



Citizens and communicators engagement faced with technological innovations

Civic participation seminar Toulouse, February 17th 2022

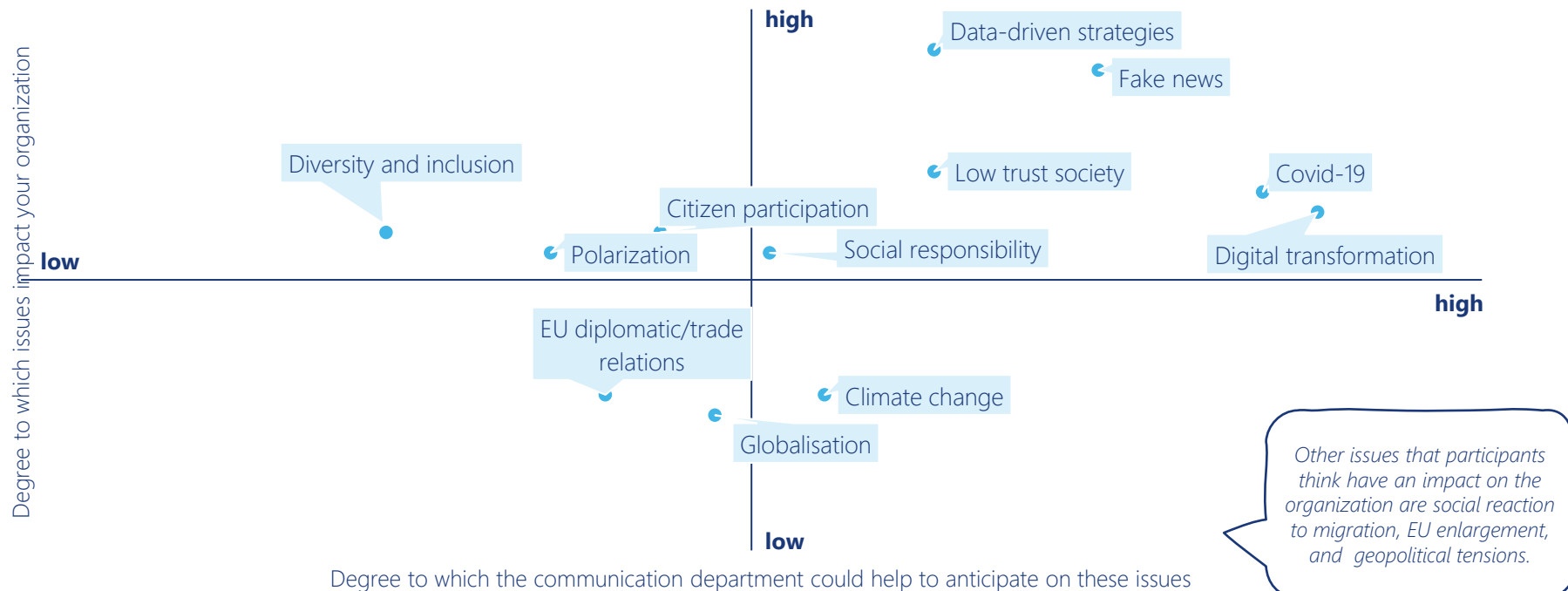
Based on the Berenschot stratcom model

Agenda

1. Current trends and impact on communicators Europe-wide and municipalities in the Netherlands
2. How practitioners anticipate (roles and expectations)
3. Ideas to further professionalize communication

Data-driven strategies, fake news, COVID-19 and digital transformation are the most important issues for organisations and communication departments

Please indicate the degree to which you expect the following issues to impact your organisation and the degree to which communication could help to anticipate on these issues



Most important trends for municipalities in the Netherlands

Most important trends for **the organization**:

