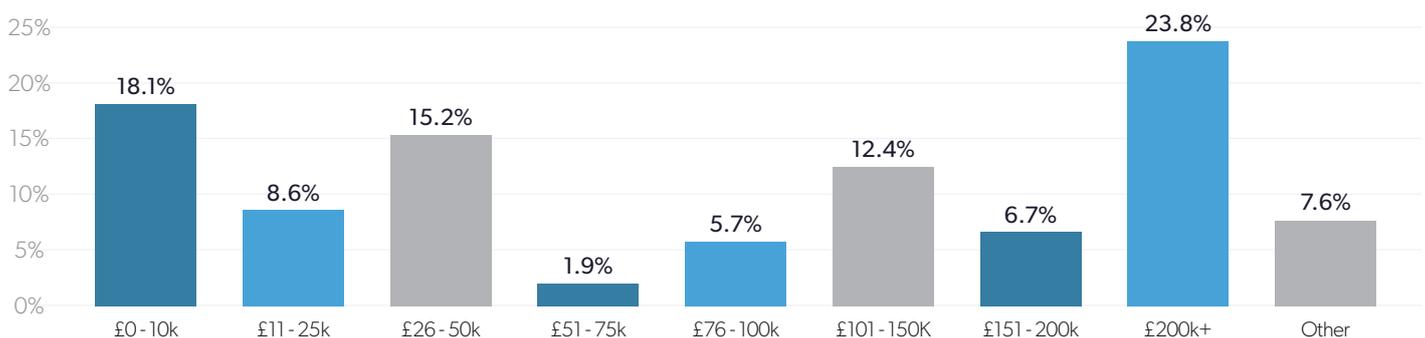
## HAS THAT INCOME TARGET INCREASED IN 2017/18?



## COMMS TEAMS' INCOME TARGETS VS THE SERVICE AREAS' THAT THEY SUPPORT



## WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL/TEAM'S ANNUAL INCOME TARGET



# Survey and Results

## A divided landscape: are you a comms entrepreneur or a comms income struggler?

A two-tier landscape is emerging for those with income targets. Those who are meeting the challenge are a new school of comms entrepreneurs who have developed the aptitude to bring in income. They don't see websites. They see web real estate. Critically, they are often teams who have imported the missing sales and marketing skills. The former newspaper advertising sales representative turned council commercial manager whose salary is covered by commission is the route to go down

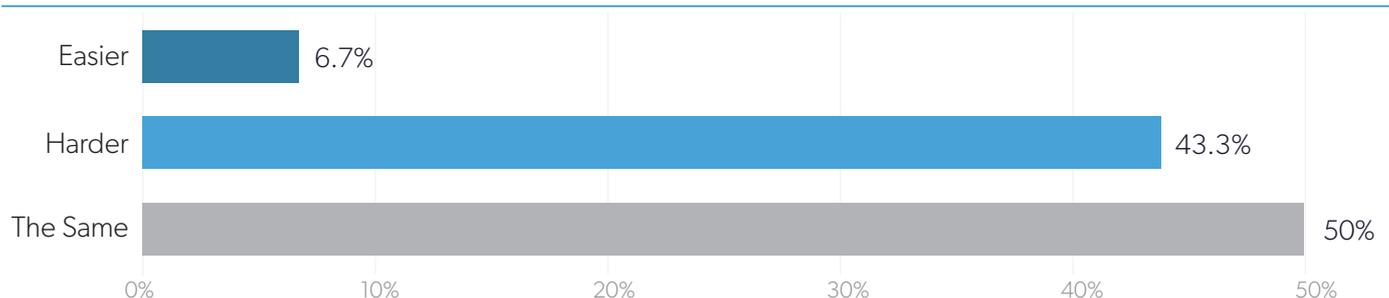
to make this work. But elsewhere, comms income strugglers show frustration. For them, they are being asked to ask old school press officers to sell ad space. It is a clash of culture and skillset.

The survey pointed to how managing income targets is getting harder. Those who found things tougher were at 40 per cent - almost six times as many people who thought it was getting easier.

### ARE YOU A COMMS ENTREPRENEUR OR A COMMS INCOME STRUGGLER?

Comms Entrepreneur	Comms Income Struggler
Sales skills in the team	No sales skills in the team
Marketing skills in the team	No marketing skills in the team
Able to identify opportunities	Is unable to market opportunities
Has senior buy-in	Has no council-wide strategy
Capacity to concentrate on bringing in income	Has no spare capacity
Meets income targets	Struggles to meet income targets
Customers outside the organisation	Customers from a small pool within the organisation
Uses digital comms tools strategically <i>(aligned with programmes with financial objectives)</i>	Little or no strategic use of digital comms tools

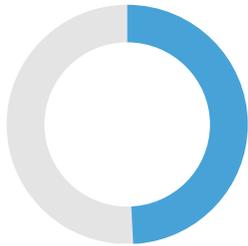
### IS IT HARDER TO REACH INCOME TARGETS NOW THAN BEFORE?



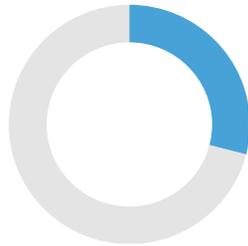
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## IN 2016/17 - WITH YOUR INCOME TARGET, DID YOU:

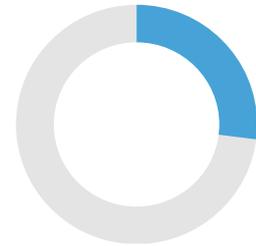
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49.0% Hit it?



28.8% Miss it?



22.1% Exceed it?

## Advertising forms the backbone of income without always the skills to bring it in

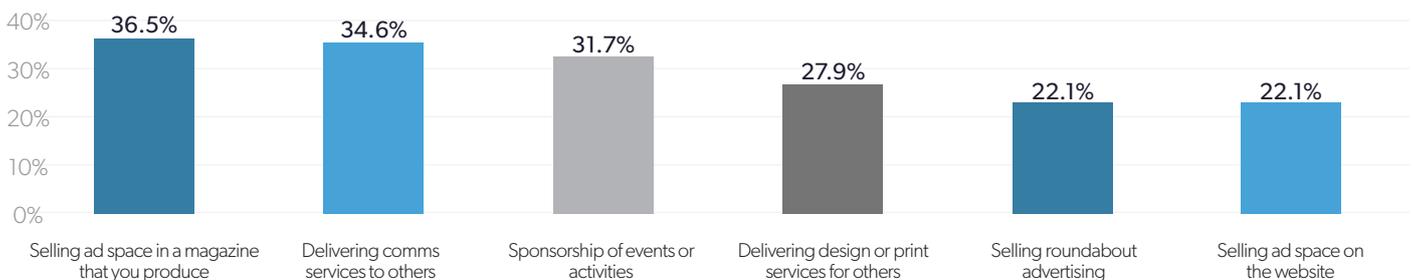
Advertising space in magazines, on roundabouts and websites dominate as means to bring in money, the survey suggested. The related category of

revenue through sponsorship deals is also present. But survey respondents complained the skills needed are missing.

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## TOP 5 MOST POPULAR MEANS OF GENERATING INCOME

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## Is your email bulletin service an overlooked income stream?

Only one in five comms teams with an income target are selling advertising space across their topic-specific public email bulletins service. With the ability to reach different audiences on a large scale and track email engagement rates, your citizen-facing (B2C) and business-facing (B2B) email bulletins are a unique and attractive advertising opportunity for businesses looking to target specific groups. See page 26 for more on using your email subscription service to bring in external income.

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# Conclusions

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## The three models of income targets

The data points to three possible paths forward. The pressing reality is that the world has changed (especially in local government) and that the need to generate income is a conversation to have if it has not happened already. There are three paths open. All require radical change.

## APPROACH 1: Be good at bringing in money

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Income targets have not reached the majority. Those who have these financial demands are facing new challenges. To make them work teams need senior buy-in to the idea of income targets, capacity and the skills to deliver the new approach. Without those essential ingredients in place, teams face an uncertain struggle they are likely to lose.

**STRENGTHS:** If you have the right team with the right skills you can generate good income from outside the organisation. You can place communications at the forefront of new ideas and you can make your team more financially secure.

**WEAKNESS:** You are being asked to do tasks outside of your comfort zone without the skills to deliver against them. You could be asked to sail on the ocean when you have only been across the lake in a rowing boat. You could only succeed in recycling internal income from service areas who have not thought through their communications.

