Privacy, protection and public debate

How GDPR is making its mark on communications
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Corporate communications and the GDPR

In October last year, The Economist described the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – the European Union’s comprehensive update of its data protection and privacy rules – as “the greatest shake up in privacy legislation for over 20 years”. Such shake up requires organisations to conduct a 360-degree analysis of the ways they handle data, and for that analysis to stand up to scrutiny and to inspire stakeholder trust, the communications function must be involved. The opening article of our Issue Focus section – written by Alexia Ellassadi and Stuart Thomson – sets out the main areas where the GDPR will impact the way your organisation handles data, and the measures that will need to be taken to avoid hefty fines. But the authors make clear that the GDPR calls for a change in culture as much as careful compliance, and this is where the communications function is primed and ready to lead. Marketing is the most obvious example of where GDPR will impact communications. Our recent issue (Communication Director 03/2017) on personalised communications illustrated the ways in which data is shared, hoarded, stored and reused in myriad ways all in the service of marketing communications: in this issue, Jonas Ander offers advice to any marcomms professionals out there having a fit of panic as May 25 draws near. But more importantly for corporate communications, the GDPR is the strongest indication yet that data protection is central to corporate reputation. Writing in this issue, Dan Golding sets out a roadmap of touchpoints between GDPR and corporate reputation. Clearly, communications must play an active role in any organisation’s GDPR journey.
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SURVEY

Learning on the job

A common complaint for communications professionals is the difficulty of learning new skills and developing one’s own career while in full-time employment: never-ending deadlines and imminent crises keep most communications people tied to their inboxes. On the other hand, the communications profession is in a permanent state of change, and keeping up with the latest trends is a must.

One section of the profession that has found a solution is c-suite level communications executives – according to findings from a new survey by the European Association of Communication Directors. Conferences, association membership, online training and the refreshingly old-school option of books are all identified as key sources of learning for staying up to speed on the job.

The survey was conducted in November last year and covered members and non-members, executives, managers and millennials. More in-depth results from the survey will be shared online at www.eacd-online.eu and in the next issue of Communication Director.

What do you do to stay up to speed for your job/how do you keep on learning?

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1. UpVote 13: the truth about GDPR, the biggest data protection change in decades
UpVote is a Wired and Ars Technica UK co-production hosted by Rowland Mantorpe and Kelly Fiveash. For this episode on GDPR, they’re joined by Orla Lyskey of the London School of Economics, and WIRED editor Matt Burgess.
Wired.co.uk, UpVote 13: iTunes/RSS

2. The Privacy Advisor Podcast: Johnny Ryan on why ad tech is trouble
Under GDPR, consent is king, which presents special challenges to ad tech when consumers are keen to opt out when given the option to under tracking preferences. In this episode of The Privacy Advisor Podcast, Produced by the international Association of Privacy Professionals, Johnny Ryan of ad tech firm PageFair discusses the necessary shift in the ad tech industry.
IAPP.org, The Privacy Advisor: Soundcloud
FACTS AND FIGURES

HEATHER KNOX

“The value that you can bring when things are being disrupted is to understand the content and the landscape and to bring that perspective in. And also not to panic.”

Successful collaboration is based on openness and knowledge sharing, and is especially vital in such innovation-hungry fields such as the auto industry. But how do established players collaborate with potential disruptors?

Heather Knox, vice president, external communications at Groupe Renault, spoke to us at the 2017 European Communication Summit about team work within a global organisation, the link between collaboration and reputation, corporate communications in a disrupted industry - and how auto giants are facing the challenge of car sharing start-ups.

This interview was filmed at the 2017 European Communication Summit: this year's edition of the Summit takes place on June 123 and 14 in – and for the first time – Berlin. Find out more at: www.communication-summit.eu/

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR ON CAMERA

HEATHER KNOX

“Effective communications clearly is having a bottom-line impact and the c-suite and the CEO in particular get that.”

What is the strategic contribution of the chief communication officer? What is the ideal model for the CCO-CEO relationship? The 2017 EACD Forum, held in Madrid on November 23, centred round a panel discussion on executive positioning and strategic leadership. Taking part in the discussion were Michael Stewart (Edelman), Ida Gutiérrez de Escofet (NH Hotels Group) and Julia Meighan (VMA), with contributions from EACD president Herbert Heitmann and EACD managing director Inge Wallage. The EACD Forum invites senior communicators and business leaders to come together to discuss an important trend in the profession. The Forum changes location each year to reflect the international scope of our membership base.

EACD FORUM

Watch our interview with Heather on the YouTube channel of the European Association of Communication Directors

Watch the full Forum keynote and panel discussion, including the introduction by EACD president Herbert Heitmann

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR 1/2018
FACTS AND FIGURES

SURVEY

Brave new worlds

Automation and artificial intelligence is fundamentally transforming the way we work, but what can we expect by 2030? A recent report by PwC on the Workforce of the Future imagines four possible worlds of work with distinct modes of operation and varying reliance on technology.

