



The KTH Communications Strategy

Summary

The purpose of KTH communications is not merely for the world to know about the university, KTH also needs to take an active role in shaping the associations that stakeholders have concerning KTH. The objective of this Communications Strategy is to create a more clearly-defined, cohesive and fair image of KTH.

KTH communications must primarily promote the aspects that are currently not really expected of a technical university. Operations are to be characterised by being *dynamic, innovative and action oriented*. In order to strengthen its image it is important that KTH communications convey the consistent personality that underlies these values.

KTH is an open, enquiring environment where its stakeholders will always feel welcome. KTH offers a dynamic environment which generates inspiration to innovation and development. KTH is driven by its passion to improve things and works to make the world we live in a better place.

The overall message is that KTH is driven by the will to create a better future; for individuals, for companies and for society generally. Communications must demonstrate that KTH is working to create a brighter tomorrow by developing smart solutions to today's challenges. This is the primary KTH message:

A Brighter Tomorrow

This Communications Strategy also describes the three primary principles for how KTH is to generate increased interest in its operations and create stronger confidence in KTH:

1. *Build on existing relationships.* Existing KTH partners form the best communications channel available. By utilising the confidence capital already built up in existing relationships, it becomes easier to establish relationships with others who currently have no contact with us. This assumes that KTH must become better at maintaining and promoting relationships that already exist.
2. *Create stars who convey the KTH message and personality.* KTH needs a larger number of individuals who can represent its operations. Creating stars does not entail promoting a small number of individuals who are already famous, it means creating the preconditions for the spotlight to be trained on more people. More stars will help to generate interest, create identification and build confidence.
3. *Enable everyone at KTH to strengthen its brand.* The KTH image is primarily conveyed in the day-to-day contacts that KTH employees enjoy with stakeholders. It is not possible to control what each and every KTH employee does and says, but we should make it as easy as possible for employees to assume the role of KTH ambassadors.

Background and aim

The work with the KTH Communications Strategy was initiated by the President and the Board in the spring of 2010. The background to the establishment of this strategy consists of the changes that have occurred, and are still occurring, in the university's environment which has made it increasingly important to be able to disseminate KTH's advantages in a more clearly-defined fashion. This has proved necessary during major, multidisciplinary research funding applications when KTH must identify co-financiers from business/industry, and also when recruiting students. The aim of this project has consequently been to develop a cohesive strategy in order to be able to communicate KTH benefits more clearly and to show how KTH differs from other similar operations both in Sweden and internationally.

KTH communications are not merely aimed at making the university known to the world. They are also intended to strengthen the KTH brand by influencing the associations and perceptions that others have about KTH. A brand is usually defined as the thoughts and associations that people have as regards a phenomenon or a name. Currently the KTH image is somewhat fragmented and often not actually in line with how the operations are regarded by the people in the university itself. In order to strengthen the KTH brand, the university needs to take a more active role in shaping people's associations. The long-term objective of this Communications Strategy is, consequently, to create a clearer, more cohesive and fairer image of KTH with its various stakeholders.

One key to the successful strengthening of the KTH brand is consistence and long-term thinking. In order to increase clarity, KTH must speak with one voice. There must be a clear message about what KTH is so that it will become easier for others to understand what KTH is able to contribute. On a practical level, consequently, the Communications Strategy will help to create improved clarity in KTH communications, will ensure that they are consistent, and will facilitate that all the consecutive campaigns and individual inputs aimed at different stakeholders contribute to the further strengthening of the KTH brand, both in-house and externally.

What type of image does KTH want to convey? The main emphases are stated in the KTH Strategic Plan for 2009-2012. Other underlying material has also been used for this project, for example the RAE Study, the Industrial Faculty project and student surveys. In addition, more than twenty interviews have been carried out with management, professors, researchers and doctoral students at KTH, as well as representatives of the Board. These preparations were carried out by a project group and results have been discussed on a continuous basis with management and a reference groups consisting of KTH professors.

The Communications Strategy is primarily a tool of governance for KTH communications, and will provide assistance in achieving several of the goals defined in the Strategic Plan. It will also function as support for the work of developing and disseminating a long-term vision for KTH.

What is to characterise KTH?

