



Grant Agreement No.: 825354
Call: H2020-ICT-2018-2020

Topic: ICT-24-2018-2019
Type of action: CSA



D1.2 NGI COMMS COACHING REPORT

Revision: v.1.0

Work package	WP 1
Task	T1.3 Coaching and Training
Due date	31/12/2019
Submission date	31/12/2019
Deliverable lead	Tipik
Version	1.0
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Abstract	This deliverable, reports on the communication coaching activities NGI4ALL has run in Year 1, including an overview of the training sessions (participants, contents, modalities) and support materials.
Keywords	Coaching, Communication, Training, NGI, Online Communication

Document Revision History

Version	Date	Description of change	List of contributor(s)
V0.1	15/11/2019	1st version of the template for comments	Philippe Félix (Tipik)
V0.2	01/12/2019	First Review	Margherita Trestini (Martel)
V0.3	10/12/2019	Content Integration	Philippe Félix (Tipik)
V0.4	20/12/2019	Final review	Margherita Trestini (Martel)

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public, fully open, e.g. web	✓
CL	Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	
CO	Confidential to HUB4NGI project and Commission Services	

* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the services the NGI Outreach Office (i.e., NGI4ALL) offers to more effectively promote the Next Generation Internet (NGI) initiative, the “coaching” and “training” activities focus on providing dedicated guidance specifically geared at creating more effective dissemination and promotional efforts across the whole programme, but also to ensure alignment in terms of branding and storytelling. The overall purpose of the NGI communication trainings is to share a better aware communication culture leveraging marketing concepts and research for more effective impact creation. Our trainings aim at supporting each NGI project to better communicate their own activities and contribute to the overall NGI communication impact. The NGI Outreach Office offers thematic training courses open to all the NGI communication and project managers, as well as ad hoc support if necessary or requested.

The pedagogical approach we adopted is very operational, to offer a concrete and “ready-to-use” set of tools and approaches: the NGI Outreach Office shares and explains key communication “principles” (often unknown by the participants), explaining how these recommendations can be concretely implemented in the context of each project.

Four NGI Communication training sessions were delivered during in the first twelve months (January – December 2019). Three of them were given online, while another one has been given in two complementary parts, the first face-to-face at the Commission's premises in Brussels, the second one online. The main themes addressed during this period were as follows:

1. Explanation of the NGI's global communication ecosystem: what channels are available, who they reach, what are they used for, how do they complement each other...
2. Demonstration and explanation of the NGI's new brand guidelines (and the graphic charter that organises them), as it was designed in close collaboration with stakeholders, and as it must now be implemented by them.
3. The fundamental principles of storytelling, i.e. the rules to be followed in order to craft interesting, impactful and useful NGI stories in the long term and in the short term, which together contribute to increasing the visibility and awareness of the NGI initiative among the targeted audiences.
4. The fundamental principles of social media engagement; advices and best practices to be followed to increase clicking, favouriting, responding, retweeting and commenting of NGI projects social media posts.

The NGI Outreach Office has monitored and assessed the results of these four training sessions, both in terms of participation and interest and of communication activities improvement. In brief the key considerations are the following:

- The trainings stimulated the interest of the participants, although, as it is often the case in most of the educational scenario, the members of the NGI Communication Group show a different level of participation and interaction.



- Each training session generated a number of concrete questions which were addressed at group and individual level, as needed.
- We were impressed, on the whole, by the speed and efficiency with which the participants (CSAs and RIAs) adopted the recommendations given to them, implementing them at their own level on their respective communication channels.

The NGI communication ecosystem is progressively becoming more coherent and dynamic: we believe that the quarterly communication coaching sessions are sowing seeds of ideas, methodology and concrete applications.



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1 TRAINING 1: THE NGI ONLINE COMMUNICATION ECOSYSTEM (MADE SIMPLE)

The first training “The NGI Online Communication Ecosystem (made simple)” was carried out, through the dedicated GoTo Meeting online meeting room, on 8th April 2019. It has been conducted by Dr Monique Calisti (Martel), Claire Doble (Martel) and Philippe Félix (Tipik). The training lasted one hour and saw the participation of 24 attendees from the following projects: Ledger, TETRA, NGIO, NGI Trust, Think Nexus, NGI4ALL.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this very first training session were as follows:

- Presenting the NGI Outreach Office role and support in terms of communication;
- Presenting the NGI communication ecosystem, and the way to leverage such a mechanism;
- Presenting the guidelines to be followed by each project for a long lasting NGI brand;
- Presenting some basic storytelling principles;
- Presenting tools and processes to publish on the NGI communication channels (NGI Portal, Social Channels, NGI Newsletter, etc).

1.2 STRUCTURE AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

All communication trainings given so far follow more or less the same pedagogical approach, which is as follows:

The training systematically begins with the presentation and a precise definition of the subject, its general objectives, and the concrete problems it aims to solve. This introduction enables participants to understand exactly the scope of the training, gives them an overview of what they will - in principle - learn, and the improvements they can expect in the exercise of their communication pole.

The head trainer, Philippe Félix (Tipik, for the NGI Outreach Office), invites all participants to interact with him during the training by asking him questions and making any comments. The aim is to avoid ex-cathedra training, and to set up a dynamic based on interactivity.

Since it is difficult to know the level of expertise of the participants, and since this level of expertise differs fundamentally from one participant to another, the



pedagogical approach is based on a systematic “back to the basics” introduction, ranging from the most general or theoretical aspects to the most concrete or practical aspects.

Each theme is approached on the principle of the funnel, starting from the fundamental concepts to concrete examples of the application of the advice given. As an example, the trainer systematically uses best practices (often identified on the web and social networks), some examples coming from sectors of activity related to those of NGI, and other examples (the most numerous) being identified within the production of NGI content itself.

The training sessions are divided into relatively short chapters (about 15 minutes). At the end of each chapter, the trainer calls any questions that may arise, and engages in a short discussion before moving on to the next chapter. Sometimes the trainer asks direct questions to all participants who usually react positively.

The training sessions end with a more general questions and answers session.

Great care is taken to ensure the rhythm and visual quality of the presentations, made of numerous slides (usually 60 slides for a one-hour session), but always very easy to read, containing very short text, and many images and illustrations. The tone is generally humorous, and many cultural references (IT world, films and series universe) are used to keep the audience's attention throughout the session.

1.2.1 Part 1: the NGI Outreach Office role and support

The first part of the session was introduced by Dr Monique Calisti, the NGI Outreach Office Director. She summarised the role of the NGI Outreach Office (carried out by the NGI4ALL project), including the various services offered to the European Commission and the whole NGI community, and the goals and benefits expected.

Dr Calisti then presented the complementarity of the different stakeholders (EC, NGIO, other CSAs, and RIAs) and listed the different communication actions they will undertake.

Finally, to conclude, she explained the main communication activities underway at the time, namely the rebranding of NGI, the establishment of the NGI Community platform, and the organization of the NGI Forum 2019.

1.2.2 Part 2: The NGI Communication ecosystem

The second part of the session was presented by Philippe Félix. It was structured into three chapters and two mini Q&A sessions.

The first chapter consisted in introducing the participants to the NGI communication ecosystem, based on the principle of circles. Without going into detail, five circles of influence were presented, each of which was characterised by specific target audiences and different communication channels available.