### CASE STUDY EXAMPLES:

- ▶ [South Staffordshire Council \(page 16\)](#)
- ▶ [Essex County Council \(page 20\)](#)
- ▶ [Stoke-on-Trent City Council \(page 24\)](#)
- ▶ [Generating advertising revenue via your email bulletins service \(page 26\)](#)
- ▶ [Met Office \(page 30\)](#)

## APPROACH 2: Be good at evaluating communications using financial metrics

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Communications and public relations are facing a struggle to be taken seriously. The disciplines can do this by being more professional and making a material difference. To do this teams need to swap the income target of money with the income target of evaluated communications. This exchanges the £50,000 target (of new income for the bank account) for a promise of better communications which help others make evaluated and quantifiable efficiency savings. This is the evaluated figure that

makes a slight difference across a series of bottom lines across the organisation, which scales up to a significant achievement. This is the well-thought-through communications that helps fewer people call the contact centre ([bit.ly/Gedling-story](#)) and reduces the demand on time-poor teams ([bit.ly/Wrexham-story](#)). This is then evaluated into a time and money figure. You save 30 hours of phone calls and there is a financial value to that.

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**STRENGTHS:** You are playing to your strengths. You are asking to deliver effective communications that makes a difference. You can focus your time on this rather than try and raise money using skills you may not have in the team.

**WEAKNESS:** The public sector is often poor at evaluating and calculating a worth to the change that happens. You will have to improve your

evaluation skills ([bit.ly/granicus-workbook](https://bit.ly/granicus-workbook)) and get used to saying 'no' to things which do not deliver a measurable difference.

**CASE STUDY EXAMPLES:**

- ▶ [Gedling Borough Council \(page 34\)](#)
- ▶ [Wrexham County Borough Council \(page 36\)](#)
- ▶ [Staffordshire County Council \(page 38\)](#)
- ▶ [NHS Lothian \(page 40\)](#)

How well are you aligning communications with your organisation's strategic priorities? Having no measures of success is a precarious situation to be in. Download this workbook to help you assess, align, execute, and report on your digital communications activities. [bit.ly/granicus-workbook](https://bit.ly/granicus-workbook)

## APPROACH 3: Bring in new money **and** use communications to impact financial metrics

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This is a combination of the two approaches to income generation and works to both bring in new money to an organisation, as well as use communications resources strategically with an emphasis on evaluating success per financial metrics.

**STRENGTHS:** This allows you to run in tandem the two different approaches. Firstly, the traditional income generation model where you bring in external funds from a variety of quarters. Secondly, you can road-test the route of evaluating communications using financial metrics - for example how comms activities are helping to channel shift people or change behaviours in ways

that save an organisation money. This twin-track approach may also reassure nervous finance officers by hedging bets.

**WEAKNESS:** The risk is that real change is not delivered as there is uncertainty over which path to take.

**CASE STUDY EXAMPLES:**

- ▶ [London Borough of Havering Council \(page 44\)](#)
- ▶ [Caerphilly County Council \(page 46\)](#)
- ▶ [Bournemouth Borough Council \(page 48\)](#)

# Conclusions

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Tactics which are being used to generate income across the public sector:

- ▶ Advertising on intranets
- ▶ Advertising on billboards
- ▶ Advertising in email alerts
- ▶ Advertising in magazines and newsletters
- ▶ Advertising on plasma screens
- ▶ Advertising on roundabouts
- ▶ Advertising on websites
- ▶ Alumni fundraising
- ▶ App building
- ▶ Bidding for external funding to deliver campaigns
- ▶ Bus shelter advertising
- ▶ Car parking income
- ▶ Comms support to in-house departments
- ▶ Crisis comms support to schools
- ▶ Comms support to third parties
- ▶ Debt recovery
- ▶ Event hire
- ▶ Event management
- ▶ Filming permissions
- ▶ Grants
- ▶ Outdoor media such as poster sites
- ▶ Project management
- ▶ Property development
- ▶ Property management
- ▶ Re-print of birth, marriage and death certificates
- ▶ Room and venue hire
- ▶ Sponsorship of events
- ▶ Team building days
- ▶ Training delivery
- ▶ Waste collection services
- ▶ Web development

## Ideas for income streams:

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*"Change the law so we don't have to publish public notices any more"*

*"Seasonal concession stands"*

*"To be a collection point for online deliveries"*

*"A pricing review of what the organisation offers"*

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# The biggest barriers to achieving income targets:

## STAFFING

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- ▶ Austerity
- ▶ No specialist staff
- ▶ No capacity
- ▶ No commercial mindset across the council outside of marketing and business development

## STRATEGY

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- ▶ Our council doesn't like advertising
- ▶ Our organisation doesn't have the culture to generate income
- ▶ We can't demonstrate the value of what comms does
- ▶ We prioritise helping other teams reach their targets
- ▶ We are pulled in different directions between internal and external demands
- ▶ We are pulled away by events
- ▶ We are in competition with others for funding
- ▶ We don't have a corporate approach so we chase the same money
- ▶ We as a council have outsourced many services which means we have to negotiate

## FINANCE

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- ▶ Those teams internally who could buy from us have tighter budgets
- ▶ We don't have the resources to sell properly

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*"That's confidential - we're in a competitive market"*

*"Consultancy"*

*"Email advertising"*

*"Expanding what we offer outside our boundaries"*

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By investing in assets, developing staff potential and through collaboration with commercial expertise, £2.3m new income will be generated by 2020.

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## *Commercialising services through an innovative business hub*

### Background

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South Staffordshire is an ambitious council with a culture of efficiency, income generation and transformation at its core. The council is committed to finding new sources of revenue and generating income in a bid to become financially self-sustainable in a climate of decreasing financial support. It's been a journey for the council. Traditionally debt-free for the last 20 years, it has had to shift in its thinking and develop into an organisation that seizes

opportunities and makes a difference in the business community.

The drive to explore new ways of raising income that are not at the expense of taxpayers is the result of an Efficiency and Income (E&I) plan, introduced in April 2015. This includes the council's diversification into related and new business areas such as the South Staffordshire Business Hub.

### What we did

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South Staffordshire is home to the i54 Enterprise Zone that has successfully attracted major businesses including Moog and Jaguar Land Rover. The majority of South Staffordshire businesses are, however, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and over 10 per cent of the population is self-employed. This provides the council with an opportunity to deliver an innovative income-generating programme that helps the SME market and supports the district's economic growth.

The Business Hub operates commercially and focuses on helping local businesses grow. It's a major new business venture for the council and it offers micro and small businesses access to added-value

services provided by the council. The decision to create the Business Hub wasn't taken lightly. We conducted extensive research with over 70 local businesses as well as partnerships with key players such as the Local Government Association and a venture capitalist.

Our Business Hub listens to businesses, then innovates by adapting and offering services based on their needs. For example, the council's customer service team underwent commercial accredited training and now offers a business-to-business call handling service.

## KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE BUSINESS HUB

To help local businesses grow by providing:

1. Business accommodation
2. Business connectivity
3. Business growth services

To help us deliver against these objectives and maximise the opportunities created through the Business Hub, we also created and launched Good Life Deals - a website and digital app that promotes local businesses, linking people to special offers and discounts and providing business-to-consumer advertising across South Staffordshire.

## What we learned

We've introduced an 'income generation ideas log', which allows staff to submit business ideas to help the organisation generate income. The council has also encouraged staff to think in new ways, encouraging behavioural change so staff focus on income generation as well as delivering excellent service. We have learned that it's important to:

- ▶ Recognise that it isn't just about income generation - it's about generating profit – because the council wants staff and members to feel comfortable with this commercial approach.
- ▶ Recognise that a council can't be run as a business but we can run businesses and services within the council that are profitable. This

contributes to the local economy and attracts more investment.

- ▶ Be more risk-aware rather than risk-averse.

We knew the council needed to evolve to achieve this new commercial mind-set and this has involved a big shift in thinking for staff. To help with this challenge, a partnership was forged with the University of Birmingham to create a programme based on their 21st Century Public Servant research.

In choosing and developing people based on individual skill sets as opposed to their everyday duties, we've seen an increase in staff self-confidence and more innovative approaches to proposing income generation ideas.

## Our outputs and outcomes

Income generation is now at the heart of the council's thinking and the Business Hub alone is achieving a profit of around £300,000 a year, culminating in £1.43 million by 2020. This shift in the mind-set of the council, retaining a public sector ethos while generating and increasing profit, means the Business Hub is able to concentrate on business activities including;

### COMMERCIALISING THE COUNCIL'S ASSETS FOR SMES:

- ▶ Accommodating growing businesses with new affordable packages
- ▶ Connecting businesses with bespoke training, events, advice and marketing
- ▶ Growing businesses by commercialising council services

## TRANSFORMING AND EXPANDING THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY AND ACCOMMODATION PORTFOLIO:

- ▶ Working with One Public Estate to develop a new income generation programme
- ▶ Investing in new industrial units
- ▶ New substantial investment property acquisitions
- ▶ Reducing running costs with solar and battery power

## REDESIGNED EMPLOYEE ROLES:

- ▶ Using 21st Century Public Servant with the University of Birmingham to grow a staff culture fit for the future

Finally, the Business Hub has helped over 200 businesses to date with its business growth services and over 9,000 people have signed up to Good Life Deals - which is promoted via South Staffordshire's email alerts service powered by Granicus. We're pleased with our achievements to date and will continue on this journey of innovation and commercialisation.