KTH is currently perceived by its stakeholders as a serious, credible technical university, and to a great extent this is also how KTH perceives itself; a central element in its identity. At the same time there are a number of values that could be advantageously linked to the KTH image which are currently not a natural association with a technical university. Consequently it is vital that KTH, to a greater degree, is able to convey such additional values to the world in order to demonstrate the sides of KTH that are not always seen from the outside. There is more to win by conveying what stakeholders do not always know about KTH, rather than merely confirming, once again, the image they already have.

KTH wishes its operations to be characterised by being *dynamic, innovative and action oriented*. These are concepts that will help make what is inside the walls of KTH visible; what the people here represent. By taking this position it will be possible to give KTH communications a clear direction and goals can be formulated concerning how KTH stakeholders are to perceive the university.

There are two different methods for KTH to reinforce these characteristics in its communications; what to bring to the fore concerning operations (*what* we do) but equally important is *how* we do things. The table below shows a summary of the image that KTH wishes to strengthen through its communications.

WHAT?	CHARACTERISTICS	HOW?
International, many contacts, exchanges	Dynamic	Stimulating, open, welcoming
Innovation, new opportunities, entrepreneurship, growth	Innovative	Surprising, creative, exciting, inquisitive
Results, benefits, improvement, excellence	Action-oriented	Goal-oriented, passionate, determined

What does this mean in real life? In the two sections that follow there are more detailed descriptions of how KTH characteristics are to be reflected in what we do and how we do things at KTH.

How to describe *what* we do?

There are many different ways to describe the multi-faceted operations underway at KTH. If too many different descriptions are used, operations will appear to be fragmented and too complicated to comprehend. It will be difficult to understand what we do. When describing operations, KTH must emphasise what they are leading towards. That is where value for others can be created which will increase interest in the university.

KTH is an international research university with an extensive contact network within academia and business/industry and considerable knowledge exchange with other countries. KTH operations lead to discoveries that open up fields so that everyone can use the new opportunities created. KTH teachers and researchers are driven by a will to improve - from the narrow research project to the wider canvas of society. The basis of everything is the action orientation of KTH; KTH *does* things that lead to results and benefits for society. This is what is meant when KTH is characterised as an entrepreneurial university.

How do we do things at KTH?

KTH operations are not that different to those of other technical universities around the world. In order to carve out a clearly-defined identity for KTH, other ways must be identified to show the difference - not only *what* we do. A strong brand has its own personality that makes it stand out, even if what it is offering is not really unique. A clearly-defined personality makes the brand distinctive, as well as more interesting, as it provides people with something to relate to. The difference between how people choose brands and how they choose their friends is smaller than you may think. By making strategic choices concerning channels and expressions of communication that reflect desirable characteristics, and by using a consistent tonality in all KTH communications, the university can build a distinct personality. In the section below a description is given of how stakeholders are to perceive this KTH personality.

KTH operations depend on stimuli from the world around it in order to be able to stay on the cutting edge. As a result KTH must be an open environment where stakeholders always feel welcome. KTH is interested in what others are doing and what others can contribute with. KTH is a dynamic environment full of creative people with a broad scope of knowledge and exciting insights. It is a place for people looking for inspiration for innovation and growth. It is a place full of people who are driven by their passion to improve things, and who work tirelessly and determinedly to make the world we live in a better place.

KTH has many international contacts but retains its roots in Sweden. When KTH people move into international arenas the university is associated with values that are also usually associated with Sweden. This is something to take advantage of. In comparison to foreign technical universities, KTH wishes to appear as more egalitarian and non-hierarchical. KTH is also to be perceived as honest, a university that keeps its promises. KTH must also ensure that it is better organised than its international competitors.

Primary message

There are as many messages to convey about KTH as there are people within its walls. In order to gradually build up recognition and the brand it is necessary to adopt a primary message that summarises what KTH stands for and that will create a framework for all KTH communications. It must be possible to express the value of KTH's existence in a brief, concise manner which can be used as the lowest common denominator for all communications. The primary message must answer the question "What is the first thing that people think about when they hear the name KTH?"

