

Agenda-Setting or how to influence the public agenda

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Agenda

- 1. Communication Challenges for NGOs**
- 2. The Essence of Public Affairs Work**
- 3. Agenda Setting in Theory and Practice**
- 4. Orchestrated Communication**

1. Communication Challenges for NGOs

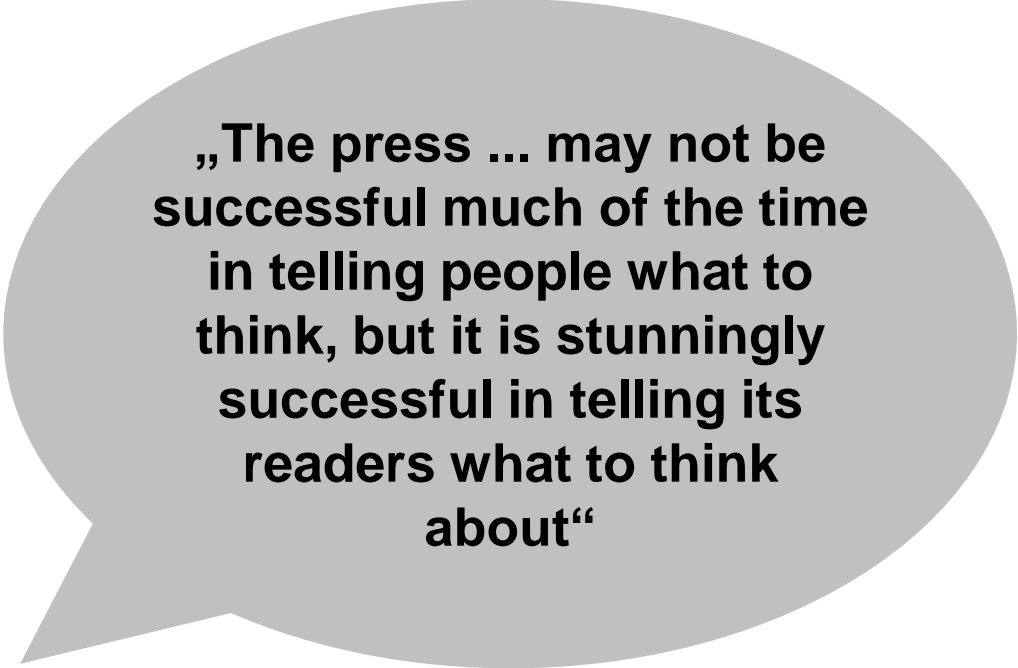
- **Work like a think tank (assemble and filter relevant content)**
- **Understand the political environment you are operating in**
- **Communicate effectively like a professional PR firm**
- **Structure your communication measures coherently along a timeline**
- **Involve and activate the “followers” according to their specific needs**
- **Act and think like entrepreneurs (budgetary discipline, use modern management tools)**

2. The Essence of Public Affairs Work

1. **Policy Check-up** (demand: needs and challenges)
2. **Political Branding** (identify guiding principle of communication)
3. **Analysis of Political Environment** (e.g. monitoring of regulatory situation)
4. **Communication Strategy** (key tools: agenda setting, orchestrated communications)
5. **Implementation** (e.g. campaigning)

3. Agenda Setting in Theory and Practice

Why do the media have such a powerful impact?



„The press ... may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about“

Bernhard C. Cohen:
“The Press and Foreign Policy” (1963)

