



AUDIENCE CHECKLIST

This checklist is based on Animal Think Tank's *Audiences Mini Guide* and social science research. Use it as a quick reference guide for crafting communications and planning campaigns. Where possible, test what works with your audience to know if it resonates.

Who's your audience?



- Who's the specific audience you want to reach with this message / campaign?
- Why do you want to focus on them, and not another audience segment?
- What relevant values might they share?
- What relevant behaviours might they share?
- What relevant identities might they share?

Where are they on their journey?



Refer to Animal Think Tank's 'hearts, mindsets and actions' journey model

Hearts – how they feel about other animals

- Apathy – rarely think/care about other animals
- Sympathy – feel sad about their suffering
- Empathy for some – care deeply about certain animals, but not all
- Empathy for all – believe all animals' lives and feelings matter

Mindsets – how they think about the issue

- Pre-contemplation – not aware/resistant; tend to dismiss or ridicule
- Contemplation – starting to question assumptions
- Preparation – actively re-thinking and open to change
- Action – already changing what they think and support
- Commitment – animal freedom is part of their core values

Actions – what they currently do

- No change/status quo
- Reducing some animal use
- Vegetarian/mostly plant-based
- Vegan/fully plant-based
- Active ally/campaigner/donor



What's their north star?

- What everyday values matter most for them in this context? (e.g. care, fairness, family, responsibility, honesty)
- How do they see themselves? And how do they want to be seen by others? (e.g. someone who cares about others, an animal lover, someone who stands up for what's right, who lives in line with their values etc.)

Quick check: Would this message / campaign feel relevant to someone who sees themselves as a caring person but who hasn't thought much about this issue yet?

Map audience's mental models (work with not against them)

Threats

- What harmful things do they believe about other animals and this issue that could be a barrier to engagement?
- What belief does your message challenge? And is this audience ready for that challenge?
- What might trigger defensiveness or rejection? And how could you best navigate it?

Opportunities

- What helpful existing beliefs, values or experiences could your message attach to and build upon?
- What have they not yet considered that might be a place for connection?

Quick check: Does your message connect to something they already accept as true – or are you first asking them to abandon a belief?

Which helpful narratives can you reinforce?

Which 1–2 narratives are best for this audience and campaign?

- Animal Abilities – other animals' emotions, intelligence, relationships
- Values & Morality – what's fair, kind, right for a caring society
- Bigger Us – humans + other animals in a shared community of life
- Social Progress – animal freedom as the next step in a kinder, fairer society

Quick check: Are you clearly reinforcing at least one of these narratives, and not accidentally centring harmful ones or welfare as the vision?

Choosing your approach

Messengers

- Who does this audience trust most as messengers?
- Are you featuring/quoting that kind of voice, or aligning with what they'd say?
- Are you avoiding messengers/voices that this audience is likely to dismiss?

Message

- Does your language feel natural and non-alienating to this audience?
- What imagery will feel compelling to this audience?
- What stories and characters will they find relatable or engaging?
- What aspect of the vision will this audience find most inspiring?

Engagement

- How will you reach this audience? What platforms, media, online spaces and physical spaces do they use?

One realistic next step

- What is the one shift or action that you're asking, which feels doable and meaningful to this audience?

Testing:

- Ask 1–3 colleagues to read it as this audience and note their reactions.
- If you can, show it to 1–3 real audience members; note what lands and jars.
- Save what works to your team's notes/style guide for this audience.

Reminder:

There is no single 'public'. Different audiences are at different points in their journey. Our role as communicators is to meet them where they are and nudge them forwards.

Unsure how to apply this to your comms messaging?