KTH wishes to attract the most eminent talent within each field so it must be able to offer these individuals the best opportunities to develop and improve their career prospects, irrespective of the path they may choose to take. KTH is to function as a springboard to jobs, companies and research. *It must be possible to demonstrate to these talented people that KTH is the best route to a better future.*

KTH already enjoys a considerable number of contacts with business/industry and supplies many companies and organisations with well-educated labour. Companies and organisations face continuous pressure to develop and renew their operations and KTH can help them with this. By being exposed to KTH's research and education, companies increase their potential for development. *Enterprises who are in close contact with KTH are better equipped to meet the future.*

The RAE Study shows that KTH is world leading within a number of research fields which has provided the foundation for the current research platforms. In addition to the fact that these platforms provide KTH with many interesting issues to work with, they also link up to many of humanity's major challenges. *From the wider perspective, results produced by KTH research create a brighter future for society.*

One common denominator for a considerable part of what KTH wishes to achieve is, in fact, a brighter future; for individuals, for enterprises and for society generally. This must be expressed with a core concept that expresses what KTH can contribute with. This is why our primary message is:

A Brighter Tomorrow

This expression communicates that KTH is working actively to bring more light to the future. This expression also communicates that KTH's ambition is to identify smart solutions to tomorrow's challenges. Through being dynamic, innovative and action oriented, KTH will help to create *A Brighter Tomorrow*.

As well as meaning more light, brighter also has another meaning - smarter. Consequently the primary message expresses both our will to contribute to a better tomorrow and a smarter tomorrow.

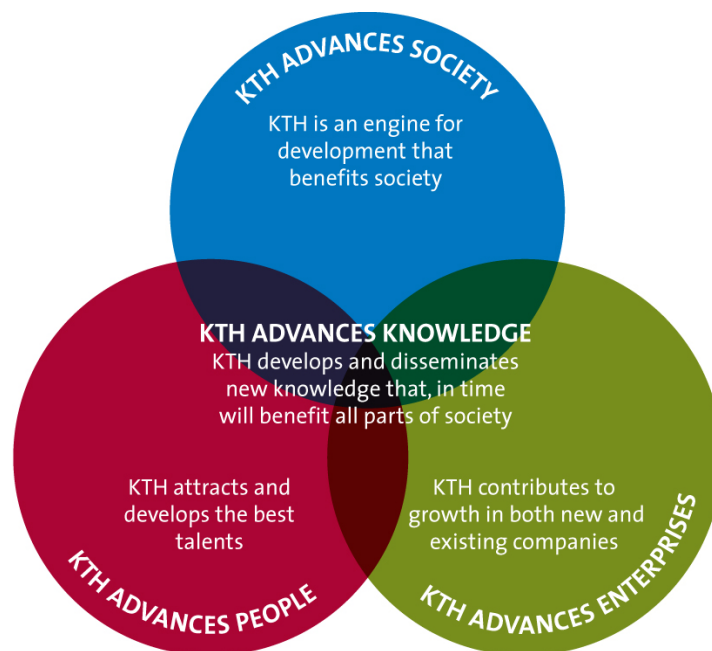
The use of the word "tomorrow" is also a conscious choice. The word "tomorrow" rather than "future" was chosen as KTH's intention is to make things happen as early as tomorrow and not at some vague future date. This is both tangible and future-oriented.

A Brighter Tomorrow provides KTH with the opportunity to represent an optimistic, solution-oriented perspective as well as establishing an arena in which to discuss the importance of research and education for social development. It is used with modesty – KTH does not have all the answers – but together with others KTH intends to be a part of driving developments forward. The primary message *A Brighter Tomorrow* summarises the image that all KTH communications should jointly convey to our stakeholders.

Secondary message

KTH's multi-faceted operations mean that the university needs to build up and maintain relationships with many different stakeholders who each have their own perspective on what KTH does. Everyone is not interested in everything KTH does. It is easy to be tempted to develop purpose-designed messages for each stakeholder; that each one is told what KTH thinks they want to hear. But KTH stakeholders do not live alone, on desert islands. The result of too many different messages will be the dissemination of a vague image of what KTH is and does, consequently KTH must use a small number of targeted secondary messages that reinforce its primary message in various ways.

Stakeholders' interest in KTH operations may be summarised into four themes: new knowledge, benefits for the individual, benefits for companies and benefits for society. Consequently this Communications Strategy also contains four secondary messages that are linked to these themes which all lead to the primary message *A Brighter Tomorrow*. Secondary messages are illustrated below.