“Integrating with the GovDelivery Communications Cloud (by Granicus) to enable the delivery of targeted email marketing has seen new sign ups to Good Life Deals balloon over the past three months with a 406% increase in new subscribers, email open rate of 42% and 13% click rate.”

- Imre Tolgyesi, Business Hub Lead



## Contact information

**Imre Tolgyesi**

*Business Hub Lead*

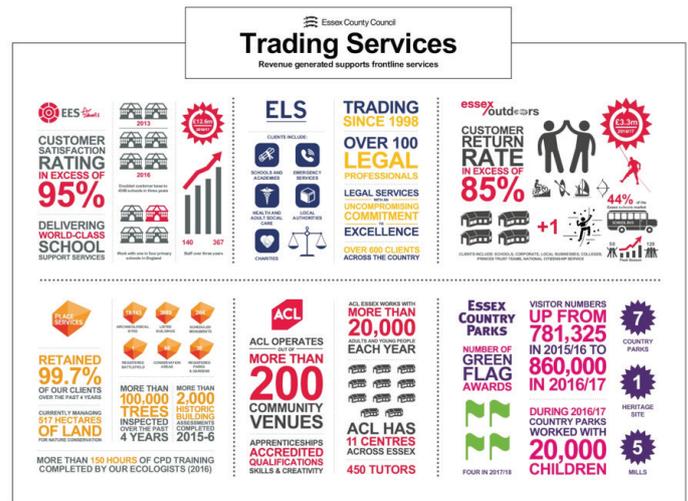
*[i.tolgyesi@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:i.tolgyesi@sstaffs.gov.uk)*

## Accelerating income generation through commercialisation

### Background

ECC Marketing at Essex County Council supports internal services to generate a surplus from income for reinvestment in core services. This contributes to the corporate aim of becoming a more commercial organisation. Essex County Council is increasingly built on the principle of having an innovative, commercial and entrepreneurial culture across the whole organisation.

Alongside this strategic remit, ECC Marketing also trades its services externally to other public sector organisations with a remit to generate income. This includes the Art of Communications toolkit, Design Studio and Marketing.



### What we did

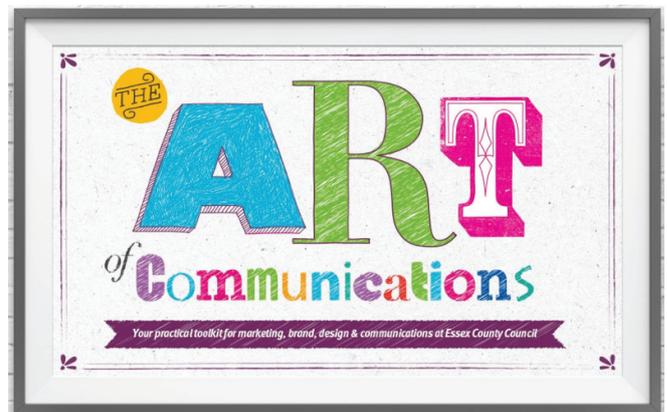
For the past three years we have worked with heads of service to develop outcome focused marketing strategies to help them achieve their commercial objectives.

Our approaches are highly dependent on the nature of the services' business and commercial objectives but some of the more common approaches include:

#### INCREASING COMMS AND MARKETING KNOWLEDGE AMONGST TRADED SERVICES

We created the Art of Communications toolkit to help increase communications and marketing knowledge for traded services. This enables them to plan, prepare

and deliver cost effective and creative marketing communications activities to help them achieve their commercial objectives.



## ACHIEVING SAVINGS AND INCOME VIA CHANNEL SHIFT

Online bookings for Schools Holiday Activity Days was supported by marketing automation targeting customers and prospects in order to reach a wider audience to increase income and make savings via channel shift - by moving face-to-face and phone bookings to online transactions. Key sales windows throughout the year were mapped in order to identify and align our communications activity to 'purchase intent' triggers. Customers/prospects were targeted via email (using the GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus) and social media, ensuring that testimonials, reviews and creative content were utilised to influence the decision-making process.



## ACHIEVING INCOME VIA TARGETED, INTEGRATED MARKETING AND SALES CAMPAIGNS

A reengagement and prospecting campaign for Essex Outdoors was used to drive awareness and sales during the off-peak season. The Essex Outdoors CRM was used to identify specific lapsed customers for reengagement as well as a target audience of customers and prospects who had not previously purchased key seasonally relevant products.



## ENGAGING CUSTOMERS THROUGH CAREFULLY CURATED CONTENT WHICH IS NOT DIRECTLY SALES BASED

In January 2017 Place Services launched a new business-to-business customer e-bulletin. In this particular area, sales are mostly achieved through establishing excellent customer relationships leading to recommendations and referrals, as well



as growth through cross-selling services to existing customers.

The quarterly bulletin content is therefore carefully selected to feature staff news, showcase the breadth of interesting projects the team

is managing, and to feature interesting and newsworthy stories from around the business.

Examples include rare and interesting finds from our archaeology work, new project commissions and news on project completions.

## What we learned

Don't underestimate the importance of identifying all of the members of staff who form part of the customer journey and make sure they are appropriately briefed, understand the changes and know exactly what they are required to do.

Factor in the importance and resource required to curate quality content, whether it be video, images, infographics or testimonials. It's a key requirement, not a nice to have.

When you are introducing new systems and processes against a backdrop of a new commercial culture, make sure you've got the right amount of resource in place so you can carefully monitor and address any issues as soon as they appear. Make sure the key players in the customer journey know exactly what their roles is, who they should flag any issues to and the process for resolving those issues. Effective communication really is key.

## Our outputs and outcomes

This financial year, the Art of Communications toolkit has been adopted by Essex County Council as a solution to increased demand for marketing support at a time of challenging financial circumstances. A bespoke toolkit, with a supporting suite of materials, has been commissioned by ECL, the care and wellbeing company.

Our targeted online support for School Holiday

Activity Days delivered sales of over £4,500 within the first four weeks of the launch.

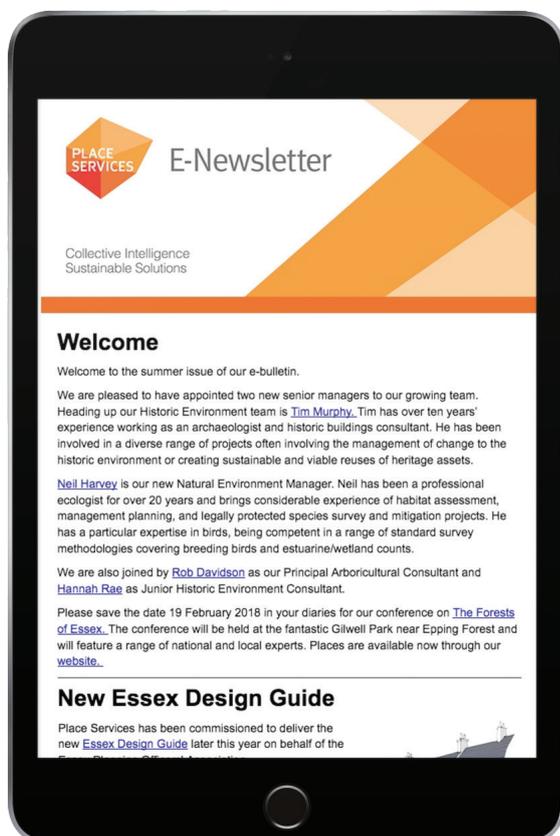
For Essex Outdoors our product-tailored emails were sent to contacts and achieved open rates of between 17% and 27%. These warm leads were followed up within 48 hours by the sales team and once this follow-up was completed, the sales team then approached the other generated contacts.

**Download Granicus' Content Marketing Guide for the Public Sector at: [bit.ly/content-mktg-uk](https://bit.ly/content-mktg-uk)**

The conversion rate of calls to leads was 4.2% and quotations worth over £23,000 were issued. The Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI) was 17:1.

The Place Services e-bulletin worked hand-in-hand with the website, with snippets of the story featured in the bulletin and links to further detail on the Place Services website. In the launch month the customer e-bulletin was the top referrer to the Place Services website generating 10% of the website traffic for the month.

