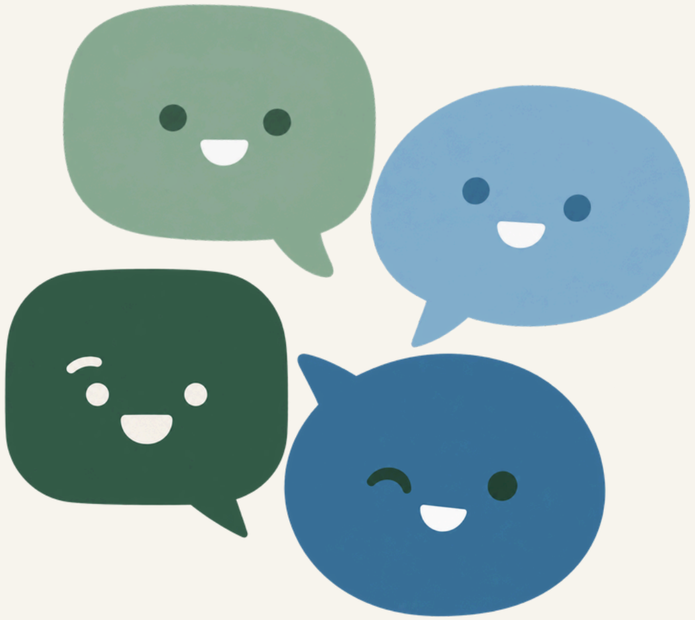
We Have Outgrown the Communications Office



Our Work Before, Around and Beyond the Message

Andrew P. Robinson

“Can You Send a Message?”

“Can you post this?”

“Can you make a flyer?”

“Can you put this in the newsletter?”

“Can you write some talking points?”



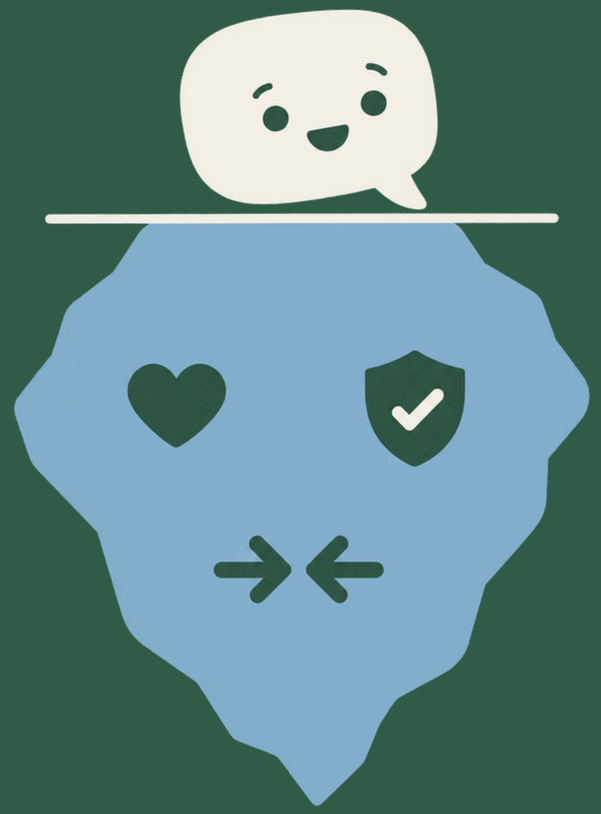
What are some other requests do you receive?

Your Most Valuable Contribution

- Think about your most valuable contribution within the last school year.
- Did it result in a newsletter, social post or press release?

Share an example or two with someone nearby.

Our Highest-Value Work Often Leaves No Public-Facing Artifact.



Understanding family impact. Surfacing a risk early. Resolving conflicting information.

