

Charlesbye

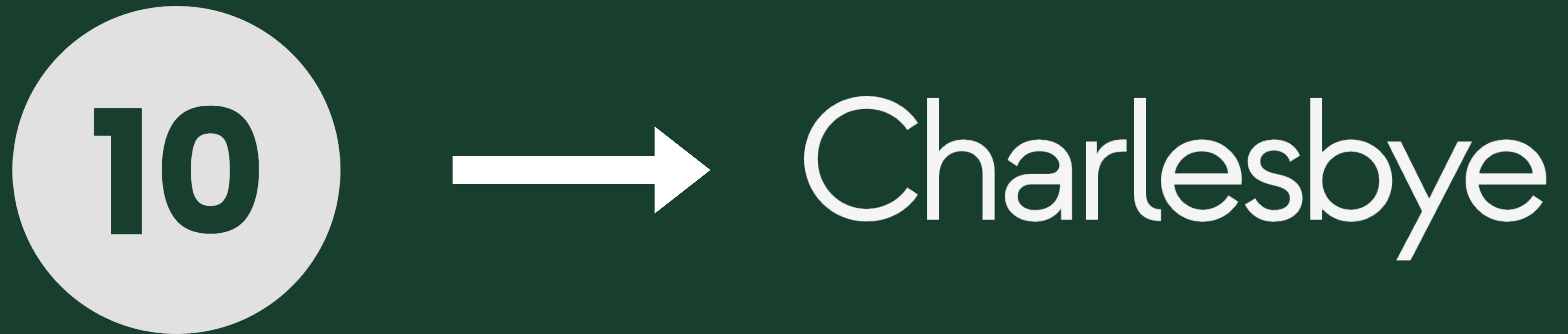
Why messaging matters

NOVEMBER 2022

Introduction



- **Lee Cain:** founding partner Charlesbye, former Director of Communications at Number 10 Downing Street



We employ the techniques and strategies used in political messaging to help organisations protect their reputations and frame debates through the creation of powerful messaging.

“Public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail; against it, nothing can succeed.”

Abraham Lincoln



The success of any politician or political party lies not only in *convincing people on the merits of their ideas* but ***persuading voters to choose them over a rival***



This sounds simple but even with the machinery of a political party it is incredibly difficult to communicate effectively with voters.



Messaging from recent winning campaigns



Can you name the message from the losing side?

PODCASTS
NEWSPAPERS
RADIO
TELEVISION
LINKEDIN
PINTEREST
SNAPCHAT
INSTAGRAM
YOUTUBE
FACEBOOK
PODCASTS
NEWSPAPERS
RADIO
TELEVISION
THE WORLD IS NOISY
PODCASTS
NEWSPAPERS
WHATSAPP
TELEVISION
LINKEDIN
PINTEREST
SNAPCHAT
INSTAGRAM
YOUTUBE
FACEBOOK
PODCASTS
NEWSPAPERS
MESSAGE
TELEVISION
PODCASTS
NEWSPAPERS
RADIO

We can't digest all the information in front of us so
we filter 99% of it out.

Organisations have a very small window to attract
our attention.

The messaging employed has to have **impact**.

Organisations are in a constant battle to shape public opinion.

Most are losing. Why?