The second chapter consisted in characterising the different communication channels available: what they are, what can they be used for, what are their characteristics, their respective strengths and weaknesses, for what purpose to use



them, etc. Philippe's main message during this part of the session was to demonstrate **how to combine them to leverage the mechanism.**

The third chapter aimed to explain the basic guidelines that CSAs and RIAs were now required to follow, and the reasons why these four rules had been established:

- NGI communication channels are prominent;
- CSAs shall use the NGI social channels;
- RIAs should develop their own webpage (as NGI subdomain) social media channels;
- The NGI brand must be promoted across all channels.

Participants in the session were then given the opportunity to ask questions on the topics discussed.

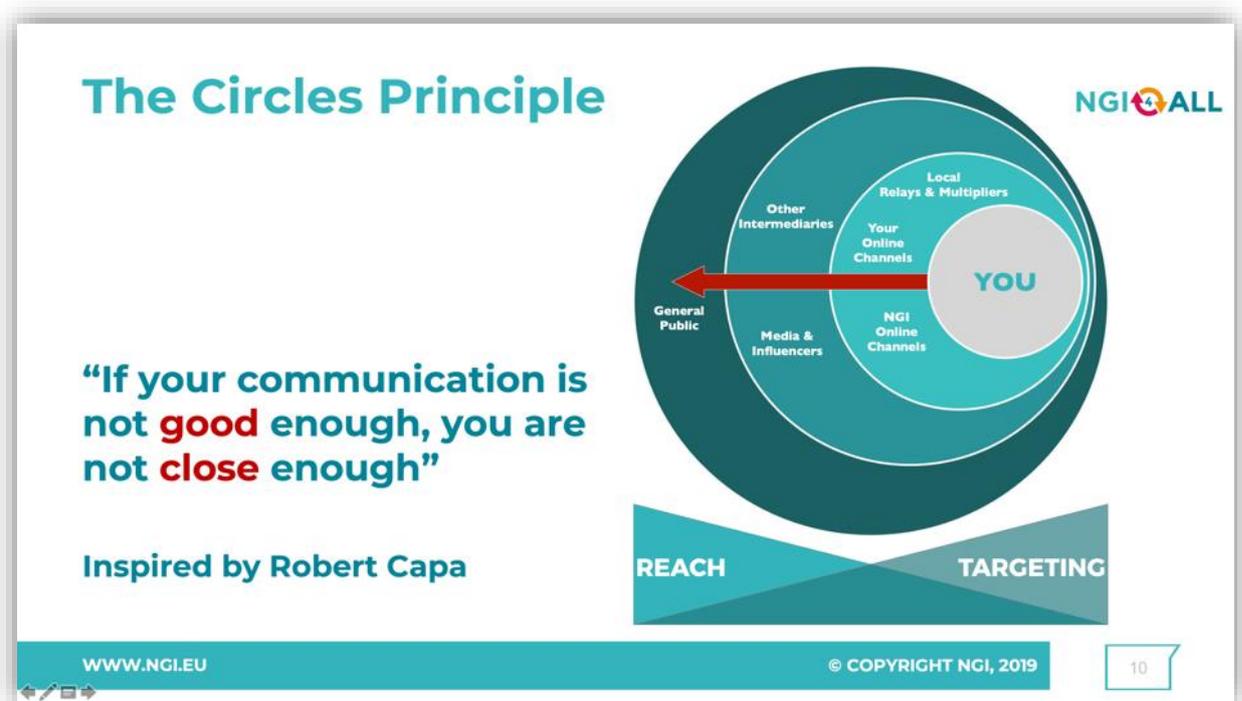


FIGURE 1. SESSION 1, THE CIRCLES PRINCIPLES



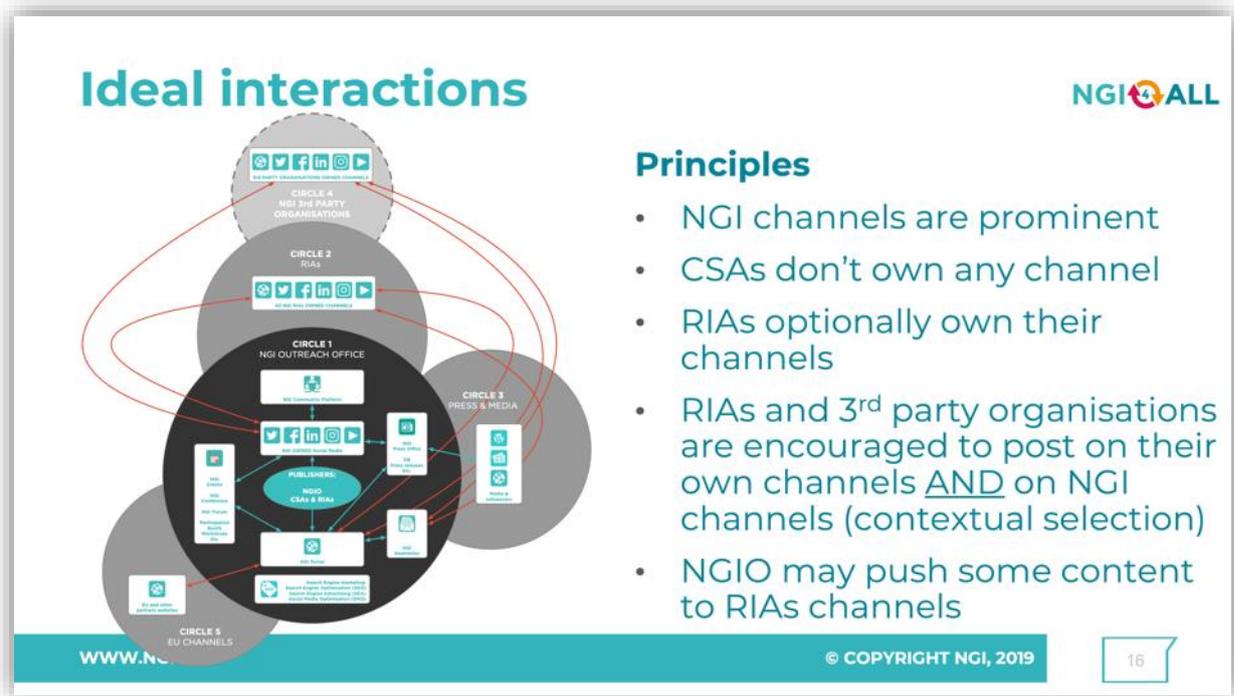


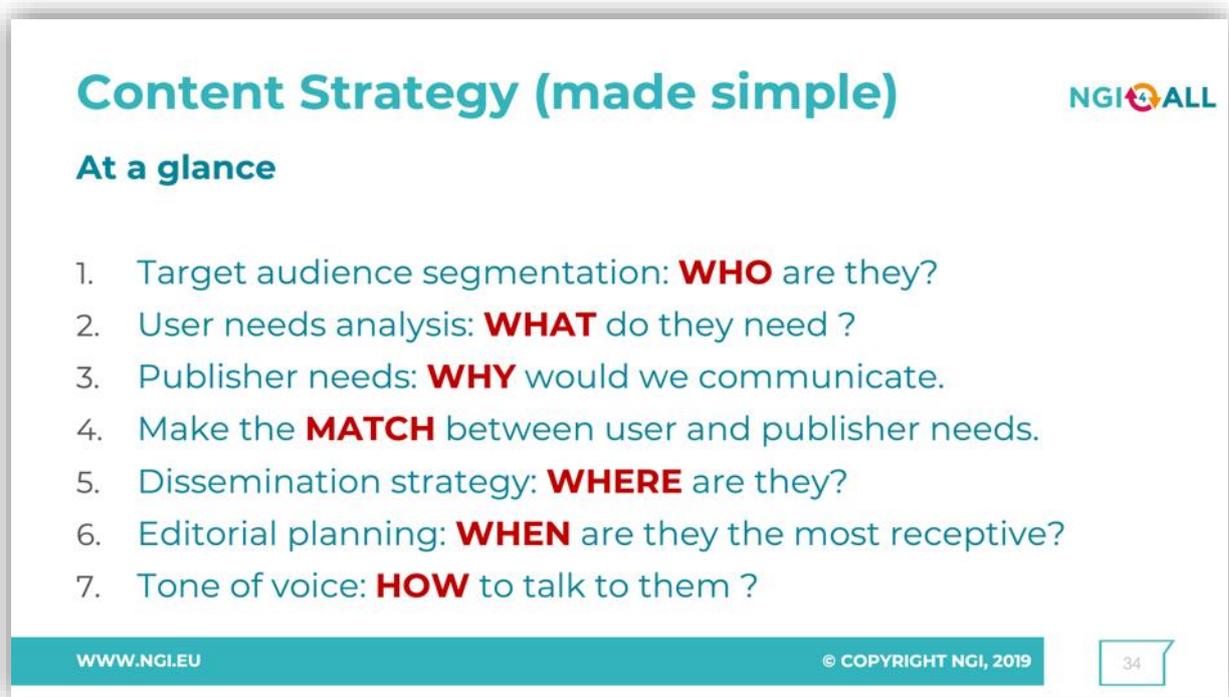
FIGURE 2. SESSION 1, TARGET AUDIENCES

1.2.3 Part 3: Content strategy & Storytelling

The third part of the training was led by Philippe Félix (chapter 1) and Claire Doble (chapter 2). First of all, Philippe Félix presented the main questions and answers on which a content strategy should rely on:

- Target audience segmentation: WHO are they?
- User needs analysis: WHAT do they need?
- Publisher needs: WHY would we communicate.
- Make the MATCH between user and publisher needs.
- Dissemination strategy: WHERE are they?
- Editorial planning: WHEN are they the most receptive?
- Tone of voice: HOW to talk to them?

Then, both presenters detailed the basic structure of storytelling, using some concrete examples. The recommendations for story structure, style, tone of voice, visual aspects, and editorial planning were explained. The participants were then able to ask their questions.



Content Strategy (made simple) NGI4ALL

At a glance

1. Target audience segmentation: **WHO** are they?
2. User needs analysis: **WHAT** do they need ?
3. Publisher needs: **WHY** would we communicate.
4. Make the **MATCH** between user and publisher needs.
5. Dissemination strategy: **WHERE** are they?
6. Editorial planning: **WHEN** are they the most receptive?
7. Tone of voice: **HOW** to talk to them ?

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FIGURE 3. SESSION 1, CONTENT STRATEGY MADE SIMPLE

1.2.4 Part 4: how to publish on NGI

The last part of this online training was presented by Claire Doble and was focused on more technical and operational information. The aim was to demonstrate in real time, based on the available interfaces (demo), how to publish relevant contents on NGI channels:

- Tweets & Facebook Posts
- News & Blogs on the NGI portal
- Add an Event on the NGI portal
- Add a Webinar on the NGI portal
- Share News via the NGI Newsletter
- Publish press releases on NGI Portal
- Download content from the NGI Portal

1.3 KEY MESSAGES

Apart from these technical aspects, the main messages conveyed during this training were as follows:

- The NGI Outreach Office is available to assist the NGI projects in their communication exercise, so as to develop clear, consistent and powerful communication.

- NGI has a very complete communication ecosystem, composed of multiple channels that should be used wisely, each channel having its own specificities.
- There are some guidelines to follow: CSAs shall not develop their own social channels, unlike RIAs, to avoid the dilution of the brand impact in the long term.