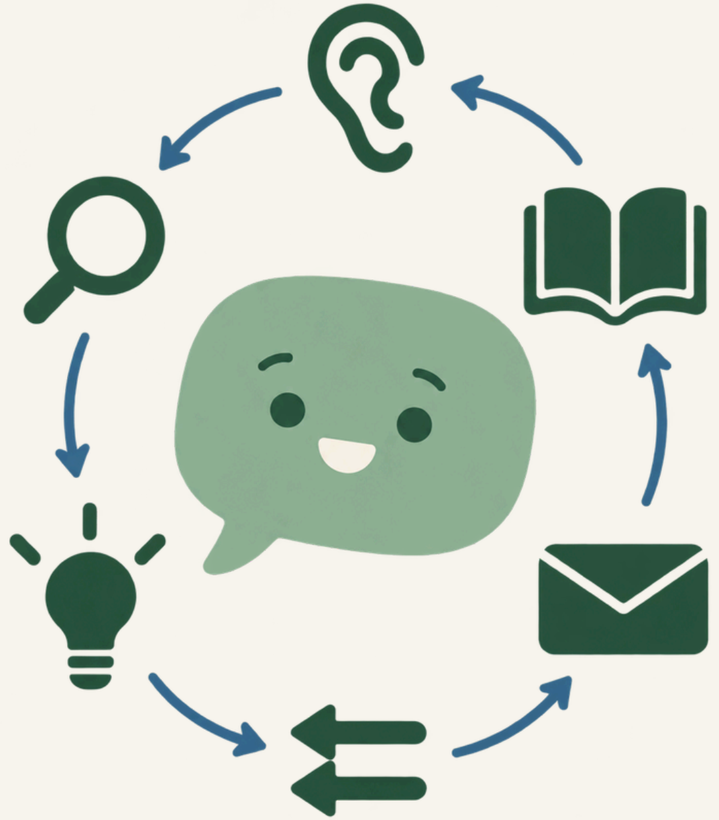
The Production Model and the Expanded Role

THE PRODUCTION MODEL

Request → Product → Publish

THE EXPANDED ROLE

Listen → Interpret → Advise → Align → Communicate → Learn



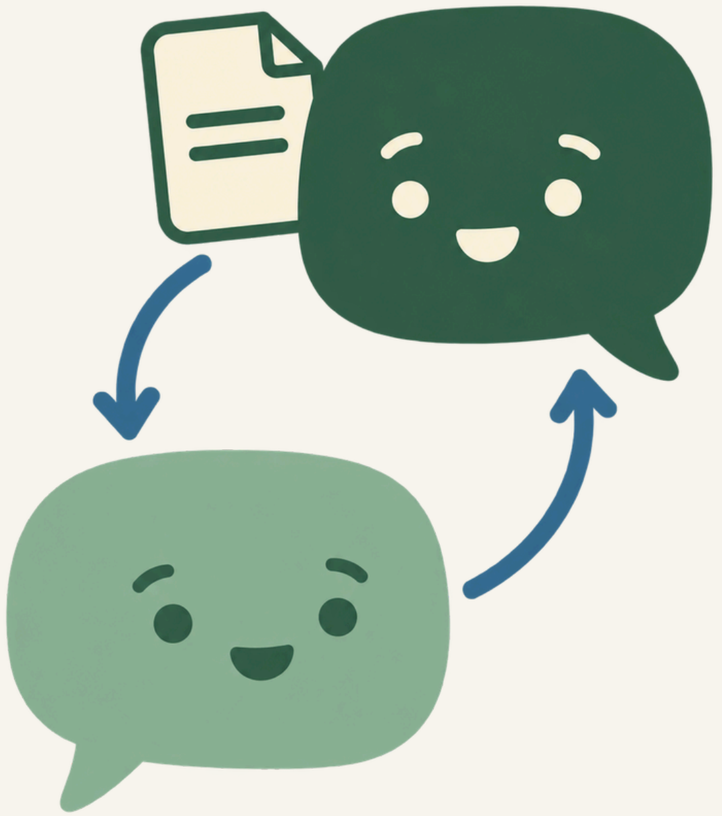
Message production sits within a broader organizational process.

Every Decision Communicates

Policies and service experiences send messages.

Audience insight belongs in decision-making.

