



SEPTEMBER STUDIOS

STORY · STRATEGY · IMPACT

Public Communications Playbook

How September Studios makes institutional work accurate, human, and accountable.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK

Accurate enough for the record. Human enough to move people.

Public communication fails in two familiar ways. It is either dry and correct — technically unimpeachable, and ignored — or warm and persuasive, but loose with the facts. Our entire method exists to hold both at once: the rigour an institution owes the public, and the humanity a citizen actually responds to.

We treat the camera as testimony, not decoration.

- **Dry & correct**

Technically flawless, emotionally invisible. It satisfies the legal team and reaches no one. Compliance is not communication.

- **Warm & loose**

Moving, shareable, and quietly wrong. It travels fast and erodes trust faster. Persuasion without rigour is a liability.

THE STANDARD WE HOLD

Every asset must be clear enough for a first-time reader, accurate enough to survive a hostile audit, and human enough that someone forwards it without being asked.

Story, strategy, impact — in that order.



01 Find the story

We start with the human truth inside the mandate — the person the policy actually serves. Research, field listening and stakeholder interviews come before a single line of design.

02 Engineer the strategy

Audience, message architecture, channel and cadence. What to say, to whom, where, and how often — engineered so the story can actually travel and repeat.

03 Measure the impact

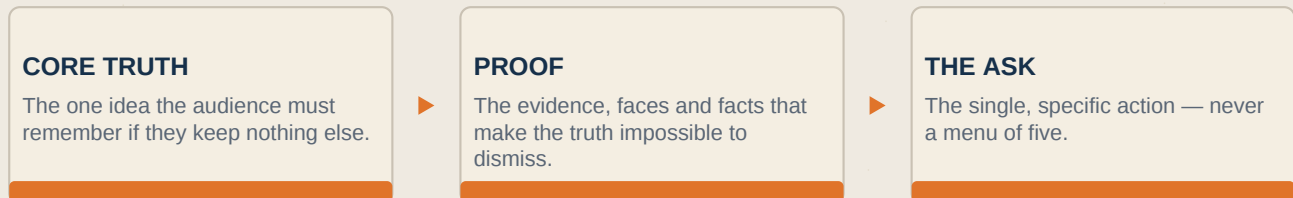
We agree the one number that matters before we begin: reach, comprehension, footfall, or trust. Craft is the means, never the point.

WHAT WE ASK BEFORE WE START

Who exactly must move, and by when? What do they believe today? What is the single change we are accountable for? If those three answers are fuzzy, no amount of craft will save the work.

One truth, proven, with a single ask.

Scattered messaging is the most common failure in public work. We compress everything into a three-part spine that any spokesperson, poster or film can be checked against.



Worked example — a vaccination drive. Core truth: “protection is already nearby.” Proof: the local health worker, named, by your own street. The ask: “walk in this Saturday.” Everything else is cut.

- ✓ Could a stranger repeat the core truth after one viewing?
- ✓ Is every proof point verifiable on the record?
- ✓ Is there exactly one ask, in plain language?
- ✓ Does each asset map back to this spine?

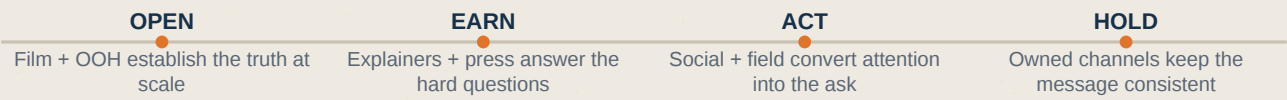
THE DISCIPLINE OF ONE

One truth. One ask. One number to judge it by. The hardest part of public work is refusing the second of everything — and we are paid to refuse it.

One message, many doors.