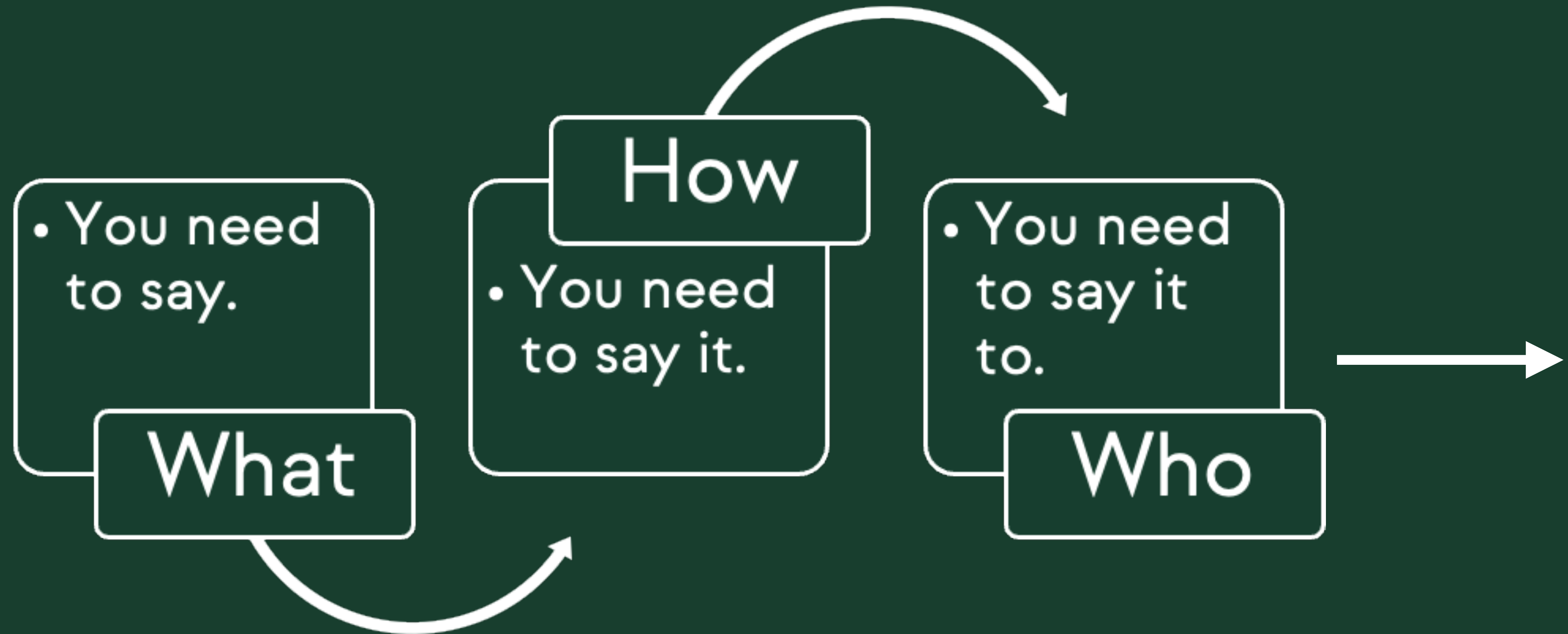
They say too much.

In a way which is too complicated.

“I believe in the battle. Whether it’s the battle of a campaign or the battle of this office, which is a continuing battle.”

Richard Nixon

Winning the battle.



How do you find this out? **Research.**

Research

Research & Insight

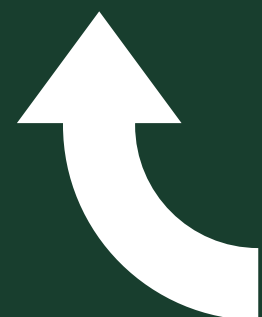
Qualitative (*Focus Groups, Interviews*)
&
Quantitative (*Polling*)



Research is **firstly** a navigational tool to understand and measure public opinion.

