

INTERNATIONAL POLICY
COMMUNICATIONS



The world is shrinking

Globalisation presents us with an increasingly complex policy-making environment, in which there are both opportunities and challenges for those governments and organisations wishing to make themselves heard.

Perception, competition and reputation are no longer the exclusive concern of corporations. Where once it was possible to operate in closed circles, modern effective communication means being willing to stand up and be judged in the court of public opinion.

Today's international agenda

The new superpowers

- The geopolitical balance is shifting as the economies of China, India and others grow and develop.
- Governments and corporations throughout the world will need to assess how they relate to this political and economic resurgence, while forward-thinking organisations from Asia will look to establish and manage their reputation and stakeholder relations in the UK and other key global markets.

International trade

- Does the apparent failure of the WTO Doha Round herald a return to bilateralism and regional trade groupings?
- Individual nations now, more than ever, need to focus on ensuring that they are not left behind by the march of global trade.

The European Union

- The EU's continued Eastward expansion brings new challenges for those countries recently admitted to the EU, those hoping for imminent accession and those for whom EU membership is a more long-term goal.
- For those outside the EU sphere, the question of how to interact with the growing, increasingly disparate but economically mighty European Union is increasingly pertinent.

Our international relations expertise

Hill & Knowlton's International Relations and Policy Communications Practice has a strong track record of working in partnership with its clients to help them develop coherent policy positions and strategies in the face of new challenges, and to devise and deploy the right communications tactics to address these challenges.

The team is able to bring to the fore the considerable and diverse expertise of its members, drawn from a range of backgrounds including diplomacy, political science, the NGO community, party politics, the civil service and career communications specialists. We specialise in understanding the geopolitical context and implications of policy decisions of governments, corporations and international institutions, and advising on how to relate to them.

At Hill & Knowlton we are ready, able and willing to resolve these tough challenges—conquering difficult audiences, advancing social agendas, building and defending reputations, facilitating change and resolving conflict. Effective strategic communication is the key to reaching out to audiences and stakeholders, to improving reputation and perceptions, and to building a coalition of supporters to protect and further interests within the UK, the EU and beyond.

Our commitment to you is that we will deliver real, measurable outcomes—and will be judged by them.

The Middle East

- As the world becomes increasingly dependent on dwindling fossil fuel resources, the consequent shift in political and economic power will have far-reaching implications for nations and multinational corporations alike.

The West post-Bush and Blair

- With the George W Bush / Tony Blair era drawing to a close, how will the UK and US relate both to each other and to the rest of the world in the coming decade?

Africa's future

- With evolving and changing regional tensions, growing economic prosperity and new thinking in the West on international aid, Africa is at a crossroads.
- Against the backdrop of a potential new source of conflict—access to water—how will Africa's dynamic change, and what challenges will this present?

We seek to identify imaginative solutions and new angles that will meet your political and business objectives. Our team can then help you to build the capacity and expertise to manage the business and political risks presented by societal pressure and institutional expectations. We advise and counsel a broad range of clients on issues from constitutional change to development assistance, from climate change to trade policy.

We believe that accurate and proactive communication on policy commitments, achievements and positions, together with proactive management of challenging issues, forms the backbone of a successful engagement strategy. We take a structured approach to communications, employing well-considered methodologies and devising clear-cut messages to take into account the social, economic and political realities of your environment.

Analysis and Intelligence

- Political research
- Trend-spotting and analysis
- Perceptions audits
- Stakeholder and audience mapping
- Risk assessment

Advice and Counsel

- Strategic planning and policy development
- Thought-leadership and positioning
- Event management
- Coalition-building

Strategic Communications

- Message and toolkit development
- Capacity-building, coaching and training
- Development and production of collateral material
- Crisis preparedness and issue management
- Opinion-former engagement
- Media relations
- Lobbying, campaigning and contact-building

Political change

Since November 2003, we have been working with the government of the Maldives to develop and deploy a modern communications structure, alongside a comprehensive programme of constitutional reform. As a developing country, with strong economic and environmental credentials, the Maldives were understandably concerned that negative international perceptions would negatively impact their economic and social growth—a concern heightened following the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

From the findings of a comprehensive perceptions audit, including face-to-face interviews with over 50 stakeholders including government ministers, opposition politicians, journalists, NGOs and foreign governments, we developed an initial 2 year strategy to help the Maldives communicate more effectively and transparently with the outside world. More importantly, we identified a number of changes to be introduced as part of a major constitutional reform programme.