The Blue World of work envisions ‘capitalism on steroids’ and heightened wealth disparity. A core group of actors will control huge corporations and access a contingent workforce. The majority of jobs will have been replaced by technology but monitored very closely by the human workforce. The Red World is defined by innovation and technology: workers with an agile mind-set will thrive as this world will require them to flexibly pivot between projects. As the name suggests, the Green World employs technology to replace scarce resources and protect the environment. The workforce will be attracted to organisations on grounds of their ethical values and positive contribution to society. The Yellow World places value on characteristics such as empathy, emotional intelligence and craftsmanship. This world of work will not be defined by a 9 to 5 routine and technology will enable people to enter their desired profession at a low barrier of entry.

Whatever tomorrow may hold, the report encourages businesses to take a proactive approach to future challenges and plan for a dynamic operating environment. Where do you fit in to the workforce of 2030? Read the full report at pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation.html

JÖRG HOWE

“We were lucky, we had a trustworthy journalist who reflected very much on the story he was writing, and he didn’t harm anybody. But you never know, it can be the opposite.”

What is the value of a celebrity CEO to the corporate brand? Daimler’s head of global communication, Jörg Howe, has positioned his boss, chief executive Dieter Zetsche, as one of the auto industry’s most recognisable leaders – just scroll through YouTube to find his off-beat on-camera presence selling the classic car makers. We asked Jörg how he did it, why it’s good for the brand, and why too much journalistic access is not always a good thing.

Jörg was speaking at a CEO Communication conference held by the publishers of Communication Director magazine, Quadriga Media Berlin. For more about Quadriga conferences, visit conferences.quadriga.eu/en

Watch an extract of our interview with Jörg filmed in December last year

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR 1/2018
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The self-owning forest

Just outside Berlin, the world’s first self-owned augmented forest is quietly growing, powered by blockchain. A piece of land was purchased by the terra0 project’s initiators, who then signed the forest over to itself, making the forest indebted towards the initiators. A smart contract on the Ethereum Blockchain regulates the forest’s inputs and outputs; drones and satellites monitor the growth of the forest, providing documentation to determine how much wood can be produced from it and sold. With the income generated, the forest will ultimately pay off its debt to the project’s initiators, thereby becoming its own owner.

Image: terra0.org.
A classic crowd-puller

Between 13 April 2013 (when it opened its doors after 10 year of renovation) and 1 June 2017, Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum attracted 10 million visitors. In an unusual update of a classic PR tactic, the museum’s 10 millionth visitor was rewarded with an overnight stay alone in the museum, right in front of its most celebrated painting: Rembrandt’s Night Watch. The lucky visitor even got a good-night greeting from the prime minister. Coverage in national and international media as well as record amount of comments on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter ensured that this was a night to remember. / Image: Rijksmuseum
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IN EXPERTS WE TRUST AGAIN?

The latest Edelman Trust Barometer reveals a trust paradox and suggests a way forward for communicators.

BY MICHAEL STEWART AND DEANNA TALLON

People may not have had enough of experts after all. Contrary to British MP Michael Gove’s oft-quoted assertion, the general population increasingly considers voices of authority to be credible sources of information, after years of predominately relying on their peers. This is one of many surprising findings with far-reaching implications for communicators from the 18th annual Edelman Trust Barometer, a global study of the state of public trust in government, business, media and non-governmental organisations.

In the study of 33,000 people across 28 markets, trust in “a person like yourself” dropped six points to an all-time low, while trust in experts like academics, financial analysts and technical experts increased. Even trust in CEOs rose by seven points globally and eight points across the European Union,* after years of skepticism about the C-suite.

This shift may be symptomatic of a larger societal truth: at a time when people are grappling with whom and what to believe in, there’s a resurgence of trust in sources that will vet information and offer a sort of truth benchmark. This year’s study, in particular, showed widespread fears about the spread of misinformation – 64 per cent of people in the EU are worried about fake news or false information being used as a weapon, and 57 per cent say that it is getting harder to tell whether a piece of news was produced by a respected media organisation.

This doesn’t mean that people are looking to the media to set the record straight; to the contrary, media is now the least trusted institution, actively distrusted in 22 out of 28 countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, the UK and Ireland. In fact, only about one-third of people trust the media to do what is right in France, the UK, Ireland and Sweden.

There are several reasons for this paradox, starting with how people in the EU define the media itself. Some consider platforms to be part of the media, including social media (39 per cent) and search engines (19 per cent), as well as newer kinds of publishers like brands (32 per cent) and influencers (17 per cent).

There is also the sense that the media is not doing its job, with 63 per cent of people in the EU saying media is more preoccupied with attracting a large audience rather than reporting a story, and 64 per cent saying they believe the media will sacrifice accuracy in order to be first to break a story. As a result, more than half of people in the EU (56 per cent) are actively disengaged from the news altogether.

Yet, all hope in the media is not lost. While trust in the institution writ large dropped, trust in professional journalism increased, further demonstrating a desire for expert

*European Union Trust Barometer data includes nine countries: France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, U.K.

“64 per cent of people in the EU are worried about fake news or false information being used as a weapon.”
Information. In the EU, trust in journalism went up by seven points, while trust in platforms declined four points. In Germany, this gap was even wider, with trust in journalism spiking to points.