We continue to balance work with internal services to enable further commercialisation, digital and channel shift opportunities whilst pursuing our own business opportunities.



The conversion rate of calls to leads was 4.2% and quotations worth over £23,000 were issued. The Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI) was 17:1.



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## *Generating income from demand for translation services*

### Background

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The Stoke-on-Trent City Council Translation and Interpretation (T&I) Service provides a host of translation and interpretation services across the city and more widely to a number of public sector organisations regionally and nationally. The service's well trained interpreters and translators possess

an excellent understanding of language as well as professional knowledge of working within different types of services such as housing, social, medical and legal service with an offer across a number of channels; face-to-face, written and by telephone.

### What we did

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T&I has seen demand increase considerably over the last three years. In part this has organically grown as migration trends nationally have changed resulting in a higher demand for these services. It's also been as a direct result of a number of changes introduced within the service which targeted increasing income as an outcome.

#### **GETTING THE MODEL RIGHT**

Our model allows resources to be drawn down from a pool of 130 local and qualified interpreters and translators. This means that the council has less direct overheads and individuals can be added to the pool from anywhere in the country. This approach means both flexibility and cost benefits for the council and any customers using the services and is allowing services to be sold at an hourly rate that is almost £100 less than a major national competitor.

#### **REPUTATION LEADING**

The Translation and Interpretation Service has earned a strong reputation for quality work at best value for

money prices, made possible through innovation and in trying to deliver best in class service which puts the customer first. Our innovative approach has seen the provision of joint training with the University of Manchester to 80 interpreters and translators, which has brought about a quality standard, unique in the sector in this area.

#### **HAVING THE RIGHT VALUE BASE**

Not surprisingly, the service works in complex and diverse environments and often with vulnerable people from a number of different cultures. T&I offers a service guarantee that provides reassurance that confidentiality, impartiality, equality, quality, reliability, value for money and high levels of customer care will be adhered to at all times.

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## What we learned

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While this is a very niche market, there are a number of areas that we're now pursuing and to deliver further benefits and income we are investing in an additional self-funding post.

We have learned that it's important to seek new demand areas – for example working with businesses which are looking to export and require translation services.

We learned too that because this is a specialist area of work, careful recruitment and training of staff is important – for example, the head of service speaks

six different languages and as a result is able to identify new income opportunities.

Innovation is key and seeking out and working with 'right fit' partners is vital – for example the University of Manchester.

Our strong service values, combined with understanding and empathy, have helped us to generate both repeat business and provide new opportunities for growth.

## Our outputs and outcomes

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- ▶ 4,183 interpretation sessions have been commissioned and 342 documents have been translated in various languages during the last financial year.
- ▶ The 2016/17 revenue outturn of the Translation and Interpretation Service has seen £136,800 contributed to the council's overall general fund position.

### **Email bulletins – embedded in the future of services**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council uses Granicus' citizen engagement platform to reach 38,000 subscribers on a range of topics. With such a large, diverse and engaged subscriber base, the council knows there is more commercial opportunity to leverage from the channel. Stoke plans to use its email bulletins service as part of the T&I comms strategy going forward and expects the channel to yield results.



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# Granicus + CAN Collaboration

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## *Generating income from your email bulletins – a three-month pilot to prove the opportunity*

### Background

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With local government under increasing pressure to generate revenue, a new approach to raising advertising income is needed. Digital advertising on council websites is now an established income generation solution, however until now, email advertising and its potential to generate advertising income in the public sector hadn't been tested or demonstrated at scale. The GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus enables the targeting of messages to specific audiences and, most importantly, citizens who have opted in to updates from government and other public sector organisations, making for a highly engaged and loyal subscriber base. With nearly 11 million subscribers connected via the GovDelivery Network, Granicus brings massive scale to the opportunity. This combination of opted-in and segmented audiences is something advertisers value tremendously, and is a rare opportunity.

Website advertising is monetised on a cost-per-thousand-impressions basis. Adverts targeted via email allow an alternative business model based on clicks and engagement. Targeting adverts based on subscriber interests, topic-specific preferences, socio-demographical characteristics, and engagement with previous messaging; and measuring the adverts' effectiveness based on real metrics (engagement rates), is both appealing to advertisers and ensures audiences see fewer, more relevant adverts.

Working in partnership with the Council Advertising Network (CAN) who provided the adverts and a handful of councils happy to carry the advertising messages, Granicus embarked on a pilot project to better understand which adverts worked best for citizens, councils, and the advertisers, and to assess potential income generation opportunities. The pilot would help to prove the opportunity for advertisers looking to deliver powerful and highly targeted messages which bring a demonstrable return on investment (ROI).

It was agreed that no actual income would be generated during the pilot which served to prove a concept.

#### THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE PILOT WERE:

- ▶ Highlight public sector demand for generating advertising revenue
- ▶ Demonstrate value to advertisers who would pay for targeted advertising and measurable outcomes
- ▶ Reach a large audience with a range of advertising content:
  - Public sector campaigns
  - Commercial advertising
- ▶ Measure the effectiveness (for different types of adverts)
- ▶ Devise a commercial model that works for both public sector organisations and advertisers

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## What we did

We (Granicus) established a three-month pilot with CAN. The pilot was deliberately low-key working with seven councils. Although a small number of councils were involved, the combined reach of the

seven councils' communications delivered via the GovDelivery Communications Cloud was sizeable at 657k citizens. The pilot ran over a 16-week period.

### COUNCILS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT

Council	Total Potential Audience
Sheffield	108,623
Southampton	111,343
Staffordshire	109,593
Kirklees	39,373
West Sussex	226,905
South Staffordshire	8,422
Bradford	53,008
	<b>657,267</b>

Advertising was placed by Granicus designers at the bottom of messages in the 'tag-line' to ensure advertising could not be perceived to be intrusive. The range of advertisers included government - for

example the 'living wage' and 'registering to vote' campaigns, plus commercial ads from Skoda and Ford. We measured open and click-through rates to gauge the overall engagements.

# Granicus + CAN Collaboration

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## EXAMPLES OF THE BOTTOM BANNER ADS



## What we learned

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We learned which campaigns generated the highest opens, views and click-throughs and in turn which created the most potential income. The pilot proved the potential of public sector email marketing to be a credible and rewarding opportunity for the organisations owning the subscriber data to bring in advertising revenue, and for advertisers to reach different engaged audiences.

Results have exceeded expectations generating good engagement rates, which, when scaled up to match the UK public sector’s potential reach through the GovDelivery Communications Cloud and Network (by Granicus) – 11 million UK-based subscribers - presents a huge and unique opportunity to engage more citizens in national and niche campaigns through the safe framework that Granicus and CAN can provide.

Both public sector organisations and advertisers are keen to experiment with the adverts further, particularly given that for the pilot the adverts were placed at the bottom and “outside” of the body of the email – the area with the lowest read rate.

Our next steps are to develop this opportunity further for our clients and offer more highly targeted advertising opportunities using audience segmentation. We will run further trials which will test different ad positions within the messages, and report on the conversion rate between opens and ad clicks to help assess success.

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## Our outputs and outcomes

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### RESULTS PER CAMPAIGN:

Campaign name	Total advert clicks	Unique advert clicks	Participating councils	Advert length (days)	Total potential reach
Living Wage	12,780	8,019	7	69	658,763
Voter Registration	618	447	6	15	618,000
Skoda	241	182	1	24	241,000
Democracy Club	164	119	3	9	102,500
Ford	90	59	2	4	225,000

If your organisation is interested in generating income through email marketing channels, please get in touch with Granicus for more information.



### Contact information

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# *Saving lives and meeting business objectives through a partnership with Highways England*

## Background

Statistics show that people are 30 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads in rain than in snow. Figures also reveal that drivers travelling too fast for the current conditions identify as a factor in one in nine road deaths, with drivers failing to alter how they drive in response to changing conditions on the road.

Following the death or serious injury of almost 3,000 people driving in the rain on the UK's roads in 2015, Highways England decided to launch a new safety campaign for 2016/17 to warn drivers "when it rains, it kills". The Rain Kills safety campaign featured radio, TV, cinema and poster advertising from winter 2016 into spring 2017.

As a part of this campaign, Highways England enlisted the support of the Met Office, the authoritative voice on weather, to help convey a credible campaign message through online

advertising, reaching the audience Highways England needed to engage. The collaboration enabled the Met Office to generate revenue through an advertising contract with Highways England, as part of a wider 'Get ready for winter' editorial partnership.

### THE WEATHER LINK

In the UK, we are fanatical about the weather! This is evident from the average 25 million visits the UK public makes to the Met Office website every month. Of all of those visits, around 85 per cent of us go direct to a weather forecast page to keep updated through the day and week of the latest forecasts. The Met Office App, which has received over 3.5 million downloads since its latest release in 2016, provides regular updates on the ever-changing UK weather and has over one million monthly visits.