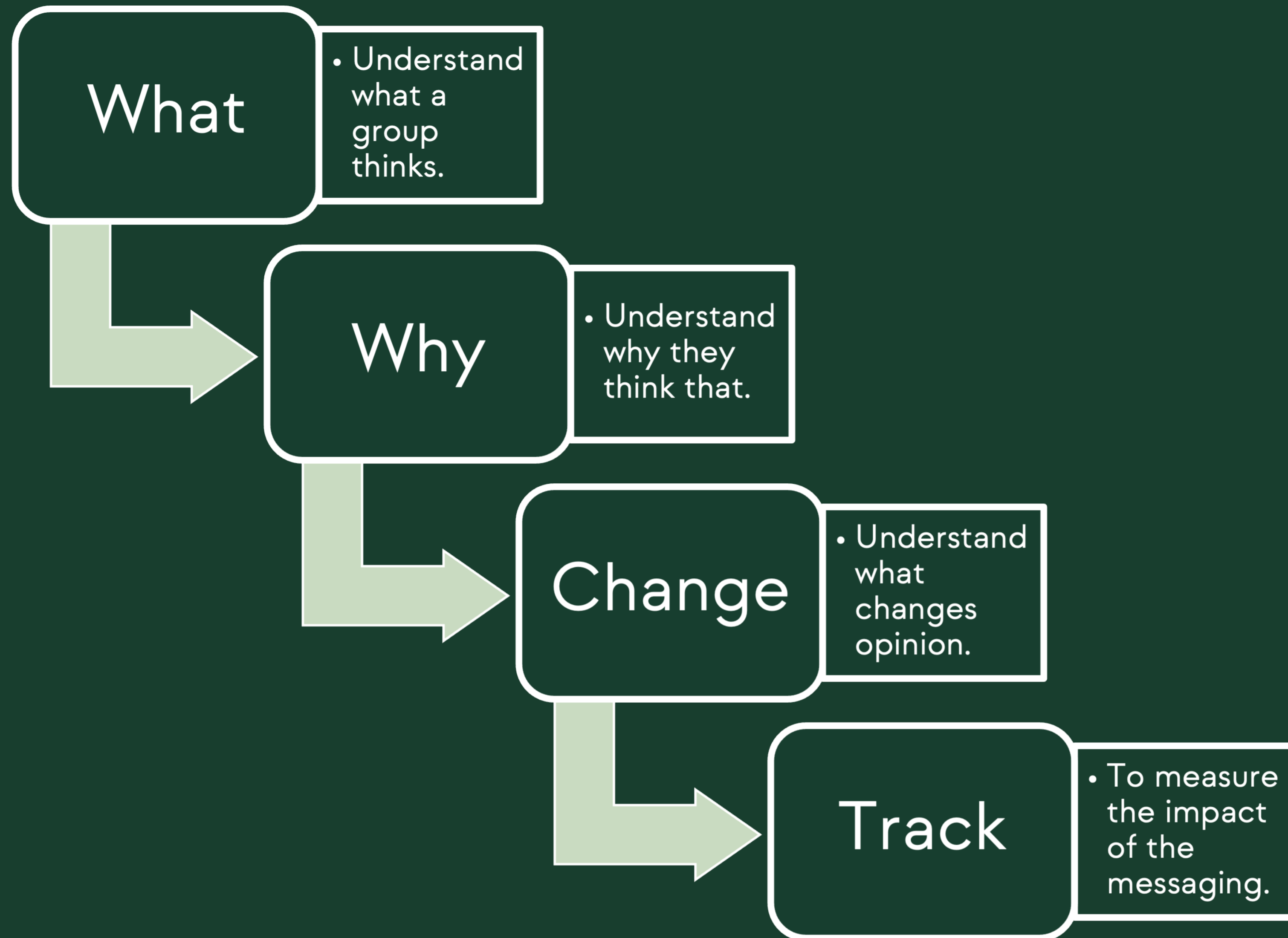


It is not a tool to develop policy.



Secondly it is a tool to change public opinion.

Research & Insight



Fire-Fighting

There will be times when you have to communicate un-popular messages.

Research allows you to understand the best way to communicate un-popular messages.

Research allows you to understand which parts of your message to:

Amplify



Or



Turn down

Case Study: October Mini-Budget



Truss & Kwarteng were of the opinion that research was pointless and that their predecessors had become too dependent on it.



The mini-budget happened without any research into the electorate's preferences and expectations around public finances.



Even a small amount of research would have allowed message tweaking to ensure it would land as best as possible.



The result: Truss and Kwarteng on the back benches.

Spin vs Strategy

Spin vs Strategy

Spin

- Daily tactics deployed to shape the story.

Strategy

- Long term messages to achieve a specific aim.

The Media and the Westminster bubble



Spinning is often aimed at the media, not the public.



Politicians regularly forget that the media is not the public.



