

NAVIGATING THROUGH TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

In 2002, Zurich Financial Services survived its own organisational financial crisis. Eight years on and internal procedures begun by the firm at the time are still in use. by Deborah Hudson

The global economy continues to struggle. Organisations around the world – from corporations with worldwide market share to small businesses that employ only a few people – are feeling the effects of the downturn, and its challenges to their balance sheets, investment portfolios and to the underlying engagement of employees. Even the organisations that have managed to avoid significant layoffs find that uncertainty about jobs, the economy and savings has affected employee engagement and confidence in management.

“In good times, employee engagement is the difference between being good and being great,” says James K. Harter, Gallup’s chief scientist of workplace management and wellbeing and co-author of 12: The Ele-

ments of Great Managing. “In bad times, it’s the difference between surviving and not. In good times and bad, low engagement reduces performance and profit. And under the current circumstances, many companies can’t afford to let those drop.” Managing employee engagement is a dynamic partnership between leadership and communications. Especially in these times of massive and constant change, we must communicate so employees are aware of what is happening and why, and so they understand how it will affect them. Then, they have what they need to take effective action, to advance their team and corporate goals and finally, to be able to tell the story of change and advocate for change.

At Zurich Financial Services, corporate communications and leadership have collaborated in advancing this model of engagement for several years, and it has served

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Today's working environment is marked by constant change and insecurity, a situation which can have harsh effects on employees' productivity and motivation and has been dramatically aggravated by the financial crisis. However, motivated, productive and creative workforces are the best weapon companies have to get through the crisis. It is therefore more important than ever to realise the full potential of internal communication. The Quadriga conference on Internal Communication will help you define strategic goals, formulate key messages and identify the best channels to convey them.

The conference will present case studies, presentations and workshops on:

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- **Knowledge Management**
- **Internal Communication During a Crisis**
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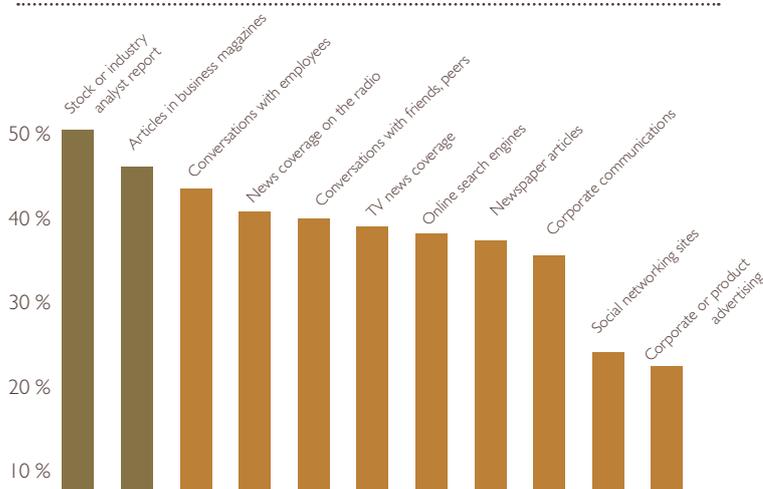
FACTS & FIGURES

In the wake of the great economic crisis, when trust in business fell to record lows, the 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer reports a modest global rise in trust in business. It is to expert spokespeople and information sources that “informed publics” turn, while trust in traditional media continues to decline. Stock or industry analyst reports and articles in business magazines lead the poll results as the most trusted sources of information about a company (below left). The survey also points to an increased need

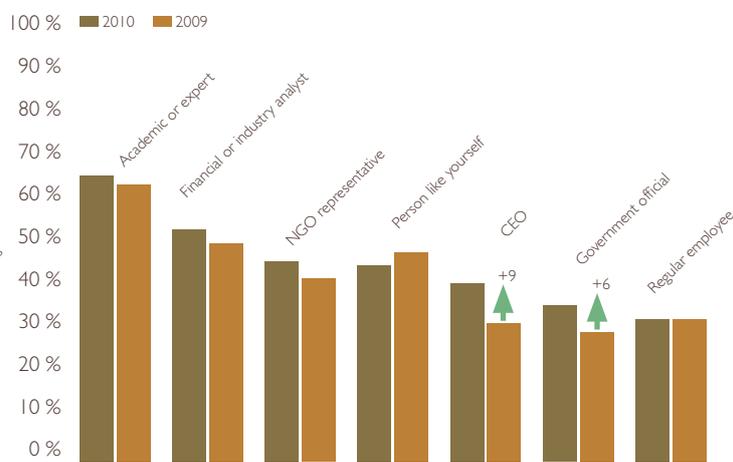
for substantial and accredited sources of information: academics and experts, and financial or industry analysts, lead the way over “someone like me”, which lost ground as a credible source of information for a company (below right). Corporate communications such as press releases, reports and emails has increased by five points globally, up to 32 per cent. However the credibility of corporate or product advertising remains low, at 17 per cent. *Taken from Edelman Trust Barometer 2010*

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Specialist sources most credible



