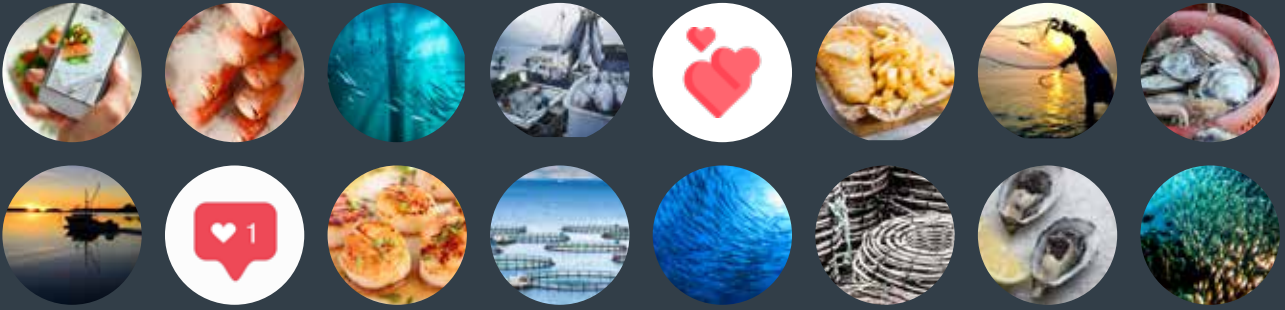
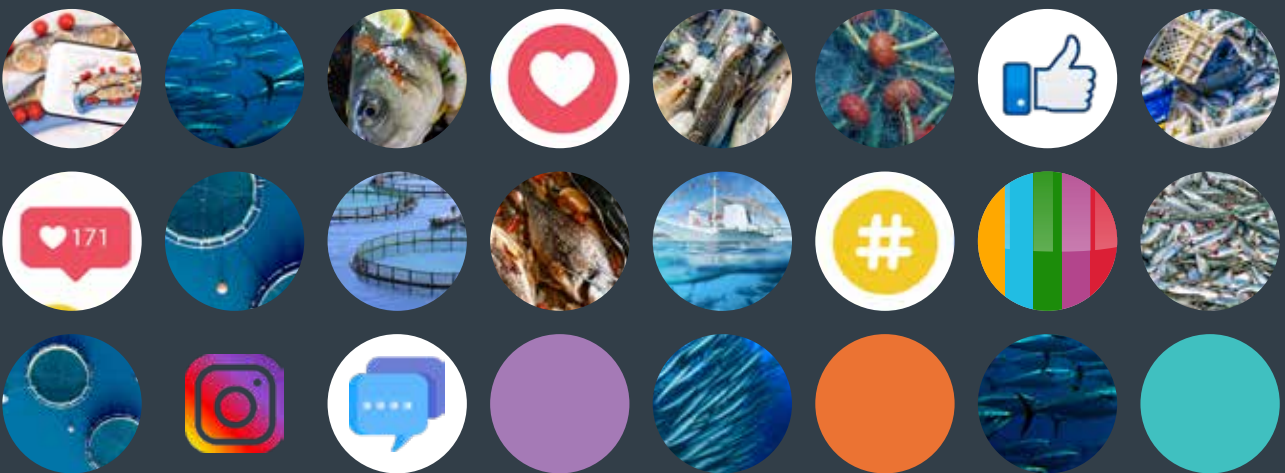


# MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



## A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY








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A large school of fish, likely snappers, swimming in clear blue water. The fish are densely packed and moving in a coordinated manner. The background is a bright, clear blue sky, suggesting an open ocean environment.

**“A Best Practice Guide for the Australian seafood industry will help you to maximise your media impact with the resources you have available.”**



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

**Whether you are a seafood industry organisation, business or brand—big or small—*Media Engagement: A Best Practice Guide for the Australian Seafood Industry* will help you to maximise your media impact with the resources you have available.**

Included in this guide are best practice principles, strategies and practical advice that will enable you to plan, carry out, and evaluate your communication activities. In today's hyper-mediated world, effective media engagement is essential. Even if media engagement feels like just 'one more thing' on an ever-expanding list of tasks, this guide will help you to make best use of the time and resources that you *do* have available to ensure the best return possible.

Your media communication strategy should comprise three iterative stages, as shown in Figure 1:

The guide provides useful media strategies and advice to people of all experience levels, but it has been designed to assist you to quickly improve your skills and knowhow when engaging with media if you are time- and resource-poor. Media engagement should always be done holistically to include planning, communication and evaluation, but depending on where you are at in your media engagement journey, you can read this guide in its entirety or focus on the sections that are most useful to you.

Perhaps you have jumped straight to the communication stage without planning and are feeling disheartened that your communication efforts aren't working. Or perhaps you already have a good handle on planning and communication, but need advice on how to best evaluate your efforts. Or maybe you just want some strategies for optimising your use of specific social media platforms.

Whatever your needs, you should find something in this guide that can help.

If the advice in this guide has been especially useful to you, or if you have any suggestions for future revisions or additions, we would be delighted to hear from you. Contact details can be found on the final page of the guide.

Figure 1






# PLANNING

05

PLANNING





**“This section outlines the elements of a media communication plan and the decisions you need to make to develop a comprehensive plan.”**





# PLANNING MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

**In order to ensure your communication is successful, you must first plan your media strategy and then ensure your media activities are effectively tied to this overarching plan.**

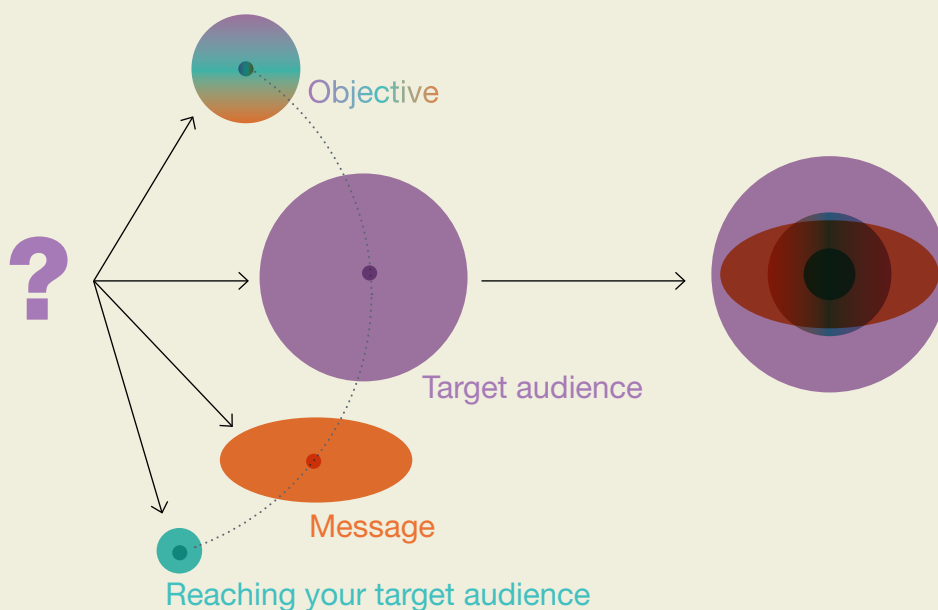
You may feel like you don't have time to devote to longer term strategy and planning, but taking the time to plan is essential because planning ensures the effort and resources you put into communication are as rewarding as possible for your organisation. The clear direction outlined in your plan will reduce the amount of time you spend carrying out your communication activity because you are much more focused and efficient, and wasted effort is minimised.

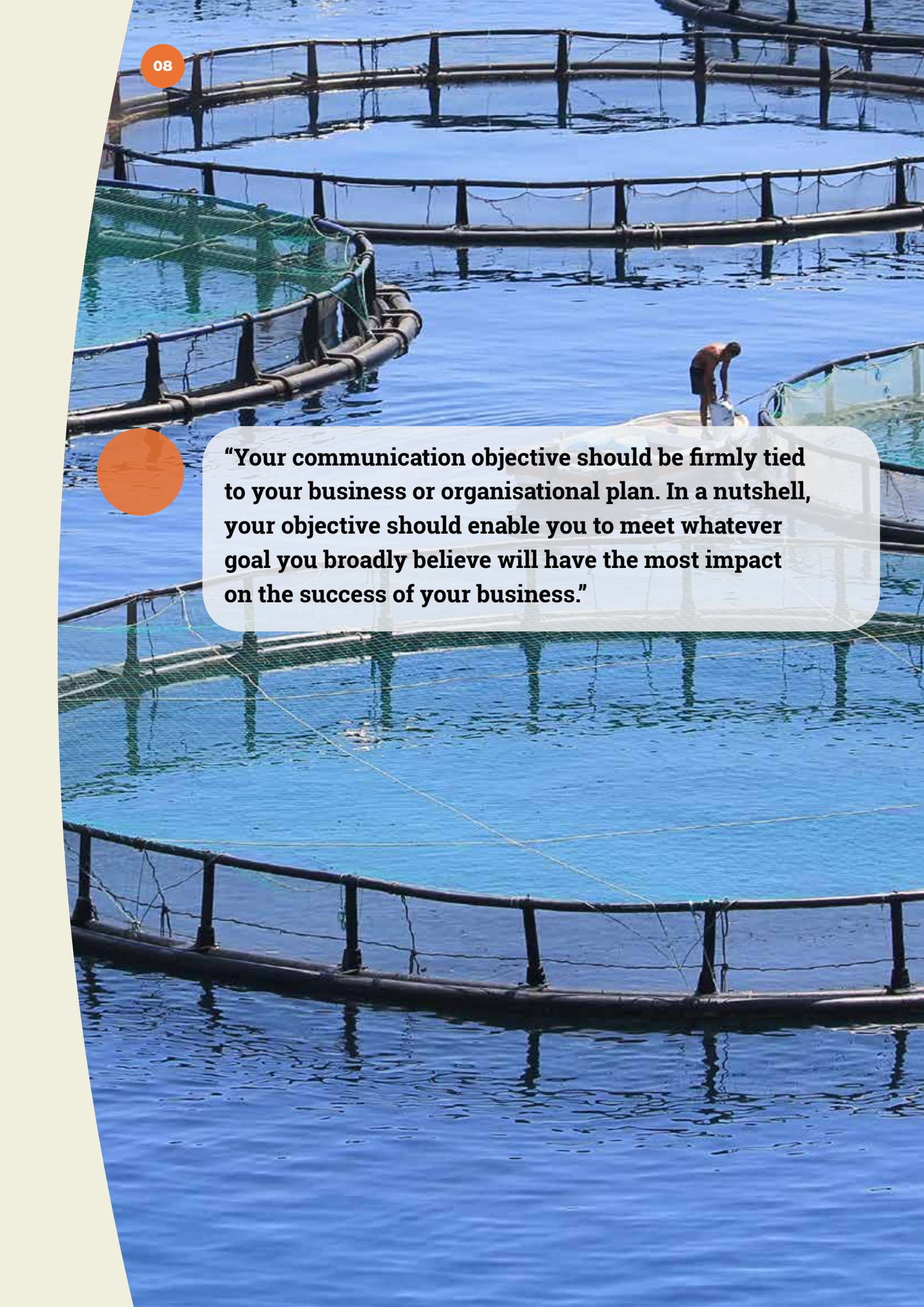
This section outlines the elements of a media communication plan and the decisions you need to make to develop a comprehensive plan (see Figure 2).

