



#RightsAndRemedies2025



Centre *for*
Environmental Rights
Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa

Topic: The power of storytelling - How to build your activist brand

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**Centre for
Environmental Rights**
Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa

Overview

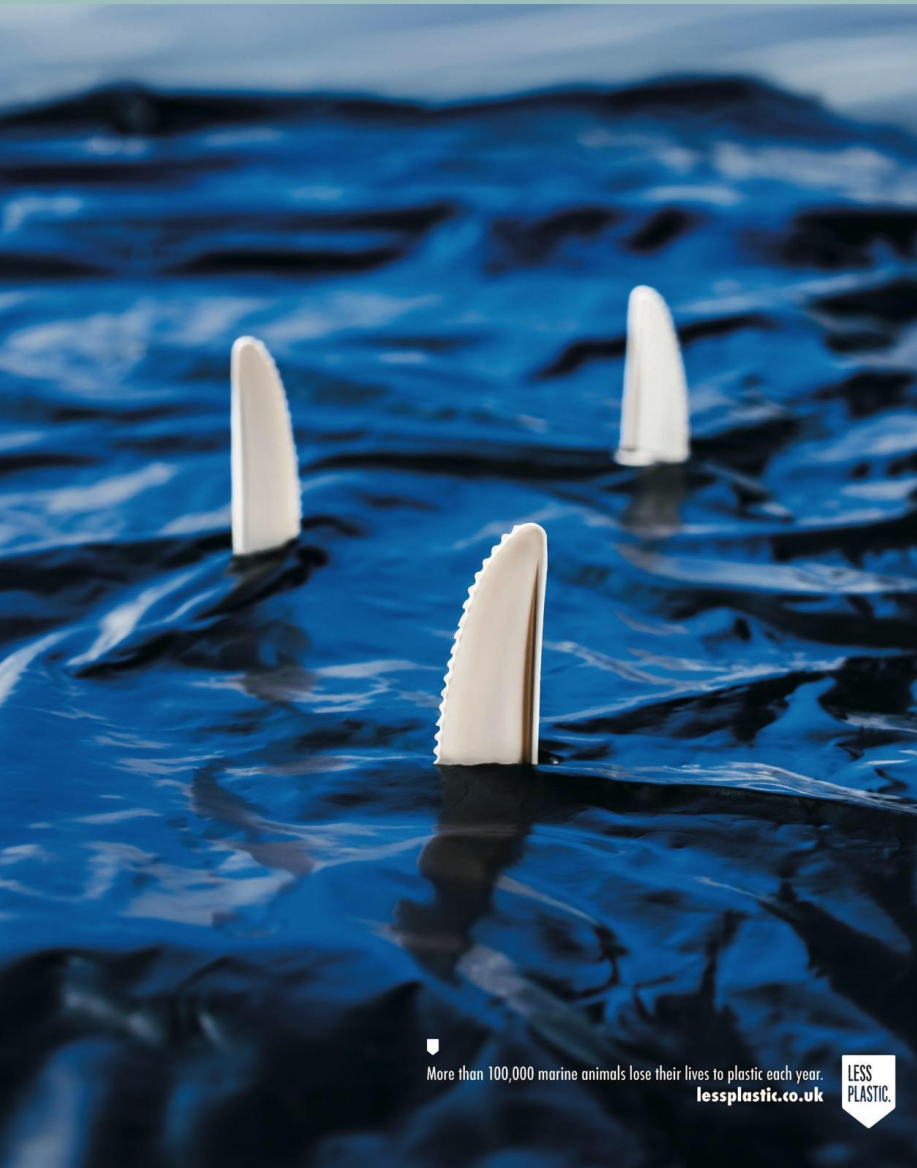
- The power of community storytelling
- Building your personal brand
- How to develop your personal narratives
- Write a case study profiling your community
- Develop a media release
- Advocating your cause through social media: How to build and amplify your profile on Facebook page/LinkedIn page



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HOW LONG UNTIL IT MATTERS?



It's predicted that if the increase in greenhouse gas emissions continues unabated, temperatures will rise by as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of this century.

Visit climatechange.org for more information.



