

Communications, a tool for successful water management

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My background

- 20 years as Manager of Communications at the Stockholm Water Company in Sweden.
- Goal: Combat water pollution.
- Theme: the water user is a water polluter.

- Over 90% of the consumers in Stockholm have confidence in their tap water.
- Why? The utility is visible and reliable.

Content

- Water is an anonymous product
- Communications – the strategic way of thinking
- Communications policy
- Internal communication: the fundamental basis
- External communication: problems and possibilities
- Long-term plans
- Endurance and realistic visions: reliability
- Crisis situations: **70%** communication
- Conclusion: Let us make people think water!

Understand the agenda

- Professor Norihito Tambo said in Montreal that people in general have understood the energy agenda –
- but not understood and not accepted the water agenda.
- Communications used wisely will make people find water important – and begin to understand.

Good water is a pure delight.



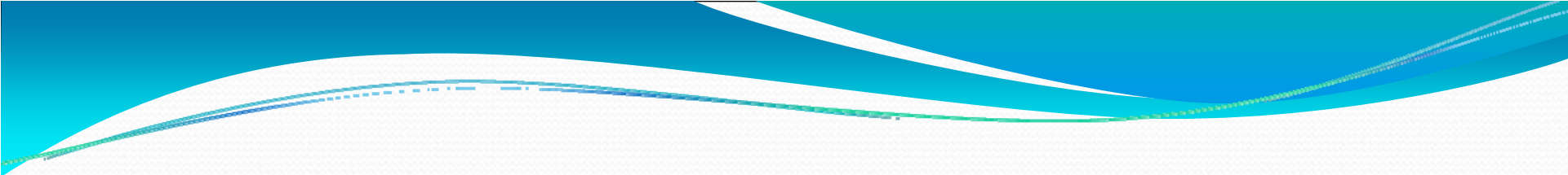
Water from the tap is unique!

- It is delivered by an anonymous producer
 - It has no visible price
 - It has no visible quality declaration
 - It has no visible instructions for use
 - It has no brand. Or has it?
-
- Who can trust such a product?

Quiet water monopolies!

- And too often invisible.
- Unless we dig a hole in the street...



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- Monopolies have no real competitors.
 - We have to choose our own to compare with.
 - And communicate to be visible and interesting.

The communicative utility

- Uses effective communications to create value.
- Knows that communications is a decisive factor for a more successful utility.
- The effects of communications are taken into account in the decision-making process.
- Employees get better and better as communicators.
- Managers are models in communication.

Two definitions

- Communication is the transfer of information between persons.
- Communications are the different media through which the information is transmitted.

Strategic thinking

- Careful, effective information and communications
- Openness to customers, stakeholders and media
- Sensitivity to customer needs
- Relevant competence
- Quality products and services
- Reliability - also in crisis situations

- Trust
- Support from customers and others

Communications policy

- A steering document that regulates management and activities:
 - Internal and external information and communication, website, media contacts, crisis management
- The policy describes routines and responsibility (Managers on all levels are responsible.)
- The purpose
- The rules



Information and communications

- Support the daily work of the entire utility
- Planned and used as a management tool
- Support the vision and mission, goals and decisions
- Correct, objective, simple and clear
- Give knowledge to employees and consumers
- Stimulate interest and understanding of our work

Responsibility and support

- The Managing Director has the total responsibility.
- Every manager is responsible for communications with his/her staff and regarding his/her working area.
- Every employee is a water ambassador.
- The Communications Manager and his/her team co-ordinate and are often spokespersons of the utility.



Avloppet är inte gjort för mediciner.
Inte vår miljö heller.

Gamla mediciner är inget att spara, men släng dem inte i avloppet. Lämna dem till Apoteket istället, så tas de om hand på rätt sätt. Ett enkelt steg mot en bättre miljö. Eller rätt medicin skulle man också kunna säga?



Vill du veta mer? Gå in på stockholmvatten.se

Internal communication

- Well informed employees give better service.
- They make the organisation function better.
- They are trustworthy water ambassadors.