Looking beyond the media to the state of trust in Europe more generally, this year was the first time the study indicated a disconnect between levels of trust and the broader macroeconomic or geopolitical picture. In Europe, trust levels among the informed public – those with the highest education and levels of income – stayed largely stable in “neutral” trust territory, despite uncertainty from a range of troubles such as forming a coalition government in Germany, Catalan independence struggles in Spain, a looming election in Italy and the ongoing saga of Brexit. Not surprisingly then, when asked what is the most broken institution in the EU, respondents cited government—with the outlier being France, where trust in government increased, likely following the election of President Macron.

Business license to lead

All of these findings demonstrate that earning trust can be increasingly complex and often paradoxical. The bright spot for corporate communicators is that business has unprecedented opportunity to build long-term value and fill the leadership void left by other institutions— if business seizes the moment.

Business is the second-most trusted institution globally, just behind NGOs, and far ahead of government and media. In Germany, business actually is the most trusted institution. What’s more, people expect businesses to make a difference far beyond their doors: 64 per cent of people globally agree that a company can take specific actions that both increase profits and improve the economic and social conditions in the community where it operates. In fact, 56 per cent of respondents think that companies that only think about themselves and their profits are bound to fail.

Chief executive officers, who are now more trusted, are expected to be catalysts for this change—84 per cent of people expect chief executive officers to inform conversations and policy debates on key issues like climate change and automation, and 64 per cent of people globally (59 per cent in the EU) expect chief executive officers to lead on making change, rather than wait for government. In fact, earning trust is viewed as a top priority for EU chief executive officers—just one point behind offering quality products and services.

Yet there’s a gap between expectation and reality, with 62 per cent of Europeans saying that chief executive officers are driven more by greed than by making a difference. This is an opportunity where communicators can be champions of change, working with the C-suite and across all of an organisation’s stakeholder groups to help chart a course to determine where a company can make an effective and credible impact.
“Trust in professional journalism increased, further demonstrating a desire for expert information.”

There are some specific and tangible actions corporate communicators to take to help make this happen. Some principles to apply from the Edelman Trust Barometer include:

**Put employees first.** Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of employees globally trust their employers to do what is right. In a world of uncertainty, this high level of trust is not an opportunity to be squandered. Businesses must continue to build trust by actively listening to their employees and acting upon their insights. Employees are a company’s strongest ambassadors.

**Act upon – and communicate progress on – key issues.** For 18 years, the Edelman Trust Barometer has asked people whether they trusted an institution to do what is right. This year, we asked, for the first time, what they expected of an institution in doing what’s right. Respondents’ expectations for businesses are that they protect privacy, drive economic prosperity and provide jobs and trade.

**Double down on the facts.** The precipitous decline of trust in media leads to a lack of shared facts to fuel productive social discourse. To be trusted, a company’s “job one” is to inform and be transparent, rather than advocate.

**Dial up expert voices.** In the quest for reliable information, technical experts, academics and other trusted sources are vital in presenting fact-based knowledge, context and analysis.

The changing state of trust continues to advance both the role of the corporate communicator and how we practice our craft. In addition to continuing to be a strategic business partner, communicators would be wise to think more like journalists in order to earn trust: informing over advocating, presenting the facts in a clear manner, and engaging reliable sources to advance their companies’ missions.

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**While trust in platforms declines, trust in journalism rebounds**

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<td>2018</td>
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Average trust in traditional and online-only media
Average trust in search engines and social media platforms

Source: 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer. COM_MCL. When looking for general news and information, how much would you trust each type of source for general news and information? Please use a nine-point scale where one means that you “do not trust it at all” and nine means that you “trust it a great deal.” (Top 4 Box, Trust), question asked of half of the sample. General population, EU.
MAKING EUROPE COOL AGAIN: THREE DO’S AND DON’TS

How to overcome challenges faced by European policymakers to rebuild trust and communicate the European project.

BY CHRISTINE GRAEFF

My most uplifting moment in 2017 was watching freshly elected French President Emanuel Macron walk across the courtyard of the Louvre to the sound of Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, the official anthem of the European Union. But elsewhere in Europe, populists of all stripes are still busy scapegoating the EU for all sorts of economic and societal ills. As Macron and others have shown, it does not have to be this way. Here are three don’ts and three do’s for policymakers to follow in order to “get through” to the general public, regain trust and make Europe cool again.¹

Three don’t’s

1. *Don’t dismiss the legitimate concerns of the people.* The fact that those concerns do not fit the liberal world view does not mean that they do not deserve to be listened to and respected. Labelling those who vote for populists as a “basket of deplorables” (as then-Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton described them in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election) or generally stigmatising them as extremists or outright lunatics can only backfire. If policymakers want to regain credibility and trust, they need to do more to acknowledge the valid experiences of ordinary people and to connect with them by calling things by their real names.

Public institutions have to take the wind out of the sails of populists who style themselves as the ones who are simply “saying out loud what many people think”. They should avoid any impression of Orwellian ‘newspeak’, which is seen as being imposed from the liberal moral high ground and narrowing the range of acceptable thought.

Doing so does not imply accepting the rhetoric of insurrection that calls into doubt the underlying consensus in our democratic societies. The appeal and lifeblood of populists is their promised power to permanently delegitimise established institutions; it feeds their anti-elitist claims that they represent the “true people” and that the “system” is rotten.