Your plan should answer the following questions:

- 1.1 What do you want to achieve with your communication? *What is your objective?*
- 1.2 Who do you want to speak to using media? *Who are your target audiences?*
- 1.3 What do you want to say to your target audience? *What is your most important message?*
- 1.4 How can you get your message to your target audience? *How do you reach your target audience, and how frequently?*

**Figure 2** Elements and decisions of a media communication plan





**“Your communication objective should be firmly tied to your business or organisational plan. In a nutshell, your objective should enable you to meet whatever goal you broadly believe will have the most impact on the success of your business.”**



# WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTIVE?

**Without a firm objective a plan does not have a clear destination, which makes it impossible to know where to go.**

Your communication objective should be firmly tied to your business or organisational plan. In a nutshell, your objective should enable you to meet whatever goal you broadly believe will have the most impact on the success of your business.

You may already have strategic objectives and plans that you can draw on to develop your communication plan. For example, you may have a business strategy, a marketing, branding or communication plan, or have spent time as an organisation setting goals and aligning your activities with a vision or mission.

This planning activity should feed directly into your communication plan.

Your objective should meet five criteria, which can be remembered using this acronym:

## **S.M.A.R.T.**

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Attainable**

**Relevant**

**Timely**







**SPECIFIC**  
**MEASURABLE**  
**ATTAINABLE**  
**RELEVANT**  
**TIMELY**

Criteria	Example/s
<p><b>The more specific your objective, the more focused your communication strategy will be. One way to zero in on a specific goal is to answer the question:</b></p> <p>What is the most important thing you are trying to achieve with your communication?</p>	<p><b>Educate the public about sustainable fishing practices.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frame your organisation as passionate about sustainability initiatives</li> <li>Increase your product sales in particular segments</li> <li>Raise awareness of your brand/s</li> <li>Improve positive attitudes towards your industry.</li> </ul>







**SPECIFIC**  
**MEASURABLE**  
**ATTAINABLE**  
**RELEVANT**  
**TIMELY**

Criteria	Example/s
<p><b>Your objective should be measurable throughout the period you will be enacting your plan.</b></p> <p>This means you need to know what your starting point is, and you should be able to measure your progress towards the objective at certain time intervals, as well as at the end of your plan to determine whether the objective has been met.</p> <p>Quantifiable and monetary objectives are easily measured. Figures are not so easily placed on public awareness and sentiment. You may need to invest in research to determine baseline attitudes, which can then be compared to evaluation research at certain points in the planning process.</p>	<p><b>Increase consumer awareness of sustainable fishing practices by 10%–15% between January 2020 and December 2021.</b></p> <p><b>To review consumer awareness, you decide to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a consumer awareness baseline through a survey in January 2020</li> <li>Review progress towards the objective through surveys in December 2020 and December 2021.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reviewing associated quantifiable returns, you find:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales of XYZ seafood brands in New South Wales and Victoria have increased by 10% between January 2020 and December 2021</li> <li>There was a 10% increase in followers for XYZ Facebook pages, with an equivalent increase in positive posts.</li> </ul>







**SPECIFIC**  
**MEASURABLE**  
**ATTAINABLE**  
**RELEVANT**  
**TIMELY**

### Criteria

**Your objective must be realistic within the context of your organisational resources, including time, staff resources and available funds.**

Remember, your media communication plan is just one element of your business or organisational strategy. It is too much to expect that communication can solve all your organisational problems, or entirely transform your business in a short space of time.

Therefore, your communication objective should provide a realistically ambitious goal for you to work towards, but it should not be so ambitious that it is impossible to achieve.

### Example/s

**Increase awareness of sustainable fishing practices amongst seafood consumers by 10%–15% between January 2020 and December 2021.**

Defining what is realistic to achieve is often relative to what has been achieved in the past.

Aim for incremental, meaningful change:

10% or 15% over a 2-year period—achievable

100% over a 2-year period—unachievable





**SPECIFIC**  
**MEASURABLE**  
**ATTAINABLE**  
**RELEVANT**  
**TIMELY**

Criteria	Example/s
<p><b>Related to the attainability of your goal, your objective must also be relevant.</b></p> <p><b>Ask yourself:</b></p> <p>Would achieving this objective be a highly valued outcome for your organisation?</p> <p>What does success look like?</p> <p>Would success get your business closer to its long-term goals?</p> <p>Is the outcome you are trying to achieve closely tied with your broader organisational objectives?</p> <p>It is important that your communication plan has buy-in across your organisation because everyone will be contributing in some way to the implementation of your plan. The clear relevance of the communication objective to your organisation's sustainability and success is therefore important to the success of your plan.</p>	<p><i>Educate seafood consumers on positive sustainability practices of the Australian seafood industry.</i> — Industry organisation with the organisational mission to present a positive, united voice for the Australian seafood industry.</p> <p><i>Build awareness of new brand of seafood in Australian market by 20%.</i> — Food brand with the organisational mission to introduce your new brand of seafood into a competitive Australian market.</p>



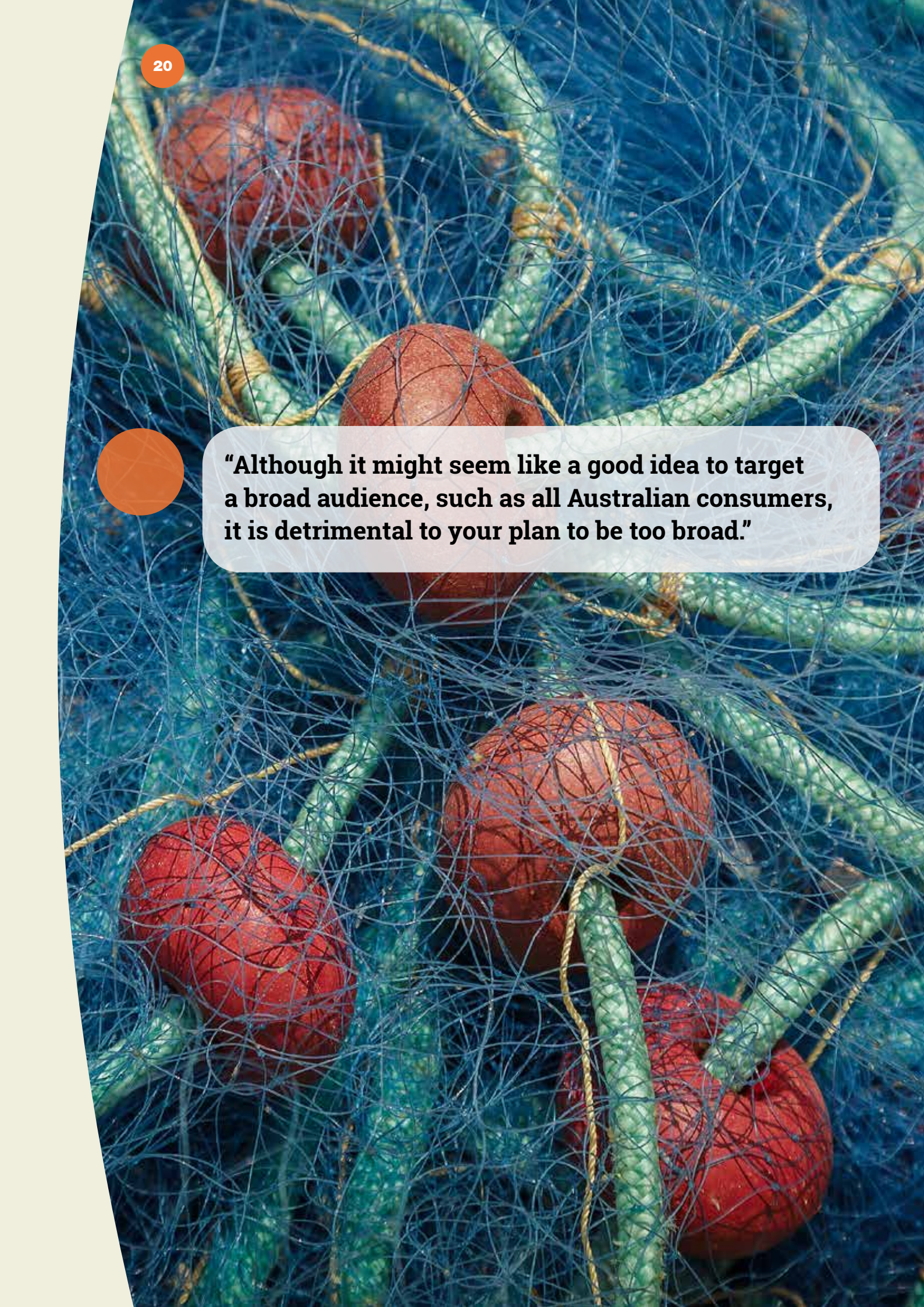




**SPECIFIC  
MEASURABLE  
ATTAINABLE  
RELEVANT  
TIMELY**

Criteria	Example/s
<p><b>Your objective must be timely in various ways.</b></p> <p><b>It must have a <i>specific</i> timeframe in which you will aim to meet the objective; in other words, an end point at which to measure whether you have met the objective.</b></p> <p><b>This timeframe must be realistic, taking into account the time available within your organisation to achieve the plan. Is it possible for you to achieve this ambitious objective in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year</li> <li>• 2 years</li> <li>• longer?</li> </ul> <p><b>Your objective must be timely in relevance to your organisational goals. Taking into account the age and size of your organisation, is this the right time to be carrying out this plan in order to meet the SMART objective you have developed?</b></p> <p>What is the age of your organisation? How established are you in the seafood industry?</p>	<p><b>Conduct surveys and measure sentiment or sales:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• before the campaign begins in January 2020</li> <li>• midway in December 2020</li> <li>• at the end of the campaign in December 2021.</li> </ul> <p><i>X staff resources and X monetary resources will be made available to deliver communication activity and workloads on different tasks.</i></p> <p>The newer you are, the more likely you plan will focus on growth in the short term—1 or 2 years.</p> <p>The <i>larger and more established</i> your organisation, the more likely you will plan over 3–5 years.</p>



A close-up photograph of a blue fishing net. Several red floats and green buoys are visible, some partially obscured by the net's mesh. The net is made of thin, blue, synthetic fibers. The background is a deep blue, suggesting an underwater or ocean environment.

**“Although it might seem like a good idea to target a broad audience, such as all Australian consumers, it is detrimental to your plan to be too broad.”**



# WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

**Having planned your objective for your media communication strategy, you then need to determine which audience you want to communicate with in order to meet that objective.**

Although it might seem like a good idea to target a broad audience, such as all Australian consumers, it is detrimental to your plan to be too broad. It is impossible to be all things to all people, and trying to speak to everyone at once will result in speaking to no one at all.

**Instead, in order for your messaging to speak directly to their specific needs, experiences and attitudes, you need to decide exactly which people you are trying to target—to persuade, engage and encourage to act. Some things to consider identify your target audience are:**

- *Which audiences are you currently communicating with, and is there another audience who you would like to engage with outside of this current group?*  
For example, you might be communicating effectively with stakeholders within your industry, but have recognised you are not communicating effectively with broader audiences, such as seafood consumers. You decide you need to work strategically to overcome media echo chambers. Are you currently communicating only with people who already know about your organisation, and want to reach people and be more visible amongst groups who have less awareness of what you do?
- *It is possible to have more than one target audience, and to adapt your message to suit different groups.* For example, you may determine one important audience is restaurateurs and chefs, whereas another target audience is middle-aged supermarket consumers who like experimenting with new seafood recipes. Your media messages should be specifically adapted for each target audience.