- They need open channels for communication.
- Simple routines facilitate communication.
- Internal communication is the start and the fundamental basis.

Internal communication

- Everybody shall get the same message!
Written documentation for those who are absent.
 - Clear, simple, good language
 - Information related in an objective way
- In-house magazine sent home to everyone
- “Aquanet” for individual access to information
- Official website
- All brochures

Uniting the differences

- Many different professions in the utility
- Employees with different backgrounds
- Different work places – different cultures

- Effective communications can unite them.
- Can make them proud of their utility!
 - Language, channels, attitude from management
 - Design, visibility





External communications

- Reach business goals for the utility
- Create support for utility operations
- Build water awareness
- Build customer and consumer trust
- Obtain and keep the confidence of owners, politicians and investors
- Build good media relations

What is not visible does not exist

- Most water utility assets are hidden.
 - Plants can be opened to site visits.
 - Cars are mobile sign boards.
 - Water ambassadors keep contact with users.
 - Website and social media give insight.
 - Worksites are interesting.
 - Web information.
 - Signs guide people.

Här gräver vi upp gatan
för att kunna leverera ett
vatten i världsklass



www.stockholmvatten.se

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External communications

- Information and communications in all plans and projects of the utility.
- Activities adapted to target groups and purpose.
- Media contacts before and during projects.
- Openness and service to journalists.

Long term strategic plan

- Utility problems can be solved by communications activities.
- Assign responsibility and form working teams.
- Communications plans in the general plans and budgets for the utility.
- Report and follow-up results of activities. Adjust!



