

## Measurement of communication at Statistics Finland

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### Abstract

Communication is measured to find answers to the question how communication in its different forms has helped the organisation to reach its goals and how to prepare to face the future challenges. Measurement and evaluation against defined goals and SMART<sup>1</sup> objectives are fundamental to any communication programme whether it be a single campaign or an on-going effort where the results are incremental over time (AMEC).

For that reason, it is important that the indicators of communication are linked to the organisation's strategic goals. The indicators can also be used to show how resources have been utilised and where and what kind of communication competence is needed. In my presentation, I examine how the measurement of communication is developed at Statistics Finland.

We started developing communication indicators at Statistics Finland at the end of 2016 by arranging training for the communications unit on measuring communication and evaluating its effectiveness and influences. After the training, we prepared plans for measuring Statistics Finland's communication activities.

Based on the strategy, we defined the following as the main goals of communication:

1. Customer commitment and responding to their needs and expectations
2. Internal collaboration and employee communication
3. Public and media visibility and the effectiveness of communication

After that, we defined the monitoring targets, means and indicators for and their connections to the strategy.

With the help of the communication indicators, we aim to get answers to the following questions: Are we doing the right things? Are we working optimally with the available resources? Did we get our messages across to the target groups? Finally, what is the value of communication?

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<sup>1</sup> Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

## 1. Introduction

Why is the measurement of communication important right now? Communication needs to be monitored, measured and evaluated because results are expected from communication similarly as from other activities of the organisation. Input-output thinking and economic criteria are part of the everyday life of communication work. The indicators can be used to demonstrate the idea and meaningfulness of activities and that resources are used for the right targets.

Communication is measured to find answers to the question how communication in its different forms has helped the organisation to attain its goals. For that reason, it is important that the indicators of communication are linked to the organisation's strategic goals. The indicators can also be used to show how resources have been utilised and for what communication competence is needed. Evaluation based on communication indicators gives answers to the questions: what works, what does not, what needs to be improved.