Expert voices most trusted



COMMENTARY

Pouring oil on troubled waters by Dafydd Phillips

The UK’s Guardian newspaper described its interview with the chief executive of BP, Tony Hayward (pictured sitting left, in discussion with a US coast guard), as “bullish”, an adjective somewhere between ‘optimistic’ and ‘bull-headed’ (May 14, “BP boss admits job on the line over gulf oil spill”). It’s also an adjective that will elicit nervous laughter in BP’s communications team. In a statement that will have crisis communicators everywhere cringing, he says that the spill in the Gulf of Mexico is “relatively tiny” compared with the “very big ocean”. Curiously, he also placed the spill in context with the Apollo 13 tragedy and last year’s Air France crash in Brazil, indicating that the incidents failed to stop the development of their industries. As the White House is currently making noises about scrapping the cap on the extent of BP’s liabilities, this might not be the wisest approach for Mr Hayward to take. At recent congressional hearings, senators rebuked BP and the other two companies involved (Halliburton, responsible for cementing the wall round the ruptured well, and Transocean, owners of the collapsed rig and employee of the eleven who



lost their lives) for their constant attempts to shift blame onto each other, another red flag for the conscientious communicator. The question of responsibility versus liability is a tough one for a corporation to handle: with so much at stake, it is understandable that a CEO would be so keen to carefully delineate who exactly is to blame for what. But accepting responsibility early and often is recognised by communications experts as a central plank to any PR crisis strategy, something Tony Hayward partially acknowledges in the Guardian interview. When asked if he felt his job was now under threat, he replied: “I don’t at the moment. That of course may change. I will be judged by the nature of the response.”

Image: bp.com

Imprint

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PERSONNEL



Petra Diroll
(Spokeswoman)

Institution: German Government

Start: June 01



Germany: Diroll to speak for President Köhler

As of June 1 this year, PETRA DIROLL will be the new spokeswoman for the Federal President Horst Köhler. In this position, Diroll succeeds Martin Kothé. Previously, Diroll worked at ARD, Germany's public service broadcaster, which she joined in 2003. She began as a political correspondent and then in 2009 became an editor. Prior to her career at ARD, she was a Berlin and Bonn correspondent for Bayerischer Rundfunk Radio.



Nigel Prideaux

(Group Communications Director)

Institution: Aviva



UK: Shake up of communications team at Aviva Group

Insurance group Aviva has reorganised its communications department by appointing NIGEL PRIDEAUX of the Brunswick Group as group communications director. It has also created the new post of UK corporate affairs director for Hayley Stimpson. Prideaux will be responsible for managing and coordinating Aviva's corporate media relations and internal communications worldwide.



Rémi Calvet
(VP Communications)

Institution: Ingenico

Start: May 01



France: Calvet goes from Gemalto to Ingenico

Ingenico, the payment solutions company, has announced the appointment of RÉMI CALVET as vice president of communication. He will report to Philippe Lazare, chairman and CEO, and is a member of the Executive Committee. He is in charge of Ingenico group communication including corporate, marketing, financial and internal. Calvet was senior vice president of communication at Gemplus as of 2004, and Gemalto after the merger with Axalto.

EVENTS

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20.05.2010 World Communication Forum 2010: Win.New.Markets

Companies can be the market leader in their home country, but totally unknown in new territory. Cultural intelligence leads to competitive advantage. This is the focus of "Win. New.Markets".

► IPREX, Messe Dusseldorf, Dusseldorf

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20.05.2010 National Summit On Strategic Communications

This summit assembles senior leaders from government, the military, the private sector, universities and NGOs to share best practices for effective communications and engagement with stakeholders globally.

► Institute for PR /The Arthur W. Page Society, Washington DC

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26.05.2010 Healthcare Communications Conference

Specifically targeted at the challenges of healthcare communicators, this event will feature cross-sector perspectives from leading brands who are excelling in their media relations strategies.

► PR Week, The Grange City Hotel, London

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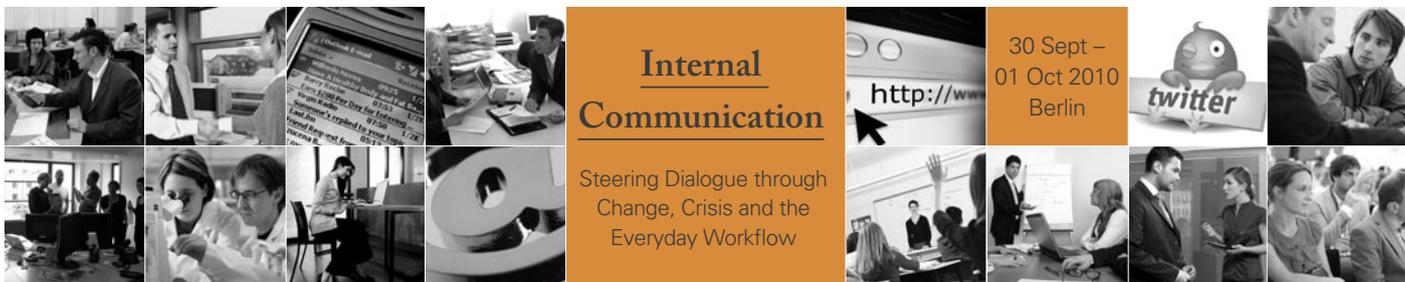


01.06.2010 GWEF – Global Economics and Ethics Forum

Co-hosted by politik & kommunikation and presssprecher magazines, this third annual forum gathers high-level political and business leaders to discuss CSR during and after the economic crisis.

► Ernst-Reuter Haus, Berlin

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