The mainstream responds to populists’ taboo-breaking rhetoric with predictable in-

¹Inspired in part by Simon Kuper’s columns in the Financial Times of 22 June and 5 October 2017
Diligence and hard work will be needed to meet the populist communicative challenge.

2. Don't keep sitting on the high horse of expert authority. Public institutions need to stop using jargon and start speaking a language that people understand. Jargon, by definition, creates distance, establishing an ‘us’ and a ‘them’. Applying some of the rules outlined in George Orwell’s Politics and the English Language, from back in 1946, would already be helpful. For instance:

- never use a long word where a short one will do;
- never use the passive where you can use the active;
- never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an every-day English equivalent.

This certainly applies to economics. If it is meant to be understood by the general public, then it has to be accessible.²

Making public policy accessible is all the more important with younger generations. For my generation, when we didn't understand a text, a chart or graphic at first sight, we probably thought: “It must be me, I do not understand”. Millennials, who are much more digitally and visually literate, have no such self-doubt. If they do not understand something instantly, it is the producer of that content that is seen to be at fault for not making it accessible.

Experts should be humble and stop pretending knowledge and certainty where there is none. One key reason for the lack of respect for experts is that, well, the experts got it wrong. For instance, there is a wide-ranging debate about whether the economics profession is up to the job of giving useful advice to policymakers. The economy is a profoundly complex system; uncertainty is pervasive. Human behaviour cannot be pressed into models of rationality and perfect knowledge. It is therefore right to stress humility.

Even under such circumstances, experts can still give useful advice. We are not in the Dark Ages. But experts must be wary of what Austrian-British economist, philosopher and defender of classical liberalism, F.A. Hayek called the “fatal conceit” (“Verhängnisvolle Anmaßung”) of complete knowledge. They can still point out likely implications of certain courses of action and, at the same time, honestly acknowledge uncertainty.

3. Don't bother with people who are in outright denial of facts. As communicators, we have to accept that some people are beyond reach. The likelihood of entering their bubble is extremely low, and even if one could, the chances of ‘getting through’ with a different set of arguments and facts are minute. In a world of finite resources it is ultimately more efficient to invest in more promising target groups.

Taken together, these three “don’ts” I've listed above would already make a difference, but they need to be complemented by three things that experts and policymakers should start doing.

Three do’s

1. Do focus on authenticity and credibility. For policymakers, the best way to achieve this is when words and actions are congruent – the famous “do as you say” and “say what you cannot do”. Too much spin has brought about a widespread loss of trust in media. Messages have no chance of getting through if the messenger is not believed.

The 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer (see article on page 16) shows that trust in media is at rock bottom. People are rightly concerned about fake news, mainly on social media platforms, being used as a weapon – though quality journalism seems to be enjoying a certain degree of recovery in public confidence.

The popular ‘media nihilism’ that one cannot believe anything anymore can only be countered by being authentic and credible. Public institutions should present precise, accurate and useful information. They should tackle the populist myths head-on and make the case for their own, fact-based, discourse. They need to present convincing arguments.

“Public institutions have to take the wind out of the sails of populists.”

² Former World Bank chief economist Paul Romer recently tried to follow this path. He publicly vented his criticism of the growing tendency to obscure economics through increasing “mathiness”, which makes effective scrutiny and debate more difficult.
and actively counter falsehoods, “truthiness” and outright lies.

This is helped – according to the Edelman Trust Barometer – by a recovery in public confidence in technical and experts. That said, a majority of people still consider a “person like you or me” to be credible. The power of authenticity which neighbours, friends or family have as witnesses and messengers, and the reach generated through their personal networks, means that institutions (and businesses) need to cultivate their own staff and customers as ambassadors and invest in their networks.

2. Do tell a story and bring back emotion. To succeed in public debate, policymakers need to tell a story. We have seen this at work: emotive language like “taking back control” or “Let’s make America great again” has struck a chord with voters – it is inclusive and infinitely more tangible than facts like GDP figures or budget numbers that have lost any human dimension. What does a billion euro, let alone a trillion, really mean to the average citizen? A recent analysis of World Bank Annual reports from a timespan of over 65 years found an increasing use of jargon, abstraction and a “language that is intentionally ambiguous, meant to obscure or confuse”. It is no wonder that people feel more attracted to the feel-good language of emotion – which also conveniently blanks out the full implications of the chosen policy path.

There is also no problem in sounding as patriotic as the populists. This does mean, to a certain extent, accepting the discourse of the populists, but cutting out the jingoistic exclusiveness of it. Across the entire political spectrum we are already witnessing a drive to re-appropriate and give new meaning to the concepts of nation and patriotism.

3. Do be present where people get their news. This means reaching out beyond the usual comfort zone of specialists, interest groups and traditional media. Public institutions need to be more present in spaces where people receive their primary information, exchange views and form opinions. That means outside the realms of traditional journalism and information channels, for instance on social media.

These lists of things to stop doing and things to start doing would enable European policymakers to take back the reigns of effective communication and create our very own narrative.

"These do's and don'ts would enable European policymakers to take back the reigns of effective communication and create our very own narrative.”
A CEO PERSPECTIVE
OF REPUTATION
LEADERSHIP

Communications directors are becoming more
critical to the success of a business.

