

THE  
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# NERDOGRAM

**ENGINE**  
mhp *mischief*

# THE NETWORKED AGED NERDOGRAM

**Welcome to The Networked Age Nerdogram, a new monthly email that gathers insights and trends, to help communicators navigate a connected world that's increasingly tribal, activist and polarised.**

In our highly digitised age, group dynamics make it even more important to understand audience: how they think, what they share, and what they want others to think of them. Without this, we run a growing risk of PR as sunk cost, lost in the noise.

The Networked Age Nerdogram grew out of an internal labour of love – a partnership with our behavioural science friends at INFLUENCE AT WORK to share favourite findings with colleagues, to help them do even better work for our clients.

But now, we have decided to bring it directly to our clients, and the wider communications community. Every month we will share the killer nuggets we think will matter most to communicators.

Please read them, share them, challenge them. And if you'd like to chat, or feedback, do get in touch.



**Kate Gomes**, Head of Strategy, ENGINE MHP

# THE RULES OF INFLUENCE

At MHP+Mischief, we apply three simple Rules of Influence - developed with Dr Tali Sharot and UCL's Affective Brain Lab - to think through every challenge. As we go along, we'll show how the Rules play out in the real world. But before we begin, let's quickly recap on what they are:

## **RULE ONE:**

**Who you are is as important as what you do.**

Audiences are tribal and united around shared narratives and values. To engage people, organisations must show they (and the people who run them) share the same values.

## **RULE TWO:**

**Influencers and passions spread ideas**

People follow people like themselves and they respond to passionate voices. Passionate storytellers and emotional stories are more effective.

## **RULE THREE:**

**Arguments are never won, outcomes are**

People will reject challenging arguments, even if they are supported by facts. To persuade people, you can't tell them they're wrong, you have to change the conversation.

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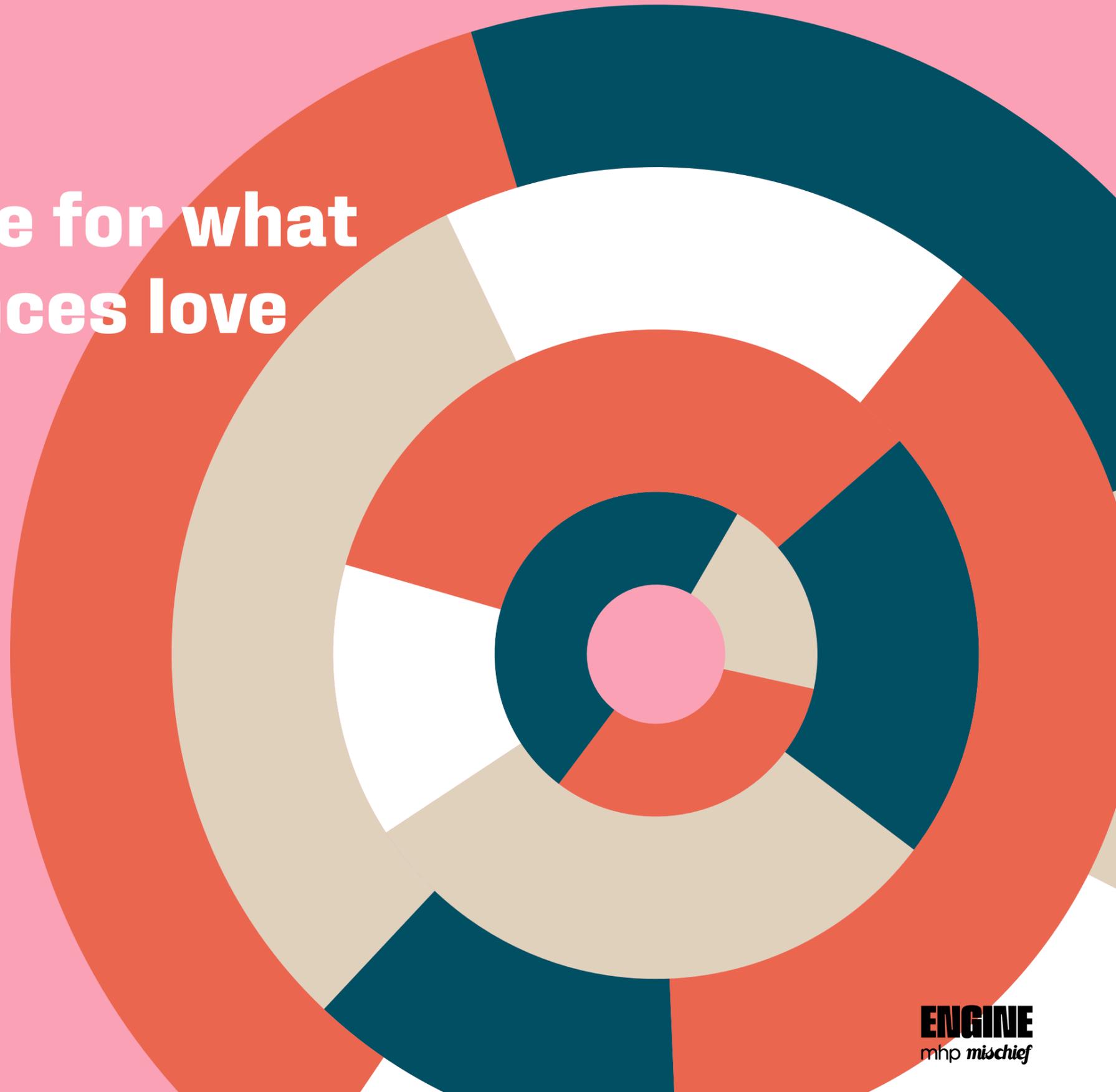
NEED TO KNOWS