Tastes like Heaven
Because soon we'll probably all be there





THEME: ALIGNING VOICE, MESSAGE, AND IMPACT

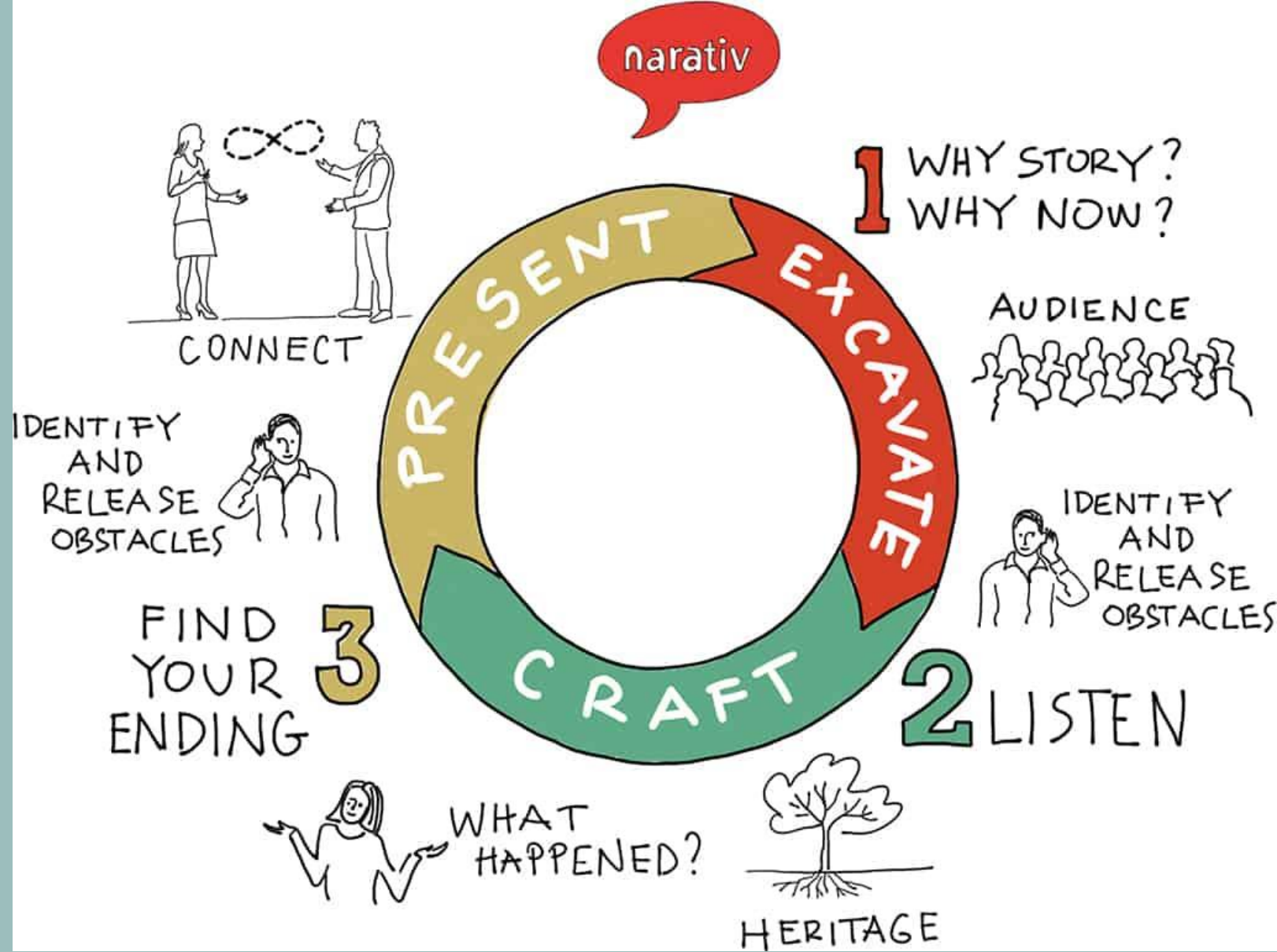
GROUP DISCUSSION: WHAT IS AN IMPACTFUL SOCIAL
JUSTICE CAMPAIGN?

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What is storytelling?

- Storytelling is an art
- Storytelling taps into a narratives and connects with our audience on an emotional level
- It helps people to empathise and understand the problems your community faces on a daily basis
- It communicates a problem, a message and what change we want to see in the world
- Storytelling humanises climate change using simple plain speak that motivates for action





Key elements in storytelling



You are your brand



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GROUP ACTIVITY:

IN GROUPS, PEOPLE SHARE THEIR PERSONAL STORIES, BACKGROUND, VALUES
AND THEIR PERSONAL BRAND AS AN ACTIVIST

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WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Defined as:

- exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium
- means of sending or receiving information
- communication is the act of giving, receiving, and sharing information -- in other words, talking or writing, and listening or reading.