BY JULIA MEIGHAN
For a long time, communication directors struggled to get the ear of their CEO, and CEOs were mostly immune to the idea of involving communications in the creation of the business strategy. This was based on the perception of the function as a mouthpiece for the organisation or ‘finesse merchants’ – teams who were able to take a strategy (that, incidentally, they had no part in formulating) and sprinkle some magic dust to make it shine.

Many still cling to this operating model and there are still obstacles that need to be overcome; however, thankfully, perceptions are changing. VMA Group has undertaken research into the challenges facing the profession, in order to understand the areas senior business executives expect the communications profession to own and where they can add the most value. The qualitative 52-page report includes 70 quotes from 40 chief executives based in Europe as well as input from leading academics.

**A call for the organisation to reinvent itself**

Chief executive officers are looking for a strategic business adviser who sits at the inner core of the organisation and proactively connects, coordinates and facilitates the business to achieve its strategic objectives. They want their communications director to be more informed, provocative and business savvy and for them to move away from managing the organisation’s messages to focus more on the digital opportunity to actively grow their business – someone who can take the global conversation about the company and harness it towards the brightest commercial future, focussing on business progress and the creation of value.

The reason that organisations are having to reinvent themselves is due to the digital revolution. Not only has this changed the business environment necessitating new products, new customer platforms, new operating models and new ways of interacting with the buying public, it has changed the very meaning of an organisation itself.

**Competencies**

The new breed of communications directors that are most in demand will possess new competencies for a new age: individuals who are drivers of change, strategic thinkers and

“The new breed of communications directors that are most in demand will possess new competencies for a new age.”

**SKILLS TO DRIVE VALUE AS A STRATEGIC BUSINESS LEADER**

As a communications director, these are the practical steps you can take to ensure you drive value for your organisation.

1. Develop strategies that affirm your role as a leader of the organisation's brand and reputation. A business’s reputation is more fragile now than ever before and safeguarding this is seen as a key value point that can be provided by communications directors.

2. The role of the communications director has become much more technical, multi-faceted, proactive and intense than ever before. For this reason, it’s important to recognise that you no longer need to be an expert in all communications-related disciplines. You should now see yourself as a business leader who can call on the expertise of others, sourcing it as and when it’s required.

3. Step into the leadership role as it’s expected and demanded of you – don’t wait to be asked. If you don’t, your role will be undermined. I’ve seen many communications directors hold themselves back, whether it’s due to a lack of business skills or, for example, financial ability. The only way around this is to get closer to the business. In general, the more insights you have into the business, the more value you’ll be able to generate.

Julia shared VMA’s insights into what CEOs want from their communications leaders at last year’s EACD Forum in Madrid. Watch our interview with her filmed at the Forum on the EACD YouTube channel.
entrepreneurial leaders. Proactive endeavour is the critical element delivering new business growth, rooting out commercial opportunities and driving change internally.

The communications function has undergone radical changes in the past decade, which has resulted in a new culture. There are a number of reasons for this, with digital firmly at the top. The digital revolution has induced more changes than we could have foreseen – from the proliferation of digital channels to the ‘always-on’ culture. In addition to this, the previous ‘message control’ model that was the mainstay of corporations in the past is well and truly over and communications professionals must somehow find a new way to create alignment among audiences without ever dictating to them. Authenticity and transparency have become the essential tonal cues today.

Chief executives believe there is a need for true leadership. Core technical skills are important but these must now be supplemented by a better business mind-set as businesses need their communications people to look out across a business horizon as a true leader does, rather than just offering support and counsel.

There are still many challenges, expectations and demands being made of communications directors in today’s organisations – from the need to be more business focussed and executive minded to being more digitally aware and more productive.

Chief executive officers are certainly challenging the profession more and more; however, that doesn’t mean they are dissatisfied, it simply means that they are sending a clear signal to the profession to say that they think the function has much more to deliver because they are forecasting a vital future for it at the heart of their business.

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**“CEOs are looking for a strategic business adviser who sits at the inner core of the organisation.”**

**Chief communications officer capabilities matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key leadership skills</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing complexity</td>
<td>Strategic mind-set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making capabilities</td>
<td>(not tactical or expert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results orientated</td>
<td>Global perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business insight</td>
<td>(not judgemental or narrow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to instil trust</td>
<td>Ability to drive (not influence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manage and lead through ambiguity</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal skills</th>
<th>What CEOs need and will demand</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Expert advice with credibility and holding excellent judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Business and financial acumen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning agility</td>
<td>Relevant business or other functional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative skills</td>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving capabilities with speed and complexity</td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new capabilities required by the modern CEO

You can now download a copy of VMA Group’s report ‘Beyond communications: A CEO perspective on reputation leadership’ from www.vmagroup.com. For further information about any of the issues raised in this article please contact Julia Meighan directly: j.meighan@vmagroup.com.
The chief communications officer and the CEO

Confidant, truth teller, strategic counsel, stakeholder advisor, cross-function observer – the chief communication officer is expected to play these and other roles for his or her chief executive officer. After all, no-one else on the management team can deliver on these expectations. We asked one such partnership for their experiences of this special relationship.

