



Commercial
Communications
Council

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COMMS
COUNCIL
LABS



COMMS COUNCIL LABS



Building Capability and Client Confidence Across Your Team with Comms Council Labs

In competitive advertising markets, client retention and team effectiveness are directly linked to the quality and depth of your people's skills. The fundamentals matter, not just for individual performance, but for your entire operation's reputation and profitability.

Shaping Careers in the First Five Years

Professionals in their first five years are most receptive to training and represent your greatest opportunity for impact. Junior staff can lack foundational understanding of how the industry ecosystem works, how their role connects to client strategy, how disciplines work together, and how the agency operates within the ecosystem. When your team has a solid grounding in core disciplines: media strategy, account management, people leadership, and agency finance, you see measurable improvements:

- Stronger client relationships: your people understand what clients need and can articulate value confidently.
- Improved decision making: teams that understand the full business picture make better choices, faster.
- Reduced client risk: well trained staff manage accounts with fewer mistakes and greater strategic insight.
- Competitive advantage: your agency attracts better talent when you're known for serious professional development.
- Better team stability: professionals who invest in their development are more engaged and less likely to leave.

What Sets Comms Council Labs Apart

Each course is curated and delivered by respected professionals from advertising, media, PR, and creative disciplines. bringing genuine, lived experience and real world relevance that generic training providers simply cannot match. Rather than lectures and slides our courses combine essential theory with real world agency challenges in immersive, discussion led formats that build practical capability and critical thinking. Your people learn alongside peers from across the industry, building professional networks and relationships that extend well beyond your agency walls.

Our courses continuously adapt to industry change and market dynamics, ensuring your team gets cutting edge, locally relevant learning that reflects New Zealand realities while maintaining global standards. Upon completion, participants receive industry endorsed accreditation that signals to clients and the market your people meet industry standards, delivering tangible career milestones and professional credibility alongside immediate performance gains.

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Foundations of Advertising and Media

In partnership with 

The Foundations of Advertising and Media is a three-day immersive course designed for early career practitioners (0 – 3 years) entering the advertising, PR, and media industry. This programme provides comprehensive grounding in industry fundamentals and builds foundational networks across the sector.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will gain an understanding of:

- Organisational structures and functions across creative and media agencies
- Client relationship management and its strategic importance
- Brand theory and consumer-brand dynamics
- Fundamentals of responsible advertising
- Creative brief development and brief management
- Integrated marketing communications and emerging digital trends
- Revenue generation and profitability management

Business Value

For your early career team members:

- Accelerates industry understanding beyond immediate agency context
- Develops strategic perspective on cross-functional agency operations
- Enhances capability in client relationship management and brand stewardship
- Creates peer networks across New Zealand's advertising and media sector

For your organisation:

- Supports talent retention through professional development investment
- Builds stronger internal collaboration by improving employees' understanding of agency-wide functions

Course Details

Facilitator: Dan Fastnedge, Advertising and Brand Creativity Lecturer at AUT alongside industry experts

Format: 3 days off-site, in-person attendance required

Delivery: Expert-led presentations, case studies, practical exercises, and agency visits

Assessment: One practical assignment briefed during the course and presented back after one month

Logistics

Dates & Booking Deadline

Dates: Wednesday 26 to Friday 28 August 2026

Booking Deadline: Wednesday 5 August 2026

Price

\$1900 + GST

Only available to Comms Council members

Understanding Agency Finance

Financial literacy across your young team ranks directly impacts agency profitability. This course builds essential capabilities in your account service, media, and digital managers, strengthening decision making and contributing to your bottom line.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will develop:

- Operational financial literacy, understanding agency business models, cost structures, and profitability drivers
- Client value alignment, ability to articulate service value and pricing rationale to clients with confidence
- Profit optimisation, skills to identify where projects drift toward loss and implement corrective actions
- Financial communication, capability to engage in financial conversations with clients and colleagues professionally
- Informed decision making, capacity to make commercially sound decisions aligned with agency objectives

Business Value

- Improved margins through better project profitability management
- Improved client relationships through informed financial conversations
- Strengthened retention of high-performing teams through career development
- Standards alignment with industry best practices

Course Details

Facilitator: Simon Lendrum, CEO of The Comms Council

Format: 1-day professional development workshop

- Expert-led sessions grounded in agency practice
- Scenario-based practice with real financial situations
- Reference guide for ongoing application

Logistics

Dates & Booking Deadline

Date: Wednesday 25 March 2026

Booking Deadline: Wednesday 4 March 2026

Date: Wednesday 21 October 2026

Booking Deadline: Wednesday 30 September 2026

Price

\$400 + GST (Comms Council members)

\$500 + GST (non-members)



The Art of Managing People

Early career managers are critical to your agency’s success, but many step into leadership roles without formal preparation. The Art of Managing People is a strategic investment in your emerging talent, designed to reduce onboarding friction, improve retention, and establish consistent management practices across your organisation.