- *Do you currently have a fragmented audience and therefore a fragmented message, which is limiting the impact of your communication?* Social media conversations about seafood tend to be highly fragmented, with industry, environmental groups and chefs operating in largely separate networks (Phillipov, et al., 2019). These networks could be more effectively bridged by targeting particular audiences, such as chefs or foodies, in order to bring seafood issues to the attention of more people.

Again, the demographic profile of your target audience should be related to your overarching business and organisational goals. For example:

- Are you aiming to communicate with seafood industry stakeholders or seafood consumer audiences?
- Which audience is most likely to be persuaded by your message? (Keep in mind that some audiences cannot be persuaded at all, so focusing your attention on them is wasted effort.)
- Are you aiming to grow your audience by targeting new demographics, or to communicate more effectively with your existing audience?
- If you are a business, is there a market you have performed well in previously, but which needs to be reinvigorated to improve business performance?
- Is there a demographic group that is currently not in your audience which could be further developed?

In deciding which target audience/s you want to focus on, the following should be taken into account:

- Quality and quantity of target audience
- Attitudes, preferences, lifestyles and persuasibility
- Media habits.



**“If you are an industry organisation, the effectiveness of the target audience will relate more to quality rather than quantity.”**



# QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF TARGET AUDIENCE

**The first thing to consider is whether the target audience is large and influential enough to warrant them being the focus of your communication activity.**

If you are an organisation targeting seafood consumers, you will be more concerned with the size of the target audience. When considering size, you need to be able to ascertain approximately how many of that type of person—including their demographic factors (e.g. age range, income, lifestyle, household type, education level, occupation type and geographic location)—there are in the Australian and possibly the international population.

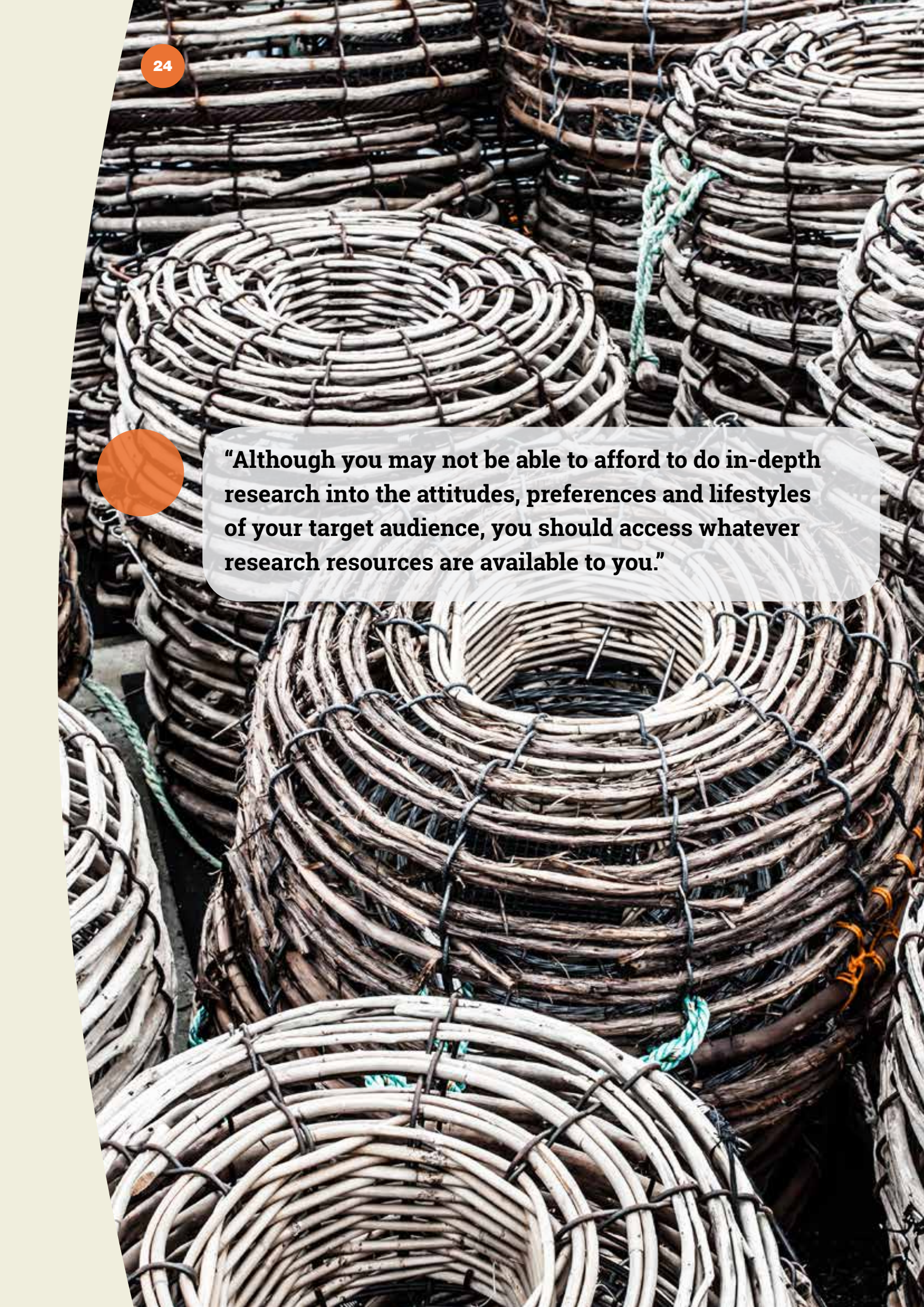
Assessing the numbers in this group will enable you to make a judgement about their attractiveness as a target audience. You can use sources of data such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics to determine the approximate size of the target audience.

For example, a consumer target audience that is specific, yet still broad enough to warrant your focus, could be men and women aged 30–50 with:

- young children or teenagers
- a household income of \$80,000+
- post high school qualifications, working full-time and who live:
  - alone or with another adult
  - in metropolitan areas with access to large grocery stores
  - in a home that they rent, mortgage or own.

If you are an industry organisation, the effectiveness of the target audience will relate more to *quality* rather than *quantity*. For example, if you are trying to raise awareness of the sustainable fishing practices of the seafood industry, targeting a small group of thought leaders whose views influence others, such as chefs, restaurateurs or foodies who are particularly passionate about and receptive to such messages, is likely to be more effective than going straight to a larger audience for your message.





**“Although you may not be able to afford to do in-depth research into the attitudes, preferences and lifestyles of your target audience, you should access whatever research resources are available to you.”**



# ATTITUDES, PREFERENCES, LIFESTYLES AND PERSUASIBILITY

**Having determined your sizeable demographic target audience, you then need to further understand their different attitudes, preferences, lifestyles and persuasibility.**

For example, do your target audience like to buy fresh seafood and experiment with different recipes for evening meals, or is this type of purchase only reserved for special occasions or weekend dinner parties? What are your demographic targets' attitudes to fishing, aquaculture, seafood health and safety, environmental concerns, animal welfare and sustainability? Are you targeting consumers, chefs and restaurateurs, or seafood organisations?

Although you may not be able to afford to do in-depth research into the attitudes, preferences and lifestyles of your target audience, you should access whatever research resources are available to you.

For example, recent research on seafood consumers found that consumers can be divided into three broad groups, each with different attitudes and persuasibility in relation to messages about seafood sustainability (Phillipov, et al., 2019):

## **1. Highly engaged foodies.**

Although this is the smallest segment of consumers, their interests are disproportionately catered to by media, and their views are potentially influential on other consumers. Foodies seek out food that aligns with their values and are therefore concerned about the sustainability of the seafood industry.

## **2. Interested home cooks.**

This is the largest segment of seafood consumers, and comprises mostly women with children. Interested home cooks are not as engaged in food as the foodies, but are still willing to try new recipes within their budgets and family preferences. The research found that this group tends to perceive sustainability as related to food health and safety, and they are therefore influenced by information they perceive impacts on seafood health risks.

## **3. Intractables.**

The second largest segment of consumers are mostly men who want to be able to choose what they eat and have little interest in ethical or sustainability concerns. Such consumers would be difficult to persuade with messages about seafood sustainability as their food choices are not influenced by such concerns.

You can inexpensively carry out your own anecdotal research by speaking to your existing networks, stakeholders and customers about their opinions and preferences in relation to your industry. This type of feedback can also come from social media engagement, by asking questions and engaging with the wider community.

Listening is a key part of successful communication: the more you listen to your existing and target audience, the better you will be able to adapt your messaging to influence them.





**“In summary, your media messages should always be adapted for specific target audience/s, which should be clearly defined and assessed for their relevance to your overarching media communication objectives.”**




# MEDIA HABITS

**Having determined the target audience for your communication, you also need to determine what their media habits are to ensure your messaging can reach them effectively.**

For example, what type of media does your target tend to consume more—social media or mainstream media? What time of day are they likely to be using their preferred social media platform and what do they use it for? (This section links to *Section 1.4: Reaching your target audience.*)

In summary, your media messages should always be adapted for specific target audience/s, which should be clearly defined and assessed for their relevance to your overarching media communication objectives. All of your communication activities should speak directly to your target audience/s in a language and tone that is suitable to them.



**“Consistently repeating the same message does not mean repeating the same tagline word for word.”**



# WHAT IS YOUR KEY MESSAGE?

Having identified your objective and the target audience/s you are aiming to communicate to, you need to decide what you want to communicate.

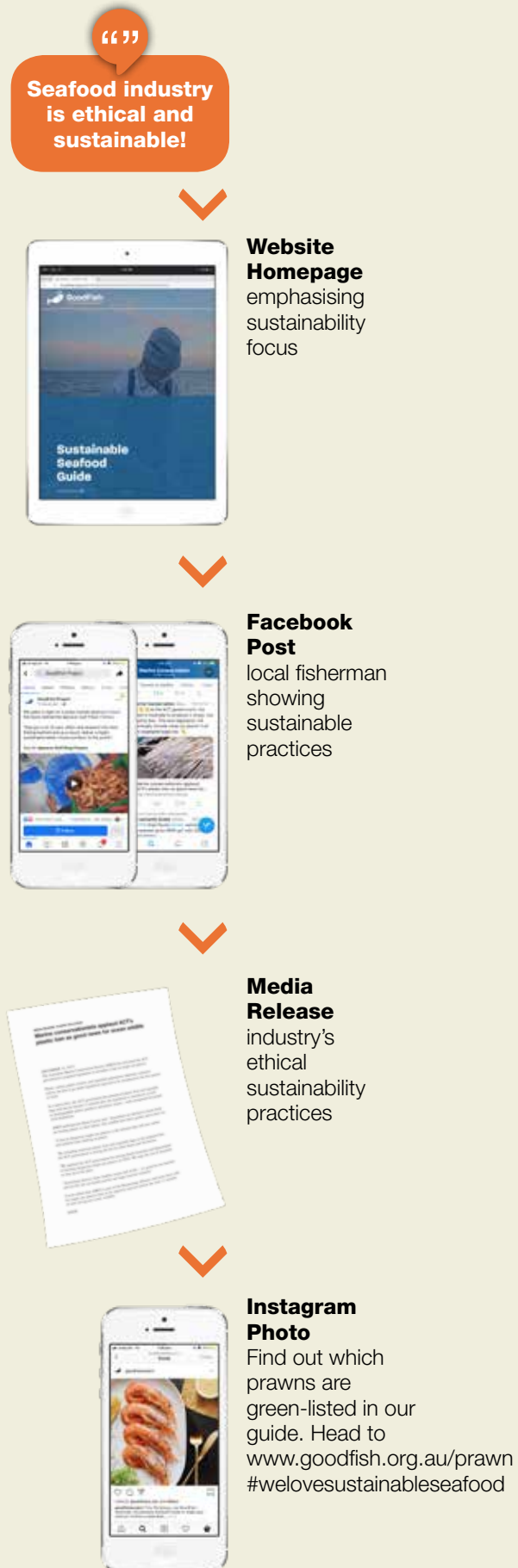
Adopting one single-minded message for your communication media strategy is crucial to successful implementation of your plan. Your message will be competing with thousands of other businesses, organisations and people also trying to communicate with your target audience.