INTERVIEW WITH IDA GUTIERREZ DE ESCOFET AND RAMÓN ARAGONÉS

Ida Gutierrez De Escofet (left) and Ramón Aragonés / Images: José A. Rojo

The CEO-CCO relationship has a crucial strategic importance for both the communications function and the organisation as a whole. And nowhere is that relationship tested more than during and after a CEO transition. At the beginning of 2017, NH Hotel Group – the hotel chain with a presence in 30 countries, primarily in Europe and Latin America – found themselves in exactly that position. Following the recent EACD Forum in Madrid, we asked NH Hotel Group’s new chief executive officer, Ramón Aragonés, and the Group’s senior vice president of corporate affairs, corporate social responsibility and communication, Ida Gutierrez De Escofet, about communicating the transition between chief executive officers, how the new head of the company and the communication function should instill a sense of strategic direction from the get-go, and what chief executive officers really want from their communications leaders.

Ramón, you were appointed chief executive officer of NH Hotel Group at the start of 2017. A change in this position is always a sensitive time for an organisation: can you tell us what role you expected your head of communications to play in this transition process?

Ramón Aragonés: Our key objective during this time was to ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible. Transmitting a message of continuity during the time following the change was vital not only for external audiences but for internal
ones too. In our case this was made simple by the fact that we had a solid business plan that was garnering excellent results and so we kept our focus on that. In this sense, having a constant contact with our employees, investors, shareholders, customers and the media is a must.

Ida, can you tell us about your experience in communicating the transition between NH Hotel Group’s former chief executive officer and Ramón? What tactics did you use to transform the strategic objectives around the change of chief executive officers into tangibles?

Ida Gutierrez De Escofet: NH Hotel Group’s transition was not a typical one, as we moved from having one chief executive officer to a triple management formula in the interim until Ramón’s final appointment as new head of the company. So, on top of reinforcing the message of continuity and business as usual, from a strategic point of view we opted for giving more visibility to NH Hotel Group’s great top management across the globe instead of focusing on a single figure. We decided to turn our top-notch chiefs and managing directors into the main character of their own areas of expertise and regions to ensure that, regardless of the transition, NH Hotel Group was perceived as a global company that did not stop in its tracks because of a change of chief executive officer. I might add that the choice made by the board of finally appointing Ramón Aragonés as new chief executive officer was a good way of reaffirming the strategy that we had chosen as he is not only a man of great experience in the sector but one that knows NH Hotel Group to perfection due to his previous role as chief operations officer.

Ramón, at the onset of your term as chief executive officer, how do you instill a sense of strategic direction in your team – how do you get them to feel that there is a master plan and a specific quality to your leadership that’s different to the preceding leadership?

Ramón Aragonés: I believe in team culture and internal promotion. Our transformation is the result of the excellent work of our employees. We are a team focused on people. In fact, talent and employee engagement are strategic issues of our project. The team is key. I trust and admire them completely and believe in their true ownership of the different pillars of the plan.

How do you see the role of the head of corporate communications?

Ramón Aragonés: Ida’s role as head of corporate affairs is difficult to define because it is ever-changing according to the company’s needs but if I were to choose only one word it would be “key”. She fulfils the role of brand ambassador, advisor to the chief executive officer, coach for top executives and strategic communication planner. In short, she acts as guardian of the company’s reputation with the ultimate objective of fostering the company’s visibility and for that she needs to
efficiently manage the information of close to 400 hotels in 30 countries, putting together the different pieces of the great NH jigsaw puzzle to make everything flow as efficiently as possible.

Ida, how would you describe your working relationship with your boss and what effect does this have on your communications team?

Ida Gutiérrez de Escofet: I would describe our working relationship as of absolute confidence. In fact, I would describe my relationship with the other top executives of the company in the same way. For a communication team such as mine, having a close and transparent working relation with them is the best and only way to have an impact on the business as it allows us to anticipate both successes and possible situations of risk.

Ramón, what role does the chief communication officer play in your decision-making process as a chief executive officer?

Ramón Aragonés: The chief communication officer is always involved from the very beginning of our strategic decision making processes because their point of view is vital. In the world of today, communicating our projects, results and ultimate purpose to our different stakeholders is necessary for an outstanding business performance and to achieve this, the support of the communications team is key.

How does the relationship between the head of the company and the head of communications change during the course of the chief executive officer’s tenure at a company?

Ida Gutiérrez de Escofet: The longer you work with a chief executive officer, the easier it is to be on target. You know the way he speaks, the strong points that can be exploited and the weaker ones that must be worked on and all of this makes reinforcing him as key opinion leader easier.

Ramón Aragonés: On top of that, working together facilitates the chief communication officer’s proactivity. She knows what the company needs and how to “use” the top management best to achieve it.

Ramón, what would you say is preventing more communications leaders from achieving a seat on the board table?

Ramón Aragonés: In the current scenario where the need for responses is many times immediate, the only feasible corporate option to ensure that the response is adequate in time, quality and notoriety is to involve the chief communication officer in all relevant processes. Whether it is as part of the committee or not, chief communication officers must have a direct reporting to the chief executive officer of any company and continuously open communication channels with its top management.

"The longer you work with a chief executive officer, the easier it is to be on target."
TRAINING THE TEAM, TRAINING YOURSELF

How a mix of external workshops and internal reflection can help to accelerate your communications career.