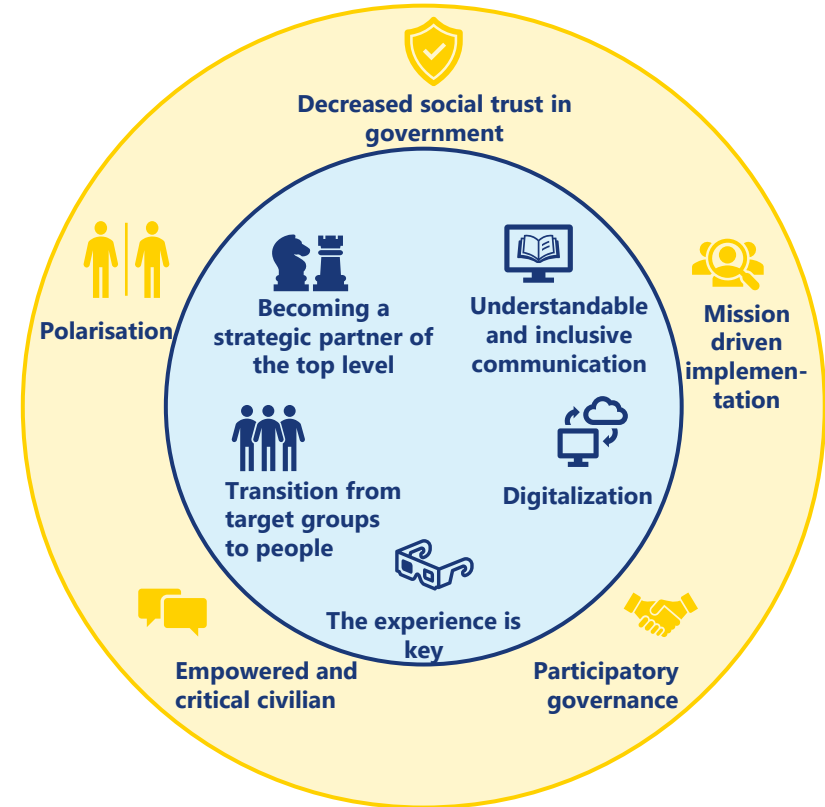
- Decreased societal trust in government
- Mission driven implementation
- Participatory governance
- empowered and critical civilian
- Increasing polarisation in society

Most important trends for **communication teams**:

- Becoming a strategic partner of the top level
- Digitalization
- The experience is key
- Transition from target groups to people
- Understandable and inclusive communication.

Also important:

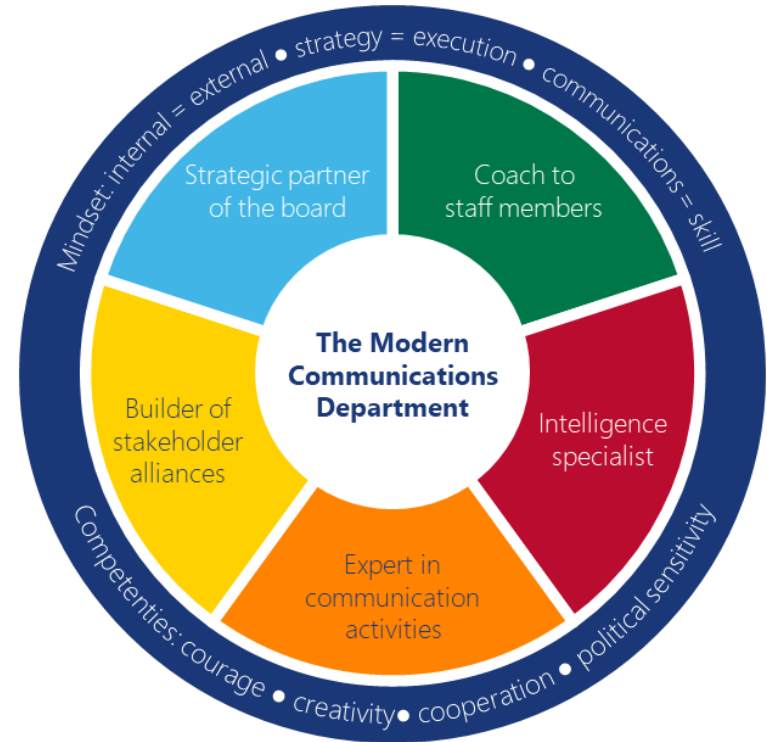
- Further centralization and grow of communication
- Investment in new competencies such as digital skills
- Better relation with stakeholders



