

Institution: University of Reading		
Unit of Assessment: 17, Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Achieving Positive Policy Outcomes Through Effective Government Communications		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006–16		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Kevin Money	Associate Professor Professor of Reputation and Responsible Leadership Director of the John Madejski Centre for Reputation	2006 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–20		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The challenge with delivering government policies is often knowing how to influence behaviour. Through engagement with the Government Communication Service (GCS), research from the University of Reading has informed communication strategies across all UK government departments and platforms (including digital, web, press and broadcast) with a combined annual budget spend of GBP300,000,000. The research has produced a tool called the “Henley Reputation Model”, which evaluates communications in order to effect behaviour change. Having far-reaching impacts across all government departments and arms lengths bodies, the Henley Reputation Model underpins the government’s Communications Evaluation Framework, used by over 400 government departments, agencies and public bodies in the UK, and is shared with public sector bodies overseas. This Framework has brought about positive behaviour change, demonstrating successful delivery of a wide range of policy priorities across government.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The underpinning research for this case comprises a body of work produced by Money and his colleagues at Reading since 2006. The initial research developed a conceptual model based on theoretical research [refs 1 and 2] regarding the effectiveness of communication strategies used by organisations to build reputation and influence behaviour. The research proposes key components of organisational communication strategies, such as organisational listening, leveraging senior leadership and influencer voices, and causally links them to desired outcomes such as cooperation, compliance and advocacy behaviour of message recipients. This novel foundational work allowed Money and his colleagues to follow up on the proposed linkages in subsequent empirical work, to provide nuance and detail for organisational strategies and likely recipient behaviour. For example, Ref 3 reports on the underpinning research as to why compliant and non-compliant taxpayers were responding in different ways to the same communications from Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC). In this research, key organisational messages associated with subsequent compliance behaviour relate to communications built around organisational listening on issues of procedural fairness and the voice of individual taxpayers. The research guides communication strategies accordingly in order to achieve compliance. In 2013 the National Audit Office awarded the HMRC for representing best practice in communications for this work. This research [ref 3] published in 2013, has not only guided the communications and evaluation strategy of HMRC from 2014-2020, but it is one of the key foundations for the first GCS Evaluation Framework of 2016, which was subsequently implemented as a mandatory tool to guide communication strategy and evaluation across all 401 government departments and related bodies.</p> <p>The focus on linking specific aspects of communications to specific behavioural outcomes was novel at this time because the value of communication has often been measured by</p>		

practitioners more generally in terms of awareness of and attitudes towards the communication itself, rather than in terms of tangible behaviour change. The research is therefore methodologically innovative in that the link between drivers (messages) and outcomes (citizen behaviour) had not been widely conceptualised, analysed or measured before. The work is often referred to as the “Henley Reputation Model”, and it uses a cause–effect logic [refs 1 and 2]. It was applied to underpin a communication strategy for the HMRC which resulted in a publication and a Reputation Model adapted for the government sector [ref 3]. The research has since been developed to allow the Model to be used in communications strategies deployed by the police force [ref 4] exploring how communicating about police performance (league tables) impacts citizens’ engagement with the police force.

Money and his colleagues continued to theoretically and empirically develop a theory of change related to communications to include a more granular categorisation of citizen behaviour [ref 5] and to explain how citizen values may effect their response to communications [ref 6]. The recent development of the novel Reputation Model [ref 5] suggested that the behavioural outcomes of communication could be usefully categorised as “starting”, “stopping” and “maintaining” behaviours; and communication drivers could therefore relate to functional, relational, motivational and/or third-party influence drivers. This categorisation was adopted as part of the GCS Evaluation Framework 2.0, which was launched by the GCS in June 2018. The research allows communicators to apply a theory of change that permits them to categorise behaviour change and better understand communication drivers by using these categories, when previously behaviour change had been considered as one category. It also guides data collection and insight generation across different departments and communication activities. Communication campaigns can therefore be planned, tested and evaluated according to which messages resonate with whom and why. The Henley Reputation Model has provided a more granular approach to understanding behavioural change outcomes in relation to more nuanced drivers and has allowed the whole process of planning and evaluating government communications to be iterative and in constant refinement.