So far, Hill & Knowlton have helped to:

- Develop and structure a ground breaking 'Strategic Communications Unit' based out of the President's office;
- Identify and train the first ever 'Director of Communication' for the Government of the Maldives;
- Facilitate dialogue between Amnesty International and the Government of the Maldives, focusing specifically on the Government's new and independent Human Rights Commission;
- Help and advise the government on the announcement and implementation of the most comprehensive set of constitutional reforms ever put forward in Maldivian history, including the separation of powers, the introduction of a multi-party system, and the adoption of international human rights standards

Stakeholder communication

The US was considering legislation to ban 'conflict diamonds' and in the UK, NGOs were lobbying to outlaw the sale of all diamonds that could not be certified 'conflict-free'. The Debswana Diamond Company hoped to build awareness and support for clean, legitimate diamonds—central to Botswana's economy. Harmful legislation would effectively cripple Botswana's ability to grow and develop.

Educating legislators, NGOs, the media, and the private sector in the critical diamond markets of the US, the UK, Belgium, and Japan, to differentiate Botswana's diamonds from 'conflict diamonds', was the key to ensuring a balanced policy debate.

We crafted a campaign establishing Botswana's diamonds as 'Diamonds for Development', leveraging existing relationships and building new ones to ensure our message reached the right audiences.

'Diamonds for Development' received support from policymakers, media and opinion-formers on three continents, building a policy environment that differentiates between legitimate diamond-producers and those using diamonds to fuel regional conflict.

Capacity building

Our experience has seen us travel to Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas in order to devise and implement tailor-made communications structures. We ensure the right infrastructure is in place, we identify key staff, and carry out training programmes to ensure the longevity of the mechanisms we create.

We undertake regular interview training and messaging workshops for those in media-facing roles, covering topics from basic interview techniques to complex media management sessions, from the development of reactive messages to the construction of proactive issue and crisis management strategies.

From small organisations to large governments, each client receives a bespoke capacity-building solution, fine-tuned to fit their needs—ensuring that the new structures of today continue to serve the changing communications needs of tomorrow.

THE TEAM



Tim Fallon

Tim Fallon is Managing Director of the Public Affairs practice, and Head of Corporate Affairs, for Hill & Knowlton in London. He provides strategic communications advice to governments including the Maldives, Uganda, Pakistan and Dubai. He has worked with high profile FTSE 100 companies and key figures in the UK government, including as Events Manager for Tony Blair during the 1997 election campaign.



James Barbour

James Barbour is a Managing Consultant in the Public Affairs practice for Hill & Knowlton in London, and heads the International Relations and Policy Communications practice. He has a background in government and crisis communications, international relations and trade policy and works on governmental and private sector clients across the globe, devising and implementing communications strategies and policy initiatives.



Ben Bladon

Ben Bladon is a Consultant in the Public Affairs Practice for Hill & Knowlton in London, focusing on the international relations and financial services sectors. He has spent five years in Brussels at the European Commission, the European Parliament and at Hill & Knowlton's Brussels office, and brings with him a thorough and in-depth knowledge of the European Union, its politics and policymaking processes.



Linda Griffin

Linda Griffin is a Consultant in the Public Affairs Practice for Hill & Knowlton in London, focusing on international relations and food/health sectors. She was formerly a researcher at the Foreign Policy Centre, where she established the Centre's China and Globalisation Programme, and lobbied the UK government on EU matters. She speaks Mandarin and is co-author of two text books for Chinese students of English.



Marcus Beltran

Marcus Beltran is a Client Executive in the Public Affairs Practice for Hill & Knowlton London, focusing on the international relations, energy and gaming sectors. His prior experience spans the Institute for Public Policy Research, the Scottish Executive and an Edinburgh-based tax reform NGO. He has also worked for the Canadian Embassy in Vienna, for an independent radio station and as a Researcher at the Home Office.

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