The five roles in the modern communications department

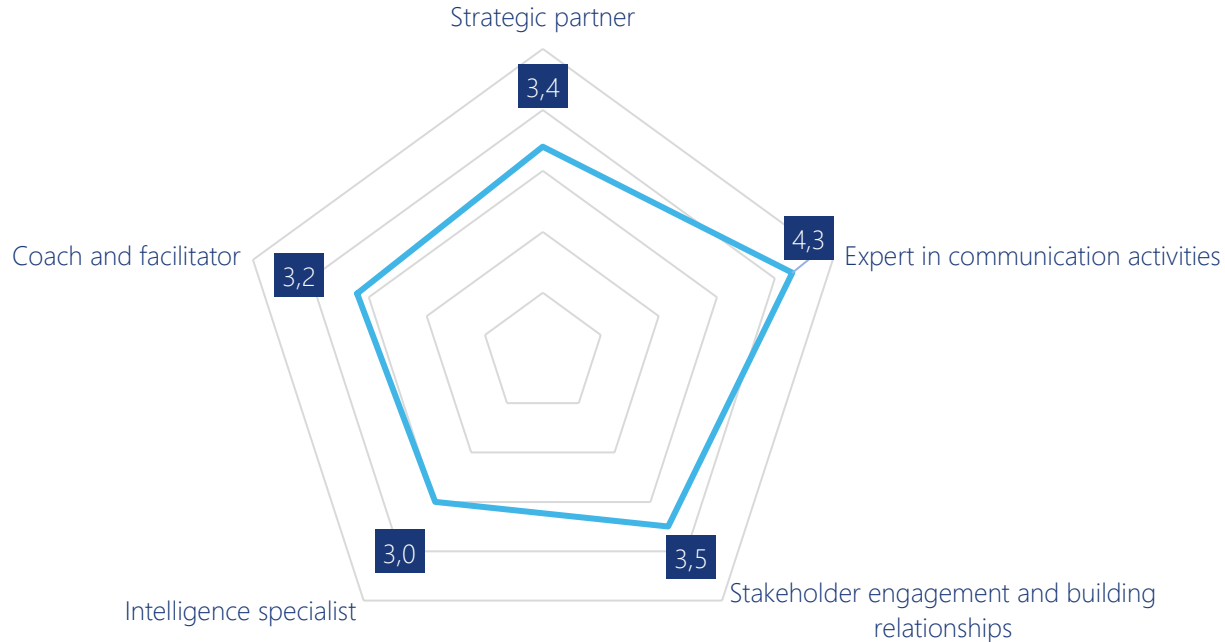
In the modern communications department, five roles can be distinguished. We define these roles as follows:

- **Strategic partner to the board:** consulting and advising the board and top management of the organization
- **Expert in communication activities:** delivering day-to-day communication activities that support all functions of the organization, dealing with the press: answering press questions, writing press releases and spokesperson
- **Stakeholder engagement and building relationships:** Communicating the corporate strategy to stakeholders and interested publics, building stakeholder relations
- **Specialist in intelligence and monitoring:** gathering day-to-day insights from media, stakeholders etc.
- **Coach and facilitator of communications:** coaching all members of the organization and enabling them to communicate professionally