The four secondary messages describe *how* KTH contributes to the creation of a brighter future for its stakeholders. Three of these themes deal with specific areas while the fourth is aimed at a broad public and consequently reflects the value of operations on a more general level. The idea is not that these secondary messages are to be conveyed in words, they describe the feelings that are to be generated in KTH stakeholders and what the university's communications must help to provide.

The table below gives a brief summary of the main contents of each secondary message and the stakeholders who are their primary target groups. It also gives some examples of typical themes that may be used to underline the message.

	KTH ADVANCES SOCIETY	KTH ADVANCES KNOWLEDGE	KTH ADVANCES ENTERPRISES	KTH ADVANCES PEOPLE
Which image do we wish to convey?	KTH is an engine for development that benefits society	KTH develops and disseminates new knowledge that, in time will benefit all parts of society	KTH contributes to growth in both new and existing companies	KTH attracts and develops the best talents
Theme	Growth, competitiveness, problem solving, competence supply, employment, welfare	Research, education, competence development, lifelong learning	Entrepreneurship, innovation, development, competitive edge	Many forms of excellence, dynamism, contacts, career, entrepreneurship, research career, new opportunities
Stakeholders	Politicians, opinion-builders, decisionmakers	Science Council, EU, SRA, companies, Ministry of Education	VINNOVA, STEM, companies, private financiers, Ministry of Energy, Enterprise and Communications, investors	Students, researchers, recruiters, alumni

How to disseminate these messages?

The choice of university, workplace or cooperation partner is not made lightly. In order to be able to attract students, researchers and companies KTH must make clear what it has to offer the individual, as well as what it, as an entity, can contribute to society.

Mass communications can help to make KTH better known, but they are seldom sufficient to build up the trust necessary for a student or a researcher to choose KTH ahead of other universities, nor can they assure that funding for research will land at KTH's door. Trust is best built up through personal contacts and relationships.

It is not possible to meet everyone that KTH would like a relationship with personally, but if communications are characterised by a personal tone it becomes easier to generate interest and establish the trust necessary to initiate a dialogue. If communications are regarded as conversations in which two-way communication is the aim, it is possible to move closer to stakeholders without necessarily actually being there in person. In the section below a description is given of the three main principles of how to generate interest and build stronger confidence in KTH.

1. Use existing relationships to build new ones

KTH needs to build up a number of new relationships in a number of new areas with people who have previously had no contact with the university. Of course it is possible to make direct contact with them but it often helps to have someone else make an introduction. By utilising the confidence capital already built up in existing relationships it becomes possible to create new contacts with others. An ex-student with positive experience from KTH will find it easier to convince new students to apply. A company that has benefitted from cooperation has credibility when talking to other prospective company partners.

KTH possesses a good network, but we can become better at maintaining and cultivating our relationships. Not only making contact when we need help also ensuring to meet on other occasions. It must also be ensured that existing contacts have something to gain from maintaining the relationship with us. By maintaining and cultivating existing contacts we will improve our prospects for making contact with a lot of other people too.

Those who KTH is most interested in meeting may not see any real reason to meet KTH, but by creating meeting places and stakeholder arenas are created where everyone can meet each other then the university will receive help with introductions that can lead to new relationships.

2. Create stars that convey the KTH message and personality

The most interesting aspect of KTH is the people in it. Employees and students at KTH are the most important carriers of the KTH brand. It is important to present a broader picture of KTH by showing more of the people who are linked to KTH. By personifying KTH, interest is awoken, identification is created and confidence built up. With the help of passionate people who have a story to tell about KTH the dynamism, innovation and action orientation that is found here can be demonstrated. Excellence comes in many guises and it is necessary to use a greater number of people to represent KTH and its operations. We need to build more stars!

Creating stars does not mean placing the spotlight on a few individuals who are already well known, it means creating the preconditions for more spotlights on more people. The more the merrier. At KTH there are many people doing exciting, interesting things - but there are far too few people who know about them. They must be helped to become visible.

Some people possess the expertise and experience that makes them suitable KTH representatives in contexts when a broader public is the target group. Others are experts within very specific fields which are perhaps not touched on that often, but when these subjects do come up it must be a natural choice to consult them. This is how to demonstrate both the breadth and the depth that is available at KTH, and to show the people who together create *A Brighter Tomorrow*.

Stars may be divided into five main categories that fulfil different aims:

Star researchers: individuals who, through their personalities and their expertise, are able to increase interest in KTH research and show the benefits for society.