Definitions of Communication

- ❖ Communication is the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, with the information being understood by the receiver.
- ❖ Communication is 'the imparting or exchange of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.
- ❖ Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more people.

- ❖ Communication is defined as the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.
- ❖ Communication is the transmission and inter-change of facts, ideas, feelings or course of action.
- ❖ Communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding



WHY DO WE COMMUNICATE?



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WHY DO WE COMMUNICATE

- Connect with people
- Build relationships
- Generate ideas
- Solve problems / find solutions
- Bridge divides between nations, societies and people and helps to bring them closer
- Knowledge sharing
- Empowering communities
- Driving change



What is a brand?

Personal branding is the intentional, strategic practice of defining and expressing your value.

“It’s the amalgamation of the associations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and expectations that people collectively hold about you,” Avery and her co-author, HBS Executive Fellow Rachel Greenwald, write in the Harvard Business Review.

They explain that personal branding’s goal is to ensure the narrative about you is:

Accurate: Is it true?

Coherent: Does it make sense?

Compelling: Does it draw people in?

Differentiated: Does it demonstrate what makes you unique?

If you don’t intentionally craft your personal brand, other people’s assumptions and perceptions of you may not align with those four attributes. By engaging in personal branding, you can define what you’d like to communicate and do so effectively.



Style and Tone – Developing your personal brand

- Use plain speak – make your idea easy to understand.
- How to develop your personal narratives
- Write a case study profiling your community
- Develop a media release
- Advocating your cause through social media: How to build and amplify your profile on Facebook page/LinkedIn page



TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Types of Verbal Communication



Intrapersonal Communication



Interpersonal Communication



Small Group Communication



Public Communication



Mass Communication

communicationtheory.org

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

VERBAL COMMUNICATION



- spoken communication
- communication that occurs face-to-face
- it also includes the rhythm, tone of voice, speed and clarity of the communicator's speech
- includes the listening skills and perception of the recipient

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Non –verbal communication

- the act of communicating information without the use of words
- facial expressions
- body language



CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION?

**the medium used to send message*

Examples include;

- in person conversations and dialogue
- Forums/roundtables
- Digital



CHANNELS

Includes written, and visual forms of communication – How CER communicates and to whom

Press releases / OPEDS/ Feature articles

- Media
- Government / Members of parliament
- Radio interviews
- Blogs

Webposts

- CER followers
- Supporters
- Community members and partners in the environmental justice sector
- Attorneys and members from the legal fraternity



CHANNELS

Includes written, and visual forms of communication – How CER communicates and to whom

Emailers

- Partners
- Supporters
- Funders/ Donors

Social media

- Facebook, LinkedIn, X, TikTok, Instagram and messaging (Whatsapp)



NGO TOOLKITS

Includes written, and visual forms of communication

- Create posts that other people can share on their social media feeds
- Include hashtags
- Include links for additional information
- Include images and tag other activists



TOOLKITS

Rights & Remedies – Your ultimate toolkit of training resources www.rightsremedies.org.za



RIGHTS & REMEDIES A Course for Activists



**Centre for
Environmental Rights**
Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa

[Home](#)[About](#)[Activists](#)[Training Resources](#)[Media Library](#)[Alumni Network](#)[News](#)

The Centre for Environmental Rights' annual Rights & Remedies Course for Activists is a transformative legal advocacy course designed to capacitate participants from communities around South Africa who experience environmental injustices.

Over three weeks, R&R provides practical legal and advocacy training and tools to activists with a focus on the Constitution and broader environmental legal regime. The course empowers committed and passionate community activists with the knowledge, network and practical legal tools our constitutional democracy offers to make a real difference in their communities upon completion of the course.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS – Advocacy Tool – Ask Karabo!