Since 2018, this refined Henley Reputation Model has informed the communication strategies of all UK government departments (through the GCS Evaluation Framework), as well as strategies in other countries, through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

3. References to the research

1. Money, K. and Hillenbrand, C. (2006) ‘[Using reputation measurement to create value: An analysis and integration of existing measures](#)’. *Journal of General Management*, 32 (1). pp. 1–12. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/030630700603200101> (ABS 2*).
2. Money, K.G., Hillenbrand, C., Day, M.B. and Magnan, G.M. (2010) ‘[Exploring reputation of B2B partnerships: Extending the study of reputation from the perception of single firms to the perception of inter-firm partnerships](#)’. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39 (5). pp. 761–768. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2010.02.015>. (ABS 3*).
3. Money, K., Hillenbrand, C., Henseler, J. and da Camara, N. (2013) ‘[Exploring unanticipated consequences of strategy amongst stakeholder segments: The case of a European Revenue Service](#)’. *Long Range Planning*, 45 (5–6). pp. 395–423. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2012.09.003>. (ABS 3*)
4. Mason, D., Hillenbrand, C. and Money, K. (2014) ‘[Are informed citizens more trusting? Transparency of performance data and trust towards a British police force](#)’. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 122 (2). pp. 321–341. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1702-6>. (ABS 3*).
5. [Ghobadian, A., Money, K. and Hillenbrand, C.](#) (2015) ‘[Corporate responsibility research: past – present – future](#)’. *Group & Organization Management*, 40 (3). pp. 271-294. ISSN 1059-6011 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601115590320>. (ABS 3*)
6. West, B., Hillenbrand, C., Money, K., Ghobadian, A. and Ireland, R.D. (2016) ‘[Exploring the impact of social axioms on firm reputation: A stakeholder perspective](#)’. *British Journal of Management*, 27 (2). pp. 249–270. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12153> (ABS 4*).

The underpinning research for this case study comprises six papers published in blind, peer-reviewed journals: one of these is located in an AJG/ABS 4* journal, with four in 3* journals, and one in a 2* journal. The *Journal of Business Ethics* (also on the prestigious FT45 journal list) and the *British Journal of Management* are particularly competitive and adopt strict refereeing standards. The research meets or exceeds 2* quality definitions, providing important new knowledge by using a mixture of quantitative, qualitative and conceptual approaches to develop and test tools that assess the effectiveness of the communication strategies used by governments to build trust and influence people's behaviour.

4. Details of the impact

Historically, the government has often used tools such as taxation, regulation and legislation to deliver its policy outcomes. However, many of the bigger policy challenges, such as the increase in chronic health conditions, can only be resolved if people are persuaded to change their behaviour. Through engagement with HMRC (in which initial research and impact took place) and subsequently the GCS, Money et al.'s research has informed the communication strategies across UK government departments within the UK, and internationally, with a combined annual budget spend of GBP300,000,000 (a total in the region of GBP1,500,000,000 between 2016 and 2020) [source 1]. The research underpins the approach taken to guiding communications strategy and evaluation in the HMRC from 2014 and the GCS Evaluation Framework (launched in 2016, and revised in 2018). This is a mandatory framework for guiding communications across all 400 UK government departments, agencies and public bodies, and has been shared across the public sector globally [source 3]. In so doing, it has helped influence behaviour in order to deliver a range of positive policy outcomes and acted as a multiplier of the impact initially achieved in HMRC. The purpose of the GCS is to deliver world-class public service communications that support ministers' priorities, enable the efficient and effective operation of public services, and improve people's lives. The successful implementation of government policies is contingent upon compelling communications. It therefore plays a significant role in achieving positive change through raising awareness, changing perceptions or encouraging behaviour change in society, whether that concerns the implementation of the NHS Long-Term Plan, for example, or exiting the EU. The GCS also addresses disinformation.

