



Category: Public Sector Team of the Year

Company: Audit Scotland

Number of staff employed - including executive / support staff - and annual public relations budget, showing areas directly under the control of the team:

Twelve people are employed in Audit Scotland's Communications team. These include:

Communications Manager
Communications Advisers x 2.6
Communications Officer
Publications Coordinators x 1.4
Senior Graphic Designer
Graphic Designers x 2.4
Web Officer

The communications budget for 2016/17 was £480,409. We advise all areas of the business, and have varied responsibilities on behalf of Audit Scotland, the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. The team is directly responsible for:

Press office operations;
Management of Audit Scotland's website and social media;
Internal communications;
Supporting engagement with key stakeholders, such as the Scottish Parliament;
Design and production of performance audit reports, including infographics;
Print and photography contract management;
Other outputs, such as presentations, newsletters, and conference materials;
Measuring and reporting impact of our communications work.

Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the past 12 months:

Audit Scotland's business objectives are designed to ensure that public audit in Scotland:
Is informed by excellent understanding of the strategic and operational context;
Responds effectively to changing circumstances and emerging issues;
Reports clearly and authoritatively;
Follows the public pound;
Promotes transparency, accountability and Best Value.

In 2016/17, the Communications team performed within budget to support the business in meeting these objectives. As well as receiving excellent feedback from internal and external clients on the impact of our communications, we delivered:

A 21 per cent increase in visitors to our website on the previous year;
A 15 per cent increase in downloads;

Approximately 1,520 items of media coverage - a 10 per cent increase;
A 75 per cent increase in twitter followers and 134,648 twitter mentions.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Our communications and engagement strategy supports Audit Scotland's vision to become a world-class organisation. It provides a framework for effective and stimulating communication, and supports a culture of creativity and innovation.

Our main priorities are to:

- Help the business produce better audit work that makes a difference;
- Effectively communicate why audit matters, and how it can improve public services;
- Support colleagues to engage with Scottish Parliament committees, to help them scrutinise public spending and policy;
- Reflect the experiences of public service users to inform and prioritise our work;
- Give stakeholders a choice in how they access our information, making creative use of design, technology and social media;

We achieve this by:

- Producing outputs that are clear, concise and accessible;
- Ensuring our work meets industry standards e.g. our website was accredited by the Digital Accessibility Centre in January 2017;
- Creating multimedia content to publicise these, from producing strong and balanced news releases to developing engaging social media copy;
- Providing dynamic communications plans to support key business change programmes;
- Measuring and communicating the impact of our work in a clear and timely manner.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

We're committed to remaining at the forefront of communications and design practices within the UK public sector. In the past year, team members have successfully completed post-graduate courses in:

- Public Affairs (CIPR diploma)
- Digital Design
- Prince2 Foundation and Practitioner
- Ruby Programming and Web Design

We've attended events on digital communications, marketing and Scottish politics, and participated in knowledge exchanges with other public sector communications teams, from:

- National Audit Office
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- NHS Education for Scotland
- Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland
- Scottish Parliament Information Centre.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements:

We know from regular feedback from our stakeholders in the public sector and the Scottish Parliament, as well as the high profile our work enjoys in the media, that Audit Scotland has

an enviable reputation for the quality of its communications across print and digital channels. Projects which have served to enhance that reputation over the past year include:

Production and promotion of approximately 20 performance audit reports, many on areas of major public interest, resulting in extensive media coverage and parliamentary scrutiny;
Production of an annual report and accounts, presenting complex financial and performance data in an accessible and attractive multimedia publication;
Creation of effective communications campaigns encouraging participation in public surveys on early learning and childcare services, and self-directed support policy;
Production of interactive tableau visualisations to increase accessibility of complex data across a range of public services;
Production and design of a special edition staff magazine, sensitively communicating progress of a major business change programme and Best Companies survey results;

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

In August 2016, we launched an online resource and animation showcasing Audit Scotland's recent work on health and social care services.

The objectives:

To raise the profile of Audit Scotland's findings and recommendations by presenting our messages in a new and innovative way;
To encourage decision makers and others with an interest in the performance of health and social care services to access and use the knowledge contained within our audit work in these policy areas, to support improvement;
To create a resource that colleagues could use to clearly and concisely communicate the common themes from our health and social care work.

The Communications team had a strong vision for the project from the outset, and it was a first for the organisation. We held extensive discussions with colleagues at all levels of the business to reassure them that condensing multiple reports into one animation wouldn't dilute the impact or accuracy of their work, and to gain support for creative autonomy for the Communications team. Sensitive language was also needed to engage audiences with the central message that our work can help public sector workers improve services, shifting audit from a critical position to one of support.

With a budget of £10,000 (excluding time and resources committed by the team members involved), we commissioned Qudos Animations to produce the animation. Over a period of three months, the Communications team oversaw production and contributed significantly to scripting, storyboard and design to ensure the final product was in line with Audit Scotland's highly respected house style and distinctive brand.

As well as telling the story of our recent work in a brief and understandable way, the animation was used to signpost viewers to an online resource, designed and created by the Communications team. To enhance accessibility, it displayed information in multiple formats e.g. reports, exhibits, podcasts and flyers to accommodate different levels of interest.

A review of the project six months following its launch concluded it had achieved its objectives, based on exclusively positive stakeholder feedback and key metrics. See attached PDF for more detail.

The project's success has led to development of a similar online resource dedicated to financial devolution. We are also pursuing further animation and video opportunities, and

recently produced an animation in-house as part of a suite of materials accompanying our 2016/17 annual report.