<https://askkarabo.co.za/>

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How communities communicate to the media

Mail & Guardian

AFRICA'S BETTER FUTURE

Support independent journalism

CAREER

News

Thought Leader

Politics

Green Guardian

Friday

The Diplomat

Research World

THE GREEN GUARDIAN / 5 DECEMBER 2024

Court overturns South Africa's coal-fired power plans, protecting children's health and the environment

By Sheree Bega

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The Pretoria high court has overturned the government's plans to add 1 500 megawatts of new coal-fired power to the

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NEWS

Youth speaking to power: Act on climate change now

19 JULY 2022 AT 12:50 PM

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Includes written, and visual forms of communication

Communities are telling the story of mines not consulting with public

- Public participation through dialogue – Newzroom Afrika interview - Matome Kapa
- https://storage.googleapis.com/bcclips/20250822/11364950-20_1E26B1C.mp4



CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION?

The World is Social



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FEB
2025

SOUTH AFRICA

OVERVIEW OF THE ADOPTION AND USE OF CONNECTED DEVICES AND SERVICES

NOTE: SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS TO SOURCE DATA MEAN THAT FIGURES SHOWN HERE ARE **NOT COMPARABLE** WITH PREVIOUS REPORTS. SEE THE IMPORTANT NOTES AT THE START OF THIS REPORT FOR DETAILS.



SOUTH
AFRICA

TOTAL
POPULATION



we
are
social

64.4
MILLION

YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

+1.2%
+759 THOUSAND

URBANISATION

69.5%

CELLULAR MOBILE
CONNECTIONS



Meltwater

124
MILLION

YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

+4.4%
+5.2 MILLION

TOTAL vs. POPULATION

193%

INDIVIDUALS USING
THE INTERNET



Meltwater

50.8
MILLION

YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

+5.4%
+2.6 MILLION

TOTAL vs. POPULATION

78.9%

SOCIAL MEDIA
USER IDENTITIES



26.7
MILLION

YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE

+2.7%
+700 THOUSAND

TOTAL vs. POPULATION

41.5%

SOURCES: U.N. GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES; GSMA INTELLIGENCE; ITU; EUROSTAT; CHNIC; KANTAR & JAMAL; PLATFORM RESOURCES; OCDE; BETA RESEARCH CENTER; KERIS ANALYSIS. **ADVISORY:** SOCIAL MEDIA USER IDENTITIES MAY NOT REPRESENT UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS. **COMPARABILITY:** SOURCE CHANGES AND BASE REVISIONS. FIGURES ARE **NOT COMPARABLE** WITH PREVIOUS REPORTS. GLOBAL DATASETS MAY USE DIFFERENT SOURCES w/ COUNTRY AND REGIONAL DATA, SO SUMS MAY NOT MATCH. **IMPORTANT:** NEGATIVE VALUES MAY INDICATE SOURCE DATA CORRECTIONS, AND MAY NOT REPRESENT DECREASES IN THE RELEVANT METRIC. WHERE YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGES ONLY, COMPARISONS WITH HISTORICAL DATA WILL PRODUCE INACCURATE RESULTS. PLEASE SEE NOTES ON DATA.