- A content strategy is essential to develop an effective communication plan. This strategy is closely linked to the principles of storytelling, which makes it possible to transform raw information into captivating stories.

Storytelling made simple

The NGI4ALL classical story pattern

A beginning (the context)

- Who: "NGI initiative"
- What: "Attending the 4YFN conference"
- When: "February, 'Last week'"
- Where: "Barcelona, Spain"

A middle (the drama)

- Dynamic NGI presence with a booth, several different workshops, NGI Awards ceremony, Open Calls promotion to key audience

An end (the promise, the achievement)

- Successful outreach. Engaging with important target group of SMEs & start-ups. CTA to join the NGI, participate in Open Calls, rewarding NGI excellence (awards)

NGI AWARDS AND ENGAGEMENT @4YFN

March 6, 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

24 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

2 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

14 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

WORKSHOP 1: NGI AS A CATALYST FOR EUROPE

On Day 1, NGI held the workshop: **NGI as a Catalyst for Europe** where the **100+ SMEs** were gathered in more detail. The workshop was introduced by Sara Pineda from NGI and moderated by Sabine Fugère from the European Commission. Participants explained the advantages of the Horizon 2020 catalytic funding.

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FIGURE 4. SESSION 1, STORYTELLING PRINCIPLES

1.4 IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of this training session was quite immediate, in the sense that CSAs and RIAs adopted rules and advice that had been transmitted to them quickly and without restriction. In terms of pedagogy, we retain that carrying out operations in real time (demo principle) is rather effective.

1.5 FOLLOW-UP

Following this training, some subsequent 1-to-1 contacts were established between the NGIO and various projects' partners, particularly on issues related to the NGI channels' content feeding.



1.6 SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The NGI Outreach Office made available, in the next following days, both the presentation and the recording of the webinar. The training materials are available on the NGI drive, the online repository (protected by password) open to all the NGI projects.

Presentation:

<https://drive.ngi.eu/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Training/20190408%20%7C%20Webinar%20%7C%20NGIO%3A%20The%20NGI%20Online%20Communication%20Ecosystem&fileid=7821#pdfviewer>

Video recording:

<https://drive.ngi.eu/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Training/20190408%20%7C%20Webinar%20%7C%20NGIO%3A%20The%20NGI%20Online%20Communication%20Ecosystem&fileid=7821#>



2 TRAINING 2: NEW NGI BRANDING PRESENTATION, GUIDELINES AND ROLL OUT

The second training “NGI Branding presentation, guidelines and roll out” was held in two parts. A first face-to-face presentation took place on the 16th of May 2019 during a meeting of the various NGI participants in Brussels at the EC premises. The presentation has been conducted by Philippe Félix (Tipik) and lasted 30 minutes.

The second more detailed presentation took place three weeks later through the dedicated GoTo Meeting online meeting room, on 5th June 2019. The training has been conducted by Philippe Félix. It lasted 30 minutes and saw the participation of all the projects, with 20 attendees.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this dual presentation / training session were to present the refreshed NGI brand image, explain its objectives, origins and purpose, variants, rules and recommendations for use and its roll-out plan.