Learning Outcomes	<p>Participants will develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management fundamentals: leadership styles, values, and self-awareness• Performance management: clear expectations, feedback, coaching, and delegation• Emotional intelligence: conflict resolution, difficult conversations, psychological safety• Team dynamics: motivation, engagement, and addressing performance issues• Wellbeing integration: balancing high performance with sustainable practices
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Business Value	<p>Strengthen retention and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early management support increases retention of high-potential talent• Team members report higher engagement when leaders demonstrate management competency• Reduces costly mistakes during critical career transitions <p>Accelerate capability development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addresses the “steep learning curve” for first-time managers• Shortens the time to effectiveness in management roles• Provides validated tools and approaches vs. figuring it out alone
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Course Details	<p>Facilitator: Julie Dormand, Brand and Culture Specialist</p> <p>Format: 1 full-day workshop</p> <p>Delivery: Facilitated learning combining theory, discussion, role-play, and practical application</p>
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Logistics	<p>Date & Booking Deadline</p> <p>Course date: Wednesday 29 July 2026</p> <p>Booking deadline: Wednesday 8 July 2026</p>	<p>Price</p> <p>\$600 + GST (Comms Council members)</p> <p>\$750 + GST (non-members)</p>
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Client Relationships

Client relationships are your competitive edge. When your account managers, media managers, and business leads master relationship management, they strengthen client loyalty and drive revenue growth through trust and proactive communication.

This one-day course equips your 3–5 year experience professionals with the frameworks, techniques, and confidence to build lasting partnerships that impact client retention and lifetime value.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will develop:

- Trust and partnership building: techniques to foster loyalty and long-term client relationships
- Understanding client value: tools to diagnose what clients need and deliver against those priorities
- Influence and difficult conversations: skills to navigate conflict and lead challenging discussions with confidence
- Proactive communication: frameworks for staying ahead of client needs and positioning your team as trusted advisors
- Client retention: practical approaches to increase lifetime value

Business Value

- Builds competitive advantage through trust and proactive communication
- Enables confident navigation of difficult client conversations and challenges
- Creates consistent, professional client management across your agency
- Directly correlates with improved profitability and growth

Course Details

Facilitator: TBC

Format: 1-day immersive workshop

- Expert-led sessions grounded in real client management scenarios
- Interactive, practical learning that builds immediately applicable capability
- Best-practice frameworks delivered by industry practitioners

Logistics

Date & Booking Deadline

Date: TBC

Booking Deadline: TBC

Price

\$600 + GST (Comms Council members)

\$750 + GST (non-members)

Strategic Planning Lab

In a world of over-supply and under-demand, strategy is essential to winning in the market place today. Demystify the word Strategy and gain all of the tools you need to plan effective strategic communications to add value to your client's business.

The course will cover the variety of challenges and opportunities any agency practitioner or marketing professional faces today; from brand and social strategy to communications planning, and the key components of measurement and effectiveness.

Learning Outcomes

- Brand growth strategies and situation analysis
- Market research application and insights development
- Targeting, segmentation, and positioning methodology
- Creative strategy development and effectiveness evaluation
- Communications strategy and consumer influence
- Campaign objective-setting and measurement frameworks

Business Value

- This course directly supports talent retention and capability building by providing:
- Industry-Standard Frameworks: participants learn cross-agency best practices and established methodologies, ensuring consistent standards regardless of agency size or location
 - Competitive Advantage: teams equipped with formal strategic training deliver higher-quality work and stronger client outcomes
 - Career Progression: clear credential pathway supports talent development within your agency and across the broader industry
 - Network Building: participants build professional connections across the industry, creating peer networks and collaborative relationships that strengthen the broader advertising ecosystem

Who Should Attend?

Mid-to-senior account managers, planners, and digital managers (typically Years 2-5 in industry).

Course Details

- Led by: Lisa Divett, CSO, at Denstu, alongside industry specialists
- 4 non-consecutive workshop days (total 27.5 contact hours)
 - Presentations, panel discussions, and Q&A with industry leaders
 - Live brief assignment with expert feedback
 - Downloadable resources and takeaway materials for ongoing reference

Logistics

Dates & Booking Deadline

Course Dates: Wednesday 6 May,
Wednesday 20 May, Thursday 28 May &
Wednesday 3 June 2026
Booking Deadline: Wednesday 22 April 2026

Price

\$1200 + GST (Comms Council members)
\$1500 + GST (non-members)