we
are
social

Meltwater

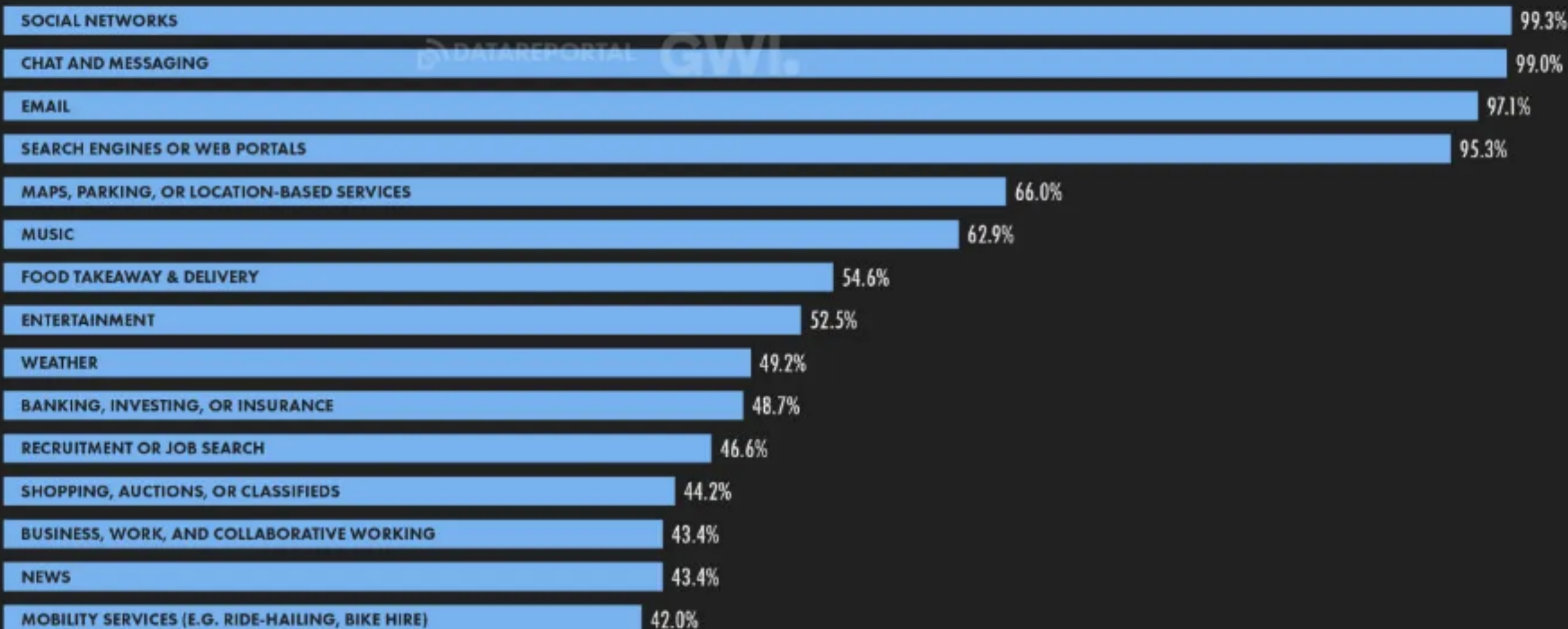
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TOP TYPES OF WEBSITES VISITED AND APPS USED

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET USERS AGED 16+ WHO HAVE VISITED OR USED EACH KIND OF DIGITAL PROPERTY IN THE PAST MONTH