# SHARE THE LOVE

**Communicate your love for what you do, to make audiences love your product.**

A study from the Journal of Advertising Research shows that communicating passion has real world impact.

Importantly, it leads consumers and stakeholders to infer that you have done the best possible job. And not only that, but in short term, passion can rub off emotionally, making them passionate about you as well.



# EMBRACE THE SNARK

**Think of ways to engage brand detractors to drive fame.**

Crocs CEO Andrew Rees [has told the Washington Post](#) how detractors have been “critically important” to the company’s stunning recent growth. Notably Victoria Beckham said she’d “rather die” than wear a pair of Bieber Crocs she received.

“**To us, that’s not a failure. That’s a win. It creates conversation, it creates media, it creates attention and that’s really good for the brand. Crocs CEO Rees said.**”

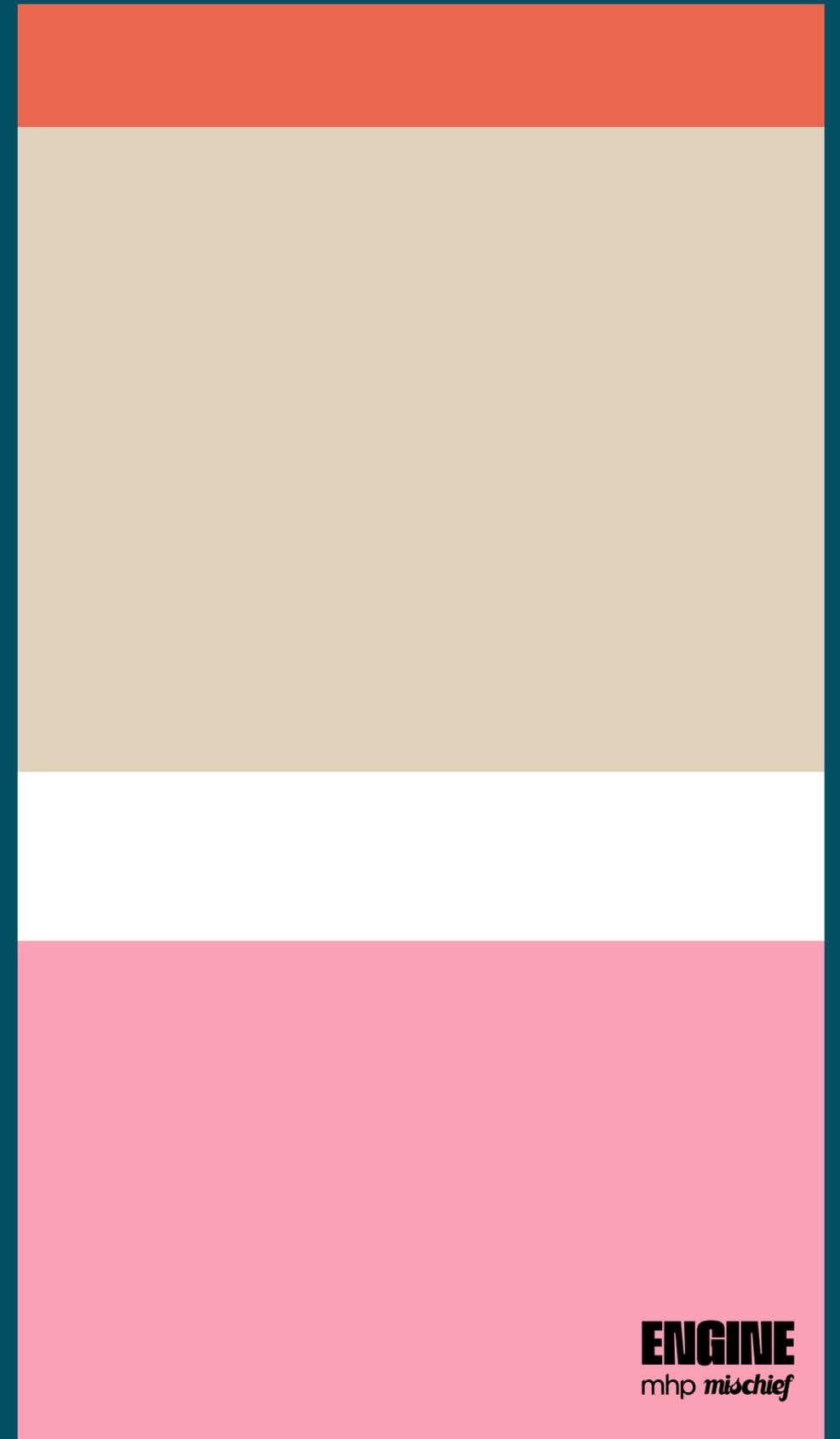
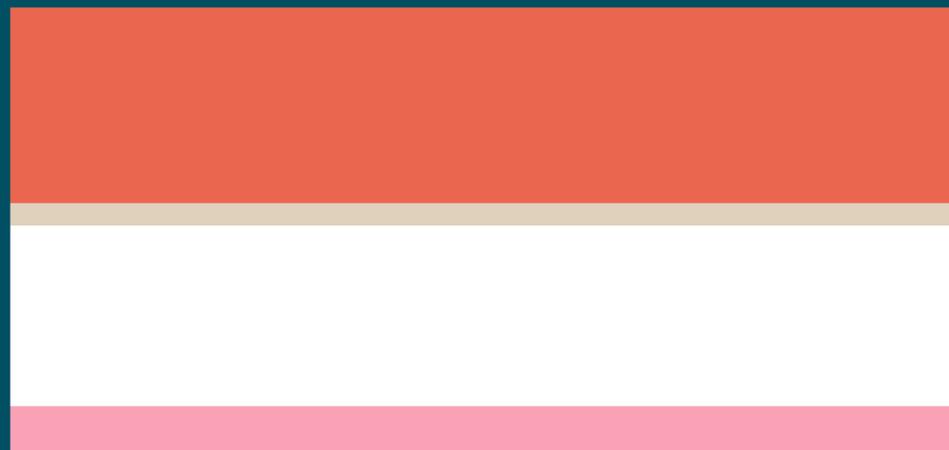