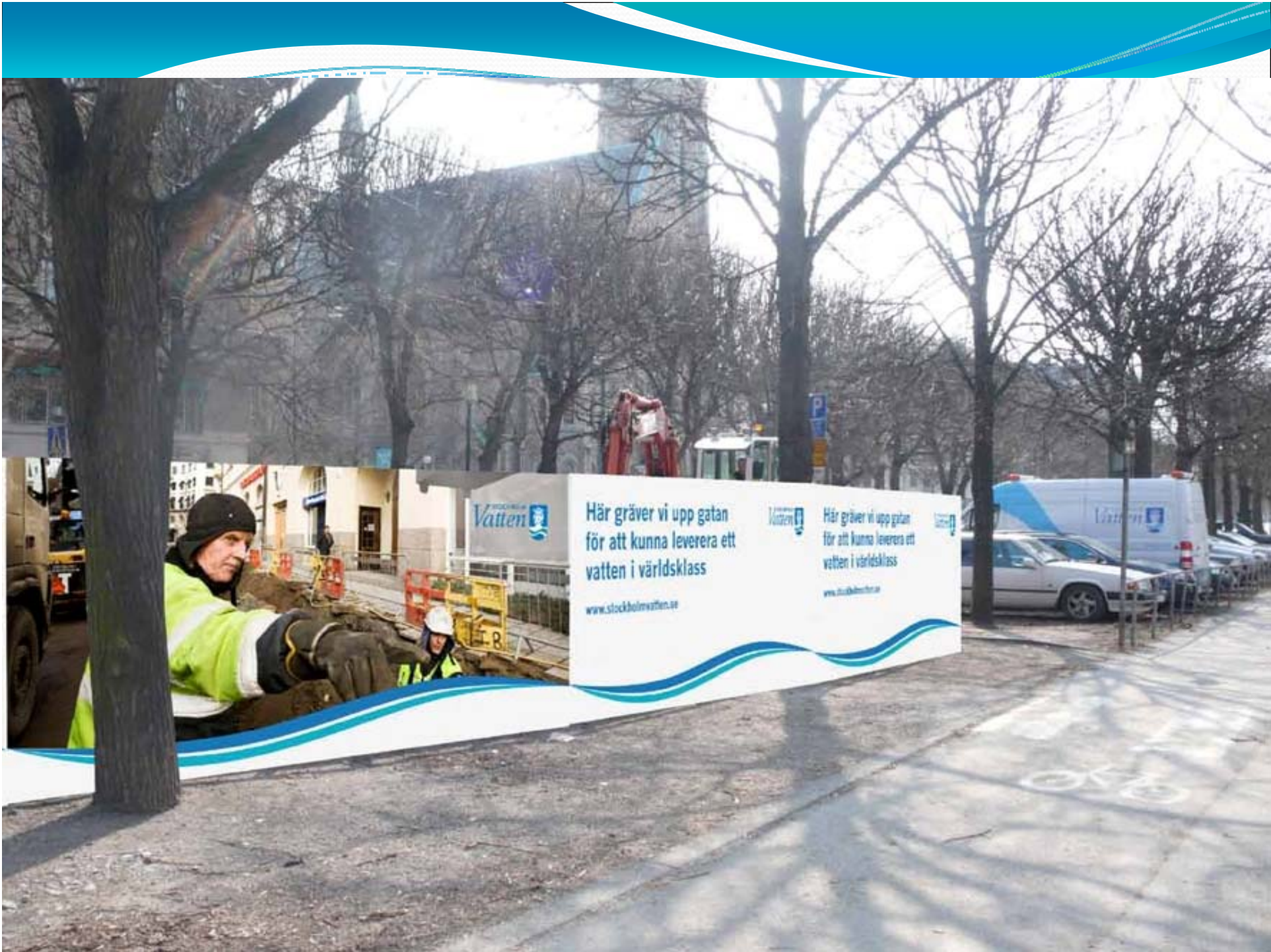
Endurance and realistic visions

- Work to build a reliable picture of the utility.
- Realistic – but optimistic and positive.
- Consider the different cultures in the utility.
- Create an open, communicative climate everywhere.
- Integrate marketing and communications!
- Develop customer care.

Reduce complaints

- People who **know** complain less.
- When planning a noisy, dirty pipe repair site:
 - Information letters to all who may be disturbed.
 - Accessible well informed contact persons.
 - Meetings with shop owners and others.
 - Interesting, correct information material.
 - Information to local media.

And the utility may win new supporters.



Inform about quality

- People get anxious if their water looks different, smells or tastes differently.
 - Samples taken at peoples' homes or workplaces.
 - Information about the quality control.
 - Test results sent home – described simply with a folder that explains the treatment process.
 - Water tasting at festivals.
- Same procedure with routine tests of drinking water.

Grattis stockholmare!
Du har ett vatten i världsklass.

STOCKHOLM
Vatten



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General awareness building

- School information programmes
- National and regional recruitment activities
- National and regional drinking water contests:
 - “Sweden’s best drinking water”
 - Professional sommeliers tasted and judged the water samples.
 - The winning regional utilities took great advantage of the media interest.



Media relations

- All managers and specialists benefit from media training – also in their daily work.
- The media culture is different!
- Openness to media contacts.
- Let the most suitable person take the call.
- Media like **news!** Quickly! Correctly!
- Social media grow in importance.
- Journalists, blogs and Facebook form your customers' opinions.

Small crisis

- “A normal leakage, nothing to worry about.”
- No!
- Quick, effective, correct information and action:
 - Signs, posters, people
 - Switch-board operators at utility
 - Accessible contact persons
 - Website
 - Local radio and TV



Big crisis

- Train, train, train! The unforeseen can occur.
- Communicators and workers train together.
- Separate telephones: emergency calls/media/public.
- Few and co-ordinated spokespersons.
- Defined messages and empathy!
- Website information often, regularly and clearly.
- **70%** of a crisis is communication!
- Take action quickly, organised and truthfully.



IWA Marketing & Communications

- Communicators are often singular specialists.
- The IWA SG Marketing & Communications is a network for development and sharing of ideas.
- Join the Management Committee and help shape a dynamic and inspiring Specialist Group that will make a difference!
- iwahq.org

Let people understand water!

- Communicating utilities will make people
 - understand the value of their good tap water - and be proud of it.
 - use water wisely.
 - think and talk water, for the benefit of us all.
- Water will be more interesting than energy!

I thank you for your attention and wish you success!