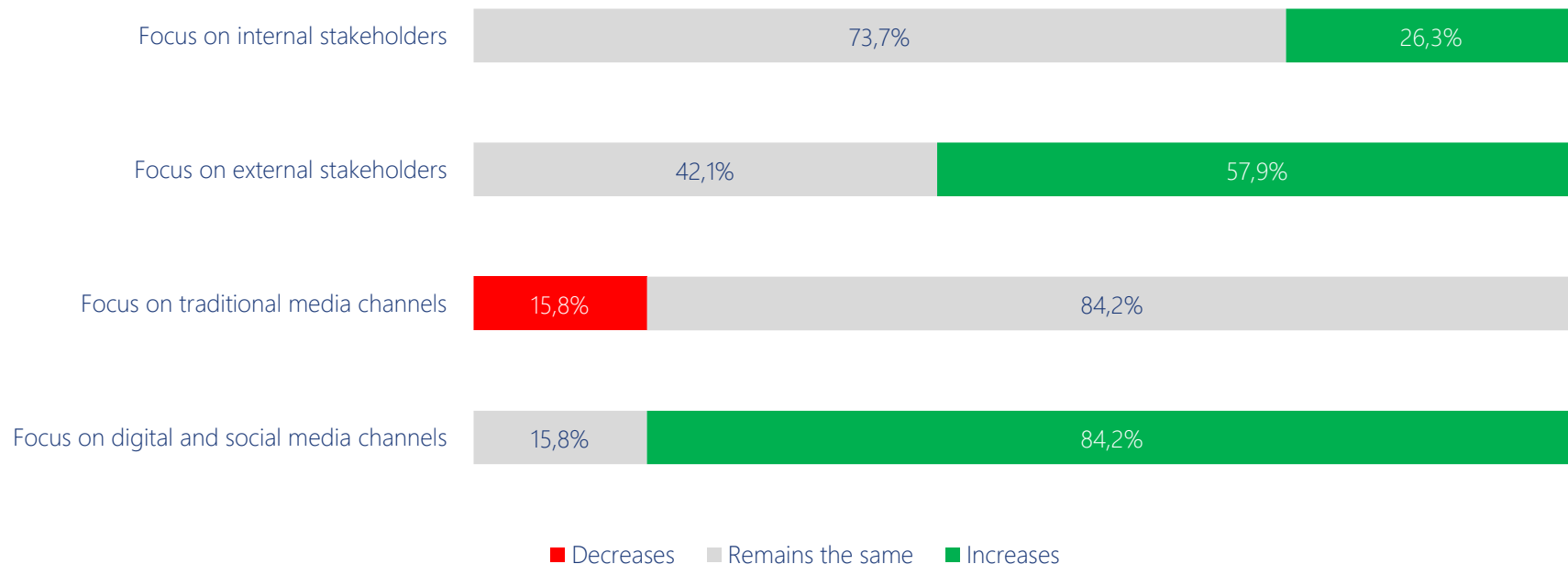
Results indicate that the expert role is most established amongst participants

How would you classify the current performance of your communication department on the five roles?



Participants expect that the focus on digital and social media channels and the focus on external stakeholders will relatively increase

What do you think will be the trend in the focus of the communication department until 2023?



The role of communication in participatory governance

Context

- Societal disruption:
 - Polarisation
 - Loss of trust in government
 - Technological revolution
 - Complex assignments (climate, COVID)



Role of Communication

- Building trust through
 - Datadriven strategy and communication
 - Much emphasis on behaviour and ethics
- Connecting by
 - Being transparant on dilemma's
 - Dialogue
- Engaging and alignment with civil society and stakeholders through values driven communication

One concrete example: the newsroom: outside is inside

- Goal: dialogue with civilians and stakeholders
- Two main lines: listening and talking
- Physical and online multidisciplinary place at the heart of the organization
- 5 roles:
 - Analysts/monitoring
 - Webcare
 - Webeditors
 - Social media experts
 - Data analysts
- Close cooperation with spokespersons, communication advisors, responsible policy officers, aldermen



Newsroom: in the heart of the organization



- Daily analysis of major trends in society is also sent to the internal organisation.
- Giving direct recommendations to policy responsables
- Gives the opportunity to directly contact or engage in dialogue with citizens
- Gives input for proactive communications
- No advice without issue analysis
- Content can be used for different channels (both internally and externally)

Wrap up: capacity building and knowledge exchange is key

- Strategic communication and participative governance are important for communication teams all across Europe.
- To achieve public consent and to counter low trust society stakeholder and civilian participation and engagement is crucial
- These challenges require capacity building and an investment in the size of communication teams
- Exchange of good practices and dialogue on how to strengthen the position of communication within our organizations needs further attention
- I would propose to build a centre of expertise on public communication within the framework of the Club of Venice and CAPCOM in the coming years.

About Berenschot consultancy

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We acquire these new insights and turn them into something practicable. We do this by combining innovation and creativity. Clients prefer Berenschot because our advice gives them a head start.

Berenschot is experienced in raising the standard of communications within government organizations, institutions and companies. We help our clients to increase their impact by improving the strategic position of the communications department.

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Public





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