2.2 STRUCTURE AND PEDAGOGIC APPROACH

The time available for this presentation was relatively limited. The session was therefore held at a brisk pace, covering the following themes:

- Reminder of the Commission's objectives in creating a strong, consistent & long-lasting brand;
- Explanation of the working method used to develop the creative briefing;
- Presentation of the main data that constituted the creative briefing, namely:
 - Human centred
 - Balance between "digital & analogic"
 - Evolution vs. Revolution
 - Readable and recognisable in any circumstances
 - Open source font (Montserrat)
 - Wide colour range
 - Fashionable
 - Highly modular & responsive
- Explanation of the different deliverables such as the Next Generation Internet logo in long version (explicit), the short version (NGI acronym), the co-branding versions used in particular for the different CSAs and RIAs, the icon versions, and the signature version.



The logo was then presented in a progressive way, by demonstrating the work done on typography and on the colour range. Different versions were presented one-by-one.

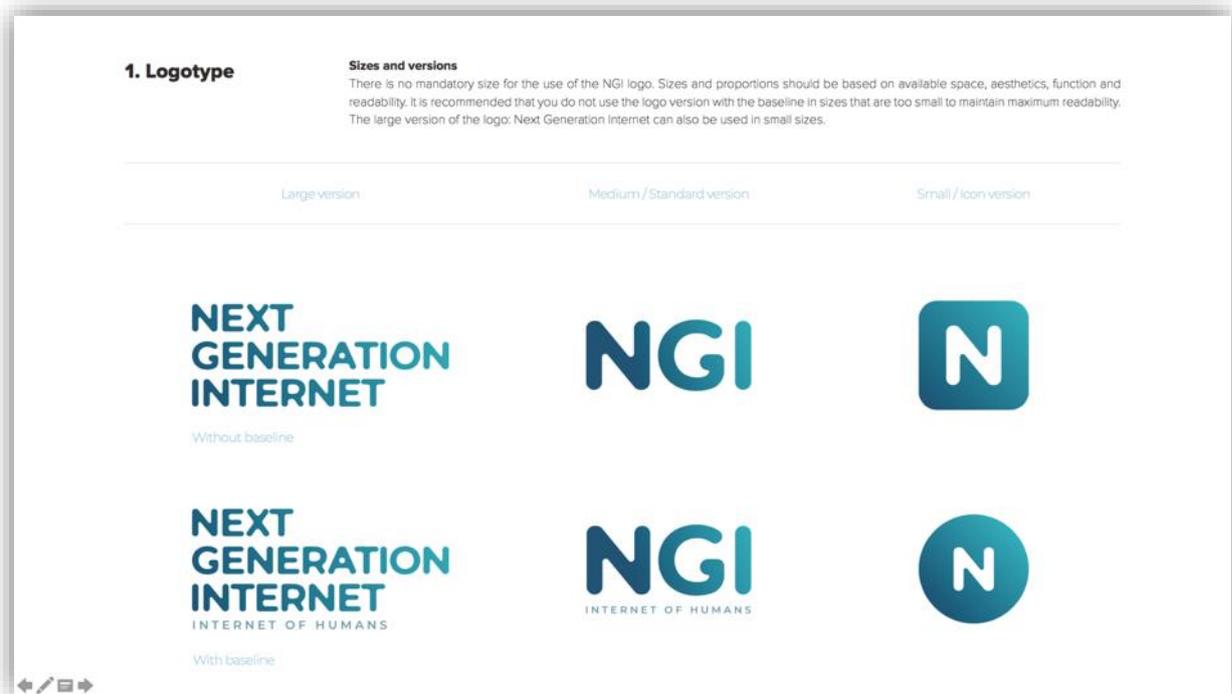


FIGURE 5. SESSION 2, NGI LOGO FLAVOURS

Philippe then presented the temporary brand guidelines that were being drafted at the time, summarising the various chapters of the document:

- Channels and media taken into account by the guidelines;
- The different uses of logos;
- The rules to be adopted in terms of typography;
- The rules to be adopted in terms of colour, and more precisely relating to the customisation of the gradient;
- Information on the sizes to be used and the free spaces to be reserved,;
- A series of Dos and Don'ts examples.

The presentation ended with a summary of the rules to be adopted by all the NGI projects as well as the communication of the roll-out plan.

This was followed by a short Q&A session, during which the majority of participants provided positive feedback on the creative proposal.

The second session, which took place online on 5 June 2019, was a new presentation of the final version of the NGI Brand Guidelines, which were approved by the Commission.

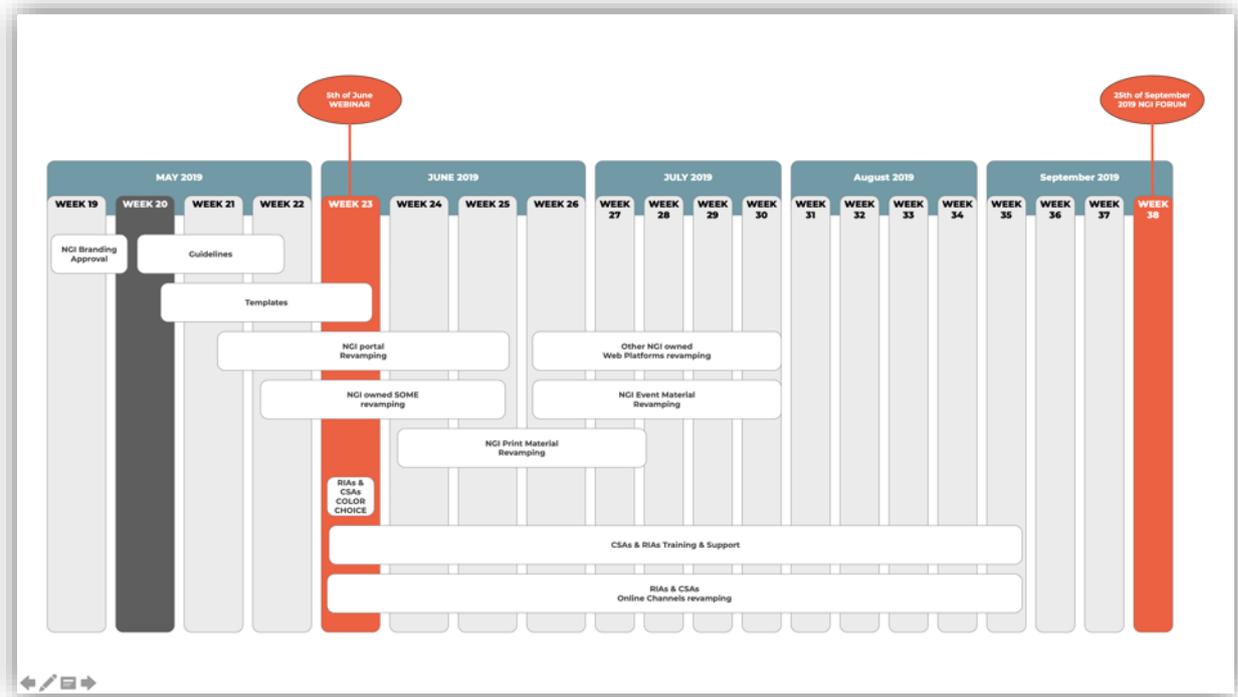


FIGURE 6. SESSION 2, ROLL-OUT PLAN

2.3 KEY MESSAGES

Throughout the entire NGI re-branding activity, as well as during the presentations of the final deliverables, we always kept the same language and advanced the same key messages:

- The long-term development of a strong brand is based, among other things, on a simple, pure, recognisable creation in line with the brand's values.
- This brand image (logo, colours...) must be used in an absolutely systematic way, according to precise rules and adapted to the different situations of use (channels, media, supports, contexts...)
- In the case of NGI, we have developed a solution that is both robust AND flexible, since it is possible (and even mandatory) for CSAs and RIAs to develop their own brand based on a common approach.