3. Agenda Setting in Theory and Practice

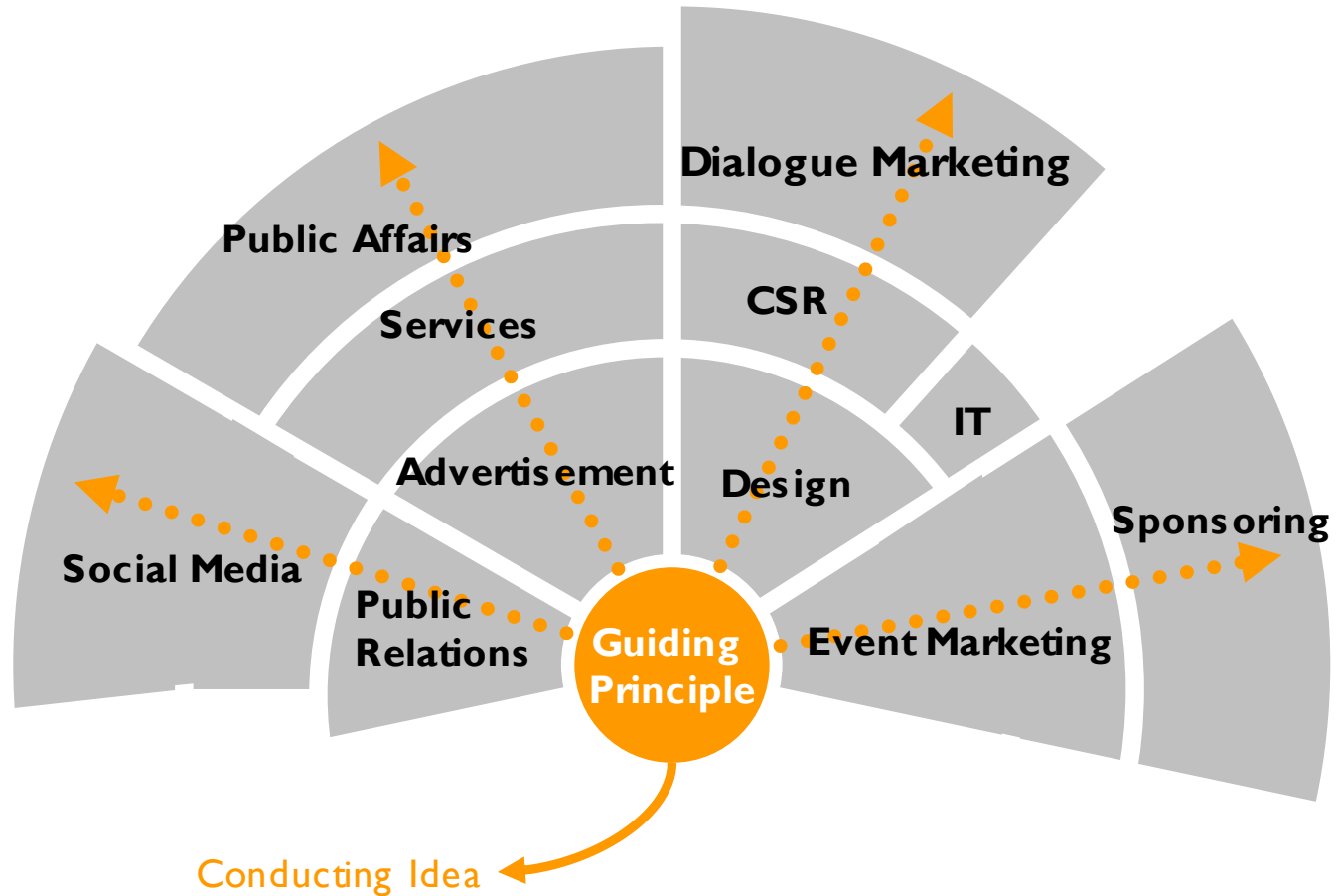
- **The core idea of agenda setting is the transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda.**
- **Modern orchestrated (integrated) communication is able to strategically leverage the agenda-setting process to point the public's attention to specific issues**
- **Agenda Setting takes place in two steps**
 1. **Issue Construction:** A specific issue or problem is introduced to the public's agenda by strategically influencing the media agenda.
 2. **Problem Solution:** Through the application of other communication tools (e.g. advertisement, campaign measures), the organization benefits from the already established public awareness of the issue.

4. Orchestrated Communication

- **Instead of applying various communication tools at the same time, all tools of the media mix are strategically orchestrated**
- **The communication concept follows the conducting idea and not the other way around**
- **The orchestrated communication allows for an harmonious mixture of multiple communication tools**
- **The orchestration avoids competition among multiple actors and uses the budget more efficiently**
- **Especially in a fragmented media environment, orchestrated communication serves as an enabling factor for successful agenda setting**

4. Orchestrated Communication

All communication elements follow the conducting idea



Conclusion

- **The media environment is constantly changing. The importance of broadcast and print media shifts to the Internet and online applications.**
- **The influence of interpersonal and direct communication through social media is constantly growing. Credibility and authenticity are crucial door openers. Still, content matters as the basis for a sound strategy.**
- **The biggest challenge for the successful application of agenda setting is the effective use of all tools available (orchestrated communication).**
- **Effective communication using agenda setting and orchestrated communication methods starts with the definition of the conducting idea. An analysis of the political environment and stakeholder are vital – and so is a thorough issues management as the basis of all communication efforts.**