# DEFAULTS RULE, OK?

**Set the default decision as the one you most want your audience to take.**

A recent [meta-study](#), published in the Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, looking at eight different nudging strategies found defaults to be the most effective way to get the preferred outcome. Overall, defaults increased participation or selection of a choice by 50%.

For us, this means making the easiest, most accessible option the one you must want your audiences to do. Like you downloading this and sharing it with your team, for instance.



# BECAUSE I SAID SO

**Add the word “because” to your request. It’ll make people c. 50% more likely to comply (even if the “because” is a tautology).**

The IAW team love this research from two US academics, who discovered the power of ‘because’:

People waiting in line to use a photocopier were asked “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the copier?” 60 percent agreed. When the request was accompanied with a reason — “May I use the Xerox machine because I’m in a rush?”—94 percent complied. Interestingly, even when the word because was followed with a completely meaningless phrase.

# THE ROUTINE 20S?

**Offer your audiences routine, demanding their engagement at a specific time of day, weekday or month.**

Routines have served as a stabilising force for many people this year, a group Pinterest has dubbed the “routine ritualist.”

Pinterest has seen:

- 22x increase in searches for “soulfood Sunday” dinner ideas in 2021 vs 2019
- 6x increase in searches for “daily routine schedule for adults” in 2021 vs 2019
- 34x increase in searches for “workout routine at home” in 2021 vs 2019



# FINAL THOUGHT - STEP OUT OF YOUR FISHBOWL

**Communicators need to find ways to look at the world with fresh eyes.**

Speaking to Rachel Bower, MHP+Mischief's Head of Brand & Reputation, at a recent Networked Age event for the launch of her new book [Anthro-Vision](#), The FT's Chair of the Editorial Board and Editor-at-Large in the US, Gillian Tett explained that the pandemic had trapped all of us with "people just like ourselves", amplifying our biases and tribal affiliations.

Tett believes that, as a consequence, higher levels of polarisation are here to stay and the best thing communicators can do is try to escape their mental fishbowls by immersing themselves in a different world.

## SOME HELPFULL LINKS

To learn more about communicating in a polarised world, download our Guide [here](#).

If you want to know more about any of the insights in this email – or talk to us more about how we think about audiences, please email me at [\*\*kate.gomes@mhpc.com\*\*](mailto:kate.gomes@mhpc.com)

And don't forget to check out our Networked Age library, including our Guides to 'The New Rules of Influence' and 'Communicating in a Polarised World'.

You can find everything here, including the Nerdogram:  
[\*\*mhpc.com/NetworkedAge\*\*](http://mhpc.com/NetworkedAge)

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