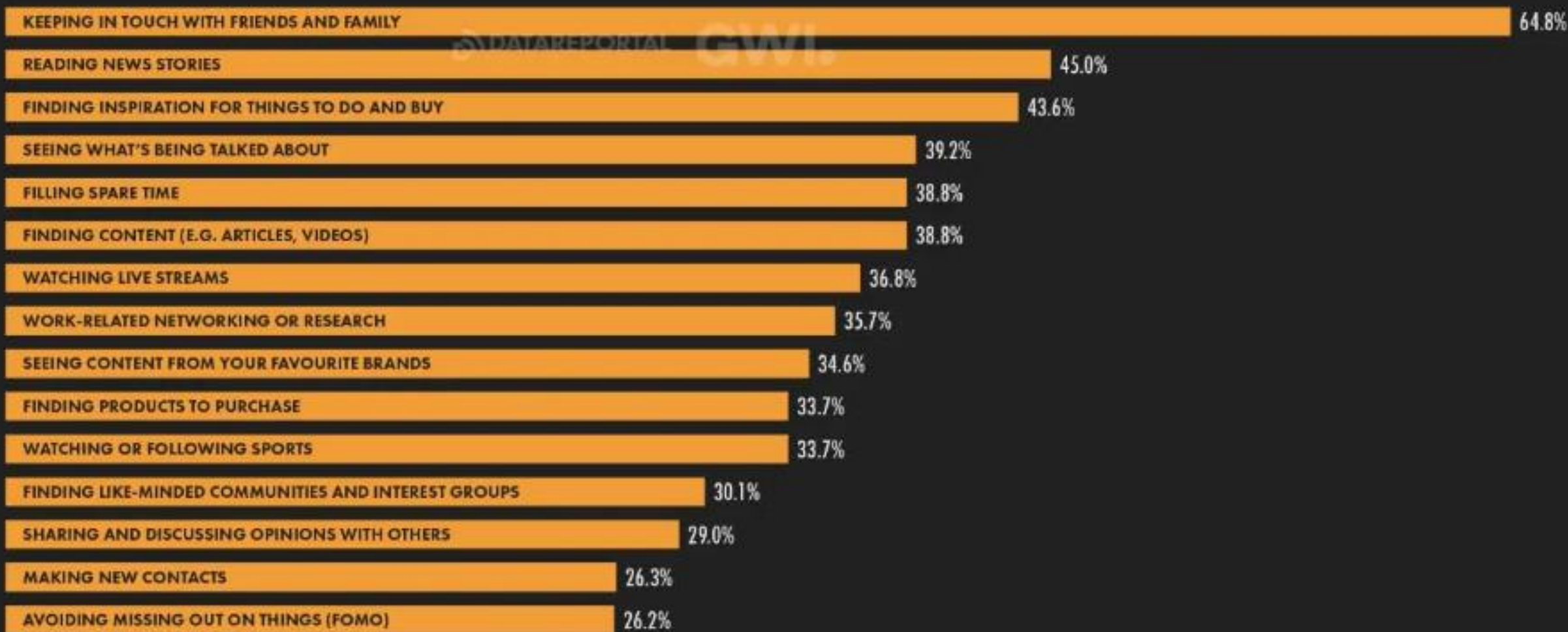
SOUTH
AFRICA



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2025

MAIN REASONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

PRIMARY REASONS WHY SOCIAL MEDIA USERS AGED 16+ USE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



SOURCE: GWI (Q3 2024). **NOTE:** FIGURES REPRESENT THE SHARE OF INTERNET USERS AGED 16+ WHO REPORT USING AT LEAST ONE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM OR MESSENGER SERVICE IN THE PAST MONTH.
COMPARABILITY: CHANGES IN AUDIENCE COMPOSITION AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY. SEE NOTES ON DATA.

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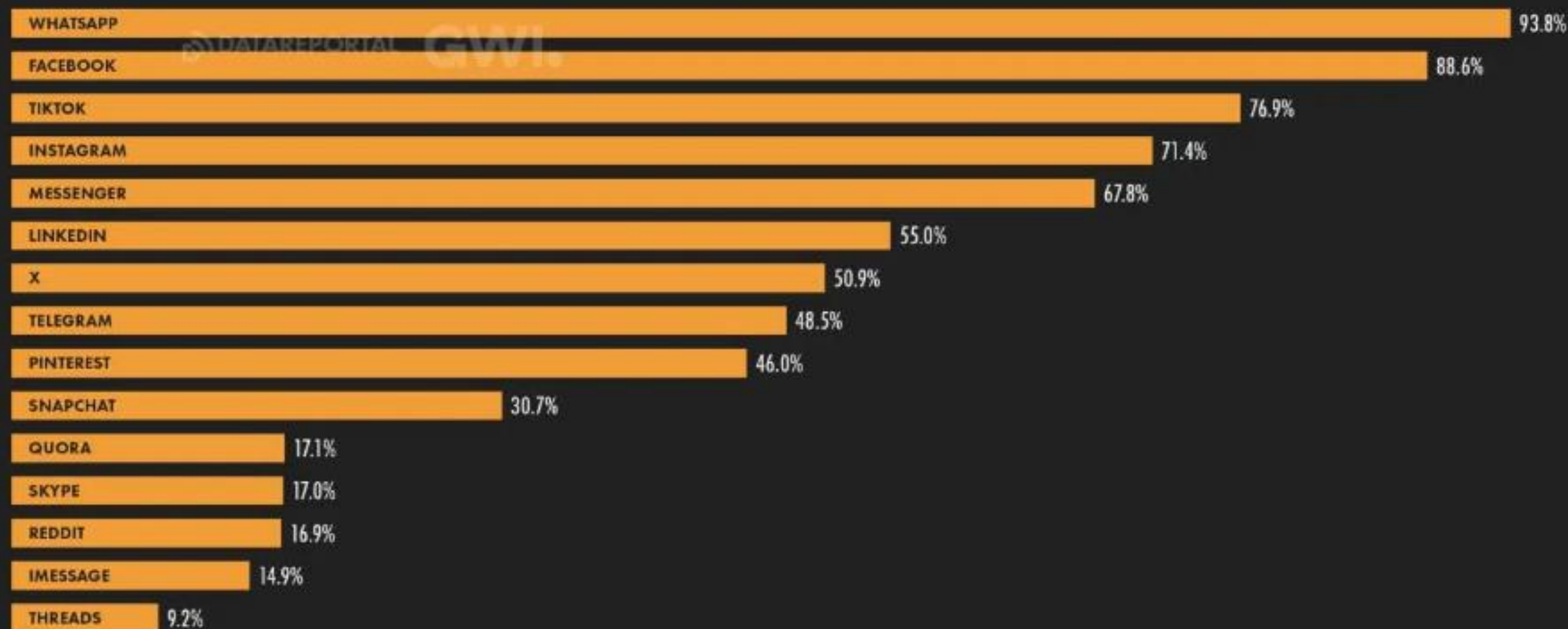
Meltwater

FEB
2025

MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET USERS AGED 16+ WHO USE EACH PLATFORM EACH MONTH

NOTE: YOUTUBE IS NOT OFFERED AS AN ANSWER OPTION FOR THIS QUESTION IN GWI'S SURVEY, SO IT WILL NOT APPEAR IN THIS RANKING.