Community experience needs a route back to leadership.



Where Communications Enters

Problem lidentified → **Options Developed** → **Decision Made** → **Rollout Planned** → **Decision Announced** → **Audience Response**

Where do we usually enter?

Where could we contribute while the work is still shapeable?

Producer to Strategist



SHIFT 1

“What do you want us to make?” → **“What are we trying to accomplish?”**

Define the outcome before choosing a product or channel.

The Outcome Behind the Request

APS SCENARIO

“We need to send families our yearly survey.”

Increase participation?

Improve understanding?

Support a change in behavior?

How often is the solution given before the problem is clear?

Messenger to Sensemaker



SHIFT 2

Distribute information → **Interpret patterns and context**

Separate questions may point to one systemic issue.

What Are the Questions Telling Us?

Similar questions at several schools may reveal a gap in policy implementation.

What pattern are you seeing that leadership may not yet recognize?

Spokesperson to Listener



SHIFT 3

Help the organization listen intentionally.

Listen → Capture themes → Inform decisions

→ Explain what changed → Listen again

Are we gathering feedback or creating a feedback loop?

Whose Experience Reaches Us?

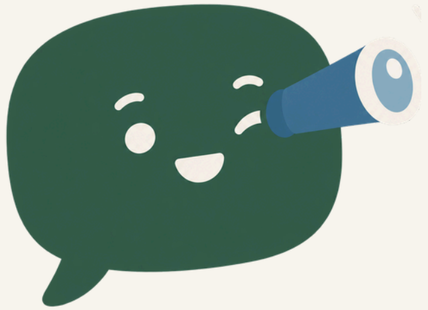
Who is easiest for the organization to hear?

Who is absent from meetings and surveys?

How do language, access and relationships shape what we hear?

People should be able to see what was heard and what happened next.

Responder to Anticipator



SHIFT 4

Respond after
an issue emerges

→

**Identify questions
before rollout**

Audience understanding and trust belong in planning.

Questions Before the Announcement

What could be misunderstood?

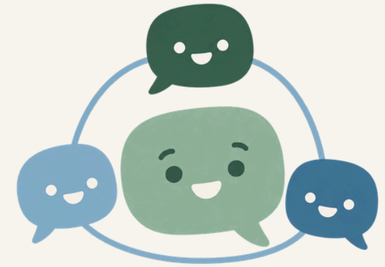
Who will experience this differently?

What expectations will this create?

What if implementation does not match the announcement?



Department to Organizational Capability



SHIFT 5

The office creates
the communications

→

The office helps others communicate well

Expertise lives in the communications office.
Communication happens across the organization.

Building Capacity Across the System

- Standards and templates
- Coaching and training
- Clear responsibilities
- Internal feedback



What recurring communication could others handle with better support?

Where Does Your Value Live?

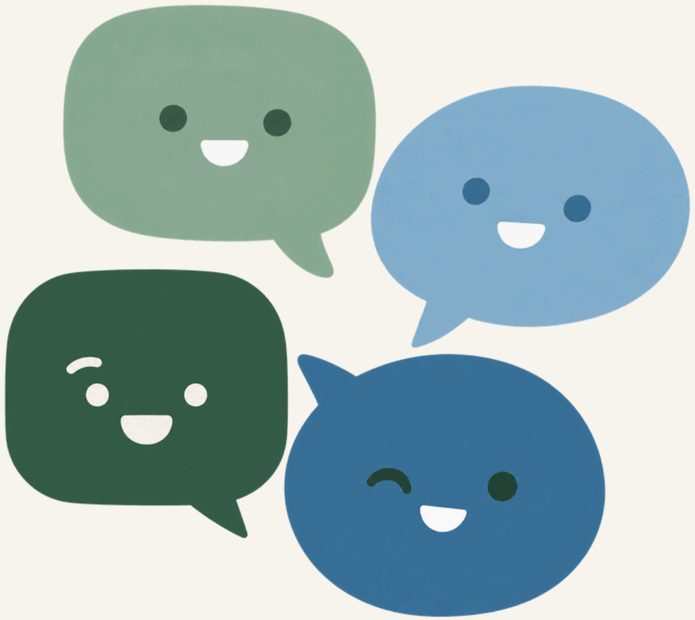
Fulfilling requests		Shaping strategy
Sharing updates		Interpreting patterns
Sending information		Building listening loops
Responding to issues		Anticipating questions
Producing communications		Building capacity

✕ *today's position.* ★ *your greatest value. Circle your opportunity.*

Discussion With a Partner

Where are you already operating beyond production?