2.4 IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of the presentations and training that were given was immediately clear: despite some initial and very limited reluctance, all stakeholders adopted the proposed brand image, appropriated their own colours, and adapted all their communication channels. This deployment was fast, almost seamless, and the entire NGI communication ecosystem was rebranded on time (by September 2019).

2.5 FOLLOW-UP

The NGI Outreach Office has responded to all specific requests that have been made about the NGI brand guidelines, even going so far as to provide some graphic services for organisations that did not have internal resources.

2.6 SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The NGI Outreach Office made available, in the next following days, both the presentation and the recording of the webinar. The training materials are available on the NGI drive, the online repository (protected by password) open to all the NGI projects.

Presentation (Brussels, 16th of June 2019):

https://drive.ngi.eu/remote.php/webdav/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Training/20190516%20F2F%20Training%2C%20NGI%20Brand%20Guidelines/NGI%20Branding%20Presentation_20190516B_PhF.pptx

Final NGI Brand guidelines:

https://drive.ngi.eu/remote.php/webdav/NGI%20Brand%20Guidelines/NGI2.0_Brand%20guidelines_20190605_V1.0.pdf

Video recording: since this training has been held face-to-face and afterwards during a standard NGI COMMS Call, it has not been recorded.



3 TRAINING 3: HOW TO TELL YOUR NGI STORY

The third training “How to tell your NGI story” was carried out, through the dedicated GoTo Meeting online meeting room, on 12th September 2019. It has been conducted by Katherine Anderson (Martel) and Philippe Félix (Tipik). The training lasted one hour and saw the participation of 15 attendees from the following projects: Ledger, Think Nexus, NGI4ALL, TETRA, NGI TRUST, NGIO.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this training session can be summarised as follows:

- Define and demonstrate what a story is, compared to unstructured raw information;
- Give the origins of storytelling, and use some examples that demonstrate its effectiveness;
- Establish the link between storytelling and content strategy;
- Share with the participants the basic rules that should be adopted and respected to build a good story;
- By a relevant example related to an NGI project, demonstrate that these theoretical aspects have a real impact on the quality of a story;
- Presentation of the two current NGI documents that provide the key elements of the NGI story (NGI Position paper and NGI Brochure);
- Demonstrate by example how it is possible, according to the principle of the abstraction scale, to move from conceptual information to concrete and more impactful information.
- Remind the main guidelines of NGI's communication strategy;
- Motivate participants to identify and provide the NGI Outreach Office with concrete stories about their own projects.

3.2 STRUCTURE AND PEDAGOGIC APPROACH

This third training session was clearly - or was at least supposed to be - much more engaging than previous ones.

Since the subject of the presentation was "**Storytelling**", it seemed normal to the trainers that the presentation should unfold itself as a story. A special effort was therefore made to make the session fun, appealing and engaging, while remaining powerful, based on a quite visual approach. Unfortunately, it is difficult in the circumstances of a webinar to assess whether or not the public is receptive to such an approach.

This training has therefore been structured as a book:



Foreword

The objective of the day, which was "Helping you to tell your own NGI stories, based on a common pattern and foundation which is the NGI main story"

The table of contents

Chapter 1: Stories. Why stories?

This first chapter of the training was devoted to defining what a story is, but also and above all to the advantages that characterise a story, namely:

- Cleaning up the mess: packaging a factual and often complex reality as meaningful, understandable and memorable information;
- Creating emotions: adopting codes and an environment that are relevant to the audience;
- Triggering word of mouth: appealing stories are memorable and worth sharing.

The participants were then invited to participate in a game, namely, to recognise a brand on the basis of its slogan. This game met some success, and enabled Philippe to make his transition to the next chapter, based on some basic storytelling recommendations.

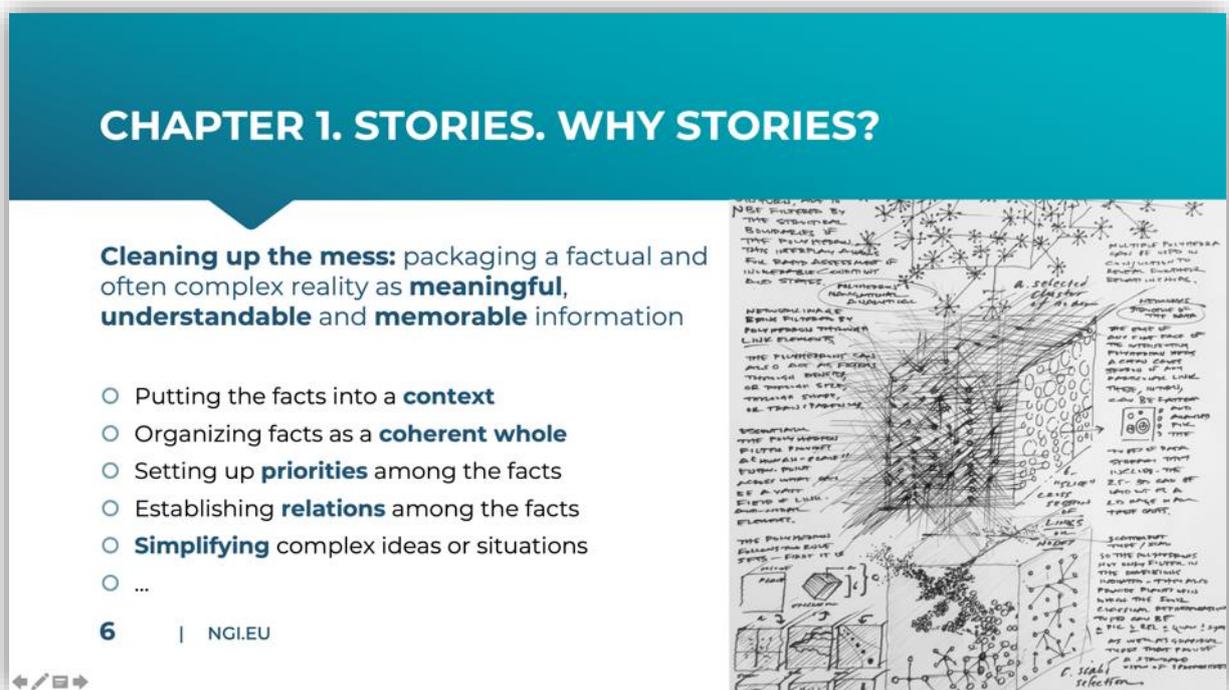


FIGURE 7. SESSION 3, WHY TELLING STORIES

Chapter 2: Storytelling 101

At this stage of the training, we presented, developing of course each point, the different basic rules of a story, which may seem obvious, but which confronted with the reality of writing an article or a press release for example, are not so easy to implement:



- Rule of thumb #1: Every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Rule of thumb #2: Every story presents good guys (or heroes) and bad guys (or pitfalls).
- Rule of thumb #3: Every story includes a quest, a promise, a holy grail.
- Rule of thumb #4: Every story includes a drama, which is the way, from a starting point, good guys achieve their quest despite bad guys and pitfalls.
- Rule #5: Every story exploits the abstraction ladder principle. (It allows for a back and forth between conceptual and concrete aspects of the story.)