In this cluttered and noisy media environment, you need to say one thing consistently so as to embed your message in *your* organisation's voice or brand.


Consistently repeating the same message does not mean repeating the same tagline word for word. A message can take many forms: a story, a photograph, a video, a speech, an advertisement, a headline or a social media post. What makes all these varied message forms consistent is that they all communicate the same *idea*.

Figure 3 illustrates that many forms of a message can communicate a single idea consistently. As an example, your objective might be to communicate the holistic idea that the Australian seafood industry is focused on sustainability.

**Figure 3.** Communicating a single message through multiple media







**“If your message is sustainability, your industry must be walking the talk on sustainability in every aspect of what you do.”**



## YOUR OBJECTIVE

### **Does your message align effectively with your communication objective?**

For example, if your objective is to *educate* your audience about industry issues, such as sustainability initiatives, does your single-minded message do that?

If your objective is to *increase sales* of your brand, how does your message help to *sell* your product?

If your objective is to *frame your industry, organisation or brand in a particular way*, such as being more sustainable, healthy, clean, fresh, delicious, easy to cook, affordable, or any other idea, does your message position it correctly?

## AUTHENTICITY

### **Your message must be authentic to your industry, organisation or brand in order to have an impact on your market.**

This means everything you communicate must align truthfully with every aspect of your industry or organisation for it to be trusted as genuine.

For example, if your message is sustainability, your industry must be walking the talk on sustainability in every aspect of what you do.



**“Emotions are crucial. When presented with scientific ‘facts and figures’, social media audiences will tune out.”**




# RELEVANCE TO TARGET AUDIENCE

**Your message must be relevant to your target audience for them to notice, engage and be persuaded by it. People do not pay attention to messages they don't care about.**

When trying to determine if your target audience cares about your message, think about the things you know about them—their demographics, lifestyles, attitudes and preferences—and consider if your message resonates with those characteristics.

Emotions are crucial. When presented with scientific 'facts and figures', social media audiences will tune out. People will only pay attention if they *feel* something about your message. You therefore need first to decide what emotional reaction you are trying to elicit from your target audience, and then make your message relevant to their lives. For example, if you know your audience is anxious about the health and safety of seafood, your message should aim to calm that anxiety.

Once you have identified your objective, the target audience you are communicating with and the message you are going to communicate, the final element of your planning is to determine how best to reach your target audience.



**25%**

**“use social media  
while at restaurants,  
bars or parties.”**



# REACHING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

**There are two ways organisations can communicate with their target audiences—via social media or mainstream media. Both types of media can be utilised by any organisation, even the most time- and resource-poor.**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has proliferated in the Australian community, offering organisations an effective way to communicate with their target audiences. According to the Yellow Social Media Report 2018 (Yellow 2018):

- 80% of Australians aged over 18 use the internet every day
- 88% of internet users are on social media sites
- 34% of social media users visit social media sites more than five times a day
- 63% visit social media sites while watching television
- 25% use social media while at restaurants, bars or parties
- 23% check social media while eating a meal with family or friends.


What do Australians use social media for?

- 85% catch up with family and friends
- 46% share photos or videos
- 36% use it for news and current affairs
- 32% watch videos
- 23% research products and services.

Site	Usage %	Visits Per Week	Time Per Visit
Facebook	91%	37	16 Mins
Instagram	42%	33	13 Mins
Twitter	23%	23	11 Mins

Source: Yellow Social Media Report 2018

**Table 2** shows the most popular site in Australia is Facebook, used by 91% of the population. Instagram is used by 42% of the population and Twitter by 23%

A large school of blue fish, likely bluefish, swimming in clear blue water. The fish are arranged in a loose formation, moving towards the right. The background is a deep blue, and the lighting is bright, highlighting the scales and fins of the fish.

**“There are a range of reasons why social media users report being more likely to trust brands on social media.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA

Continued

**According to Yellow's report, more than half of social media users say they are more likely to trust brands if they interact positively with them on social media.**

There are a range of reasons why social media users report being more likely to trust brands on social media, with follower count found to be less important than content relevance:


- 55%—the content is engaging and relevant
- 54%—the brand interacts positively with them
- 54%—the content is regularly updated
- 36%—the brand has a large number of followers

Yellow's report also showed the most followed types of businesses on social media are in the categories of holidays, travel, accommodation, entertainment, music and movies or TV shows. Although food and dining are not specifically included in one of these categories, they fit within the broader lifestyle, health and entertainment sector, which means fishing, aquaculture and seafood organisations, brands and businesses are highly relevant to the social media audience.

With these huge numbers of people using social media regularly, your organisation can strategically utilise one or more platforms not only to communicate with your target audience, but to stay engaged with them.

This enables you to improve the *reach* and *frequency* of your communication. For your message to influence the target audience, both are required.

More information about using social media platforms to effectively communicate with your audience is included in *Section 2.1: Social media*.

A fishing boat with a large net is shown on the water. The boat is white with a blue cabin and a tall mast. The net is a large, rectangular structure made of mesh and floats, extending across the water. The boat is moving through the water, creating a wake. The sky is overcast, and several seagulls are flying around the boat. The overall scene is a typical fishing operation at sea.

**“Although you have less control over how your message is portrayed in traditional media, if you can generate earned content, you will reach a large audience that can reap large benefits.”**



# TRADITIONAL MEDIA

## **Traditional media continue to offer opportunities for you to place your organisation in front of mass audiences on television, radio, or in printed or digital newspapers and magazines.**

Although you have less control over how your message is portrayed in traditional media, if you can generate *earned* content (as opposed to paid advertising), you will reach a large audience that can reap large benefits.

According to the 2019 Deloitte Media Consumer Survey, the top three most preferred entertainment activities for Australians include (Deloitte 2019):

- Browsing the internet—52%
- Watching free-to-air TV—51%
- Streaming video—37%
- Listening to music—36%

A key segment of traditional media is news media, which Australians continue to consume at high levels. According to the News and Media Research Centre's *Digital News Report: Australia 2019*, 58% of Australians have a high interest in news. This report also found 57% of Australians still access *offline* news, including television, radio and printed newspapers (Fisher et al. 2019). Deloitte's report also found the most frequent way to consume news continues to be television news, with 36% watching TV news.

News media and other informational sources in entertainment media, such as lifestyle media programs on TV and radio or in magazines and newspapers, offer you an avenue to reach a huge segment of the Australian population. The popularity of cooking and lifestyle shows, most notably Channel Seven's *My Kitchen Rules* and Channel Ten's *MasterChef Australia*, and the spillover popularity of social media commentary about these shows, is indicative of the interest Australians have in food, cooking, and lifestyle entertainment.

More information about working with the mainstream media to reach your target audience is included in *Section 2.2: Mainstream media*.

By developing a comprehensive plan that identifies your objective, target audience, key message and the best platforms to reach your target audience, you are ready to implement your plan.





# IMPLEMENTATION



**“This section contains best practice guidance for communicating using social media and for liaising with traditional media outlets.”**




# IMPLEMENTING MEDIA COMMUNICATION

## SOCIAL MEDIA

**Your media communication plan provides a road map to guide your communication activities throughout the length of the plan, whether that be 1 year, 2 years or more. This enables you to be more deliberate, strategic and consistent by ensuring your message serves your organisational goals.**

This section contains best practice guidance for communicating using social media and for liaising with traditional media outlets.

This section provides advice about posting on social media, including creating content, what not to post, how often to post, photography and video, working with influencers, user-generated content, staff resources, and moderation and tips for using Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, including advice about what type of content works best for each platform.



**“Smaller organisations who don’t have a dedicated staff member tend to allocate social media management to someone who has the time and experience to manage this task.”**



## CREATING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE

**When creating your social media profiles, keep in mind the following best practice tips to ensure you start out on the right foot:**


- Use *consistent visual images and branding* across your social media platforms so your profile image and background image, where applicable, reflect your organisational brand and are consistently recognisable across platforms.
- Where relevant, such as on Twitter, go through the *verification* process to verify the authenticity of your organisation's profile.
- Include *contact details* on your profile such as phone number and email address, and a link to your website.
- A good way to initially *build your number of followers* on a new page or profile is to follow or like other organisations and people in your wider organisational network. This has two benefits. The first is that you will then be able to monitor your network's social media activity. The second is that many profiles will reciprocate your follow by following you back.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES AND MODERATION

**Large organisations tend to have a dedicated communication specialist who is responsible for managing social media accounts.**

Smaller organisations who don't have a dedicated staff member tend to allocate social media management to someone who has the time and experience to manage this task. Sometimes it is the owner of a small business, who is a jack-of-all-trades. No matter who it is in your organisation that is posting on social media, the following tips about moderation and maintenance of social media apply:

- All social media activity should be aligned with your communication plan and should follow your plan's objectives, target audience, key message, and main platforms. If you are the only person in your organisation responsible for social media, it is a good idea to have a second pair of eyes checking content for typos, errors and consistency.
- Even if they are not directly responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of social media accounts, all staff should come up with ideas and content to post on social media, including photos and videos. This will contribute a wider array of ideas and content.
- At least one person should be responsible for monitoring social media accounts regularly so they can reply to questions or comments needing follow up. They can also scan social media for anything of relevance to interact with on behalf of the organisation. This type of monitoring is rarely a full-time job, but at least one staff member should be putting a small amount of time aside to undertake this work each week.
- If you are using more than one platform, you might choose to invest in a social media management tool such as Buffer, Hootsuite or Sprout Social. These tools enable you to manage all your profiles in one place. This includes being able to schedule posts; monitor comments, reactions and shares; and evaluate using a single dashboard across the different platforms.



**“Make sure the message is informative,  
entertaining and/or educational.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION

## **One of the challenges of communicating on social media is coming up with ideas about what to post.**

A good way to think of your organisation's social media accounts is as a *window*, through which:

- you can look out and interact with your target audience/s
- your target audience/s can look into your organisation, get to know you and engage with what you are doing.

Using this metaphorical window, your posts can take a variety of different forms, all tied to the overarching message you have outlined in your plan. You can use them to show and tell, update, invite, and comment and share.