What is miscommunication versus misinformation?

Miscommunication:

- Failure to communicate properly
- Miscommunication is a failure to get a message across
- Climate misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information about climate change and climate action that is generally spread without malicious intent.
- Climate disinformation is deliberately false and fabricated to deceive people about climate change and climate action for political, financial or ideological reasons.



Changing media landscape – Power of community media!



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WHEN

WHERE

WHAT

WHO

HOW

WHY

What is a media release?

- **A media release is the most obvious way of alerting journalists and the media to your campaign. Local media can present a good opportunity to get your voice heard (particularly for local issues).**
- **With media outlets increasingly under-resourced, go out of your way to present the best press release possible; you'll have a better chance of getting it printed.**



What is a media release?

- **When writing a press release, be concise. A press release should generally not be more than a page long. All the important points should be in the first two paragraphs, as this is probably as far as a journalist will read before deciding whether or not to run the story. These first two paragraphs should contain the who, what, where, when, and why of the campaign.**
- **It's also a good idea to personalise your campaign. How will it affect particular people? Quotes are an ideal way of getting this information across. If you can provide pictures, better still.**



How to write a media release:

- **Inverted pyramid method – Start from the most important information first.**
- **Maximum 350 words**
- **Headline is 5-7 words long in active tense**
- **Include quotes from two spokespeople**
- **Use plain speak – keep sentences short and concise**
- **Include interesting statistics that is evidence-based and resourced**
- **4 Ws and an H – What happened, Why is it important, When did it happen, Where did it happen and How did it happen?**
- **Why is it newsworthy e.g. Dogs bites man or man bites dog**
- **Conclusion must have a final message and take away – it's a summary of your key points without introducing new concepts**
- **Include contact details – how will the media contact you for information**



The Centre for Environmental Rights supports the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance silent protest

22 MAY 2025 AT 4:31 PM

Johannesburg – The Annual General Meeting of ArcelorMittal South Africa (AMSA) is set to take place on May 23rd, 2025. The [Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance](#) (VEJA) will hold an exhibition as a silent demonstration of their need for accountability and transparency from AMSA for environmental impacts and long-term sustainability plans.

VEJA is an alliance of environmental justice defenders who represent the interests of communities living in the Vaal Triangle Airshed Priority Area. An area saturated with harmful air pollution.

VEJA has tirelessly vocalised the negative impacts this has on the communities' health and wellbeing. Every year the organisation earmarks the AMSA AGM as an opportunity for the voices of the community to be heard. The Centre for Environmental Rights is in support of this protest set to take place on the day of the AMSA AGM.

Amidst the climate crisis, AMSA is South Africa's third highest greenhouse gas emitter, while also a key contributor to the economy and employment. Given high public interest in AMSA's decarbonisation plans; AMSA's cooperative engagement which includes local communities is essential.

ENDS



Media interviews



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How to conduct a media interview?

Media interview preparation – Be calm and prepare for difficult media questions

Preparation leads to better performance – Know your messaging, research the facts

Rehearsal is key for media interview preparation

Refine your messaging with three core ideas

Use the ABC method

So, how do you weave in your three key messages? It's unlikely you'll be directly asked a question about your core points, so you need to seek opportunities to weave it in.

The ABC method is simple and powerfully effective:

A = **address** the question

B = **bridge** to your key message

C = **communicate** your key message





GROUP ACTIVITY: HOW TO NAVIGATE MEDIA INTERVIEWS

HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF IN INTERVIEWS

ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

NAVIGATING LIVE RADIO/TV INTERVIEWS VERSUS WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE BASED
INTERVIEWS

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How to write a case study:

- Start with your mission, imagery, and a tagline.
 - Tell your nonprofit's history.
 - Say what you do.
 - Show the impact.
 - Demonstrate what your project has achieved using tangible facts and figures.
 - Let people visualise your goals and objectives
 - Build transparency.
 - Mention your call to action.
-
- Use **SMART**



Setting SMART goals

BiteSize Learning



Specific

The goal is concrete and tangible - everyone knows what it looks like.