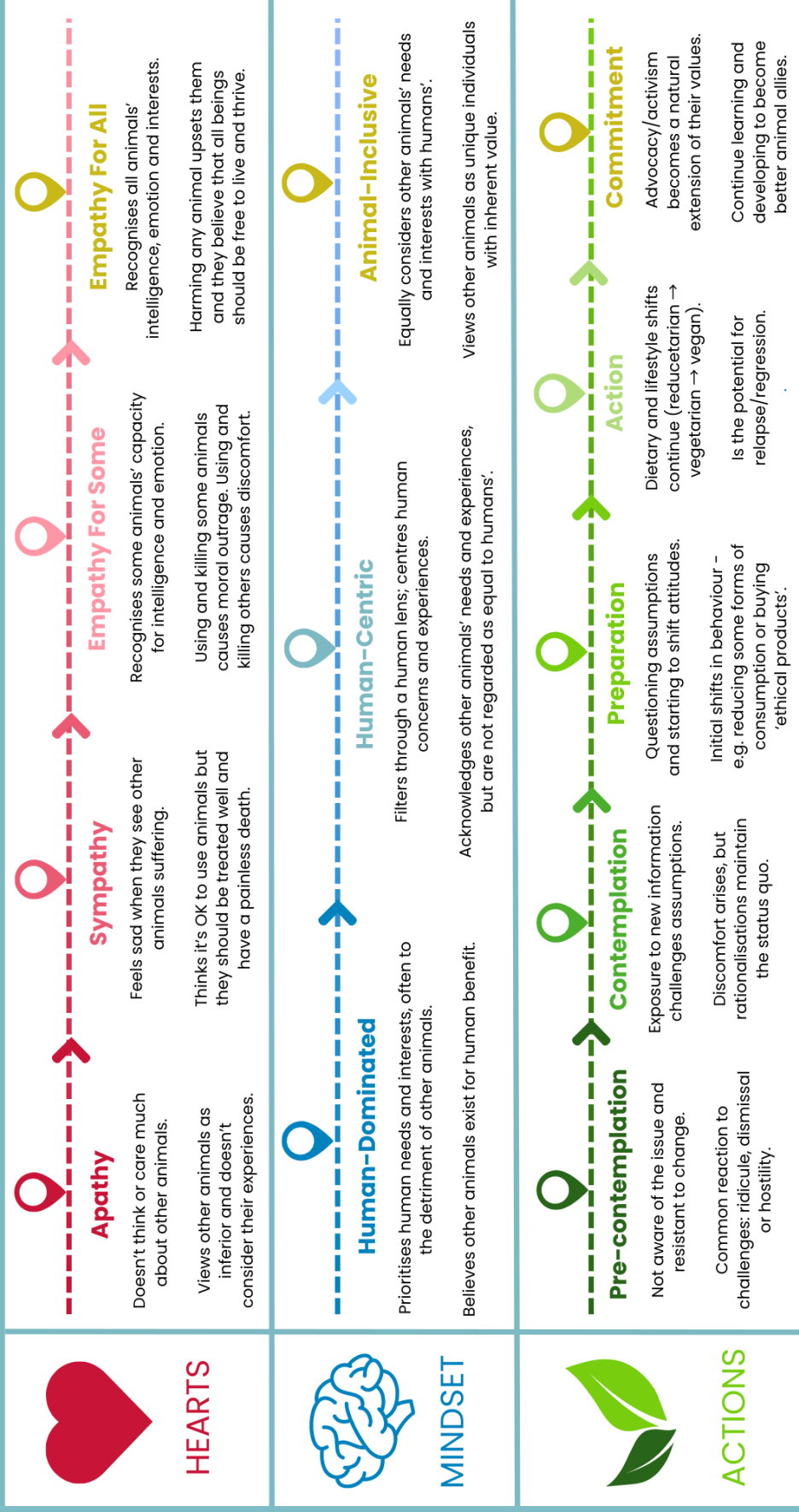
Have a comment about this checklist?

Contact us for a quick chat or drop us a line on the [Slack #ask channel](#).



Audience Journeys

Everyone's at a different point in their journey, in terms of their empathy towards fellow animals (**hearts**), their attitudes and beliefs (**mindsets**) and their behaviours (**actions**)



Cognitive dissonance can arise when people are at different points in their empathy, mindset or action journeys. Where they are in their journey affects which communication strategies will be most effective.