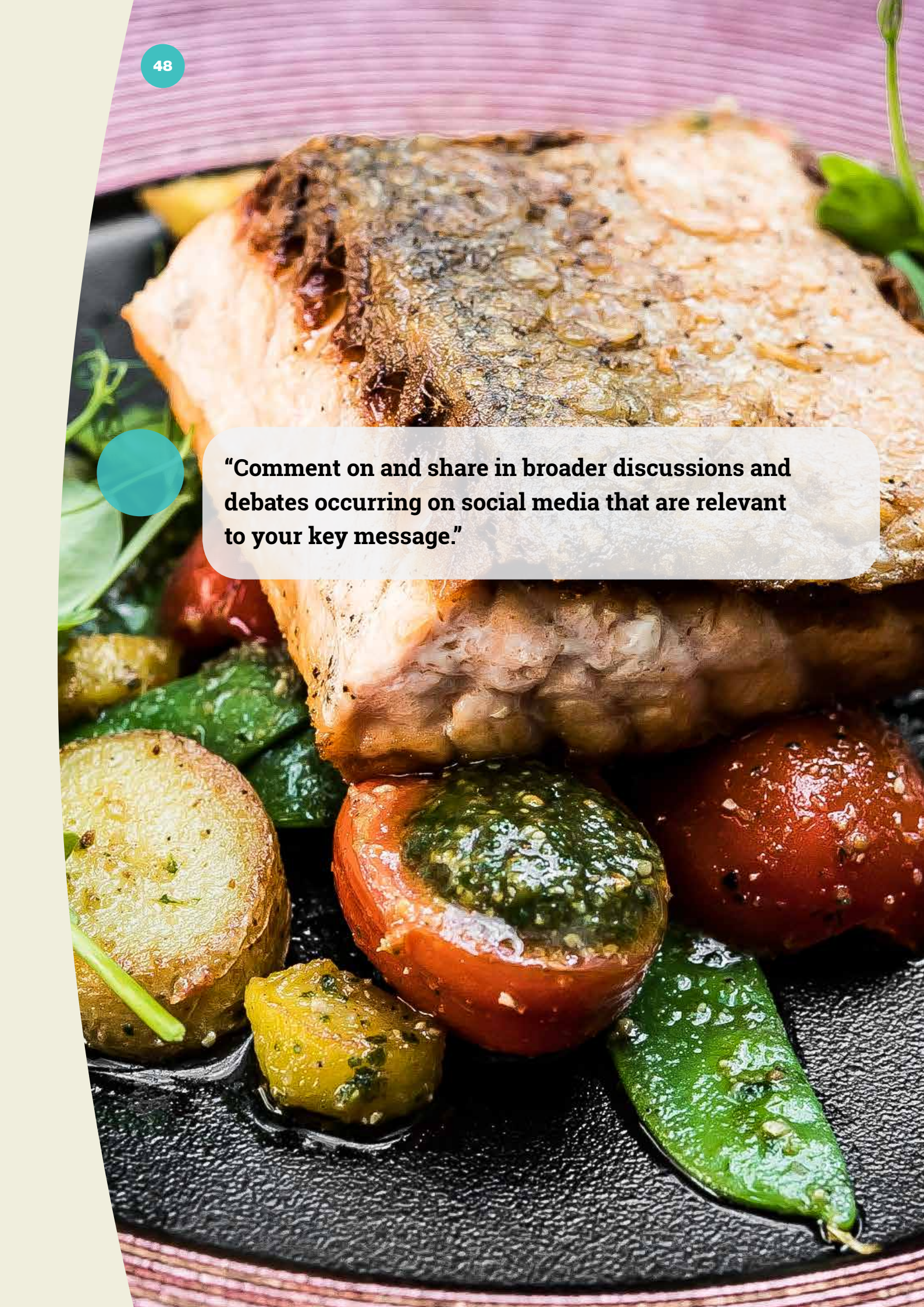
## **Show and tell your ideas, information, products and services to your target audience in an informative way.**

Remember to always link your message with the interests of the target audience. Why would they care about what you are telling them? Make sure the message is *informative, entertaining and/or educational*. For example, you might want to *show* where your fish come from and how they are caught. You might want to *educate* the audience about the sustainable aquaculture practices of your industry. You might want to *inform* your audience about changes in food regulation that impact on them.

## **Update your target audience on news about your organisation, industry, product or services that is relevant to them.**

Is there something you have done or achieved that they should know about? Is there something new you can tell them about? Did something unexpected happen that they would like to know about? Through updates and information, you can position your organisation as a thought leader in your industry. A *thought leader* is viewed as a credible and authoritative source of information on a topic, presenting new ideas and informing new discussions of value to the target audience.





**“Comment on and share in broader discussions and debates occurring on social media that are relevant to your key message.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION

Continued

## **Invite your target audience to engage in and contribute to a conversation you have started on a topic of interest to them.**

Social media should not just be used to ‘push’ content at people; rather, it should be used to ask and answer questions of your target audience; to listen; to provide help, advice or support; to seek their views; and to respond to their feedback in ways that are useful and relevant to them. This idea will be returned to in *Section 2.1.6: User-generated content*.

## **Comment on and share in broader discussions and debates occurring on social media that are relevant to your key message.**

This can often take the form of commenting on another organisation’s posts or sharing posts by relevant organisations. Be careful always to stick to your message while being positive and respectful when commentating and sharing your views in social media discussions. This idea will be returned to in *Section 2.1.3.1* about what *not* to post on social media.

Using these categories of posts, you will be posting both *proactively* and *reactively*. You need to be prepared for both to ensure you have the materials you need to post regularly:

- **Proactive posts** are general messages in line with your plan that fit the categories of *show and tell*, and *invite* outlined above. It is a good idea to set aside time each week to think about proactive posts you might be able to post, and to ensure you have the materials and content required to post them, e.g. key facts, quotes, photos, videos or any other relevant information.
- **Reactive posts** are messages that relate to events either external or internal to your organisation that fit the categories of *news and updates*, or *comment and share*. Although you usually won’t be able to plan these reactive posts far in advance, you need to ensure you have a plan for reacting in a timely way to events that warrant either a news update or a contribution to a wider discussion.

Social media is fleeting, so to be able to react in an appropriate timeframe (engaging in and sharing relevant information), it is important that you stay engaged in social and traditional media monitoring to make sure you are aware of new developments, events, discussions and topics of interest to your organisation.





**“Avoid any risks and negative consequences from using social media inappropriately or in a way that wastes your effort to meet your objectives.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION

Continued

## What Not To Post

Always stick to your plan when posting on social media. This way, you are emphasising your key message to your target audience in a consistent way, while avoiding any risks and negative consequences from using social media inappropriately or in a way that wastes your effort to meet your objectives. You should refrain from posting anything that:

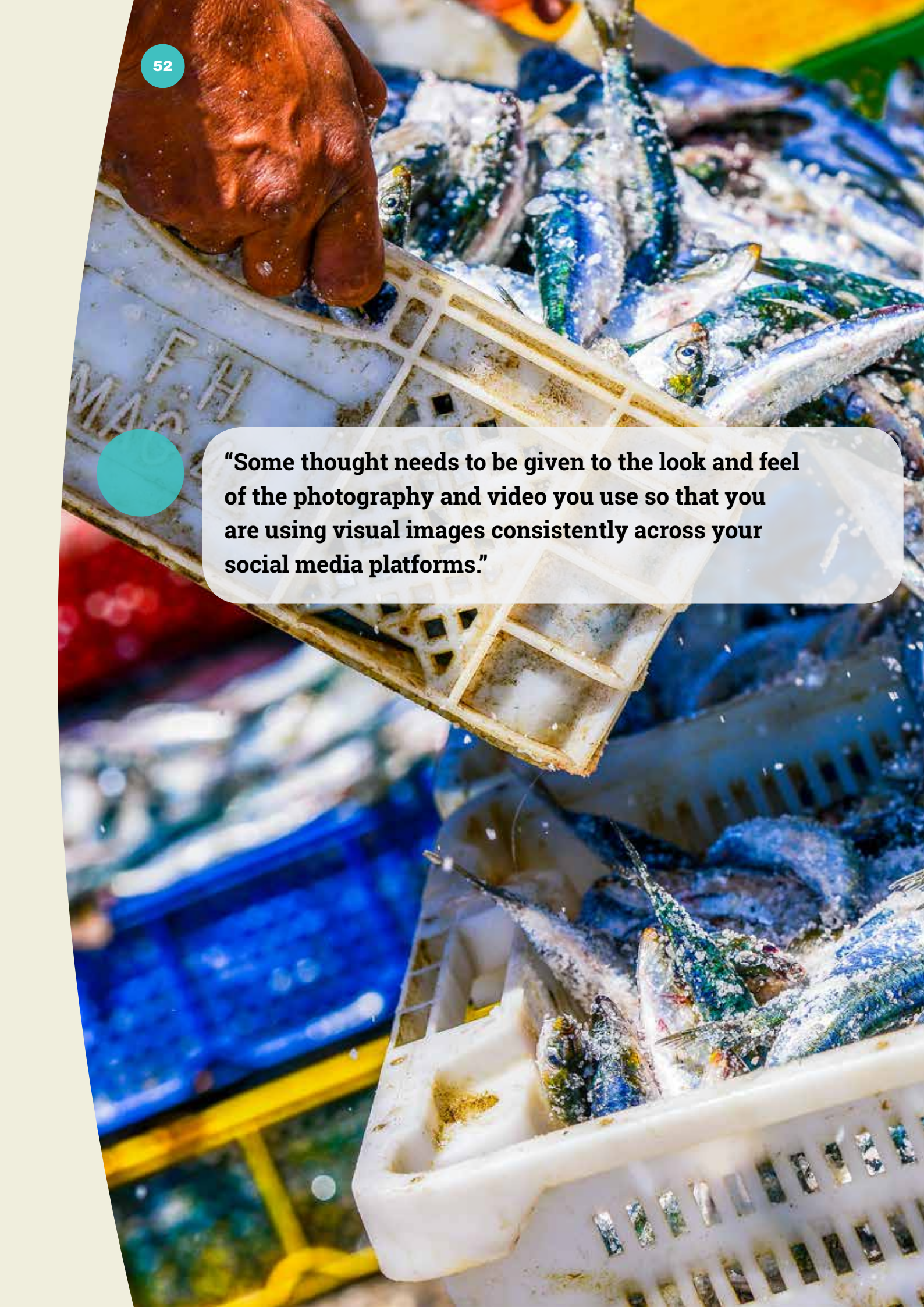
- *undermines the credibility of your organisation and the consistency of your key message.* This includes posting or sharing posts of a personal nature, commenting in a negative or aggressive way, even in situations where you strongly disagree with other social media users. There is nothing to be gained from social media battles and debates with people or groups you disagree with. If you have nothing positive to contribute, it is best to say nothing. Negative social media commentary can impact on your reputation and draws disproportionate attention to issues you may be trying to deflect.
- *attacks or debates contradictory views or criticisms of your content.* It is understandable that you would want to defend yourselves publicly or correct the record, in cases where, for example, NGOs, environmental activists or recreational fishers are being critical of your industry or organisation. However, this type of contestation on social media simply increases the visibility of negative messages to your audience. Research consistently shows that people with strong views will not have their minds changed through online debate. In fact, such debate is more likely to entrench their existing views. So it is always better to focus on making your own (positive) message visible than trying to debate points with those you disagree with.
- *is irrelevant to your target audience.* ‘Journaling’ organisational events or news that is not relevant to the target audience is a common mistake. Always keep your target audience in mind when posting on social media—if the content is not relevant to them and your key message, it should not be posted.

## How Often To Post

There is no specific rule about how often you should post on social media. The correct regularity depends on what is happening in your business or organisation and the availability of suitable content. You need to make a judgement about how often you post, keeping in mind the following advice:

- Always keep your account *active*, so that it does not appear to be stale. An account that has not been used for weeks appears to be inactive. At the bare minimum you should be active on social media at least once a week, if not more often.
- Find the right balance between *proactive and reactive* posts. Plan ahead. If you know your organisation is about to have a busy period that will generate reactive posting, you don't need to plan as much proactive posting. Conversely, if you are about to enter a quiet period, prepare some ideas for proactive posts to make sure you have the content ready to go when you need it.
- Beware of *overloading* your followers. They do not need to hear from you multiple times a day. Too much posting can turn your followers off. Think about how often you like to hear from people on your own social media feeds and use this to guide an appropriate number of posts of both a proactive and reactive nature.