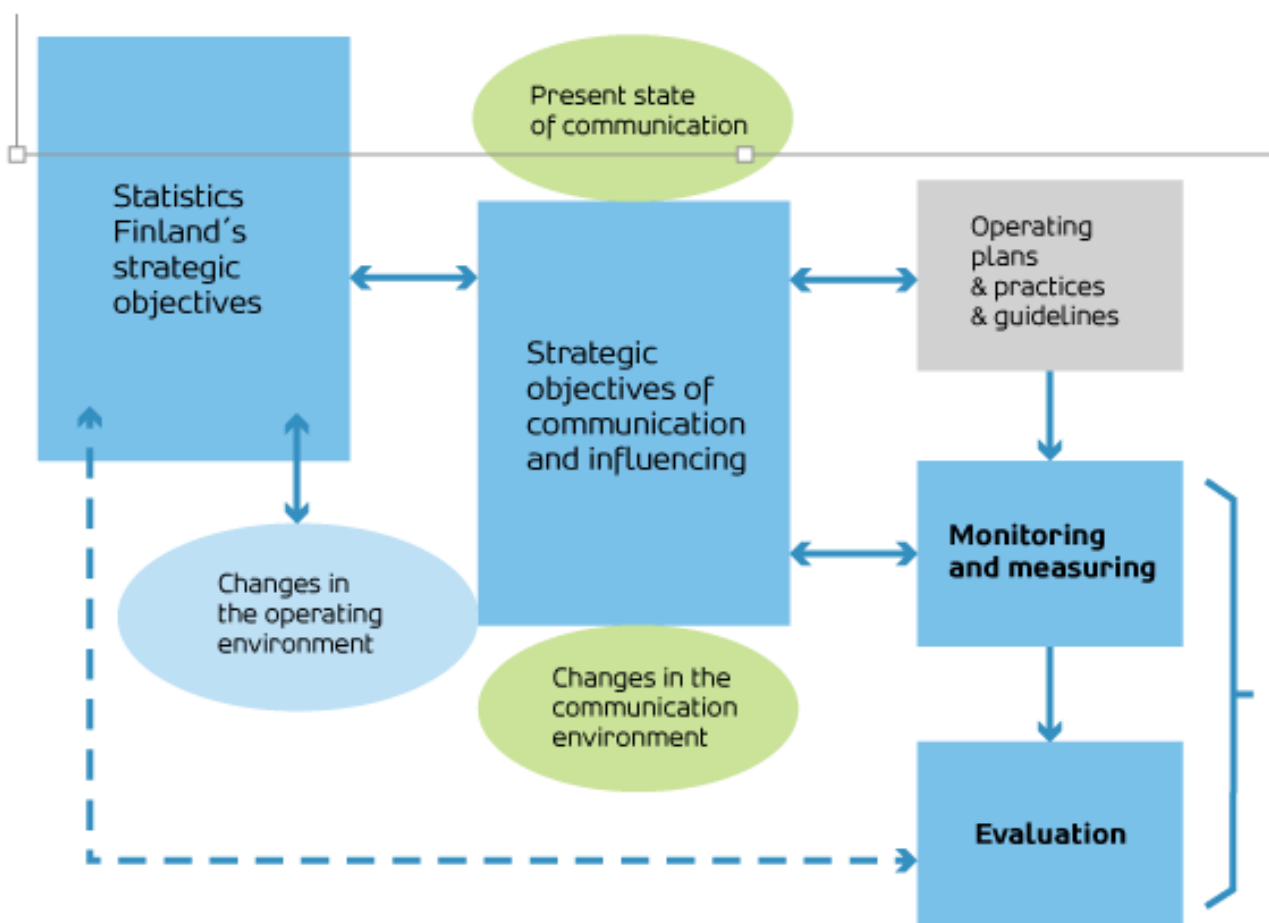


Figure 1: Monitoring and measurement of communication is linked to the organisation's targets (Juholin 2010/2013).

Often the organisation knows what is to be measured but collecting of the needed information is difficult, slow or expensive. When planning the indicators, it should be considered how much resources should be used for producing the information and for ensuring its quality, that is, what the efficiency ratio of the information is. In most cases, less frequent and less detailed indicators may be sufficient, because too many indicators may make it difficult to distinguish essential issues. It must also be ensured how the information received is utilised and is not just left hidden in a drawer.

Customer satisfaction surveys, personnel surveys, stakeholder analyses and surveys, and reputation and brand surveys currently dominate the evaluation of organisations' communication. The problem here is that responding has decreased, which lowers the reliability of the surveys. New ideas come from ethnography or observation and participation, netnography or ethnography made online (Kozinets 2010), for example. Listening does not set its own questions but data are collected openly and data analytics or utilisation of big data and algorithms (Macnamara 2015).

When planning evaluation it is important to consider what kind of information we really need and what resources and how much we are ready to invest. Often a good solution is to do less and more deeply, that is, inquire for real need, not for routine or out of habit.

It is important to find such indicators and analysis means that produce the necessary information. Clear objectives of communication help in selecting the indicators.

After measuring communication, the most demanding stage of the process starts. The measurement results must be utilised so that the activity develops. Evaluation information is not hidden but utilised to improve matters. Evaluation of effectiveness involves the question: what should be done based on evaluation information? Measuring remains under control when it is known what information is needed.



Figure 2: In evaluation matters are viewed constantly from various perspectives (Juholin 2010/2013).

## 2. Training to support development of indicators

We started developing communication indicators at Statistics Finland at the end of 2016 by arranging training for the communications unit on measuring communication and evaluating its effectiveness. Our department's Heads of Development, the Coordinator of web services and the Head of Development preparing performance targets and financial statement at the Office of Director General also took part in the training.

After the training, we prepared plans for measuring Statistics Finland's communication activities. Based on the strategy, we defined the following as the main goals of communication:

1. Customer commitment and responding to their expectations
2. Internal collaboration and employee communication
3. Public and media visibility and effectiveness of communication

After that, we defined the monitoring targets, means and indicators for these goals and their connections to the strategy.

Table 1. The table below shows the present indicators and in addition to them, the proposed new indicators:

Target	Strategic aims	What is monitored	Current indicators	Proposed new indicators
<b>Customer commitment and responding to their expectations</b>	Customer first	Business image surveys, data user surveys, separate product-specific surveys, course evaluations	School grade for chargeable assignments, satisfaction with customer training	Familiarity, reliability, impartiality, intelligibility of information, recommendation of chargeable assignments' data
<b>Internal collaboration and communication</b>	Productive professionals	Personnel survey, intranet user surveys	-	Exchange of information, intranet use and technical competence
<b>Public visibility and effectiveness</b>	Customer first	Publicity analysis, web pages, social media channels	Editorial mentions in printed media, blog posts, subscribers to newsletter	Articles, expert interviews, experts' Twitter accounts, experts' presentations in international meetings

Statistics Finland carries out media monitoring by means of an outsourced service. The agency produces real time information on hits in the web media and once a day on hits in the printed media. We receive bi-annually a publicity analysis, which tells about the tone of publicity, Statistics Finland's visibility, division of publicity by week, media and region, appearances of Statistics Finland's experts in the media, statistical releases having received most mentions and the development of the volume of publicity.