We also tackled some essential ingredients for the press:

- Key facts
- Key figures
- Quotes
- Visuals
- and one indispensable “diamond” which is the **hook** that can convince journalists to use an NGI story and publish their own story.

We concluded this chapter by presenting a web page (a story) relating to the *house.coop* project (funded by NGI) as a **mind map** that fully respects all theoretical advice on storytelling previously mentioned.



FIGURE 8. SESSION 3, STORYTELLING 101

Chapter 3: The main NGI story

This part of the training session was based on the NGI story itself. We insisted on the fact that the main NGI story is the foundation for all NGI stories. Its basic elements are as follows:

- The beginning: Internet today (lack of trust, hacks, security flaws, dis/misinformation...)
- The middle: heroes collaborate and develop technology building blocks...
- The end: tomorrow’s Internet (human-centric, secure, safe, democratic, inclusive...)
- The heroes: innovators, researchers, SMEs, start-ups, policy makers...
- The pitfalls: monopolies (GAFAs), non-democratic models...
- The quest: building a Human Internet for a better future.

We then presented the NGI story as it has been used in the NGI position paper and in the NGI brochure, demonstrating how we adopted a storytelling approach to develop both of them.

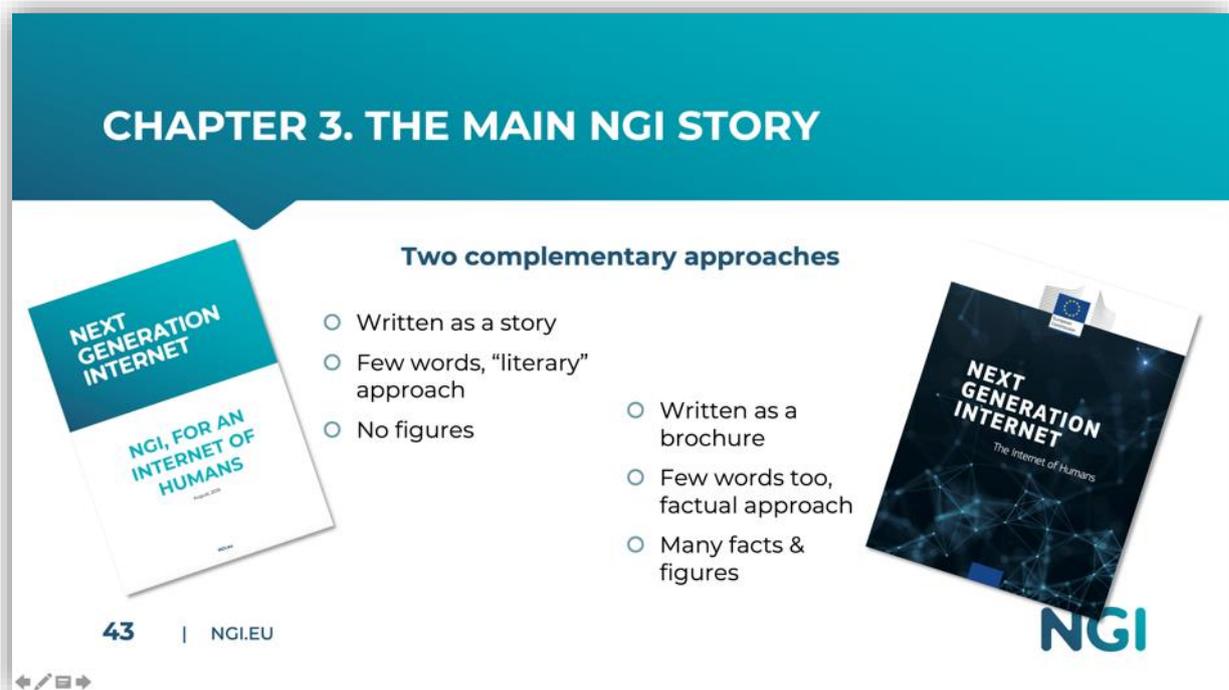


FIGURE 9. SESSION 3, THE NGI MAIN STORY

Chapter 4: NGI key messages in action

Katherine Anderson introduced this crucial chapter, which presented four key NGI messages. Each of them was presented in its "conceptual" form, but also in a much more concrete form. The objective was to show, by example, to the participants of the training session that it is important, even essential, for each story developed, to identify the concepts to be transmitted, but above all to seek concrete information to demonstrate the very nature of these concepts.



As a reminder, the four ideas presented were:

- NGI funds researchers and developers who can do work that would otherwise not be possible;
- NGI supports decentralised technologies such as blockchain or peer to peer to solve problems;
- NGI aims to build the key technology blocks of a human-centric Internet;
- Through advanced technologies, new decentralised business and social models will ensure secure and trustworthy access for all.

Chapter 5: Our editorial strategy at a glance

Philippe took over for this last chapter of the training during which the key elements of NGI's editorial strategy were recalled:

- Communication objectives;
- The main target audiences;
- The available communication channels;
- The editorial schedule for the coming months.



CHAPTER 5. OUR EDITORIAL STRATEGY (REMINDER)

Main Communication Objectives

- **Awareness, popularity and recognition**
 - Reflecting and promoting "Internet of humans" core values
 - Creating a community for a human Internet
- **Engagement and interaction**
 - Engaging new stakeholders (more and new participants to the open calls and NGI calls)
 - Defragmenting and connecting the community
- **Knowledge transfer**
 - Promoting new functionalities, services, applications and technologies
 - Linking long-term research with applied research and innovation

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FIGURE 10. SESSION 3, THE NGI EDITORIAL STRATEGY

Epilogue: Special requests, questions & answers

We closed this session with some specific requests and answers to the questions asked.

3.3 KEY MESSAGES

The main messages that were delivered during this presentation are quite numerous. The main point to remember for participants was that it is not only **desirable** but also most of the time **relatively easy** to transform the reality of their projects into stories. This "packaging" of raw information (facts, data), in terms of structure, style and narrative elements, makes it possible to create pieces of information that are easier to understand, remember and share.

However, the application of a number of narrative principles is not sufficient to make information visible, particularly to the press. It is always necessary to identify and promote a "diamond", a "pearl" (breaking / exclusive news, remarkable achievement, exceptional event), which is one of the main challenges for NGI stakeholders in terms of communication with the general public in particular.

3.4 IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of this training is, in our opinion, not yet tangible. Indeed, at the moment, the first NGI stories are being produced, and we do not yet know their impact to the external audience. But we know that the message is gradually getting through to all CSAs and RIAs, and that major efforts are being made to make the NGI concept much more concrete to our communication targets.

3.5 FOLLOW-UP

The editorial team of the NGI Outreach Office, and more particularly Katherine Anderson, is in regular contact with the other CSAs and RIAs to identify and structure together the most relevant and effective stories, especially through the "NGI Blog" which features the innovators' background stories, achievements and the impact of the NGI funding on their projects.

3.6 SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The NGI Outreach Office made available, in the next following days, both the presentation and the recording of the webinar. The training materials are available on the NGI drive, the online repository (protected by password) open to all the NGI projects.



