

16th October 2023

Communications Policy

1) Introduction

The British Dance Council recognises that consistent, effective and appropriate communications – both external and internal – are essential for the BDC to achieve its aims, objectives and policies, and to its credibility as a publicly accountable organisation. This document outlines the principles for managing Communications, including a summary of key strands of communications, and the responsibilities of staff in relation to communications.

2) Scope

The Board of Directors, members of Executive and staff should be familiar with this Policy, and membership should be aware of it. The aim of the Communications Policy is to reduce the risk to the BDC of damaging or ineffective communication, and to ensure that all staff are aware of how communications are best conducted externally and internally, and who has responsibility for which aspects.

3) Definitions

External Communications include all the messages and information that the BDC presents to different audiences, whether directly (through telephone calls, letters, e-mails, newsletters, marketing materials, social media channels, online and press releases) or indirectly through the media and word of mouth. They also include the messages and information given to visitors at the BDC, as well as to other stakeholders..

Internal Communications include all the messages and information (whether verbal or written) shared within the BDC Office, Meetings, Executive and principally between members of staff. Internal Communications include the information given to those working in associated companies.

4) Legal Basis

The BDC's responsibilities in relation to Communications stem from the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2005).

5) Statement of Principles

The objective of the Communications Policy is to help the BDC achieve a better understanding of what it offers to the public and its membership to ensure that the BDC can work as efficiently and effectively as possible, and to:

- improve the clarity with which the values and identity of the BDC
- promote transparent and open communication
- provide clear and well judged information at the most appropriate level of detail in relation to the needs of the reader or user

Principles for managing External Communications

Corporate and marketing communications should be considered as part of the wider field of advocacy in which the BDC wishes to:

- distribute high-quality information about its plans, projects and programmes of activity, ensuring that those who are influential for the future support of the BDC are well informed
- reach out to target audiences, to those in partner organisations and potential participants
- offer background and corporate information – principally through the website - as a reference source
- ensure that the visual identity of the BDC, as shown through all its print and digital communications, is clear, coherent and expresses the BDC's key values
- have a beneficial dialogue with its audiences using research, feedback and social media channels to gain insights, answer queries and deliver key messages

Principles for managing Internal Communications

Internal communications are based on active management across the BDC to ensure that:

- staff and directors are informed of the most important information relating to the good management of the BDC
- regular exchanges through e-mail, meetings and telephone calls are thoughtful, respectful, efficient and well disciplined
- an informal exchange of information is encouraged through the staff/directors for creative of ideas and proposals

6) Responsibilities

Directors

- The Chairman is responsible for ensuring that the Directors help to promote the BDC's reputation through consistent external communication.
- All Directors are expected to be familiar with the programmes and activities of the BDC and to refer complex or difficult external questions to the BDC Office.
- The President, with the Vice President as appropriate, is responsible for the overall clarity and coherence of the BDC's external communications.
- The President seeks opportunities for good advocacy in order to promote the interests of the BDC.
- The Presidium works to create an internal culture of open, honest, efficient and transparent communications.

The Board

- ensuring that the BDC offers clear and consistent messages about its objectives and its work
- ensure that all print communication from the BDC (other than publications) including marketing, social media, development, learning and access, hand lists and signage, are of a standard for communication and corporate image.
- promoting effective communications through the media, whether printed or broadcast, and seeking collaboration with appropriate media channels
- ensuring that communication for members within the BDC, and at associated organisations, is appropriate and as clear as possible
- working with the Company Secretary to promote good internal communications
- are responsible for ensuring that information is carefully and appropriately made available to the public, and that the principles of the Freedom of Information Act

BDC Office

- the BDC Office should promote good internal communications by following high standards of clarity and integrity in all aspects
- The BDC office act as the public voice of the BDC and communicate with a variety of audiences via a range of media.
- The BDC Office manages the BDC's brand and uses paid-for and free promotional tools including advertising, print distribution, third party promotions and digital, online and social media channels. The Presidium proactively generates media coverage by identifying stories and news to publicise BDC activity and facilitates media requests, and responds to media enquiries.
- The BDC Office aims to develop an accurate and positive understanding of the BDC's brand and work, and to maintain the BDC's reputation.

Staff

All BDC staff are responsible for maintaining good internal and external communications, for suggesting improvements wherever possible and for reporting breaches of the Policy.

7) Social Media

Members and directors are advised to observe caution when using social media, it is advised for safety as well as up keeping of the reputation of a member and the council.

Consideration should be taken with posts and images. Personal information is advised to be kept private and when operating in a professional capacity social media is used in a positive and constructive manner.

8) Breach of the Policy

Any actions taken by members of the BDC which contravene the Communications Policy will be dealt with by the board of directors. Depending on the severity of the contravention, any external matter will be dealt with at General meetings under complaint procedure, and any internal matter will be reported to the Directors. If in either case it is a matter which threatens the reputation of the BDC, or creates severe disruption, then the BDC's Disciplinary Code will be followed.

9) Review

The Communications Policy will be reviewed every five years as part of the cycle of reviewing BDC policies and procedures. The next review will be in autumn 2025.

10) Date of Approval

This Communications Policy was reviewed approved by the BDC Chairman – June 2020