**“Some thought needs to be given to the look and feel of the photography and video you use so that you are using visual images consistently across your social media platforms.”**



# PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

**No matter which social media platform you are using, photography and video help to draw people's attention to your posts. They show rather than tell your audience about your organisation.**

With the advent of smart phones, anyone can shoot a professional video or take a good photo. Social media users do not expect organisations to use professional photography and videographers, so even if *you* feel the photos and videos you shoot are not professional enough, they will appear authentic and engaging to your audience.

If you have resources for professional photography and video, it's great to have your own library of visual assets on hand for use in social media content to complement the photos and videos you create yourself.

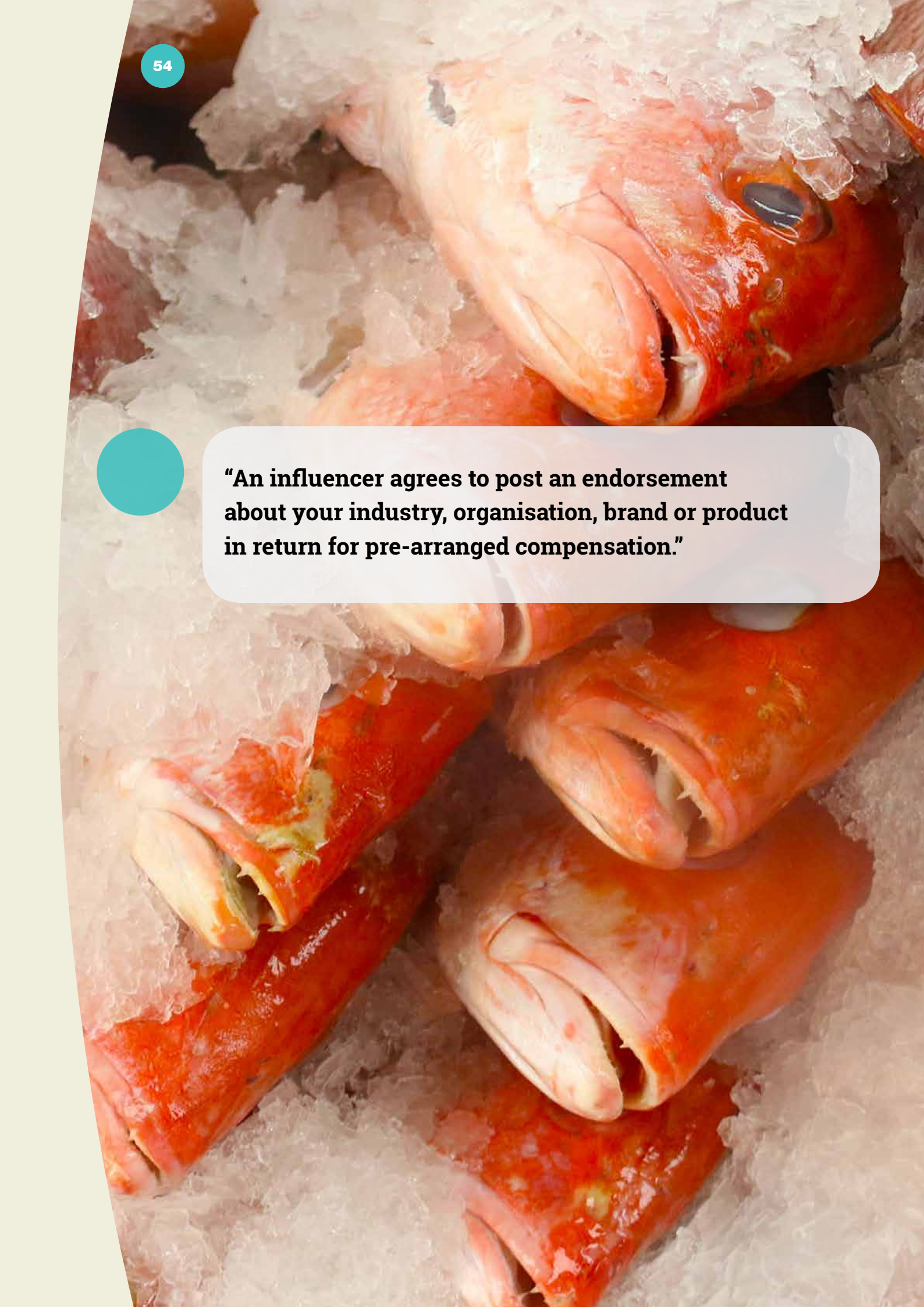
Some thought needs to be given to the look and feel of the photography and video you use so that you are using visual images consistently across your social media platforms.

- *Learn to edit your images*, whether using your smart phone or on your computer, to get the most out of each shot. Editing includes enhancing the colours by increasing or decreasing brightness and light, cropping photos down so that the framing is clearer, removing red eyes and adding filters where appropriate.
- *Select a consistent filter*. If you are going to use a filter to enhance your image, such as making it vivid, cool or warm, use the same filter consistently rather than chopping and changing for different photos. Think about which filter works best with your message—do you want a clean crisp photographic style, or a muted, soft style? Less is more when it comes to filters, so if in doubt, go without.
- *Short videos are better than long videos*. Social media audiences like to dip in and out of content without spending too much time on any one post.

A good rule of thumb for video length is no more than a minute for informational videos, and no more than 10 seconds for entertaining videos. You can edit and crop videos and even add music using smart phone apps and computer programs that make video editing easy. You can add royalty-free music and sound effects; useful websites include [incompetch.com](http://incompetch.com) and [findsounds.com](http://findsounds.com). Add captions to video when possible so that social media users can watch them without sound.

- *Acknowledge and link*. If you are using someone else's photo, acknowledge them in a caption and, where possible, link to their social media account. If your image features people, such as chefs attending an industry event, you should make sure that you tag them and link to their social media accounts—this improves the visibility of your posts outside your own direct network.
- *Create a YouTube channel* if you plan to use video regularly. This acts as a repository of video assets, offering an accessible and much-used platform to help your message reach your target audience via your Facebook post or other platforms. Paid YouTube video advertising can also be effective, ensuring the video message is short—no more than 15 seconds. YouTube is a much more cost effective and targeted way to place your advertising in front of your target audience than traditional television advertising.

It is a good idea to take photos and video relevant to your organisation and key message whenever you can, so that when you create content for social media, you have a large bank of assets you can draw on to accompany your post. No opportunity to record visually interesting elements of your organisation, such as products and the people involved in the organisation, should be wasted. You won't use every image you take, but it is good practice to keep a file of images and videos that may be useful to you in the future.



**“An influencer agrees to post an endorsement about your industry, organisation, brand or product in return for pre-arranged compensation.”**



# WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA 'INFLUENCERS'

Social media influencers present an opportunity for your organisation to partner with a credible and popular source of information to promote your message beyond your own networks by piggybacking on their large followings.

Organisations use influencers in much the same way advertisers arrange product placement in traditional media, such as television shows. An influencer agrees to post an endorsement about your industry, organisation, brand or product in return for pre-arranged compensation, whether that be monetary payment, free or discounted products, or sometimes in-kind promotion in return.

When using influencers as part of your communication strategy, it is worth keeping in mind the following advice, drawn from recent research funded by the FRDC (Phillipov et al., 2019):

- The influencers used by the seafood industry tend to include mostly chefs, as well as bloggers and nutritionists.
- You should select influencers carefully to ensure appropriate alignment between their 'brand identity' and your organisation's key message.
- Some messages are communicated more effectively by influencers than others.
- Influencers and the message they communicate should be carefully targeted to niche audiences, as broad approaches often don't have the desired impact.
- Think outside the square when identifying suitable influencers to reach your specific target audience, and favour quality over quantity.
- Long-term relationships with appropriate influencers are more beneficial than one-off posts of endorsement.
- The terms of your agreement with the influencer should be well defined, in the same way that you make agreements with any stakeholder, client or supplier in your organisation.
- Stipulate that the influencer should be tagging your social media account in any posts discussing your organisation or your products.

**“If an influencer’s followers are predominately in international audiences and your organisation is Australia-based, the investment is wasted.”**





# WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA 'INFLUENCERS'

Continued

## Chefs, Bloggers and Nutritionists

Chefs, bloggers and nutritionists are especially important influencers due to their ability to leverage media, communicate complex ideas simply, and tell influential stories about 'good' food.

Most influencers favour Instagram as their most effective communication platform. They engage in a range of formal and informal arrangements with industry and NGOs. Influencers are willing to partner with industry only in cases where they feel the alliance will be worth their effort and their integrity can be maintained. Chefs prefer not to be told explicitly what to post. They prefer to present positive messages aligned with their own values.

## Select Influencers Carefully

It is important to ensure appropriate alignment between the influencer's 'brand identity' and your organisation's key message. This can be as simple as aligning the location of the influencer's followers and the location of your target audience.

For example, if an influencer's followers are predominately in international audiences and your organisation is Australia-based, the investment is wasted. The alignment should also match the demographics of your target audience: if the influencer is a high-end chef who is well known amongst foodies who can afford to eat out at the chef's high-end restaurant, but your audience is mums and dads who cook at home for their children, the appropriate target audience alignment may not be present.

The old adage that 'any publicity is good publicity' no longer applies in a social media age. If the only influencers willing to work with you aren't quite the right fit, it is better to go with an alternative communication strategy rather than risk diluting your message or even alienating a key section of your audience by choosing the 'wrong' influencer.

## Influencers communicate some types of messages more effectively

As an example, when industry and NGOs use chefs to communicate their message during times of conflict, influencers have little effect on shifting public opinion. Instead, influencers are better used to communicate positive messages during 'calmer' periods, when audiences are more receptive.

Research has shown that many consumers choose to ignore messages from influencers who are seen as "too political", which again suggests that a concerted strategy of positive messages is likely to be more effective.

## Influencers and niche audiences

Influencers and the message they communicate should be carefully targeted to niche audiences, as broad approaches often don't have the desired impact.

That being the case, the number of followers the influencer has should not be the only metric you use to judge their value to your organisation. Lesser known influencers may have smaller follower numbers, but their messages can have greater cut-through and be perceived as more genuine to their supporter base.





**“A single post is unlikely to have a discernible impact on your target audience as only a small fraction of the influencer’s follower base are likely to engage with the content.”**



# WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA 'INFLUENCERS'

Continued

## Thinking outside the square when identifying suitable influencers

Trust between the consumer and the influencer is essential, and is an indicator of how effective the influencer's message will be. Remember, when it comes to alignment between the influencer and your target audience, you are always seeking quality, not quantity.

## Long-term relationships with appropriate influencers

A single post is unlikely to have a discernible impact on your target audience as only a small fraction of the influencer's follower base are likely to engage with the content. Ongoing relationships with an appropriate influencer will generate more frequent messaging, which will have longer term benefit for your organisation. This idea relates to the importance of the reach and frequency of an influencer's communication.


## Terms of your agreement with the influencer

If the influencer is receiving payment, agreements should be contractual in nature and clearly laid out to describe exactly what the influencer will be providing. You should be monitoring the influencer's adherence to the agreement to ensure you are receiving the promotion you have paid for.

However, recent research has shown that some influencers, particularly chefs, are open to working with industry on non-financial terms as they too are interested in forming reciprocal alliances to cross-promote themselves, grow their networks and access new products. Such arrangements would not necessarily involve a formal agreement, but there should be clear understanding of the terms of the relationship and a clear brand alignment between the influencer and your organisation. Again, 'any publicity is good publicity' does not apply.