The GCS Evaluation Framework

Money and Hillenbrand's 2006 article [ref 1] was first used by HMRC across its communication division in a study that was subsequently recognised as best practice by the National Audit Office in 2013. The HMRC research was published in an article in 2013 [ref 3] and has been used to guide HMRC communications and evaluation strategy between 2014 and 2020 (source 7). In 2013, the then Head of Evaluation in HMRC, and a close collaborator with Henley Business School (University of Reading), was seconded to the GCS to guide "Project Aspire" – an initiative to develop a mandatory evaluation framework for use across government. Money was a key advisor to Project Aspire, which led to the launch of the Evaluation Council in 2013. Money was invited to be a full member of the Evaluation Council in 2014 alongside key industry players such as Google, eBay, and Kantar; as well as NGOs such as Oxfam and AMEC (International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications). Having overseen over 100 campaigns since 2014, the Council supports GCS to develop, improve and embed best-practice approaches to planning, delivering and evaluating government communications activity. It also acts as a sounding board to help shape future cross-government communication initiatives, bringing scrutiny, rigour and challenge to GCS campaign planning and evaluation.

As a result, the GCS Evaluation Framework (2016) [source 2] was launched, drawing heavily on research by Money et al. [refs 1 and 3; source 1]. Specifically, the Framework was underpinned by the research on cause–effect relationships, with the outlined components of organisational communications strategies, as well as behavioural change outcomes, derived from Money's research. The GCS Framework is now a mandatory tool used to evaluate and guide government communications across all 25 government departments (such as, for

example, the Ministry of Justice, HMRC, and the FCO) as well as all 401 non-ministerial departments and arms-length bodies (such as Ofcom, the DVLA and the British Council), both nationally and internationally.

Further University of Reading research underpinned the subsequently revised “Evaluation Framework 2.0” [source 3], launched in 2018. This cited six publications by Money et. al., the only academic research mentioned. Specifically, the research [ref 5] enabled a focus on categorising behavioural outcomes more effectively and applying a theory of change related to communication strategies. This is highlighted in the Government Communication Plan 2019/20 where “setting the highest standards of communication practice” includes “evaluating the outcomes and impact of every campaign utilising the Evaluation Framework 2.0” [source 4]. In addition, the research was used to provide guidelines on data collection and how to choose key performance indicators. This has allowed GCS to develop a joint database across government departments allowing learning to be shared across the GCS, not only saving costs, but also acting as case studies of best practice using the research.

Adoption/Implementation

Money’s work has influenced government communication both nationally and internationally. In addition to sharing the Evaluation Framework with public sector communicators across the world, who have similarly used it to improve the standards, consistency and impacts of their communication [source 1], it has also been used by the FCO. Money has directly mentored senior communicators in the FCO and the Department of Trade and Industry as part of his role on the Evaluation Council. Thus the Reputation Framework has been used to guide consular and diplomatic efforts overseas, seeking to encourage positive relations for the UK and its citizens in relation to safety, counter-terrorism, trade and foreign inward investment.

Since 2014, HMRC has used the Henley Reputation Model [refs 3 and 5] and the GCS Evaluation Frameworks (based on this Henley research) to develop, evaluate and adapt its communications strategy (on a yearly, monthly and sometimes weekly basis) with SME’s, large companies and individuals to increase tax compliance and reduce tax avoidance. This includes communications related to corporation tax, income tax, excise duties national insurance and VAT. These HMRC communications have played an important role in reducing the tax gap (the difference between the amount of tax that should, in theory, be paid to HMRC, and what is actually paid) through impacts on the behaviours of large companies, SME’s and individuals. “In summary, between 2014 to 2019 the tax gap has decreased in each consecutive year, from an estimated 7.2% in 2014 (£38bn) to an estimated 4.7% (£31bn) in 2019, at a total saving of at least £7bn over this period” [source 5]. The role of adapting and developing communications, informed through research outputs [refs 3 and 5] and the GCS Evaluation Frameworks of 2016 and 2018, “has played an important role in achieving a reduction in the tax gap, [t]hereby securing more revenue for the HMRC to assist the government in funding important government services such as health (NHS) and education” [source 5].