## What we did

The Met Office worked with Highways England to produce specific travel advice to help drivers prepare for journeys. The advice included preparing vehicles for and driving in severe weather, wet weather conditions, and during the winter months.

With specific advice messages around 'being safe and seen', 'taking control' and 'safe breaking distances', the safety campaign materials shared advice from expert voices at Highways England, RAC, and the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

The Met Office then helped to promote this content across a variety of social channels, digitally via both desktop and mobile website advertising.

### USING DESKTOP AND MOBILE WEB ADVERTISING

Using the web and mobile website audience reach from the Met Office, the most recent 2017 Rain Kills campaign delivered Highways England's advisory messages at the right time and place. By creating

## TOP TIP – GROW YOUR REACH BY 618% USING A WEB OVERLAY

The Met Office recently collaborated with Granicus ([bit.ly/MetOffice-UK](http://bit.ly/MetOffice-UK)) to significantly increase downloads of its weather app and subscribers to digital weather updates, including the National Weather Warnings Service. Implementing a web overlay increased the number of web visitors subscribing to Met Office alerts by 618%.

bespoke 'rain-triggered' thresholds, the Rain Kills safety adverts were displayed when it mattered and in real time. These adverts supplemented the wider safety campaign advice available. Whether the Met Office user was viewing the weather forecast on desktop or on a mobile device, as long as there was forecast for rain, the Highways England safety message displayed.

## OUR OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The Highways England digital advertising campaign was a success with the Met Office audience

responding well to the campaign messages. The rain-triggered safety advert placements delivered the message, at the right time and in the right place. The post campaign survey demonstrated 59 per cent of those surveyed said they would drive slower because of seeing the ad-content on the Met Office site. Actual road accidents stats will be published September 2018. The period in which the specific advertising campaign was live across the website experienced 22,089,567 page views, and 19,104,871 unique page views.

## What we learned

The Met Office and Highways England learned that working together effectively with another public trusted brand, which has an authoritative voice and joint corporate objectives to save public lives, works. For the Met Office, introducing advertising and

sponsorship opportunities means partners' critical messages reach new members of the target audience directly, while bringing revenue back for reinvestment in services that benefit the UK population.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The average cost of a fatality on the road is £1.78 million (including lost output, medical and ambulance costs and human costs), and the estimated total value of prevention of reported road accidents in 2015 was £15.3 billion in Great Britain.



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# Opinion Piece: Local Government Finances

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## *Commercial councils - more than just the latest buzzword?*

by Andrew Burns

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Local government faces three key drivers. Firstly, the effects of austerity with cuts in government funding alongside rising cost pressures. Secondly, the need for councils to be more self-sufficient, a key part of the government 100% business rates retention agenda. Thirdly, the desire of local leaders to help improve their places for local people via economic regeneration and community wellbeing.

Councils being more commercial responds to all three drivers; either more income to help mitigate otherwise more damaging service cuts, or better use of the councils' balance sheet to help promote local economic regeneration. However like every buzzy concept it is not the single magic bullet to achieve financial balance and sustainability, while avoiding painful cuts in the process.

Being commercial is not new in local government, what is perhaps new is the intensity and prevalence across most councils. Our forefathers built municipal local government on the back of borrowing to fund major infrastructure investment for economic and community wellbeing.

This increasing commercial intensity is revealing in two ways. Firstly, more reliance on the direct purchase of commercial property specifically for its income yielding capacity. Secondly, more economic regeneration investments in the hope of growing the business rates base. With both funded via a surge in borrowing.

All commercial ventures carry a risk. But absolutely local government needs to be more commercial, especially if it helps our local communities and avoids more painful service cuts. For councils increasing their commercial activities it's important that they are 'savvy' with the due diligence required.

More savvy due diligence means having the right skills to evaluate, communicate and manage the commercial risk involved; judging affordability on the basis of what could go wrong and not just the cost of borrowing, it means putting in place the level and type of governance appropriate to the risk and it means councils acting proportionately.

In the real world more commercial risk inevitably means that some ventures will fail. For local government, the reputational risk and damage that ensues are much greater than in the private sector; remember Icelandic banks!

So when local councils take commercial decisions they should do so also after rehearsing how they would defend the decision to their public and especially if it were to go wrong. There is a key role here for strategic communications professionals to explain why – not just what – local political leaders are doing here, when acting more commercially. Firstly, to avoid any perception that councils are not carrying out an appropriate level of due diligence and ongoing governance around their commercial risks. And secondly, to avoid any substantial

perceptions that individual councils are taking on disproportionate levels of debt and aggregate levels of risk as a result of their commercial ventures.

A higher standard of clear explanation and open governance are needed when investing in commercial property to generate income alone, rather than provide services or promote regeneration.

Andrew Burns is Director of Finance and Resources at Staffordshire County Council and President of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

He tweets at [@CFOstaffscc](https://twitter.com/CFOstaffscc)

## Best practice

### INVOLVE CITIZENS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES

When public trust in politicians and government institutions is at an all-time low, the public sector must find ways to reconnect with citizens and instil confidence. Being transparent about how your organisation is spending public money and generating new income can help build better relationships with communities.

By gathering feedback from citizens about how your initiatives are affecting their lives, and by collaborating with different stakeholders (across multiple sectors), you could enrich and optimise your organisation's entrepreneurial approaches. To do this, you must make it easy for people to get involved in decision-making processes and have their say. Download this guide ([bit.ly/public-meetings](https://bit.ly/public-meetings)) to learn how your organisation can:

- ▶ Communicate effectively to "bring people along with you"
- ▶ Empower more voices that help you improve services
- ▶ Create a more inclusive and transparent dialogue
- ▶ Gather and analyse citizen feedback quickly and efficiently
- ▶ Harness collective experience and perspectives to improve decision-outcomes

**[DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE](https://bit.ly/public-meetings)**  
**[\(\[bit.ly/public-meetings\]\(https://bit.ly/public-meetings\)\)](https://bit.ly/public-meetings)**

## Better citizen engagement reduces call centre costs by 14%

### Background

Each year Gedling Borough Council collects council tax from every household, a process which has traditionally caused extra work for staff during the billing period and a huge influx of phone calls from citizens who have questions about paying their tax bill. Council leaders needed to find a way of

reducing the number of calls to their call centre in order to free up staff time and reduce call centre fees. They had to get more people managing their tax payments via Direct Debit and their account details online.

### What we did

In an effort to increase the number of people managing their tax payments and details online, and residents' awareness of other council services, Gedling used the GovDelivery Communications Cloud (by Granicus) to encourage more people to subscribe to its "Keep Me Posted" email bulletins service. This gave the council an opportunity to engage people in advance of the council tax billing period, ensuring they were well informed and less likely to need support over the phone.

The Council Tax team at Gedling provided the Communications team with email addresses for 10,090 residents and together they identified the campaign's key messages. They sent an email bulletin to those people, directing them to the online council tax services, along with an incentive encouraging residents to sign up to bulletins from other council services too.

### What we learned

#### *GovDelivery Communications Cloud increases engagement and cuts costs*

This campaign was a really easy way to get in touch with residents and reduce avoidable contact. Gedling had to make sure they were careful with the data and only used it for the purposes of council tax but the overall result and savings speak for themselves.

*"We definitely recommend this and will be doing this every year, building on the success of last year."*

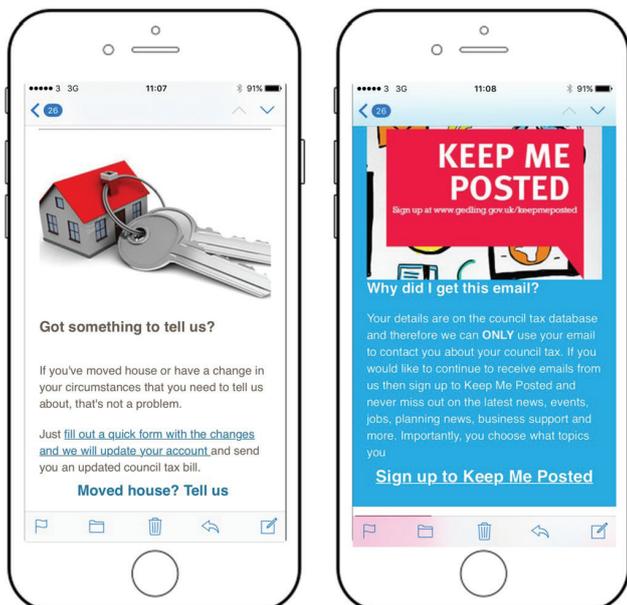
*Rob McCleary, Communications Manager,  
Gedling Borough Council*

## Our outputs and outcomes

### Reduced phone contact, increased efficiency and financial savings

As a direct result of the email campaign, more citizens were able to pay their bill and update personal details online instead of feeling the need to call. This led to 3,500 fewer calls in total to the Council Tax team in comparison to the same period the year before, representing a saving of £8k on phone contact costs.

