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# NERDOGRAM

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**ENGINE**  
mhp *mischief*

# MAKING COMMS STICK

**Welcome to the second 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.**

The visibility of polarisation comes in cycles. And Covid – and vaccines and masks in particular – position it currently front of mind for most of us.

But as this ebbs and flows, the principles which drive it, harness it and counter it remain relatively stable.

These emails are designed to give you some snippets of these relatively “timeless” insights. I do hope you enjoy them. Do reach out, argue with me or voraciously agree. I'd always welcome a coffee and a debate.



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

# NERDOGRAM

NEED TO KNOWS

# THE PURPOSE OF PURPOSE

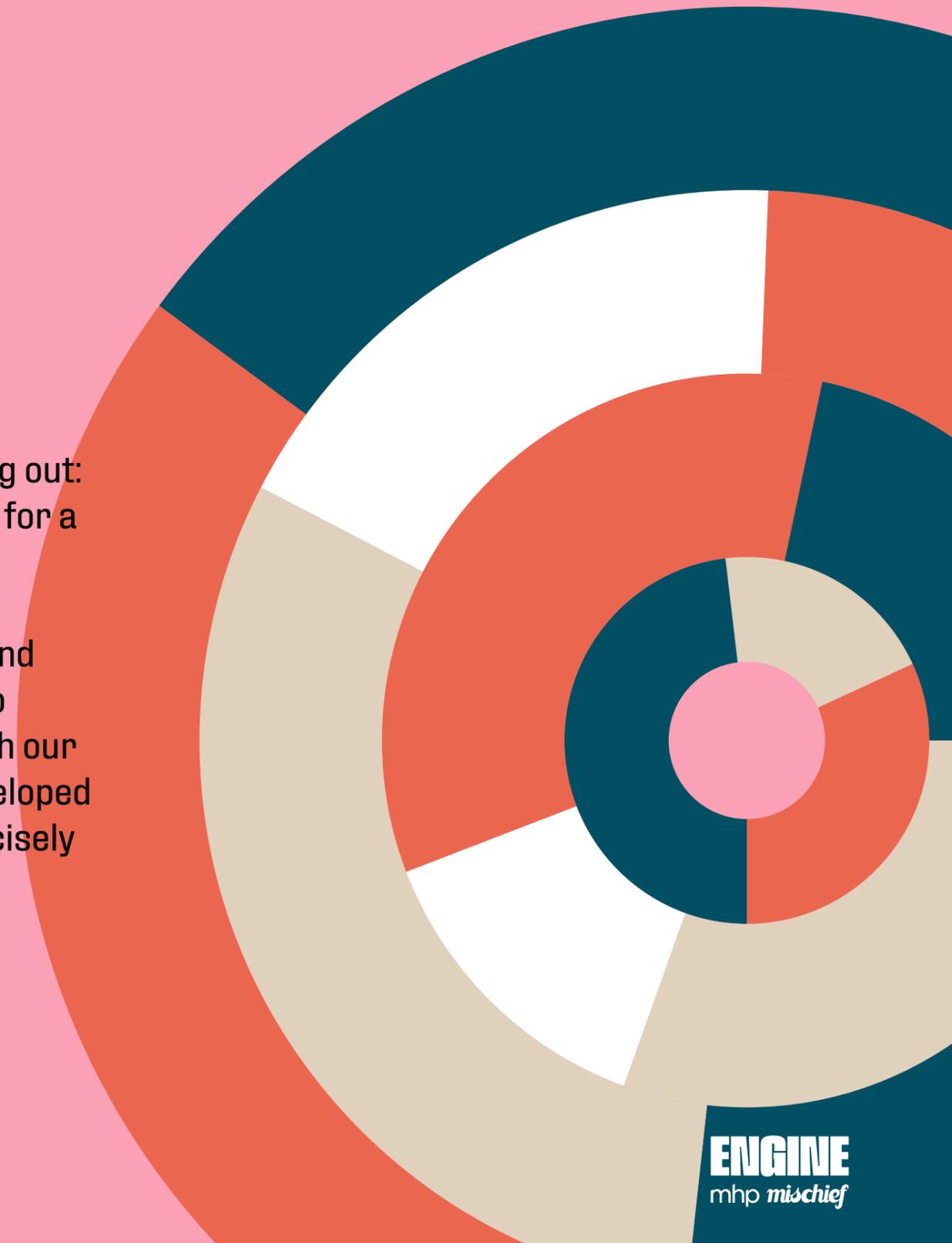
## Brand purpose has untapped potential

Recent research from [Initials](#) shows the scale of the delta between brand Purpose expectations and reality.

Where 46% of us seek out brands with a Purpose as an alternative to existing brands, **only 9% of consumers trust a brand when it says it has a deeper Purpose.**

Brands are failing to communicate their Purpose authentically, and they're missing out: 89% of consumers would pay a premium for a brand that has an authentic purpose.

As communicators, we have to think beyond the Purpose launch to how we continue to communicate in a way that resonates with our stakeholders. But don't worry, we've developed the [Purpose Pathfinder](#) to help solve precisely this issue.



# PUT PEN TO PAPER

## If you want others to stick to their commitments, get them to write them down

A study published in the Journal of the [Royal Society of Medicine](#) shows that **making people write reminders themselves makes them much more likely to stick to their commitments.**

NHS receptionists made people write down the time of their appointments themselves (as opposed to writing it down for the patients) led to an 18% reduction of people missing their NHS appointments.