We also defined separately the objectives, target groups and indicators of different social media channels. In addition, we assessed successes and failures in various social media channels.

In 2015 to 2016, we have measured the numbers of followers in social media on Statistics Finland's Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. Target values have been set for them in Statistics Finland's performance agreement with the Ministry of Finance. At the beginning of 2017, we started regular measuring of social

media, which is utilised in practical communication work. The indicators are monitored with social media channels' analytics and on Twitter also with the Tweetdeck program. Problems have been caused by Facebook constantly changing its own analytics and algorithms.

The introduction of more accurate indicators has already been visible in Statistics Finland's communication in social media. Activeness on our social media accounts has increased after we started to assess tweets and posts regularly and made necessary text changes to them and increased the use of images and infographics.

For example, every Friday we post the week's figure on Facebook. Its visibility and likes used to be very low. The same image and heading were always used in connection with the week's figure. We decided to try out a new approach. We made a new image for each week's figure and changed the heading each time. After the change, the week's figure received considerably more visibility and likes. We have also increased the use of infographics in our social media channels, which has raised activeness on our social media accounts.

Systematic planning has increased through the use of the social media calendar adopted in the intranet workspace, with which the communications unit's social media team is better equipped to plan future posts.

Table 2. The table below presents the objectives, target groups and indicators of social media channels:

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Indicators from the beginning of 2017</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	To reach and activate new data users and make Statistics Finland's data known.	New users of statistics, potential customers of services and products.	Weekly: successes of posts. Once a month: the number of followers, visits to web pages. Every 3 months: content evaluation.
<b>Twitter</b>	To reach and activate data users, bring forth Statistics Finland's experts and present topical views to discussion.	Media, experts, decision-makers.	Weekly: successes of tweets. Once a month: followers, shares, likes, information service questions, visits to web pages. Every 3 months: content evaluation, Statistics Finland's experts on Twitter.
<b>LinkedIn</b>	To network professionally, to develop the employer image.	Potential job applicants	Once a month: number of followers. Every 3 months: shares of recruitment ads.
<b>Instagram</b>	To raise familiarity among young people, give a visually interesting image of Statistics Finland, an image of a living workplace.	Young potential job applicants.	Once a month: number of followers. Every 3 months: number of likes and comments.

### 3. Development of indicators

During 2017, we continue to develop communication indicators. With the help of experiences gained during the year, indicators that produce essential information for the use of the organisation will be chosen for continuous use. Measuring alone is not enough, but results should also be analysed carefully and utilised in developing the activity. Continuous improvement requires that successes and failures are known and we learn from them.

With the help of the communication indicators, we aim to get answers to the following questions: Are we doing the right things? Are we working optimally with the available resources? Did we get our messages across to people? Finally: what is the effectiveness and value of communication?

The results of media monitoring and the publicity analysis are available to the personnel on Statistics Finland's intranet pages. The pages also have a section showing the results of customer surveys and proposed measures, results of the business image survey, received customer feedback and monitoring data of web services. In future, we will collect the key results of social media monitoring on the intranet for the use of all personnel.

The key message recorded in Statistics Finland's strategy is customer first. To produce benefit for customers, we must know their needs. Customer surveys and feedback also function as tools of continuous improvement and development. Ensuring the continuity of Statistics Finland's activity and risk management require active analysis and monitoring of the operating environment.