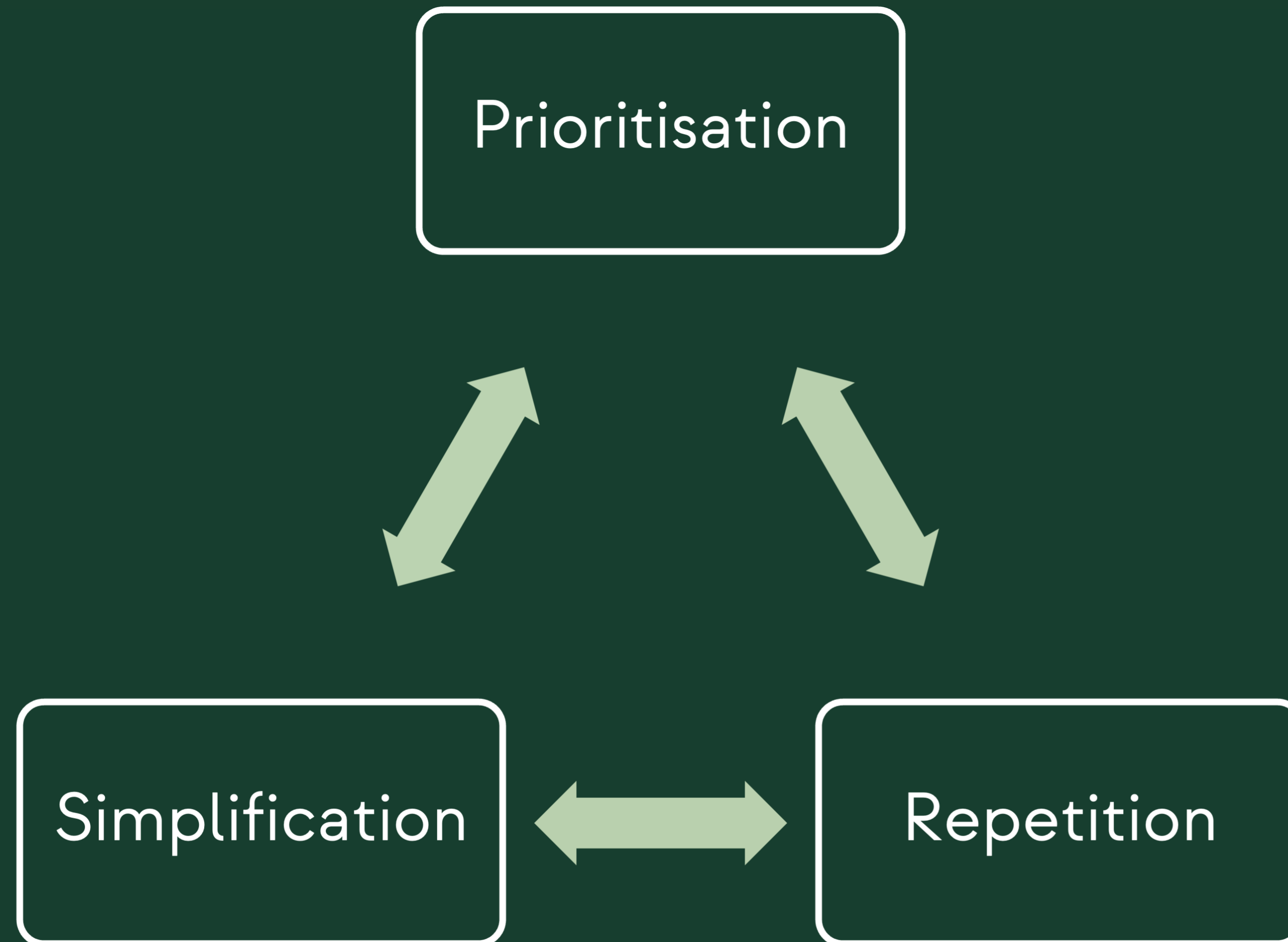
During the vote leave campaign many Conservative MPs wanted the slogan to be '*Britain's going global*'.



Research showed this was incredibly unpopular with the public. They ignored the evidence because they had convinced themselves, via the media, that global Britain was what people were voting for.

How do you make your message matter?

Three step process:



Prioritisation

Normal people live in noisy worlds.

Through research, work to understand what the core messages are, who your audience is and focus on communicating with them.

In the 2019 Election campaign research focused on those who'd voted *Conservative in 2019 and Remain in 2016* and those who'd voted *Labour in 2017 and Leave in 2016*.

It was established that these were the two key groups in the electoral coalition who both had to be secured to ensure a Conservative majority. These two groups required different messages.

Simplification

Normal people live in noisy worlds.

Messages must be clear and concise.

People will not take the time to try and understand your message if it is not immediately obvious. Worse, often lack of clarity leads to negative assumption.

Example: Labour on Brexit in the 2019 Election.

In an election dominated by Brexit, the party refused to back remain or leave, then in the campaign said that they'd remain "neutral".

Repetition

Normal people live in noisy worlds.

Normal people don't sit and watch the 24 hour news.

You can't assume that someone has heard your message, so it needs to be repeated until you're sick of it.

Get Brexit Done. Take Back Control. Make America Great Again.

Summary

In Summary:

Use research to understand **what** you're trying to communicate and **why**.

Talk to your **audience**, not the **media**.

Prioritise what you need to say.



Simplify how you say it.



Repeat until you're bored.

Questions

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