## The importance of hashtags

To get the most out of your relationship with the influencer you have engaged, be sure to stipulate that the influencer should be tagging your social media account in any posts discussing your organisation or your products. If you are using specific hashtags in your social media posts, remember to request that the influencer also use those same hashtags to link their message to yours.



**“It is important to remember that social media communication should always be two-way, so you are not just broadcasting your own message, but also engaging with other organisations and people to form relationships.”**



# USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-generated content is any content posted by your followers that promotes your industry, organisation, products or brand. This can include posts endorsing or commenting on your organisation, or other users commenting, reacting to or sharing your posts onto their own feeds.

User-generated content has various benefits for your social media promotion:

- When other social media users promote your business or organisation to their social media followers, assuming they give you a positive endorsement, your promotion reaches beyond your own follower base, increasing your audience and potentially encouraging more people to follow you.
- Research has shown that social media users trust recommendations and endorsements from their own friends and family over advertising on social media (Baer & Lemin, 2018). User-generated content is therefore a valuable form of word-of-mouth promotion that may be more influential than your own promotional messages.

It is important to remember that social media communication should always be two-way, so you are not just broadcasting your own message, but also engaging with other organisations and people to form relationships, grow your community and reach as many people as possible. You can encourage social media users to generate positive content for your products and services in various ways:

- *Comment on, react to, and share* other users' content that is relevant to your key message, inviting reciprocal sharing of your posts.
- *Post a question*, inviting people to respond. Ask people for their views, experiences, feedback and comments on a particular topic and then engage with them by responding to their comments.
- *Hold competitions* to encourage user-generated content. For example, you could encourage your members to share their ideas and suggestions for initiatives to support their industry, using social media as a public forum to generate conversations and garner feedback. If you are a seafood brand, you might promote a prize for the best photo of a seafood dinner cooked with your product, or encourage people to share their seafood recipes. You can ask users to include a competition hashtag or tag your account so that their content is linked back to your account. You can also share their content to generate more interest in the competition.



**“Facebook is an excellent way to reach target audiences of all demographics.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

**This section includes best practice advice for the three most relevant social media platforms for reaching your audience: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.**

Your organisation does not need to use all three platforms in order to communicate effectively with your target audience. Depending on your staff resources, expertise and the time available, you may choose to focus just on one platform, which you judge to be the best place to reach your target audience.

What is most important is that if you choose to use one, two or three of these platforms, you must ensure you are using each of them effectively and regularly to meet the objectives as set out in your plan. It is in fact better to use only one platform and to use it well, than to spread your resources thinly across three and feel you're not able to use them to their full potential.





# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Continued

## Facebook

As the most dominant social media platform amongst Australians, Facebook is an excellent way to reach target audiences of all demographics. People tend to use Facebook as an entertainment and information medium. This means posts should be quickly digested, offering a simple message with as little text in the caption as possible. Photos and short videos work very well on social media. Here are some tips about how to get the most out of Facebook functionality:

- *Tag people and other pages* in your posts when relevant. This encourages those other profiles and pages to share your post, extending its reach.
- *Caption length is optional*, but long captions need to be opened with a click, so short captions that fit within the small preview space are easier to read. Try to keep your caption to no more than three sentences.
- *Use hashtags sparingly* to link your post with relevant discussions. You might have a dedicated hashtag for your organisation, which should be used on each post.
- *Livestream important events relevant to your audience* using Facebook Live. It is best to use a tripod to livestream events and make sure you are close enough to the speakers that the audience can hear the audio.
- *Remember, you are aiming to engage and encourage interaction* on Facebook. Comments are an important part of the Facebook experience, so encourage people to like, share and comment on your post. The best way to do this is to ask them to react. For instance, 'Like this post if you agree!'
- *Monitor* all types of comments and messages on your page *and respond* in a practicable amount of time, such as within 48 hours.

When you are first starting out on Facebook and have only a small number of followers, it will be difficult to see the benefits of your work. However, follower numbers will slowly grow and so you need to keep posting and interacting over a sustained period to build your profile and follower count. The investment in time and resources won't pay off immediately, but eventually you will start to see the benefits.


### *Paid Facebook advertising*

Facebook promoted posts offer an inexpensive way for you to advertise your posts outside of the group of users already following your page. The benefit of Facebook sponsored posts is that you can target your advertising spend to specific users.

Since Facebook has rich data insights into its users, its sponsored post targeting is very specific, including age, location, gender, interests and lifestyle.

You can set aside a small budget for your sponsored post, as little as \$50. Once this spend is reached, the sponsored post is automatically removed.

A good way to use sponsored posts is to identify high-performing posts and boost them to reach a wider audience. You can also use sponsored posts for specific campaigns, such as competitions aimed at encouraging interaction with your page, or critical issues facing the industry on which you're seeking to galvanise broader support.

An underwater photograph showing a large school of fish swimming in clear, blue water. A diver is visible in the background, partially obscured by the fish. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a shallow depth.

**“Images and videos can be uploaded to Instagram after being shot elsewhere, such as on your smart phone, or can be recorded or snapped within the Instagram app.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Continued


## Instagram

Instagram has grown in popularity since being launched in 2012. According to the *Yellow Social Media Report 2018*, it is the third most popular social media site after Facebook and YouTube, with 32% of Australians using the platform. Instagram is also more popular amongst female than male social media users (Yellow, 2018).

The following is a guide to using Instagram to grow your following and communicate with your target audience:

- *Visual and fleeting.* Instagram is primarily a visual medium where users scroll through photos, images, short videos and stories, which are collections of images and videos linked together like a slideshow. Stories disappear after 24 hours, so they are fleeting content used to give a more comprehensive account of an event or issue than a single image or video.
- *Sourcing and editing.* Images and videos can be uploaded to Instagram after being shot elsewhere, such as on your smart phone, or can be recorded or snapped within the Instagram app. The app has editing functionality, so you can add filters, create text banners and edit the photo by, for example, cropping and changing brightness. Images on Instagram can be framed horizontally (landscape), vertically (portrait) or square, with portrait the most effective size for engagement (Hudson, 2018).
- *Memes as messages.* Memes are also popular on Instagram. They may be a comment, a joke, a remark, something inspiring or an idea. One way to create visually interesting messages using the meme format on Instagram is to overlay text on top of a photograph to create a headline message.
- *Images and text.* By using text over an image, you are making a clearer point than having to rely on your caption to back up the message in the photograph. Instagram users scroll through hundreds and thousands of images and so, much like an outdoor billboard in traditional media, your Instagram post has milliseconds to communicate your message. Less is more.
- *Using captions and hashtags.* Captions are secondary to the visual element of Instagram posts and should be used to add further context or description to the image. Keep captions as short as possible. Hashtags are crucial to Instagram functionality, so use as many as is necessary to link your content with wider Instagram themes. Your own consistent hashtag highlighting your industry, organisation and/or brand should be used on every post.
- *Showing your story.* Instagram is a storytelling platform where you can show the story of your organisation in pictures and videos, one piece at a time. Remember to make your story relevant to your plan by using your images to highlight and reinforce your key message.



A scenic view of a coastal town with a boat named 'MERSEY' in the foreground. The boat is white with yellow accents and is moving across the water. In the background, there are green hills, a few houses, and a large net structure in the water.

**“Twitter has a relatively small user base in Australia, but this does not mean it is not a valuable communication tool.”**



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Continued


## Twitter

Twitter has a relatively small user base in Australia, but this does not mean it is not a valuable communication tool. Twitter is best used to engage with institutional contacts, such as stakeholders in the fishing, aquaculture and seafood industries, influencers such as chefs and restaurateurs, as well as important external networks such as researchers, politicians, and media professionals, including journalists. The following tips help you to get the most out of using Twitter to engage with your audience and other important stakeholders:

- *Follow as many relevant Twitter users as you can* to build up your network of useful source information. Twitter is particularly important to the news media industry, so breaking news, social and political commentary and debate, both Australian and international, can be sourced via this platform. Keeping in touch with current affairs and wider discussions relevant to your industry is crucial for staying engaged with your target audience.
- *Contribute to existing conversations.* Although Twitter can be used to announce news stories in the form of a media release, it can be hard to start conversations on a platform better designed to contribute to conversations already occurring. Twitter conversations tend to follow the daily news cycle, led by mainstream news media agendas. Therefore, the best way to communicate on Twitter is to be part of the conversation. If you have something of relevance to add in line with your key message, you can have your say and put your perspective across amongst other users doing the same. Use relevant hashtags to make your tweet part of a wider conversation.
- *Contribute to a live trending topic*, not unlike contributing to a conversation. A live trending topic can be anything from a TV show people are tweeting about using a designated hashtag, such as #MKR (My Kitchen Rules) or #MasterChefAU (Masterchef Australia), to a sporting event or a news story.
 

Use the hashtag while the event is live, as this is when Twitter users will be using the hashtag to link the conversation together. This enables you to not only put your relevant message in front of a larger audience beyond your own followers, but also to link your message with the popularity of the topic, such as the TV show.

Always make your message relevant to both the trending topic and your key message. If there is no obvious link, it is not a good idea to piggyback irrelevantly; not only is it wasted effort, but can also be viewed cynically by Twitter users.
- *Post your own content and re-tweet other users' content* if it is relevant to your audience and contributes to your key message. A re-tweet is an implied endorsement, so it's important you only re-tweet content you are willing to endorse. You can also share your comment or opinion on other tweets by replying to the tweet or re-tweeting with a comment. Always aim to be positive and respectful when commenting and sharing content. There is nothing to be gained from engaging in negative Twitter discussions and debates.
- *Be patient.* It can feel like it takes a long time to build a valuable following on Twitter, but just like the other platforms, your network will grow slowly yet steadily as you build your presence and follower base.



**“Lifestyle media covers topics such as health and wellbeing, food and nutrition, family, culture and entertainment.”**



# MAINSTREAM MEDIA

The mainstream media offers you the opportunity to promote your organisation to a large audience through television, radio, magazines, newspapers and online news and lifestyle media. Once you have identified your target audience and their media consumption habits, you can devise a strategy aimed at influencing media content creators to profile your organisation in a positive way.

**Lifestyle media** is growing in popularity. Lifestyle media covers topics such as health and wellbeing, food and nutrition, family, culture and entertainment. Lifestyle media is educational, informative and entertaining to media consumers, often offering them advice, ideas and news relevant to their interests and lifestyles.

General news might also be relevant to your organisation at times, and you might contribute to general news media in one of two ways:

- Contribute the idea for a story about something newsworthy happening in or to your organisation, which frames your message in a positive light.
- Act as a source, contributing to a news story about an issue or event relevant to your organisation or industry. In this case, you would provide a comment or perspective to be used in the story. Again, this should only be done when it frames your organisation in a positive light, aligning with your key message.

It might seem like a difficult proposition to get your message profiled positively in national media, but remember that not all media organisations are national; some are local, niche and targeted to specific interests. Content creators are always on the lookout for new sources of information and newsworthy ideas to help them create media stories and programs. Radio is especially content-hungry, given the number of hours each day that must be filled with stories, and so radio is often more likely to cover your story than other types of news outlets.

The trick is to present your information to mainstream media contacts in a way that makes it simple and effective for them to include your message in their content, whether that be a masthead news story, a TV show, magazine feature, radio program, podcast or local newspaper. This can be by media release or communicating with journalists, producers and other content creators.





**“Hook the reader into the most newsworthy information at the top of the story, much like writing a news story.”**



## MEDIA RELEASES

As explained, a media release can be used both to present an idea for a news story about your organisation, and to comment, as a source, on a relevant story about an issue or event related to your organisation.