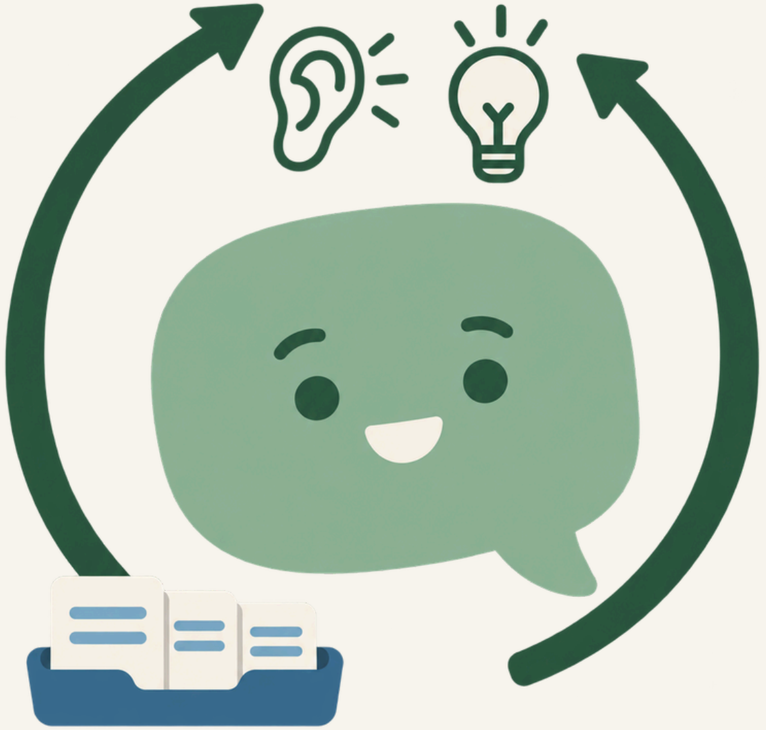
What keeps your function from moving further upstream?



Making Room for the Expanded Role

An expanded role requires changes to the work.

- Reduce low-value output.
- Standardize routine communications.
- Equip colleagues to communicate independently.
- Protect time for listening and analysis.



Expansion without subtraction is not strategy. It is burnout.

Shared Responsibilities

What Organizations Owe Communicators

Earlier access and relationships

Clear authority and resources

Time to listen and plan

Willingness to hear difficult counsel

What Communicators Owe Organizations

Understanding of the school system

Evidence behind recommendations

Respect for colleagues’ expertise

Courage to question decisions early

Evidence Beyond Output

Production Measures

Messages sent

Open rates and engagement

Website traffic

Projects completed

Organizational Contribution

Decisions informed

Questions identified before launch

Conflicting information resolved

Leaders equipped

Processes improved through feedback

Pair data with examples and short case studies.

Questions and Examples



Where could this work differently in your district?

Share a barrier, a useful practice or a question.

One Change to Move Upstream

- Choose one recurring project or relationship.
- Identify where you enter today.
- Name the value you could bring earlier.
- Choose a relationship or process that would help.



“I will move communications upstream by…”

Thank You!

Explore more on
andrewrobinson.co

A WORKSHOP WITH ANDREW P. ROBINSON

We Have Outgrown the Communications Office

Our value begins before the message.

For school communicators ready to bring listening, judgment and audience insight into the decisions that shape their communities.

Download the companion guide

Presentation coming soon

Two-page PDF · Reflection + action planning



Find where your value lives.