

Know more, conceive better, achieve greater things: Pithy concepts are the basis of any effective implementation. In simple steps, from mandate through to evaluation, this working tool describes the "concept" craft with specific tips, examples and methods.

The new Concept Recipe®

The 10 steps to the ideal concept.
With tools, methods and examples.

Works in an overarching way for overall communication, as a partial concept for each discipline, or as an action paper for channels and projects.



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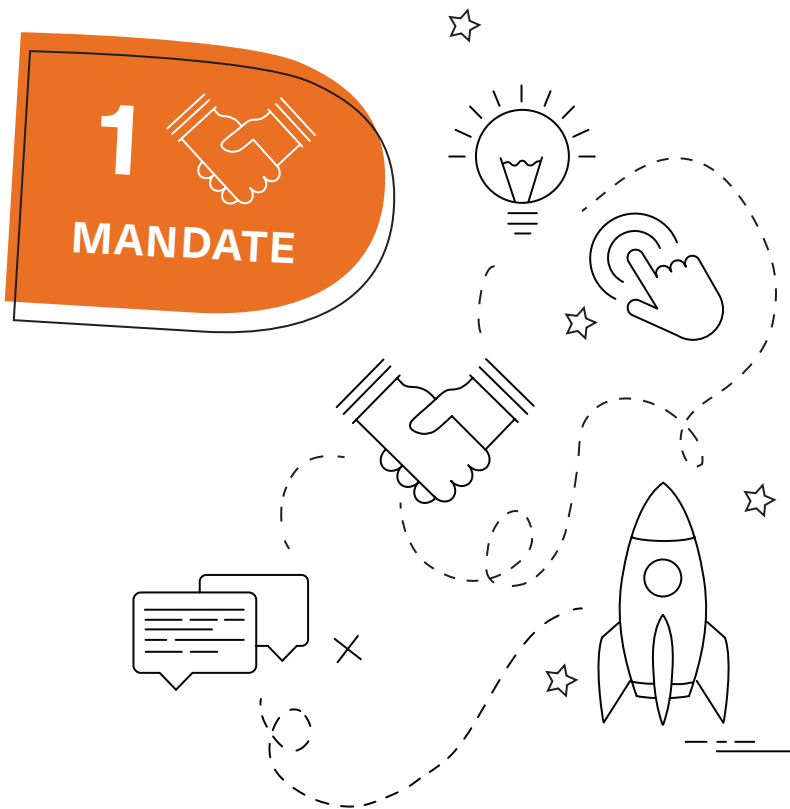


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The new Concept Recipe[®]

by Bernet Relations

Visualize a common objective. A careful start clarifies the mandate.



Methods and tools

The new Concept Recipe contains a box with methods and tools for each step. With tried-and-tested, classic and innovative approaches. As support and inspiration. For experimentation and further development.

Apposite initial questions and “Columbo”

1. Where does the greatest challenge lie?
Where is the “sticking point”?
2. What will we achieve and when?
Can objectives be prioritized, quantified?
3. Where does the client see the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?
4. What resources are available?
5. Who decides, implements, and provides background support?
6. Are there preconceived ideas, taboos, prioritized stakeholders?
7. What is the prehistory? Are there any previous experiences?
How was the feedback?

We have the mandate explained to us in detail. The interaction involved in exchange throws up new perspectives and creative approaches. Getting into the mindset of the theme and truly scrutinizing it yields clear answers and priorities – the key basis for concept and implementation.

Are you familiar with the “Columbo” technique? The crafty cult TV detective drops the key detail right at the end of the discussion – just as he is leaving. We should follow Columbo’s lead, having the courage to properly enquire – even when it comes to delicate issues.

Start without misunderstandings

A succinct, written confirmation of the objectives, resources and timing delivers clarity for the first steps. In your own words, condensed, brief, to the point. Once the client agrees, we can then move on to the concept work proper.

Everyone should be “in the know”

We begin the document with the essence of the mandate. Why was the concept written? Who contributed, what kind of process was involved? We answer this question in an introductory way in the table of contents, thus paving the way forward for the reader.

Example

The Concept Recipe delivers practical tips for the efficient planning of communication projects. This edition is the completely revised and developed new version of the original edition of 2007. Tips on methods and possible tools supplement tried-and-tested content.

Listen, understand, involve. People who are listened to will help with implementation.



Methods and tools

c = classic, i = innovative

AEIOU observation ⁱ

Data analysis ^{c,i}

Desk research ^{c,i}

Empathy map ⁱ

(Expert) interviews ^{c,i}

Focus groups ^{c,i}

Framing ⁱ

Mash up ⁱ

Positioning cross ^c

Role play ^{c,i}

SWOT ^c

System mapping ⁱ

Stakeholder map ^{c,i}

Why-how laddering ⁱ

Key people at the table

We involve the relevant decision-makers and ambassadors at an early stage, including when fleshing out the mandate and undertaking analysis. These key people should be at the table when workshops or surveys are held. For example: No overarching communication concepts without the CEO, no action paper on opening a site without a senior HR figure.

Sun and clouds – SWOT

The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – or SWOT for short – provides an overview of the decisive points and questions. We look at the organization first of all: What factors will support the search for a solution, what factors represent potential stumbling blocks? And then externally: Where do we perceive opportunities and threats in the market and in the wider environment? How do we prioritize this information?

Transparent, selective, condensed

We talk to the parties involved, gather perspectives, get people on board, hold thoughts up to a mirror, and obtain input. We supplement these experiences with market data, surveys, media reports – thereby gaining a 360° view. A key element is filtering by relevance: What is of greatest importance to our project? When does analysis deteriorate into blah blah blah?

Get the “quintessence” into the summary

The summary brings together the findings and should run to no more than one page. It releases stimuli for the design of strategy and measures. No analysis without a summary. Here we ascertain where the greatest problem lies and where we see the greatest need for action.

Quick poll brings authenticity

If there are insufficient resources for a representative survey, we start off with a flash telephone survey. This involves five to eight clients, journalists or other stakeholders and a handful of key qualitative questions. The core statements provide an external perspective for the analysis. Incorporated into the presentation in their original tone, they invigorate the concept.

Example

The analysis shows that

- modern methods are lacking in our existing Concept Recipe,
- the rapid, slick print format is valued by users,
- we can link the print edition to the online world more cleverly.