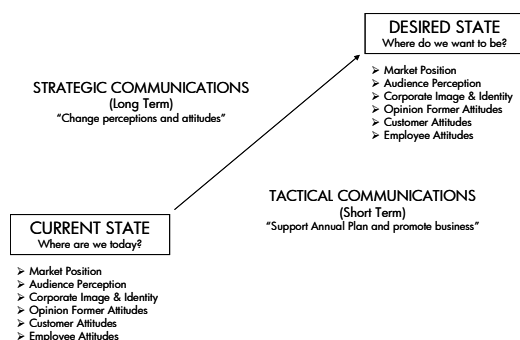


## Manage the 'message' and you manage your most precious asset – your brand image and identity

**Protecting BRAND IDENTITY and enhancing BRAND IMAGE is what all successful corporations - large and small - do well. Whether it's being pro-active to 'opportunity' or reactive to 'threat', what sets the successful players apart is 'managing the message'. But those who do it poorly are often accused of just plain 'spin'!**

n a t i o n has worked with a number of clients over the years in helping to manage the message and in doing so has developed a number of simple 'models' to assist in the process.

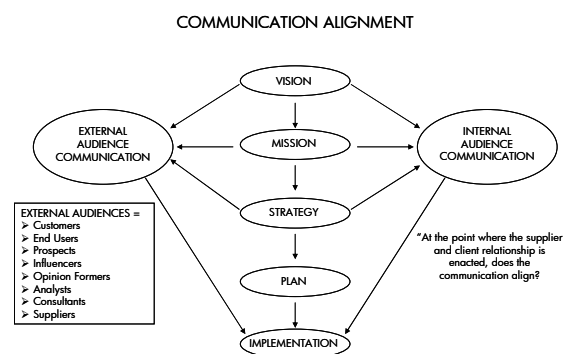
The process starts with a simple but very clear understanding of where you are to-day versus where you want to be at some point in the future – usually 3-7 years out. We term this CURRENT STATE vs. DESIRED STATE – see Model below:



Using this model requires you to think hard about where you want to be and recognise that to get there you have to concern yourself with both the 'tactical' day-to-day communications AND the long-term 'strategic' communications. Each is important and one cannot be done without the other. In to-day's short term, near view, cautious business environment this is often

difficult to achieve but in our experience, those who fail to recognise the need for both TACTICAL (Short-Term) AND STRATEGIC (Long-Term) COMMUNICATIONS will ultimately fail as a business.

Once this initial work is completed then the next step is to have a very clear understanding of who are the various 'audiences' you are communicating with, what you need to say to them and how you are saying it to them. We refer to this as COMMUNICATION ALIGNMENT – see Model below:

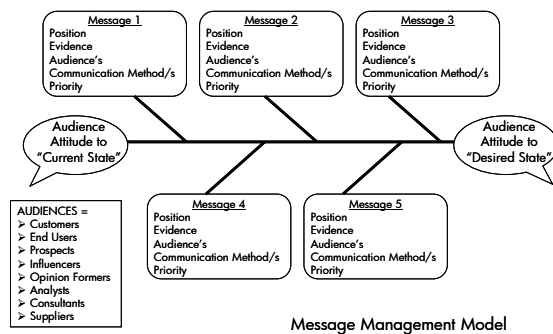


Here we look at the complete 'strategic business planning process' from Vision to Implementation and consider both external and internal audiences. The intent is to establish what is being said by whom to whom. For example is the 'internal employee communication' aligned and in tune with what the external communication is saying. In other words is there synergy and alignment?

We often find that what is being communicated internally in terms of 'attitude' to customers often conflicts with what the business is saying about customers externally. A typical example of this would be where the business is publicly declaring that it is a 'service' organisation yet where the customer meets the service delivery the 'experience' does not match up to the public declaration. Service in the automotive sector is

a frequently quoted example of where this happens.  
 The result is that the clients' perception of the Brand Image is different from that being promoted.

To avoid this **n a t i o n** has developed a pragmatic working model, which is called the MESSAGE MANAGEMENT MODEL – see below:



Using this model as a working tool requires you to determine and specify the 'key messages' that are necessary to assist in the transition from the current to the desired state. The model requires the user to consider ALL audiences for each message and demands that in defining the audience you also specify proof statements, methods and priorities. The final outcome will be a Communication Campaign that has lasting effect and consistency, and in doing so, protects the Brand Image and Identity in the long term.

Using the **n a t i o n** Message Management Model corporations find that they can break down the traditional barriers to effective, aligned and consistent communication.

For more information on this topic or for a face-to-face meeting with the NATION specialist on this topic, please e-mail:

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