Across the machinery of government, the GCS Evaluation Framework is required to have an agile approach, reflecting the challenges in delivering a diverse array of time-sensitive policies. Underpinned by the Reading research and the theory of change, this approach has been shown to be fit for purpose, influencing communications across a breadth of policy areas. For example, since 2016, “Public Health England has used the Evaluation Framework to guide its ‘One You’ campaign evaluation, using findings to optimise planning and delivery of a multi-year campaign that aims to save the NHS £11 billion a year by encouraging people in mid-life to engage in healthier behaviours such as diet and exercise and reduce behaviours such as smoking and drinking alcohol” [source 1]. Furthermore, “ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) is an ongoing Government campaign that reached more than 50% of the UK population at least 6 times during 2017 alone. Its strategy was informed by evaluation of previous activity and has been very successful, significantly increasing knowledge of what may constitute terrorist activity and improving awareness of appropriate course of action. This has in turn resulted in increased and appropriate use of counter-terrorism help lines” [source 1]. Meanwhile, the

“Department for International Trade’s GREAT campaign encourages UK businesses to export overseas and the international community to visit and do more business with the UK. It used the GCS Evaluation Framework to identify opportunities for growth and to target communication for UK business and exporters as well as to encourage related activities such as tourism” [source 1]. Since 2016, it is estimated that the GREAT campaign has brought a gain of GBP1,700,000,000 to the UK (NAO 2015).

Other examples of positive policy outcomes include the Department for Education, which has used the Framework to shape its communication in relation to apprenticeships. With its spend of approximately GBP170,000,000 in 2019, it guided 21,197 applications for apprenticeships (the apprenticeship market is worth GBP2,500,000,000 a year). It is estimated that the Framework drove 50–60% of these applications (that is, applicants replied because of the communication guided by the Framework) [source 1]. In the field of healthcare, a further example includes the work done by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on its “#FakeMeds” campaign which started in 2016 and is ongoing. One in ten people have bought fake medical products online in the last year, according to the MHRA. Fake medicine and devices can lead to serious negative health consequences. In 2018, it seized over 4,600,000 fake medical products and closed 4,700 websites. Positive outcomes include a 43% increase in the reporting of counterfeit dental equipment sales and a 16% increase in searches for products registered as legitimate on the EU registry [source 1]. Similarly, “in the year 2018/2019, Public Health England used the framework to guide its ‘Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign’. The campaign set out to impact citizen behaviour by avoiding taking antibiotics if they don’t need them. The campaign is estimated to have directly resulted in 1.5 million fewer prescriptions of antibiotics in 2018/2019 by explaining the dangers of using antibiotics” [source 1].

In summary, in the words of Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Government Communications: “Communication is one of the four main levers of government alongside legislation, regulation and taxation. When done well, its contribution to delivering government policies is profound.” The Evaluation Framework has facilitated significant policy outcomes across a breadth of government policy areas (domestic and international) where a change in behaviour is the required policy outcome. As a result, the positive policy outcomes have been profound, having “far-reaching impacts across all government departments and arms lengths bodies” [source 1]. These include an effective counter-terrorism campaign, improved health outcomes, and increased trade. Thus the Framework has “helped departments communicate more effectively and more efficiently, improved stakeholder relationships and improved trust, encouraged pro-social behaviour, discouraged anti-social behaviour, and shown return on investment for tax spend” [source 1].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [S1]** Letter from the Executive Director of the Government Communication Service and two follow up letters from Head of Insight **and** Evaluation (Prime Minister’s Office and Cabinet Office Communications).
- [S2]** Government Communication Plan (2016) – includes GCS Evaluation Framework.
- [S3]** Government Communication Service: Evaluation Framework 2.0 (2018).
- [S4]** [Government Communication Plan 2019/20](#).
- [S5]** Letter from Head of Comms Project & Evaluation at HMRC.