Presentation:

https://drive.ngi.eu/remote.php/webdav/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Training/20190912%20Webinar%20NGI%20Storytelling/NGI_Storytelling%20Webinar_20190912.pdf

Video

recording:

https://drive.ngi.eu/remote.php/webdav/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Training/20190912%20Webinar%20NGI%20Storytelling/NGI_StoryTelling_Webinar_12Setp2019.mp4



4 TRAINING 4: HOW TO ENGAGE OUR AUDIENCE ON THE NGI SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The fourth training “How to engage our audience on the NGI Social Media Channels” was carried out, through the dedicated GoTo Meeting online meeting room, on 10th of December 2019. It has been conducted by Philippe Félix (Tipik), Pierre-Yves Leveaux (Tipik) and Katherine Anderson (Martel). The training lasted 80 minutes and saw the participation of 24 people from the following projects: Ledger, Think Nexus, NGI4ALL, TETRA, NGI TRUST, NGIO and the newly launched project, DAPSI.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this fourth communication training were as follows:

- Share a clear and common definition of what engagement on social channels is;
- Demonstrate the importance of this level of commitment in terms of community building;
- Share a series of statistics to evaluate the current performance of the different NGI channels;
- Review the current situation in terms of audience and engagement rate;
- Communicate and explain fifteen ways to increase engagement rate;
- Analyse together a series of top tweets produced by the NGI stakeholders
- Demonstrate the correct way to choose hashtags
- Illustrate these theoretical points with a series of best practices



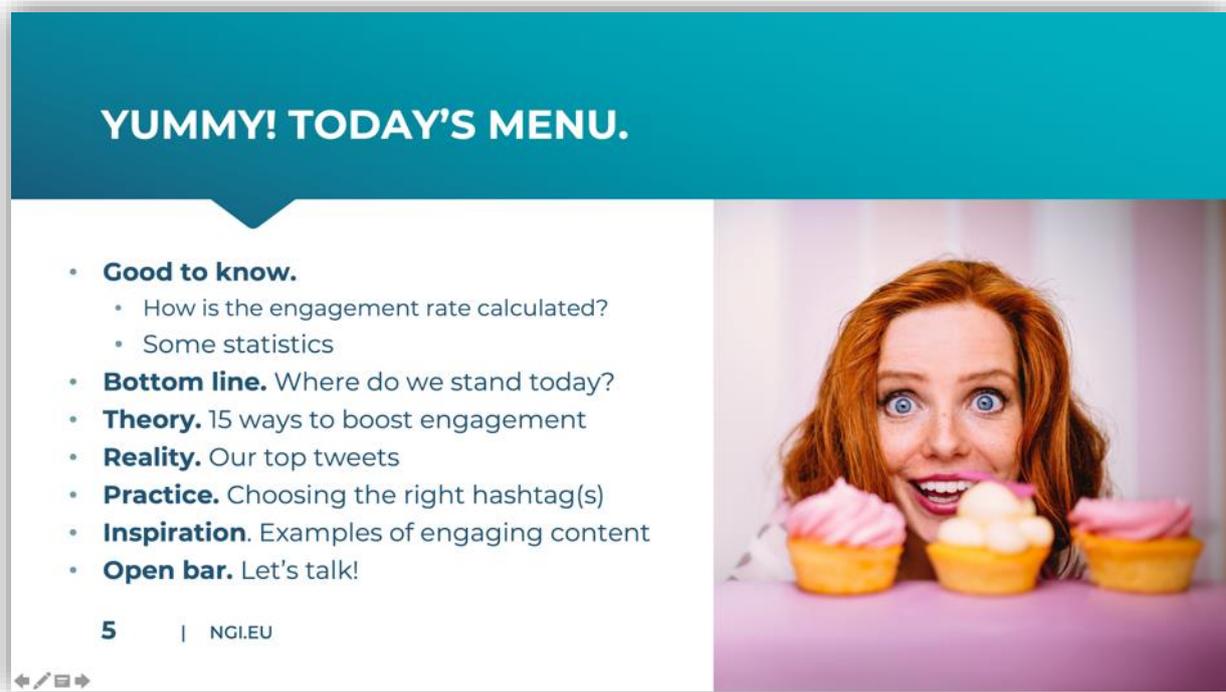


FIGURE 11. SESSION 4, AGENDA

4.2 STRUCTURE AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

As described in the previous pages, the pedagogical approach chosen is based on six steps that allow for a **gradual evolution** from the most general to the most concrete aspects of the addressed topic.

The first part of the training session aimed to define:

- What we mean by engagement rate;
- The importance of this commitment when building and animating a community is at stake;
- The way the engagement rate is calculated;
- And the performance thresholds usually accepted in the field of social media.

In summary, this first section defined the engagement rate as the number of interactions generated by a message: clicks, likes, shares, comments. The total of these interactions is compared to the number of impressions of the message. The percentage is the engagement rate.

The second part of the session highlighted the current state of play regarding the audience of the various NGI channels, and the engagement rates usually observed. Audiences are still relatively limited, which is not unusual given the specificity of

the topics covered by NGI, but achieving higher engagement rates than they are today is one way to increase this audience.



FIGURE 12. SESSION 4, STATE OF PLAY

The third part of the training was devoted to the theoretical exposure of the 15 best ways to increase the engagement of target audiences, by promoting interaction and encouraging the emergence of conversations with readers. A summary of these methods is presented below in the "key messages" section. Let us simply remember that these methods cover several aspects that are:

- The type of content promoted in a message;
- The tone of voice used to communicate this content or information;
- The visibility that can be given to a message through the appropriate use of well-chosen hashtags and mentions;
- The use of visual elements in addition to purely textual elements;
- The structure and conciseness of the messages disseminated;
- The importance of editorial planning, and in particular the key moments to disseminate information whose lifespan on social channels is extremely short;
- The layout of the contents, that can be particularly improved by the use of Twitter Cards;
- The adoption of certain cultural codes specific to social media, such as memes.

THEORY. 15 WAYS TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT.

Let's focus on Twitter

- **Clicking** your link
- **Favoriting** your tweet
- **Retweeting** your tweet
- **Responding** to your tweet
- **Mentioning you** in a separate tweet

15 | NGI.EU

FIGURE 13. SESSION 4, THEORY

The fourth part of the session was devoted to commenting on best practices (top tweets) created by the NGI Outreach Office but also by the projects themselves.

REALITY. OUR TOP TWEETS.

Provided by Pietro

10:55 AM · Sep 26, 2019 · Buffer

7 Likes

FIGURE 14. SESSION 4, TOP TWEETS



The fifth part of the session was more technical and presented the tools to be used to choose the most effective hashtags.

The sixth part presented concrete examples of messages related to different topics covered by NGI such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain, cybersecurity and human-computer interaction, and demonstrating how the adoption of the theoretical principles presented sooner had real effects on the engagement rate of target audiences.

The session closed with the usual question and answer session.