The email campaign saw a 70% open rate and prompted 1,000 residents to subscribe to other updates via Keep Me Posted, increasing the council's reach for other campaigns. The team used the analytics available in the GovDelivery system to cleanse and update its database, removing any invalid email addresses.



### Metrics

- ▶ **3.5k** fewer calls
- ▶ **£8k** in savings for the council
- ▶ **14% reduction** in calls from residents
- ▶ **Easy** online customer experience
- ▶ More **efficient records** management
- ▶ **10k** contacts targeted in specific campaign
- ▶ **1k** new subscribers to other services' updates



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[@Robspotlight](#)

## *Smart use of targeted email to save money and time, and deliver real channel shift*

### Background

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Wrexham County Borough Council serves over 134k residents. In the past its primary citizen engagement channel was the printed resident magazine. However with more funding cuts and a greater pressure to reduce costs, the council looked to

remove the need for a printed magazine completely through a far reaching and efficient email strategy, placing the GovDelivery Communications Cloud (by Granicus) at its core.

### What we did

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In 2012/13 the cost to the council and residents of our printed magazine was £24.3k a year. We decided to seek ways to reduce this cost and provide more tailored information and engagement options for residents.

In 2013/14 we moved to a mix of print and email communications saving the council almost £14k in the process. But we knew that we needed to go further as the squeeze on public sector budgets increased

and the requirement to deliver better services to our residents grew. So we looked closely at the kind of information our residents required and built a tailored list of 'topics' which our residents could sign up to receive alerts on.

We now have 43 topics set up for our residents to choose from, many of which are automated alerts and require zero maintenance.

### What we learned

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We have learned about the kind of topics our residents want specific information on. So we now offer tailored emails on topics ranging from bin alerts and planning applications all the way through to local "what's on" news and severe weather updates. This provides our customers with choice rather than us broadcasting lots of information which isn't relevant to them.

Our automated personalised bin collection alerts have attracted 7k subscribers and with an open

rate of 54%, we know the service is a handy way for residents to be reminded to put their bins out and hear about any service changes.

Using Granicus' marketing automation and segmentation features for this topic alone has led to fully automated bulletins for multiple collection rounds, saving an officer a whole day's work a week by eliminating the need to build and schedule hundreds of bulletins manually.

## Our outputs and outcomes

We are delivering hard savings through the effective channel shift of our residents away from face-to-face and telephone contacts to digital transactions and self-service.

In 2016/17 we moved away entirely from a printed resident magazine and to embrace the e-zine channel instead. This channel costs just £199.99 per year – a saving of over £24k on where we were five years ago with a printed publication. And unlike the printed publication we are now able to accurately measure our engagements through our digital channels and evaluate residents' responses to our calls to action – this was rarely ever possible with a printed magazine.

Our recent survey revealed 28.4% of subscribers had avoided the need to visit the council thanks to

an email update, and 27.5% of subscribers hadn't called because the email updates provided them with the information they needed. Scaled up to reflect our 33.3k-subscriber base (equivalent to 25% of residents), this reduction in customer contact represents a significant cost saving to the council.

At 62.5%, our average engagement rate across all bulletin topics is well above industry benchmarks, ([bit.ly/2017Benchmark-UK](http://bit.ly/2017Benchmark-UK)) indicating that our audience remains engaged and keen to receive tailored information via email bulletin. We're encouraged by the success we've seen so far, and will continue to identify ways to deliver better, more targeted communications for our residents and at reduced costs.

My Updates Survey March 2017 1317 responses			
Face 2 Face £4.73 per visit	£4.73 (per visit) x 374: £1,769.02	Estimate savings based on full subscriber list (62.5% engagement rate): £27,564	Estimate savings based on full subscriber list (100% engagement rate): £44,102
Telephone £2.51 per call	£2.51 (per call) x 359: £901.09	Estimate savings based on full subscriber list (62.5% Engagement rate): £14,105	Estimate savings based on full subscriber list (100% engagement rate): £22,567
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,670.11</b>	<b>£41,669</b>	<b>£66,669</b>

### Survey Impact

Our recent survey revealed 28.4% of subscribers had avoided the need to visit the council thanks to an email update, and 27.5% of subscribers hadn't called because the email updates provided them with the information they needed.



## Contact information

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## Research-led foster carer recruitment campaign saves council nearly £1 million

### Background

In 2014 in Staffordshire, there was an immediate need to recruit 50% more foster carers with 50% less funding than the previous year. The targets:

- ▶ Place at least 39 children in long-term, short-term, respite or weekend foster care
- ▶ Ensure at least four young people from residential care with behavioural difficulties are placed in a safe and secure home
- ▶ Place six teenagers in need of mentoring support and lodgings in a safe environment
- ▶ Save the organisation at least £500,000

### What we did

Key to our success was targeting the right people with the right experiences and motivations, and solid competitive positioning in the market place. Without the ability to pay foster carers as much as the private sector, we knew that demonstrating our outstanding social and emotional support as an employer would be perceived as an important benefit for our target audiences. The campaign comprised three sub-campaigns:

1. **“Flexible Fostering”** - Challenging misconceptions of caring being a full-time commitment; recruiting to long and short term and targeting busy, community leaders.
2. **“We See Your Potential”** – Niche marketing to recruit carers for children currently living in residential homes using what we believed was a unique solution; building relationships with retiring police officers, prison officers and youth workers who had the right experiences and skills to deal with challenging behaviour.
3. **“Room to Grow”** - Targeting families with a spare room to act as hosts for teenagers not yet ready to live independently.

An innovative approach to segmentation helped us to recognise the “customer” aspect of recruiting and to better understand what attracts a prospective foster carer or adopter. By using a “value-moding” segmentation system, we categorised the current cohort of foster carers according to their values and social attitudes to provide insight for how to target and position our conversations to meet these “pioneer transcendents” needs. This meant:

- ▶ Leveraging messages about challenge, local need and the ability to self-select and self-serve to find the information needed
- ▶ Reducing misconceptions of the experiences and time required, by focusing on the right person for the right job, and illustrating the “day in the life” of different types of foster carer
- ▶ Utilising and motivating stakeholders and wider community networks to advocate the campaign and create conversations in local communities.

Each campaign was phased to allow for the application of behavioural change principles. By

tracking the status of enquiries through data capture and customer relationship databases, we were able to understand any emerging barriers to application and when incentives, in the form of engagement activity or timely communication, should be used.



## What we learned

Mapping the emotional journey people take to enquiring about foster care helped us to plan when, where and how we could intervene and nudge them towards picking up the phone and make an enquiry.

Through ongoing evaluation and analysis of web statistics and online comments, we ensured that implementation tactics responded to the effective messages and channels.

## Our outputs and outcomes

Campaign	Carers Recruited		Enquiries	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Flexible Fostering	36	52 + 25 in training = 77	260	700
We See Your Potential	4	10	40	80
Room to Grow	4	6 during campaign (20 now in place)	20	37

We smashed the £500,000 savings target, saving £955,040 in total. Our return on investment was £346 for every pound spent, based on securing places for children who otherwise could have

cost the council up to £40,000 each in residential care fees. There was also a significant campaign underspend.

### Our advice to others

Market segmentation and value-moding were absolutely key to our approach and the success we've seen.



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# Video comms helps reduce demand on NHS sexual health services

## Background

Sexual health can be a difficult subject matter. Lothian Sexual Health which is part of NHS Lothian produced three topic-specific high quality animated films to improve communication on clinical procedures and reduce clinical time needed for patients.

1. Vasectomy advice:  
[bit.ly/nhslothian-vasectomy](http://bit.ly/nhslothian-vasectomy)
2. Abortion advice:  
[bit.ly/nhslothian-termination](http://bit.ly/nhslothian-termination)
3. The coil advice (the medical name for this is IUD, an intrauterine device, or IUS, an intrauterine system):  
[bit.ly/NHSlothian-coil](http://bit.ly/NHSlothian-coil)

### THREE VIDEOS AVAILABLE ONLINE:

## What we did

We produced three high quality clinical information films using animation to help improve the patient experience and communicate these procedures in a cost effective and efficient way.

For example, if a patient watches the information film about the coil and is able to complete a checklist, we save the cost of a clinical session for each procedure. This communication tactic has already been shared with approximately eight other health boards across the UK as an example of good clinical practice.