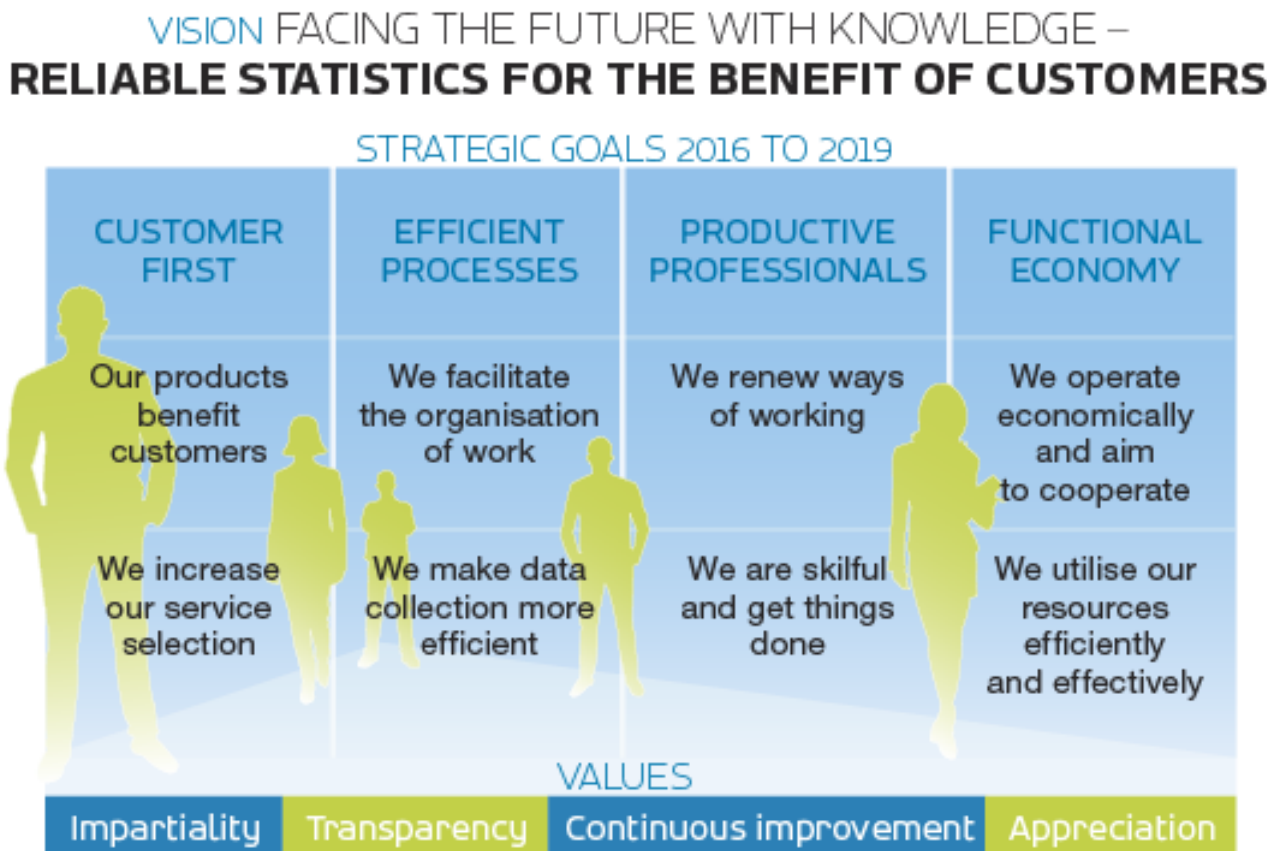


Figure 3. Statistics Finland's strategy for the years 2016 to 2019.

## 4. Conclusions

Communication is measured to find answers to the question how communication in its different forms has helped the organisation to attain its goals. For that reason, it is important that the indicators of communication are linked to the organisation's strategic goals. The indicators can also be used to show how resources have been utilised and where and what kind of communication competence is needed. Evaluation based on indicators of communication gives answers to the questions: what works, what does not, what needs to be improved.

Statistics Finland has started to develop indicators for communication. With the help of experiences gained during 2017, indicators that produce essential information for the use of the organisation will be chosen for continuous use. Measuring alone is not enough, but results should also be analysed carefully and utilised in developing the activity. Continuous improvement requires that successes and failures are known and we learn from them.

Benefits have already been seen from indicators of social media channels and their regular monitoring. The numbers of followers of social media channels have grown and activeness on the accounts has increased, when changes have been made to tweets and posts based on the monitoring.

The key message recorded in Statistics Finland's strategy is customer first. To produce benefit for customers, we must know their needs. Customer surveys and feedback also function as tools of continuous improvement and development. Ensuring the continuity of Statistics Finland's activity and risk management require active analysis and monitoring of the operating environment.

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