BY ILDIKÓ KOVÁCS

Communication is only as good as the level of know-how of its practitioners but expectations and standards are not the same all over the world. Decades of research and practice have promoted the strategic, business partner role of the communication professional, but it seems that job descriptions and academic degrees still need to catch up with the reality of current practice. It is perhaps unfair to expect that universities around the world produce communication graduates with a uniform skillset when historically the practice, its importance, perceptions and applications have been so different around the world. It is equally unfair to criticise human relations departments for inadequate job descriptions, when these should in fact be created in collaboration with the hiring departments. My purpose here is to provide an example of how corporations can successfully address these challenges by implementing a different candidate assessment and onboarding process and by embracing a philosophy that supports learning and development.

Training for needs

German automotive manufacturing company Continental has 22 tire plants around the world, all of which have a communications specialist on site. After years of candidates bringing in highly diverse qualifications and skillsets under the same academic degrees yet still being unable to confidently manage the location communication of Continental’s plants, the candidate assessment process has been reviewed to focus on strategic communication. Therefore, as part of the interview and assessment process, all candidates have to create a communication strategy and complete one operative task, such as writing a press release, an article or completing a crisis communication exercise, depending on the specificity of the plant and its current communication needs. While most candidates satisfactorily manage the operative communication tasks, they struggle with the strategic communication plan and their leadership skills. This is particularly the case for both practitioners with up to five years of experience and for candidates holding a masters’ degree in communication.

Upon joining the Global Locations Communications Team at Continental’s Tire Division, the onboarding process spans over six months and features exchanges with corporate functions, training in corporate tools and platforms, visits to at least two other manufacturing facilities, as well as introduction to Continental’s products and processes.

Achieving this was no easy feat, the initial assumption being that communicators do not need much training. However, after years of internal negotiation and closer collaboration with the human relations department, Continental’s assessment has been implemented as a standard and it is aimed at identifying talent while its onboarding process is focused on developing them by filling in gaps in their knowledge (in the short and medium term) and by integrating them more into the entire business and its decision making (on the long term). So far, this process has greatly benefited the team, expanding it from a mere five in 2011 to almost 30 in 2018.

But the journey is not over. The assessment and onboarding processes have raised the bar, but an excellent communication function needs continuous training and development so that the juniors of yesterday become the confident, efficient and accountable managers of tomorrow. Leadership skills, critical thinking, reflective analysis, immersion into emerging technologies are all needed to succeed. To achieve this, Continental’s communication professionals can chose between an expert career or a managerial career. While the first career path requires more specialised knowledge, the second also requires leadership skills and strategic communication knowledge.

Whichever route they choose, communicators need a learning platform where they can share knowledge. “Communicators need a learning platform where they can share knowledge.”

Internal and external insights

The 2017 edition of the Global Locations Communications Workshop featured storytelling for public relations, CSR best practices and an
iPhone video editing seminar. The internal sessions focused on strategic input from the central functions, with input from our heads of corporate communications, corporate media relations, and human relations communications (A special thank you goes to Professor Dr. Ana Adi, who led the Storytelling for Public Relations session at the Workshop and has greatly contributed to its success and to that of the professional development of the Continental Locations communications team.)

Our focus has shifted from internal/external target audience to stakeholder prioritisation. We’ve also moved on from fearfully discussing trends and technology to identifying ways in which we can embed them in the team’s activities, thus helping communicators meet their promise and commitment to being a business partner. This is why storytelling was an essential part of the workshop, because it invited participants to picture the narratives and plots in which Continental’s role as a facilitator in the success of its stakeholders is shown. This is why the participants played with iPhones, challenging their creativity and their working practices. By learning to master new techniques regarding content communication and new technologies the communication teams can increase efficiency and speed in their communication and engage stakeholders in a dialogue.

Eight steps to advance your career

Continental’s assessment, onboarding and Global Locations Communications Workshop all have a positive contribution to the communication team. However, the responsibility for enabling and accelerating one’s career development should not be internalised. So, reflecting on the lessons learned from implementing this all at Continental, I recommend each communication practitioners eight easy steps to follow. It is all about asking the right questions and having the right attitude:

1. **Masterplan** How do you envision your career?
2. **Platform** Which business/organisation fits you?
3. **Mentoring** Who could advise you on your career path?
4. **Development** Which education could qualify you for the envisioned position?
5. **Network** Which professionals/groups could support you in your growth?
6. **Opportunity** Be proactive and seize the opportunity to grow!
7. **Authenticity** Be yourself, you can only be good in what you are passionate about!
8. **Value** Strive always to add value to other people and to your organisation!

A masterplan is your personal vision of where you see yourself professionally, as well as an honest answer to yourself of “what you really love to do”. It makes no sense to pursue a managerial position if you do not like or have the patience to work with people; in this case, an expert career could give you more satisfaction and opportunities. When searching for the right platform for your professional growth, far more important than the job description are the company’s culture, values, opportunities for development, degree of internationality and aspects such as location and benefits for employees.