For communicators seeking behaviour change, encourage others to write down their commitments themselves.

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

## Influencers use brand nicknames to drive shareability

According to a recent study in the [Journal of Marketing](#), the use of brand nicknames in content is a powerful way to drive engagement.

In an experiment, on average, **consumer tweets that used nickname hashtags were shared twice as much and liked three times as much as tweets that used the formal name hashtags.**

But, a word of warning, this had the opposite effect when the nickname was used by a brand. For us, that means encouraging influencers and third parties to use your brand nickname (but steering clear of it yourself!)

# THE POWER OF POSITIVITY?

## The 5:1 positive/negative ratio

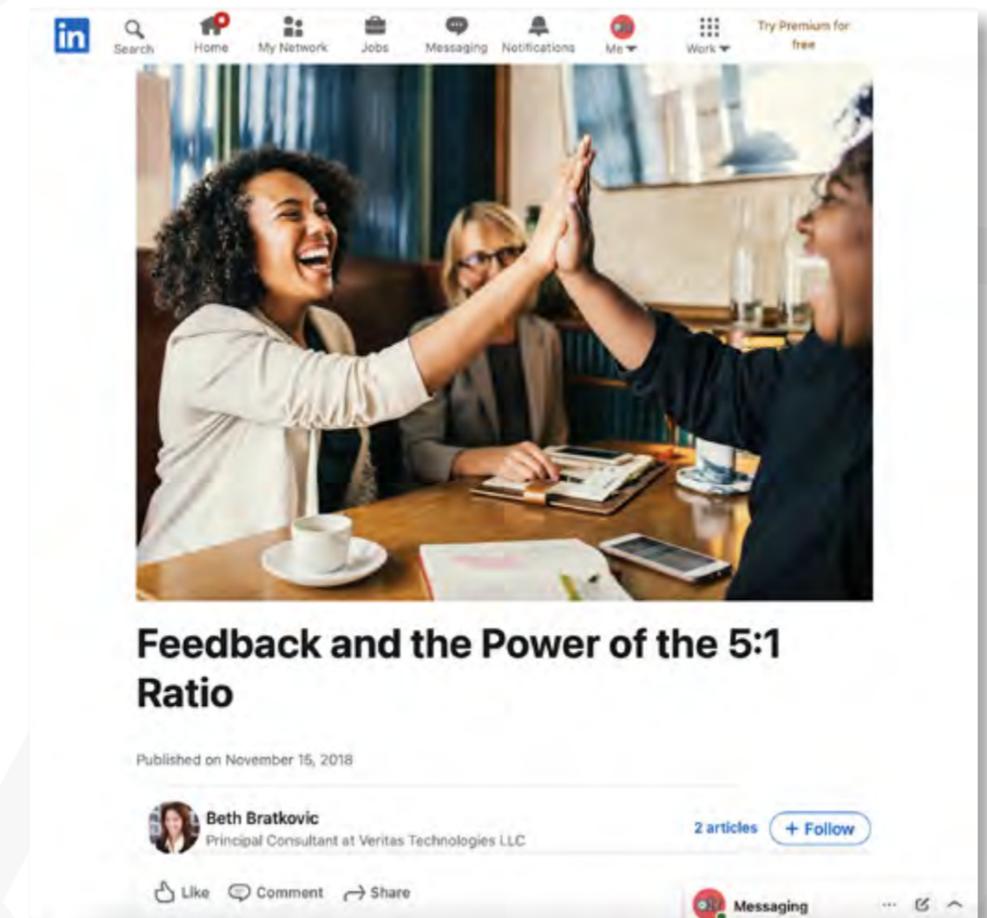
For every single negative message we receive about a person or organisation, we need five positive ones to counter it.

Developed from a [1970s relationship](#) study, this insight is now used across everything from [organisational psychology](#) to [parenting](#). In each case, we are told **five positive messages are needed to undo the work of one harmful one.**

This can be used in so many ways. From employee feedback to crisis management, understanding this key ratio helps us understand the disproportionate impact of our negative words or acts.



The screenshot shows the website for The Gottman Institute, which is described as 'A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH TO RELATIONSHIPS'. The main article title is 'The Magic Relationship Ratio, According to Science'. The author is Kyle Benson, with a profile picture and the date October 4, 2017. Below the author's name are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The article text states: 'That "magic ratio" is 5 to 1. This means that for every negative interaction during conflict, a stable and happy marriage has five (or more) positive interactions.'



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn post by Beth Bratkovic, Principal Consultant at Veritas Technologies LLC. The post features a photograph of three people in an office setting, with one person giving a high-five to another. The title of the post is 'Feedback and the Power of the 5:1 Ratio'. It was published on November 15, 2018. The post has 2 articles and a '+ Follow' button. At the bottom, there are options to Like, Comment, and Share, along with a Messaging icon.

# LESS IS MORE

## Subtracting to improve things is an untapped skill

A study, shared in [Subtract: The Untapped Science of Less](#) (a recommended read), but also published in [Nature](#) shows that we **naturally find “additive transformations” rather than “subtractive transformations” when seeking to solve problems.**

Put simply, we build more, spend more, buy more rather than seeking to take things away. This takes unnecessary effort, time and money and often overlooks the simplest opportunities. As communicators, when we present, write and explain we are always looking for more ways to show value, and rarely think that this could be by showing less.

# 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. We've tagged each of the Need to Knows with the Rule of Influence they correspond with, so let's 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.

## SOME HELPFUL LINKS

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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