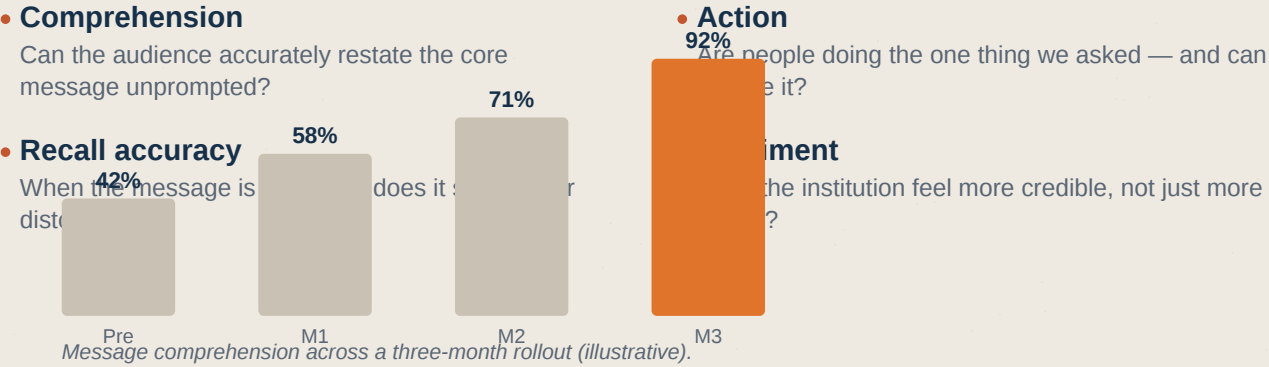
- **Documentary film**
Long-form testimony that earns belief and outlives the campaign.
 - **Out-of-home**
Dignity at scale, in the public spaces people already trust.
 - **Social & owned**
Consistency that compounds, week after week.
- **Explainers & policy**
Complex schemes made unmistakable in sixty seconds.
 - **Regional press**
Credibility in the languages and mastheads communities rely on.
 - **Field & community**
The message carried, finally, by the people it serves.

How we sequence a launch — channels are not a checklist; they are a relay. Awareness opens the door, consideration earns the room, action closes it.



Trust is a design problem.

Trust feels intangible, but it leaves a trail. We instrument every campaign against four signals and read the curve weekly — not at the end, when it is too late to act.



The pilgrimage circuit.

Saurashtra Heritage Board PUBLIC SECTOR · TOURISM

CHALLENGE

Dozens of pilgrimage sites were promoted in isolation — inconsistent visuals, mixed tone, and no shared identity. Faith felt commodified; modern visitors felt unguided.

INSIGHT

Pilgrims don't visit a site; they travel a circuit. Branding the journey — not each stop — would carry both reverence and wayfinding.

WHAT WE MADE

One identity system spanning 40+ sites, a documentary-led launch film, a regional-language public campaign, and a wayfinding kit the board rolls out site by site.

2.4×

Seasonal footfall (sample)

40+

Sites under one identity

1

Brand replacing dozens

PHASE 1

Identity system + naming across the circuit

PHASE 2

Documentary launch film + regional press

PHASE 3

Wayfinding rollout, site by site

PHASE 4

Seasonal campaign + footfall read

WHAT CARRIED IT

Branding the journey, not each shrine. One reverent system did the work that dozens of disconnected efforts never could.

Figures illustrative — replace with verified results before external use.

RED FLAGS

Stop-and-fix signals.

A field guide to the moments that quietly sink public work. If you recognise any of these, the brief is not ready to produce.

- ✓ The approval chain has more voices than the audience.
- ✓ The copy is written for the minister, not the citizen.
- ✓ Accuracy and emotion are treated as a trade-off.
- ✓ The deadline was set before the message was agreed.
- ✓ Nobody can name the single action you want.
- ✓ "Make it go viral" is the only stated goal.
- ✓ There is no plan to measure anything after launch.
- ✓ Every stakeholder added a line; no one removed one.

OUR JOB, HONESTLY

Half of good public communication is subtraction. We are paid to protect the one message from everything that wants to crowd it out.

How an engagement runs.

01 Discovery (1–2 wks)

Interviews, field listening, audience and message audit. We leave with the spine: core truth, proof, ask.

02 Strategy (1–2 wks)

Channel plan, cadence, measurement framework, and the creative platform signed off before production.

03 Production (3–6 wks)

Film, design and copy built against the spine, tested on real audiences before release.

04 Rollout & read (ongoing)

Phased launch, weekly measurement, and optimisation against the one number that matters.

What you receive — a defensible strategy document, a production-ready creative platform, every channel asset, and a measurement dashboard your own team can keep running.



Let's make it understood.

Public work has to be accurate, human, and accountable — all at once.
That is exactly the brief we are built for.

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