Star teachers: individuals linked to KTH who, through their teaching abilities, inspire others.

Star students: individuals who, during their period of study, demonstrate their social ability, subject competence or excellent result levels via, for example, international experience.

Star administrators: individuals who, in an innovative manner, work to make KTH a better springboard for students, researchers and companies.

Star companies: companies who are part of a relationship with KTH that may be used to demonstrate the potential in cooperation with KTH.

Star alumni: individuals who have been students or staff at KTH who can illustrate the opportunities that KTH opens up and can inspire others to apply to the university.

3. Make it easy for everyone at KTH to strengthen the brand

The KTH image is primarily conveyed in the daily contacts that KTH employees undertake with the various stakeholders. Consequently it is extremely advantageous if everyone at KTH conveys the same image. It is not possible to control what every KTH employee does and says but it is possible to make it easy to help build up the KTH brand. Employees must find it easy to take on the role of KTH ambassadors, the brand needs to become a little more pret-a-porter!

KTH must offer support that facilitates for employees to convey their own content, at the same time as they help to reinforce the image of a dynamic, innovative and resolute KTH. It is vital to emphasise that this still concerns free choice, but if it saves employees work that is perceived as complicated and not really part of their own area, then this support will be welcomed. They can do as they wish but it should be simpler to use the support that is already in place.

Communications Office responsibilities

All KTH employees play a vital role in the work of strengthening the KTH brand. The Communications Office has an important assignment in making it easy for every employee to contribute to this goal. Below is a description of the central tasks of the Communications Division as concerns the implementation of this Communications Strategy.

Prioritise among the various activities

The Communications Office has an important task in that it must prioritise among the many proposals for communicative activities that are generated at KTH. This concerns ensuring the quality and relevance of these communications, consequently prioritisation must be carried out by a specialist in the subject who has access to the overall picture.

Coordinate

All KTH employees are responsible for maintaining and developing KTH relationships. However in order to ensure that there is a theme evident throughout all these relationships, the Communications Office must coordinate the various meeting arenas and activities.

Present an outside perspective

The Communications Office bears the responsibility for presenting an outside perspective. There must be a clearly-visible value for stakeholders in all activities, not merely a value for KTH.

Provide support to build up the KTH brand

There are many ways to support KTH employees in their role as KTH ambassadors. This may mean developing template texts for press releases, programme descriptions or conference invitations, good advice for press contacts or in their efforts to secure company cooperation partners. This may consist of offering pre-printed materials such as name badges, signs, maps and other documents that can be rapidly retrieved from a depot as the need arises.

As the image of KTH becomes more clearly-defined, more employees will experience the fact that associations to KTH can strengthen their own role and their own message. Eventually more will feel the need to use the support available and so build up their own, and the KTH, brand.

Inventory and mapping of networks

All KTH employees possess their own contact network in the world around the university. Taken together all these relationships form an extremely valuable asset that reaches all over the world. In practice it is this network that is the most important KTH communications channel and the Communications Office is responsible for ensuring that it can be used in a systematic manner.

Identify the stars

In order to be able to create stars, the Communications Office must help to identify individuals who possess expertise within subjects and themes that occur in the social debate. The Communications Office must be able to forward incoming questions to the correct person, as well as identifying occasions and contexts in which these stars can be afforded the space to disseminate their messages.

Support the stars

There is no need to force anyone who is unwilling to become a KTH star, but in order to get as many volunteers as possible the Communications Office needs to offer good support. This may concern everything from a little encouragement to media training and courses in presentation techniques, to practical support in the formulation and packaging of knowledge so that it may be understood by a broader public.

A resource when planning activities

It is essential that representatives of the Communication Office are included as early as possible in the planning of a communications activity. This representative is to function as a resource that contributes ideas, expertise and experience concerning how communications may be designed in order to strengthen the desired KTH image.

Develop KTH meeting arenas

In order to be able to create unexpected and surprising encounters that are sufficiently interesting for others to talk about, KTH needs to develop and coordinate existing contact arenas so that more KTH stakeholders are able to gain from meeting each other.

Ask the right questions

The Communications Office must ask questions as to how well proposed activities live up to the expected degree of being dynamic, innovative and action oriented. If they do not then improvements must be considered, or even an evaluation of whether the activity should be carried out at all.