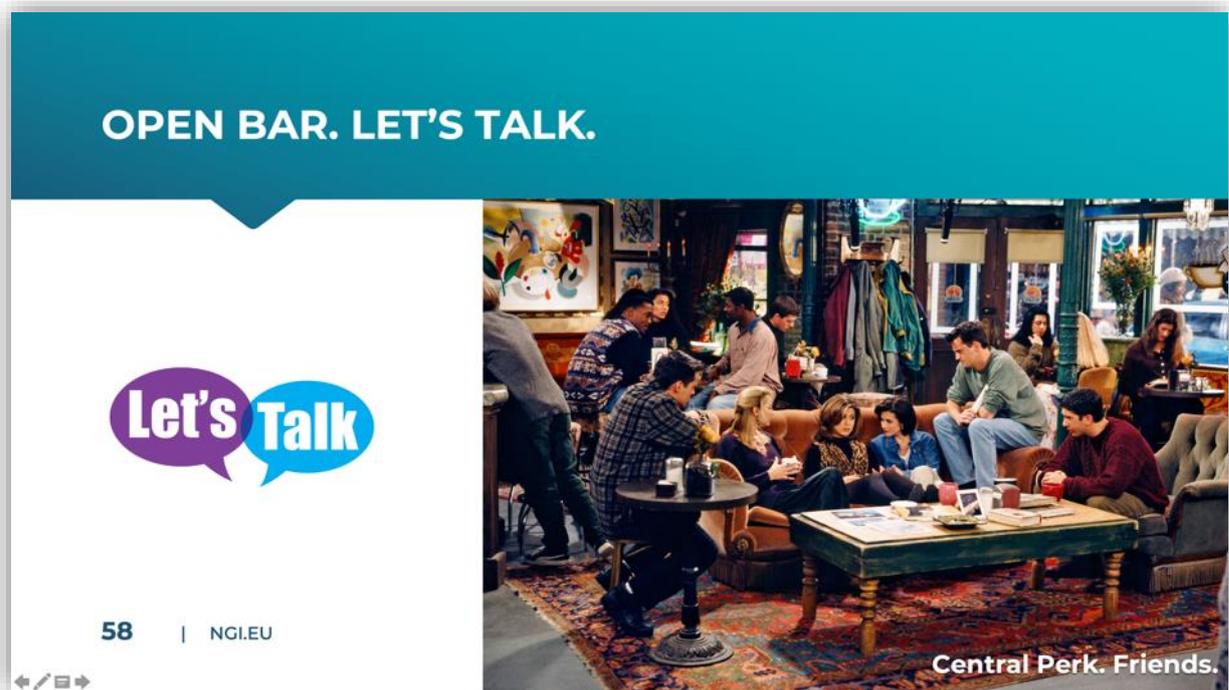


FIGURE 15. SESSION 4, Q&A

4.3 KEY MESSAGES

The main messages delivered during this communication training session can be summarised as follows.

- Current NGI channel engagement rates may appear relatively high compared to generally accepted averages. But this is a false analysis, because the calculation is made on an extremely limited audience basis.
- Messages should be concise.
- It is recommended to use illustrations, images, and videos if these videos are short (30 secs max) and if the images are extremely readable.
- The difference between mentions and hashtags is essential. It is recommended to use two hashtags, no more; this does not include the number of mentions.
- It is essential to choose hashtags with great care, without choosing too generic or too specific hashtags.
- It is recommended to ask direct questions, or to publish clear and engaging calls to action. We also recommend to explicitly request Retweets when justified.
- We recommend adopting a "cool" and humorous tone when possible, to give a more human image to projects.
- We emphasize the importance of tweeting at the right time, when target audiences are supposed to have time to read the tweets.
- We also discussed the questions of Twitter cards and showed how they help to control the readability of messages.
- We also discussed some details that can make a difference, namely the use of emojis, short (and well identified) links, and the creation of memes.
- Finally, we have shown that strong statements contribute enormously to generating commitment.

4.4 IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

As this session was given very recently, it is not possible to assess its impact at this stage, as the shared knowledge has not yet been implemented. In terms of lessons learned, we observe two recurring phenomena.

The first is as follows: a few days before the presentation, the various projects were asked to identify and share with the trainer some "best practices" that deserved to be presented. We only received two contributions. It is therefore confirmed that, with a few exceptions, it is difficult to engage projects in concrete terms when they are asked for additional and/or unexpected work.

On the other hand, on a more positive point, we received several positive appreciations and thanks following this presentation. Several people pointed out the usefulness of the exercise, which confirms that there is a real need of communication coaching.



4.5 FOLLOW-UP

In terms of follow-up, it is planned that NGI's various communication channels will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that recommendations provided during the training session are applied, and to verify the impact of these improvements in terms of audience and engagement rate.

4.6 SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The NGI Outreach Office made the presentation available immediately after the training sessions. The training materials are available on the NGI drive, the online repository (protected by password) open to all the NGI projects.

Presentation:

https://drive.ngi.eu/remote.php/webdav/NGI%20Documents/NGI%20Communication%20Trainings/20191210%20Webinar%20Tips%20and%20Tricks%20to%20engage%20your%20audience/NGI_Engagement%20Webinar_20191210_V1.0_PhF_FINAL.pdf



5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The training sessions conducted so far have covered four very essential topics:

- The first one was about the tools NGI Outreach Office make available to all projects to communicate, and how it is possible to exploit this large and rich communication ecosystem to achieve the NGI's communication objectives.
- The second session focused on the new NGI's brand identity, as it was necessary to share the “what”, “why”, “how” and “when” the new identity needed to be implemented by all the actors involved.
- The third session provided an opportunity to share a number of “tips and tricks” that should make it possible to meet a particular challenge of the NGI initiative, namely to make a political vision tangible in the eyes of the public, and to demonstrate to them - once the first concrete results of the projects will become available - that this vision is relevant.
- The purpose of the fourth session was to enter into the details that make a publication on social networks (mainly Twitter in this case) a success, evaluated on the number of impressions, clicks, likes, comments, reactions, and shares. It was no longer a question of delivering a strategic vision, but a very tactical and operational vision of online communication.

Given the crucial importance of developing, maintaining and strengthening the NGI brand image on a long-term perspective, we plan to regularly reschedule the communication training on the NGI Branding Guidelines for new projects that join the initiative over time. It is also a way to reinforce the importance of NGI branding among the projects already trained and make them aware of the essential adoption and implementation of these guidelines in all the communication products. In concrete terms, we plan, for example, to present this training at the beginning of February 2020, during the face-to-face meeting planned between all the projects' coordinators and the European Commission.

If we look at the average level of participation in these sessions, we can assume that the people in charge of communication within the various CSAs and RIAs have little time, and they struggle to attend these coaching sessions. We also find that the level of interaction in these sessions is relatively low; those who participate and react are always the same.

This is not an original observation, and this situation, as our experience in training shows us, is very common. To strengthen our impact, as it was hopefully the case for the third session, we are currently working on more surprising, interesting and engaging approaches.

We are also convinced that some training courses must be held face-to-face to foster participation and interaction. For reasons of availability, time investment and organisational costs, it will be impossible to organise this type of face-to-face training very frequently as initially planned, but we will leverage on the periodic meetings organized by the EC with the projects' coordinators and the events which gathers most of the projects (see NGI Forum). We think it is reasonable to organise a communication-centred **training/exchange** session each year; these sessions could be organised around a theme that is not imposed but chosen by the



participants according to their communication needs or weaknesses that they would like to address.

For the year 2020, and depending on what we observed during the NGI Forum 2019 for example, we think that it would be interesting to set up a training course focused on **the design and delivery to the public of quality presentations**, the level of presentations by NGI stakeholders being indeed very variable, and in some cases quite low quality.