Measurable

The goal has an objective measure of success that everyone can understand.



Attainable

The goal is challenging, but should be achievable with the resources available.



Relevant

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives like the overall mission.



Timely

This goal has a deadline or, better yet, a timeline of progress milestones.



Writing your case study using SMART principles

Specific: Clearly define what you want to achieve with the case study. Instead of a vague goal like "analyse marketing," a specific goal would be "analyse the effectiveness of the new social media campaign. Did it increase new followers?"

Measurable: Establish clear criteria to track progress and determine if the goal has been met. This could involve quantitative data, such as "increase lead generation by 20%" or qualitative indicators, such as "achieve a 90% positive sentiment on your website".

Achievable: Ensure the goal is attainable and realistic given your available resources, skills, and time. A goal that is too ambitious will lead to frustration, so it should be practical to complete within the given constraints.

The objective should align with the broader goals and purpose of the case study and your overall objectives. It should matter and contribute to a larger understanding or outcome.

Time-bound: Set a specific deadline or timeframe for achieving the goal. This creates a sense of urgency and helps with planning and task prioritization. For example, "complete the data analysis for the social media campaign by the end of the quarter".

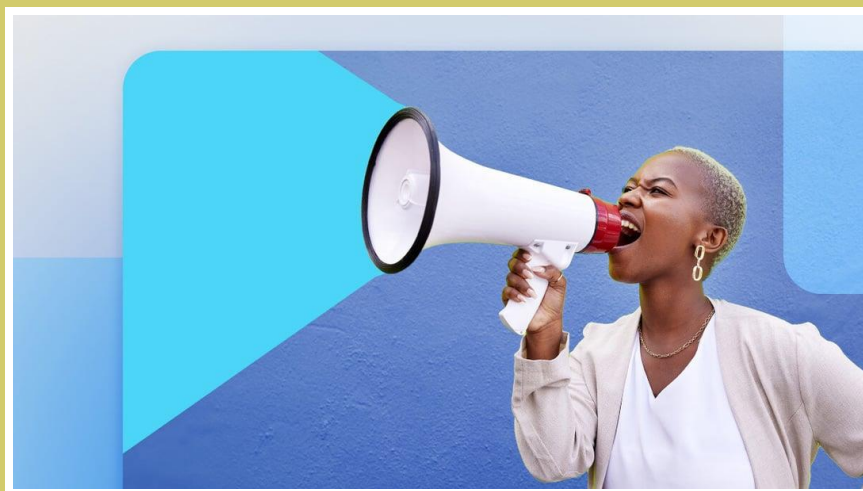




HOMEWORK

**WRITE A ONE PAGE CASE STUDY ONE THE ENVIRONMENTAL
CHALLENGE YOU ARE EXPERIENCING**

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DEVELOPING A COMMS CAMPAIGN

[#RightsAndRemedies2025](#)

Tying it together: Developing a Communications Campaign

To develop a plan for communication, you have to consider some basic questions:

Why do you want to communicate with the community? (What's your purpose?)

To whom do you want to communicate it? (Who's your audience?)

What do you want to communicate? (What's your message?)

How do you want to communicate it? (What communication channels will you use?)



Tying it together: Developing a Communications Campaign

- Whom should you contact, and what should you do to use those channels? (How will you distribute your message?)
- The answers to these questions constitute your action plan, what you need to do to successfully communicate with your audience. The remainder of your communication plan, involves three steps:
- Implement your action plan. Design your message and distribute it to your intended audience.
- Evaluate your communication efforts and adjust your plan accordingly.
- Keep at it.



Lastly: Your campaign must have the following

- **Objectives**
- **Approach – The How**
- **Target audience – community, government, stakeholders, partners**
- **Channels – website, Insta, tiktok, Facebook, YouTube**
- **Tactics – media release, interviews, social media posts, podcast, article/blog**
- **Narratives – Your messaging**
- **Target media – Sunday Times, The Sowetan, Newzroom Afrika, Metro FM, SAFM, Khaya FM**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**
- **What is your golden thread – the key message that ties it together**





RIGHTS AND REMEDIES

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