Here are some tips for writing and sending out media releases:

- *Hook the reader into the most newsworthy information at the top of the story*, much like writing a news story. Use a headline to explain in a few words the relevance of your news story or your perspective on another story. The first sentence should then summarise the key facts of your media release while positioning its relevance to your organisation and the news story. The rest of the release includes more detailed information and quotes that can be used by the media and attributed to you.
- *Frame the relevance of the news to the media organisation*. Think about what would give this media release the best chance of being used as a news story or as comment in another story. What makes the news impactful or useful to your audience, or how does it create interest in the topic? How is the information you are providing special or unique to your organisation and how does it position your organisation as credible, positive and authentic? What is new about the information and why is the information important and valuable to the media organisation?
- *Keep the release as brief as possible*—no more than one page.
- *Include the date of the release* on the top of the document.
- *Provide your contact details*—mobile phone number and email address—on the media release so you can be contacted for follow up or for an interview.
- *Post your media release on your website*. You can then link to the website page on social media platforms.

## COMMUNICATING WITH JOURNALISTS, PRODUCERS AND OTHER CONTENT CREATORS


When you have a media story idea worthy of a media release, a relevant comment to make on a current news story or an idea for a collaboration between your organisation and a media outlet, you should approach journalists, producers and other media content creators to pitch your idea to them. Here are some tips about the pitching process:

- *Contacts*. It is a good idea to keep a database of contacts in the media industry so you have a list of people ready to pitch your ideas to. You may need to contact media organisations to find out who the best contact is.
- *Making contact*. The most common way you will make contact with media organisations, whether it be to send a media release or pitch a story idea, is via email. You may also cold call media contacts to pitch a story idea. Many journalists, producers and content creators also use social media, particularly Twitter, so you can try messaging them via their social media network to pitch your story to them.
- *Frequency of contact*. Although it can be tempting to pitch many ideas regularly in the hope that one will be picked up, it is best to wait until you have a story idea that is particularly impactful, newsworthy or novel so that it stands out amongst the many other messages media organisations receive each day.





# EVALUATION



**"It is important to remember that communication activity will not transform your business overnight."**



# EVALUATING MEDIA COMMUNICATION


**As you implement your plan, you should continually evaluate the effectiveness of your communication. This will enable you to ensure that you are on the right track with your message and allow you to adapt to improve your media activity as needed to reach your objective. Evaluation is an essential step in your media engagement, and should include not only measures of *outputs* (i.e. what you did), but also *outcomes* (i.e. what you achieved).**

Rather than waiting for your plan to be complete and then evaluating its success, evaluation should be an ongoing process of looking back at the results of your activity and *looking forward*, by adjusting your activity regularly throughout the period in which you implement your plan.

It is important to remember that communication activity will not transform your business overnight. Your evaluation should be determining whether your activity is helping to move you *towards* your objective, but not necessarily to meet it in the short term.

To assess the effectiveness of your communication at various intervals throughout your plan implementation, conduct evaluation activities, such as:

- *reviewing* your social media analytics
- *listening* to your audience online and offline to see if your target audience is repeating your message
- *conducting formal research* into your target audience to determine your target audience's level of awareness of your organisation and your key messages, and
- *evaluating* the impact of your communication on your organisational objectives.

A top-down view of two oysters on a bed of crushed ice. The oysters are shucked, revealing their dark, glistening roe. A slice of lemon is placed on the ice to the right of the oysters. The background is a light, textured surface.

**“It is a good idea to review your media analytics to see which types of posts are generating more interest from your target audience.”**



# EVALUATING MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Continued

**Social media analytics** provide you with a useful yardstick to judge the popularity and level of interaction with a social media post. It is therefore a good idea to review your media analytics to see which types of posts are generating more interest from your target audience and which lead to a discernable spike in your number of followers.

This advice comes with a caveat, however. It is more important that your posts be on-message and therefore related to your ultimate objective, than generating clicks just for the sake of clicks.

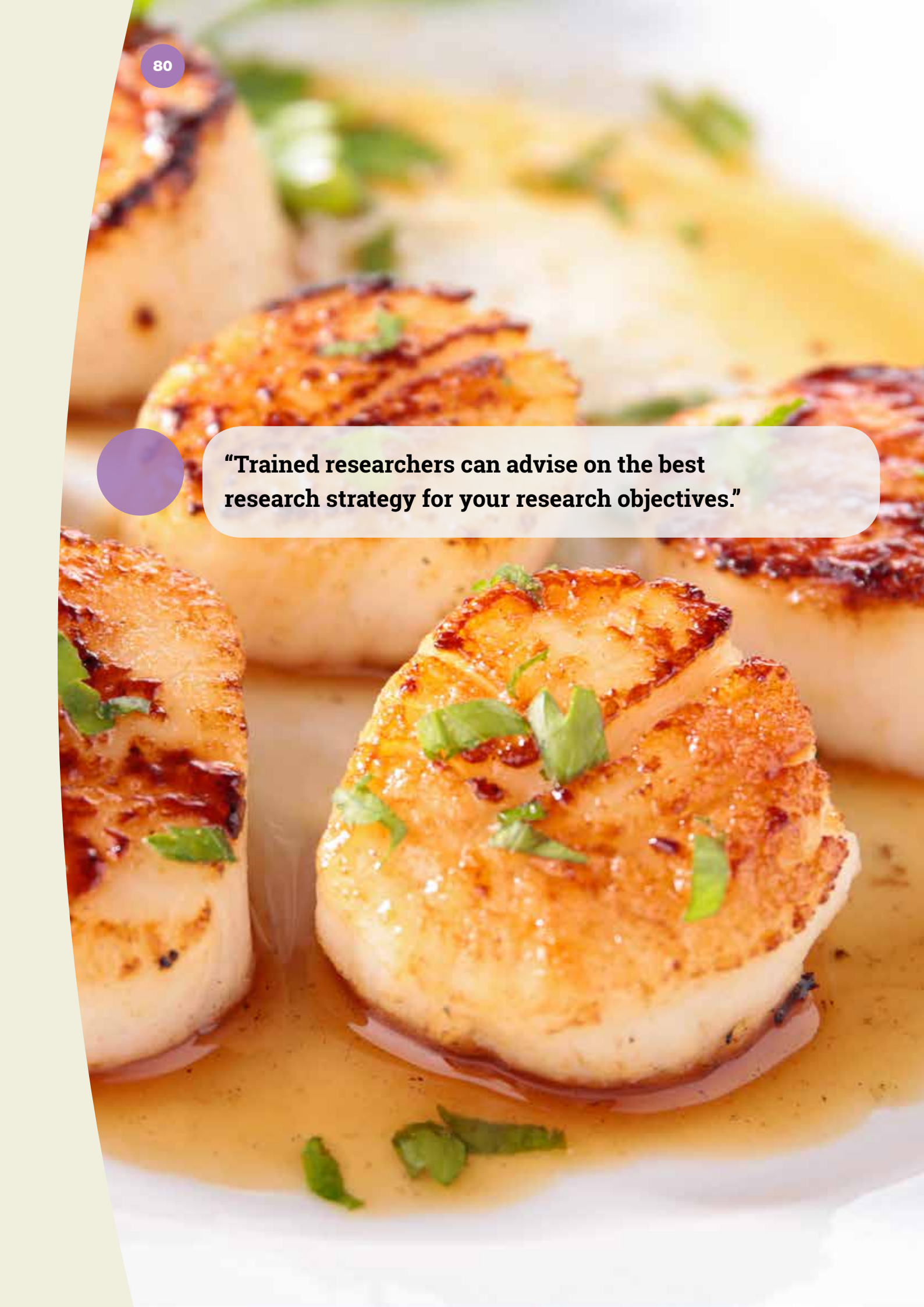
The danger of judging a post only on its clicks is that it can distract you from your key message. It can divert your plan to seeking clicks that don't actually help to deliver your message in a consistent and clear way to your target audience.

Use your analytics to ensure the messages you are posting align with your plan and are as effective as they can be over the long term, not just for individual posts. Use experimentation and creativity to come up with new ideas for posts that might generate more interest within the parameters of your overarching messaging strategy.

**Listen** to see if your audience is repeating your message when speaking about your ideas or products. This is an excellent way to judge how well your communication is influencing your target audience.

There are social media listening tools available that you can invest in to make this job easier. If you don't have the resources to buy these tools, you can monitor social media yourself by searching for key words and phrases related to your organisation. See what people are saying and if their conversations align with the messages you are communicating.

You should also be listening offline to your network of contacts—including customers, clients and stakeholders—to see if they talk about your organisation or product in a way that aligns with your key messages.



**“Trained researchers can advise on the best research strategy for your research objectives.”**



# EVALUATING MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Continued

**Conduct formal research** to see how much awareness your target audience has of your organisation and your key messages. When investing in a research project, it is a good idea to benchmark the audience awareness and understanding of your organisation or product before you implement your plan, and then repeat the exercise after a year or more to see if awareness and attitudes have shifted in line with your messaging objectives. Formal research can take the form of surveys, polling, focus groups and interviews. Trained researchers can advise on the best research strategy for your research objectives.

Finally, **evaluate the impact of your communication on your organisational objectives**. Media communication is one part of your business strategy, so although it is not entirely responsible for the success of your organisation, it should be evaluated in line with your organisational objectives to determine whether it is having a positive influence on your reputation or your bottom line.

This analysis should be as specific as possible. For instance, if a particular idea was the focus of your communications, have you seen an increase in people mentioning this idea on social media? If you were aiming to grow your target audience in a specific demographic, has your business seen any growth in sales from that demographic? Aligning the success of your communication strategy with business objectives is an important part of your evaluation to ensure you have buy-in from your organisation to continue to invest in your communication activities.

Your evaluation activities are a crucial part of the implementation and ongoing planning of your communication activities. In this respect planning, implementation and evaluation are parallel activities that are all equally important to your success.

Table 3 can be used as an evaluation template to record and assess the outcomes from your communication activity. This table is adapted from the Public Relations Institute of Australia's *PRIA Measurement and Evaluation Framework* (2017). Examples show how the table can be utilised, and include measures of both outputs and outcomes.





# EVALUATING MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Continued

**Table 3.**  
Evaluation template for communication activities

	EVALUATION	
	Short term Initial responses from the target audience	Long term Longer term effects on target audience
<b>Media communication objective</b>	<b>Increase public awareness of sustainable fishing practices</b>	<b>Increase positive attitudes about seafood industry through greater public awareness of sustainable fishing practices</b>
<b>Evaluation frequency</b>	Monthly, e.g. social media and website metrics	Report long-term metrics annually. Include a summary of monthly reports, as well as long-term metrics, e.g. results of annual sentiment surveys.
<b>Metrics recorded</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of social media posts</li> <li>Social media likes, shares, follower numbers, comments</li> <li>Visits and engagement on website</li> <li>Number of media releases and journalist enquiries from media releases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media audience alignment with target audience</li> <li>Increase in social media user-generated content</li> <li>Number and sentiment of social media mentions</li> <li>Number and sentiment of mainstream media mentions</li> <li>Stakeholder/customer acquisition and retention (sustained membership or business growth)</li> </ul>
<b>Measurement method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media analytics—engagement with individual posts and follower trends over time</li> <li>Website analytics, e.g. Google Analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media analytics—trends over time</li> <li>Formal research, e.g. surveys, polls, focus groups, interviews and ethnographic studies</li> <li>Social media and mainstream media monitoring</li> <li>Organisational analysis—tracking stakeholder and customer enquiries, engagement and growth, financial reporting</li> </ul>





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# CONTACT



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