The vasectomy and abortion films provide in-depth clinical information prior to the procedure. This enables the clinical team to be confident that the patient has robust information prior to proceeding

and allows clinics to run more effectively as a result.

A recent survey of 150 women attending the abortion clinic showed a third had visited our page on the website. In these clinical situations patients are asked if they have seen the films and if they are happy to proceed.



## What we learned

For the abortion video we created content which was generic enough to be used by every NHS health

board in Scotland and introduced a local printable factsheet to communicate any regional differences.

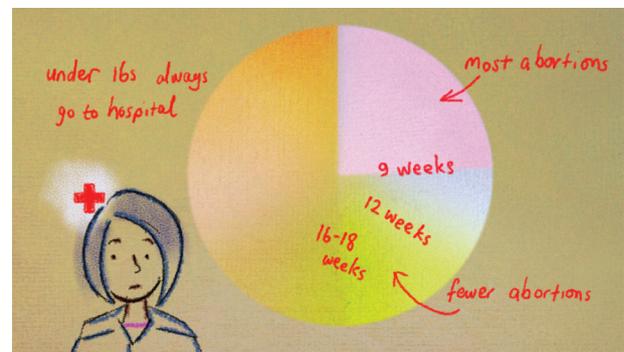
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This was a very cost effective way of creating one resource for all boards.

The creative was then developed for a pan-European resource which will launch in autumn 2017. In a randomised control trial, we will test how the animated explanation of early medical abortion helps the clinical procedure. France, Scotland, Portugal and Sweden are involved in this research project.

The coil (IUD or IUS) procedure resource is also generic enough to be able to be used across the country and has been shared widely.

We've overcome many challenges in terms of making the content make sense everywhere - taking into account local differences in procedure - however the use of animation for these subjects tests very well with our patients.



## Our outputs and outcomes

Each time a patient uses the video clip and the checklist form, we eliminate the need for a clinical counselling appointment with a nurse. While we need to quantify and verify our savings further, early indications represent a potential annual saving of £25,000 (based on the video clip saving a minimum of five nurse sessions a week). Our estimated cost of one nurse counselling session a week for a year is

£5,000, so there are significant savings to be made if you scale that up across the UK.

By providing clear, accessible and effective communication – for example using video animation – NHS teams have an opportunity to streamline processes and reduce the demand for in-person appointments.

### Our advice to others

The video communications help save a lot of time in clinical appointments and increase the likelihood that a clinic will run on time.



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# Opinion Piece

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## *How communicators can be more commercial – eight top tips*

by Nick Edmonds

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The way councils are being funded is changing. The future of grants isn't fully known yet, and councils may have to rely on the income they can raise themselves. This means inevitably having to learn how to trade services and be more commercial. It's not easy and sees services having to look at what they have traditionally done and consider how they can operate on the open market with all the challenges and opportunities this can bring. It also means wholesale cultural change which can't and doesn't happen overnight. Whatever stage you're at in commercialisation, there are obvious considerations that should be taken into account.

### **BUILD YOUR BUSINESS CASE**

It sounds so simple but it can be one of the easiest things to overlook. Don't just leap in. Take time to build your business case, test it and make sure it stacks up. Challenge every element of what you're doing and get others to too. Be comfortable it's the strongest it can be and then confidently stand behind it.

### **KNOW YOUR TRUE COSTS**

An essential part of moving from providing a service to commercialisation is about understanding your true costs. Underestimate these at your own peril. Make sure any pitches for business, any future planning and resource estimations stack up accordingly. Otherwise you could be counting your costs quite literally.

### **TEST AND UNDERSTAND YOUR MARKET**

At every stage, make sure you test and understand your market. It's significantly different trading in an open market than it is providing a service. Understand what makes your offer, brand or opportunity unique and build on this. Take the surprises out, make sure your products stack up and be clear on where you and your organisation fit. Critically, learn from your competitors and make sure that you adapt in light of what you see.

### **SEE WHERE YOU CAN COLLABORATE**

If you're looking at trading across the organisation, see if there are any other services that you can naturally collaborate with. Additionally understand if there are areas where you don't have to go it alone. Is there a general legal contract that could be adopted for general use, for example or can you share resources for sales?

### **UPSKILL AND DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE**

It goes without saying that your people are your biggest asset. Assess realistically where you and your team are placed and have a clear plan as to how you'll get to the level you need to be. Without this, it's unlikely your targets will be achieved.

### **PUSH YOUR THINKING**

For years, we've been driven by providing services in a more traditional way. But operating in a commercial environment means that we need to turn this on its

head. We have to push our thinking and embrace opportunities and challenges that may feel alien to use. Be brave, look for new ideas and step out of your comfort zone. It really will help you succeed.

### **CUSTOMER FIRST**

Stand by the principle of “customer first”. It isn’t the case that public service doesn’t do that now but this is a different way of thinking that comes with being truly commercial. Without quality customer service at the centre of what you do, you’ll very quickly understand the impact it has on your business. Paying for services through choice raises expectations and you need to be able to respond accordingly. If you haven’t got the right attitude towards looking after your customers, get it sorted quickly or it’s unlikely you’ll be trading for long.

### **DON’T FORGET THE OBVIOUS**

Finally, make legal your best friends. While it’s good to push the boundaries of what is possible, don’t do it at the behest of common sense. Make sure what you’re doing stacks up legally. It may feel frustrating but it’s better to be safe than sorry.

*“The future of grants isn’t fully known yet, and councils may have to rely on the income they can raise themselves.”*

**Nick Edmonds is Section 151 Officer at Stoke-on-Trent City Council.**



## *Saving money and generating income from channel shift and online advertising*

### Background

Havering Council uses the GovDelivery Communications Cloud to keep in regular contact with residents. It is a key platform in its digital transformation and channel shift strategy. Havering's digital strategy has been two-fold. Firstly, the council set out to generate income through advertising across digital channels. A target of raising £20k in revenue from email newsletter advertising this year has been set.

Secondly, Havering decided to identify areas where digital transformation and increased service efficiency could move the council away from traditional and more costly solutions – for example encouraging electronic or automated sign-ups rather than via traditional customer service advisors to save money.

### What we did

As a part of our channel shift strategy we identified the opportunity to increase online renewals and subscriptions to areas such as our garden waste collection service in order to support the council's priority to reduce service inefficiencies and running costs and generate an income stream. Alongside other campaign tactics, we delivered a series of targeted email campaigns driving staff and residents to a dedicated webpage where they could sign up for the collection service.

Our resident engagement, through a targeted email strategy, has seen us grow our subscriber base to

more than 135k subscribers overall who are now receiving at least two emails per month - many, many times the circulation of our local newspaper – and so creating valuable communications real estate of owned platforms.

In addition to these two monthly emails a total of 40 tailored email newsletters targeting residents interested in particular neighbourhoods or 'topics' are also produced on a regular basis by the communications team. Subscriber numbers for these emails range from just over a hundred to tens of thousands.

### What we learned

While we constantly strive to provide value for money, we must think more commercially. Local government is changing, and the digital platforms we use are transforming the way we communicate with residents, giving us direct engagement with them.

With a growing subscriber list of 135k subscribers (equivalent to 57 per cent of the local population), our email updates have changed the way we communicate with our communities, giving us an opportunity to be more commercial in our approach

as well as support local businesses and the economy through advertising on our email newsletters.

We had an already established base of contacts for advertising in our quarterly resident magazine but we engaged with these advertisers and encouraged them to consider using our email bulletins for

advertising, emphasising our subscriber numbers and open rates that were consistently higher than industry averages. We gave some adverts for free at the beginning, just to gauge interest, and to prove the business case. Now, we charge £300 for an advert at the top of the bulletin and £250 at the bottom, per instance.

## Our outputs and outcomes

**In terms of advertising, across 2016/17, the council generated over £18k through advertising in our email updates. Revenue per email bulletin ranges from £300 to £1200.**

Open rates for the Living in Havering email newsletters are typically around 27% with c60k opens and 34k unique opens, giving us valuable reach and engagement opportunities plus the ability to drive traffic to specific web pages and calls to actions.

The significant achievement, however, has been in using our email marketing platform to send personalised reminders encouraging residents to renew their garden waste collection service subscriptions online or by automated telephone. This has resulted in 73% of renewals taking place via these self-serve means, avoiding the need for any interaction with a customer service advisor.

