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SME GUIDANCE
DRONES FOR GOOD

Top 10 ways to engage with the public

April 2022

LET'S GET STARTED

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This guidance is specifically for organisations that might be considering implementing drone technology as part of the day-to-day business operation or providing drone services. Research conducted has highlighted the top ten considerations that might help ease this transition.

Significant research was conducted throughout 2021, aiming to understand public knowledge and acceptance towards drone technology. By doing this, we are able to provide guidance to UK businesses on how to engage and communicate with the public to maximise the benefits of drone technology and services.

A full round up of the research can be found here. You can also find out more about the Drone Pathfinder Catalyst Programme here.

1) **THE PUBLIC ARE INTRIGUED ABOUT THE USE AND POTENTIAL OF DRONES – THERE IS AN 'OPEN DOOR' TO EDUCATE AND INFORM THEM FURTHER**

The public are more likely to show interest and curiosity in **why** and **how** you may be using drones, as opposed to showing anger, fear or concern about how they may be applied – the general public are fairly neutral in their acceptance towards the technology.

2) **A KNOWLEDGE GAP EXISTS**

The public has heard of drone technology, but beyond this latent awareness, knowledge, understanding and a recognition of the potential benefits are far from top of mind. There is appetite to fill this gap with the positive benefits that different use cases and applications can bring.

3) **ENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC**

Fuel the public's intrigue by communicating and demonstrating how you're planning to use drones (show, don't tell). Our research shows that knowledge and understanding drives acceptance.

4) **BE POSITIVE AND ON THE FRONT FOOT**

Focus on talking about the benefits and why you're using drone technology as a **positive narrative**, as opposed to trying to answer negative perceptions, which are less prevalent.

5) **MESSAGING THAT PROMOTES PERSONAL BENEFIT CAN HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT**

If people can see or understand the benefits that **themselves** or their direct **family and friends** will get from your adoption of drone technology, they are much more ikely to buy into their use and accept them – for example, a *"people like you are already benefiting"* message can have a positive impact on people.

6) **ENSURE YOU CAN DEMONSTRATE HOW YOU'RE PROTECTING PEOPLE'S SAFETY AND PRIVACY**

The areas that have potential to drive public concern surround perceived safety *(will they fall out of the sky?)* and privacy *(what data are they capturing?).*

This doesn't need to be front and centre of communications but being able to remind the public that the UK has an excellent reputation for aviation safety and that drones are regulated as part of this.

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7) **ALWAYS LINK THE APPLICATION BACK TO HOW THE PUBLIC WILL BENEFIT, EVEN IF THE BENEFIT IS LESS OBVIOUS**

This is more apparent for examples such as parcel delivery where the 'greater good' benefit is not as clear to see. The benefits to society here could include fewer delivery vans on the road, less congestion, reduced impact on the environment and quicker delivery times, for example.

8) **COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD PORTRAY DRONES BEING USED IN REAL LIFE SITUATIONS AS OPPOSED TO THE TECHNOLOGY**

Focus more on real people, in real situations using drones to make a real difference to lives, as opposed to the technical aspect of the drones. People are intrigued more about how they are used and the benefits that can bring, as opposed to how they work.

9) **IMAGERY SHOULD PORTRAY HOW DRONES CAN SERVE PEOPLE WITH HUMANS IN CONTROL**

Drone imagery that depicts the most popular use cases proved to elicit the most positive reactions. Examples of how drones can serve humans and make a positive impact is key and is more reassuring when human authority over drones is never in doubt.
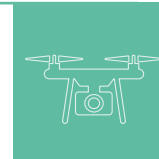
10) **CREDIBLE SPOKESPEOPLE CAN DRIVE TRUST**

Aviation experts and scientists are seen as trusted people that can deliver a credible message, as opposed to politicians or influencers.

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