Increased renewal rates also improve the efficiency of our operations given that fewer bins (where a subscription has lapsed) are picked up only to be redelivered (once residents realise and renew). The email bulletins provide timely prompts. This approach has delivered impressive outputs and outcomes for Havering:

### **YEAR 1 OF USING EMAIL MARKETING TO PROMOTE SERVICE (2015/16)**

- ▶ 18k collection service renewals
- ▶ 375% increase in renewals on previous year
- ▶ 100% increase in new registrations
- ▶ £350k additional revenue to the council

### **YEAR 3 OF USING EMAIL MARKETING TO PROMOTE SERVICE (2017/18)**

- ▶ **Nearly 75% of renewals completed online/automated phone**
- ▶ **£770k revenue to the council from online/automated phone sales**

We talk a lot about digital transformation in local government but this particular success has delivered real benefits and improvements for our residents – especially as a result of the personalised email reminders and easy self-serve customer experience (to complete transactions).



## Contact information

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## Smart use of email to increase citizen participation and secure sponsorship income

### Background

Caerphilly is the fifth largest local authority in Wales in terms of population – with 180k residents - and the fourth largest in terms of population density.

The council's predicted net revenue expenditure for 2017/18 is £325m (which incorporates a £9m savings target) and the anticipated cumulative savings target for 2017/18 to 2021/22 = £38m.

The council's communications goals are:

- ▶ Reach more citizens with more timely, tailored communications
- ▶ Reduce costs of communications activities including: traditional hard copy expenses / labour intensiveness / disjointed approaches
- ▶ Customer contact channel shift
- ▶ Generate income
- ▶ Improve citizen satisfaction
- ▶ Devolve production and publication of bulletins to service areas
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of these changes

### What we did

In previous years the council produced 10 printed editions of its resident newspaper called 'Newsline' per annum and distributed it to every household across the county borough.

In order to achieve challenging savings targets, it was agreed that the frequency of the publication would be reduced to four issues each year. As a result of this change, the council was keen to investigate alternative ways of delivering news and information to residents in a more cost effective manner.

An electronic version of our printed publication was developed to complement Newsline and this was called NewsOnline. This is now produced every fortnight and is delivered electronically to those who have subscribed to it.

We also developed a range of email bulletin topics our residents would be interested in subscribing to (delivered using the GovDelivery Communications

Cloud by Granicus). For example, we created a bespoke Caerphilly 10K bulletin for those interested in running this important race series in our community.

We had an existing 4.2k email addresses from the previous three races, some of whom we expected would want to race again. To encourage more, and new, sign-ups we promoted in our first bulletin an "early bird discount" for registrations. We heavily promoted our email subscription offer across all of our owned channels and platforms.



## What we learned

Our digital engagement strategy has centred on creating a range of topics which our residents are interested in and has enabled us to increase our subscriber numbers, our open rates significantly and the take-up of our services and events. As a result, we're increasing our revenue from paid-for activities such as the Caerphilly Challenge Series.



## Our outputs and outcomes

### OUR JOURNEY TO DATE HAS SEEN US GROW OUR SUBSCRIBER BASE SIGNIFICANTLY:

- ▶ We 'soft-launched' our email subscription offer as Stay Connected in July 2015 – we initially had just 500 subscribers for our single topic - News Online email
- ▶ In May 2016 we had grown this to 10.5k subscribers offering a choice of six active topics for our residents (Events, News Online, Roadworks, Bus timetables, Caerphilly 10K, Consultations)
- ▶ And at September 2017 we have grown our base to 53k subscribers who have opted in to receive updates via 22 public subscription topics (including Leisure and Sports News, Homes Ready to Rent, Business, Bins and Recycling News and Property Availability)

### THE DEDICATED CAERPHILLY 10K EMAIL TOPIC IS DELIVERING RESULTS. FOR EXAMPLE (2017 RACE):

- ▶ In the launch weekend we saw an impressive 58% open rate and over 200 runners signed up
- ▶ In total nearly 2.3k runners signed up and took part in the race (more than 300 more than in 2016)

- ▶ We now have over 6.2k subscribers to this topic alone - 41% up from where we began at the beginning of this new approach
- ▶ Our average engagement rate for the topic is high – a 41% open rate, with over 2.4k unique opens per send
- ▶ We see spikes in event registration following email sends
- ▶ **The increases in reach, subscriber engagement and registered runners as a result of the digital strategy (powered by Granicus' technology) have helped us attract and secure a commercial sponsor for the race, boosting income into the council.**



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## Another budget cut? Hold the call for redundancies – there’s another way

### Background

So, your budget’s been cut for the umpteenth year in a row, but workload is on the up and the expectations from colleagues and members continue to rise. Cue – “income generation”.

When faced with a corporate programme of “core service transformation” (we all know what that means) several years ago I had two options.

Make redundancies, stop the magazine (which members love and which consistently proves its worth in every poll of resident satisfaction, trust and well-informed levels), cut corners and compromise on quality, or, dip our collective team toe in the realms of income generation. I chose the latter.

### What we did

Where to start? We could introduce chargeable services internally – but departments are squeezed too, can they afford it, do they want it? Or we could chase the external money – yikes, we’ve never done that before.

After establishing that there was a desire among senior political and officer leaders for capacity to be maintained, we restructured and began to offer internally many of those services that departments traditionally get elsewhere (freelance photographers, graphic designers, website developers).

Our team restructure adopted an ‘agency-style’ model, with business partners aligned to service clusters, working with specialists in the team collectively delivering the bread and butter services of issues comms, media relations, web management, social and email marketing while also selling in additional services that the team can provide – full campaign delivery, media buying, creative, graphic design and web development, for example.

### What we learned

Two years in, what have we learned?

- 1.** Don’t just chase funds from the big projects - that major road scheme or flagship regeneration. Yes, there’s money to be had there, but in these times of austerity they are relatively few and far between.

- 2.** Embrace the small stuff – the social media recruitment campaign, the service delivery needing a change in customer behaviour to succeed. Some commissions only amount to a few hundred pounds but across a year they add up to thousands.

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**3.** Price yourselves accordingly. If you're in a competitive situation, know the market and, if you want it, price to win the work. We missed out on a great project because we held our line on costs; if we'd priced it within their budget we'd be £6k better off this year already.

**4.** Make it everyone's job. Strong buy-in and a mentality of collective responsibility from every team member means that everyone does their

bit to think commercially and spot opportunities. And have good business support – with all those recharges and invoices, you'll need it.

But key for us is having a mixed approach that includes seeking out external income. Alongside changing how we worked, we positioned our team as the experts in securing advertising income from council assets.

## Our outputs and outcomes

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We weren't the experts then, we just saw an opportunity that no-one else in the council was taking and took the risk of grabbing it. A very steep learning curve for Rachael Mills in my team has seen us increase annual advertising income from the lamp-post estate more than six-fold, and bring numerous other opportunities to the market which are delivering cash results – for our team and other areas of the council.

Those with responsibility for the asset – street lighting, car parks, refuse etc. take a share, the media agency takes a share, and we get the rest towards our bottom line - reducing the council's cost of delivering comms,

while maintaining capacity. Contracts for digital six-sheets and 48-sheet billboards are about to go to procurement, and should collectively bring in a six-figure sum from 2018/19.

The result of this combined approach? While we have had to make redundancies over the last few years, these have been kept to a minimum. Last year, we managed to bridge a £120k funding gap with a £30k underspend to boot. This year - that funding gap rises to £165k. But we are up for the challenge and we plan to succeed.

### **Bournemouth's email marketing strategy**

See how Bournemouth is using email to help reduce customer demand, save money and improve citizen satisfaction.

[Read story >](#)

[bit.ly/Bournemouth-Story-UK](https://bit.ly/Bournemouth-Story-UK)



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# About Granicus

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## *Make your organisation more profitable*

If you'd like to find out how our citizen engagement technologies and services could help your organisation generate income and save money through good strategic communications, please get in touch. We'd love to help you realise your commercial potential and make efficiency savings with an improved digital strategy.

Granicus provides technology that empowers public sector organisations to create better lives for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 150 public sector organisations in the UK and 3,000 worldwide, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities.

Our products connect more than 150 million people globally (including 11 million in the UK), creating a powerful network to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement. By optimising decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government realise better outcomes and have a greater impact for the citizens they serve.



Say hello

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# About comms2point0

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*comms2point0 champions, promotes and delivers the very best in creative communications.*

We work with organisations to improve their communications planning and performance and with people to build their personal knowledge, confidence and skills.

We deliver creative communications consultancy, strategic reviews, interim solutions, bespoke training and development, mentoring for communications professionals and a wide range of events, workshops and masterclasses for both the public and private sector.

And because we like to do things differently we also run the unique UnAwards ([bit.ly/unawards](http://bit.ly/unawards)) – the alternative industry awards - by comms people, for comms people.

We have a highly engaged community of over 13k who we talk with daily via our popular twitter feed and a website which is home to over 1.2k posts, case studies and learning from the world of communications, PR, marketing and digital.

**COMMS2POINT0**

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