It takes humility to realise that you do not know it all, but there are people who do and have already followed the career path you envision for yourself. Therefore it is good to look for a mentor in the area you would like to excel and develop professionally. Associations, universities and certain companies offer mentorship programmes. Being aligned with the current trends in the industry and acquiring the right knowledge is essential for your development as a future leader in communication, therefore continuous learning is a must. Knowledge exchange with other professionals can bring insights which could support your work and we can all learn from each other’s experiences. Do not wait for opportunity to come, but create it in the sense of taking responsibility for your own professional growth and addressing your employer in your employee dialogue or informing yourself on opportunities outside the company. In all you do, be yourself, be authentic and ensure that you add value to the organisation and to others, trying to serve with your talent an ever growing and larger number of people. It is this way that you increase your influence and advance in your career.

Continental’s approach to developing its communicators has spread outside the department, and the team’s expertise is now sought to develop the communication and leadership skills of other functions. This includes collaborations with the human resources community at Tire Division for HR Training Week and with the manufacturing facilities for the Global Talent Initiative for Plant Managers Successors. In the first case, we share our approaches on stakeholder engagement as well as tools to ensure the cascading of information at all levels of the organisation. In the second, the communication teams host the module for executive communication for an exposed leadership position, aimed at supporting future leaders to prepare for their role.

Job descriptions might still need revisiting, and differences in perceptions and impact of communication will continue to be different. What Continental’s case shows is that an excellent communication function can be created by focusing on the continuous development of those who cover it. Their expertise, then recognised, is what promotes them to the desirable position of a trusted business partner and advisor.

ILDIKÓ KOVÁCS

HEAD OF LOCATIONS COMMUNICATION
TIRE DIVISION
CONTINENTAL

Ildikó Kovacs is responsible for the global management of communications for Continental’s 22 tire plants worldwide. Since 2011, Ildikó has built up a team of around 30 international professionals and implemented new structures, processes and tools for locations communications. Ildikó has initiated various development platforms for the communication professionals and leadership teams of the Manufacturing Tires organisation.
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In October 2015, *The Economist* published its cover story about bitcoin and, more compellingly, the key technology that supports it: blockchain. (More later.) Having spoken and written about this topic for nearly a year by this point, I excitedly wrote to my colleague.

“See? Proof that I’m not nuts!”

“No, Phil,” my colleague replied. “It’s just proof you’re not the only one who’s nuts.”

Since that cover story – from what is hardly an obscure fanzine for ardent crypto-enthusiasts—we’ve seen an explosion of cryptocurrencies, several compelling blockchain experiments from corporations (even governments) and, in parallel, rapidly increased interest from the media. If I was “nuts,” the madness is spreading and in truly remarkable ways.

Given all of this, why is our industry so reluctant to talk about the transformative effect that blockchain technology could have? Most surely, there are all of the evident signals that would ordinarily indicate a generational shift in how we think about technology and communications.

But we need to take this seriously—not only the technology but the philosophical shifts that give it life. Our profession has for far too long relied on mastery of hierarchies in order to ply its trade. It must now understand how to operate in a very possible world where consensus-based proof wins over institutional trust.

**Blockchain: a brief explanation**

By way of an overview, a blockchain is a way to record data that is both consensus-based...
“Our profession has for far too long relied on mastery of hierarchies in order to ply its trade. It must now understand how to operate in a very possible world where consensus-based proof wins over institutional trust.”

Why it matters

As a career communicator, it’s easy to point to times when a single, shared, consensus-driven version of digital truth would have been useful. In a crisis, particularly in the run-up to a recall, it often takes a distressingly long time to get all of the facts of who-knew-what-when and where processes failed – a trivial matter when an enterprise has had blockchain technology already deployed. (According to Fortune, a recent Walmart blockchain pilot project compressed the time it took to track its mango supply chain from more than six days to just a few seconds.) Even in our personal lives, we accept the inefficiencies inherent in reconciling multiple versions of “digital truth” almost daily, such as the amount of time a bank transfer takes to show up in the target account or the settlement times in purchasing securities.

Today, blockchain stands to disrupt many business processes. Some notable, representative examples:

- Companies like Chronicled and Provenance are exploring this technology to help us know more about what we buy, from the journey a product has taken, to whether it is genuine, to even whether it was sourced and gathered ethically.
- Addressing the many middlemen in ad-buying, companies like MadHive, NYIAX, MetaX and others are focusing on making this market more efficient and fair.
- Various projects are applying these supply-chain principles to virtual goods, such as the ones purchased in games, making such goods able to survive the shutdown of a virtual world.
- Leading banks – precisely the kind of institution cryptocurrency was meant to disintermediate – are piloting projects aimed at achieving greater clearing and settlement efficiencies, as well as transform sectors like trade finance and lending.
- Many nation-states and municipalities are looking at blockchain technology for government services, ranging from securing land titles and health records to (somewhat incredibly) frequent-buyer loyalty programmes. One project, Bitnation, even wants to make it possible to replace many of the functions that nation states provide.

Challenges

But for all of this, there remain several relatively under-explored challenges.

For one thing, there is the pervasive notion that data stored on a blockchain equals “truth” in much the same way that pundits 15 years ago claimed that “blogs” automatically delivered “transparency.” This, of course, is almost fatally facile. As your grade-school computer lab teacher taught you: “garbage in, garbage out.”
HOW ARE EACD MEMBERS ACROSS DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES SIZING UP THE POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT OF BLOCKCHAIN ON THEIR INDUSTRY?

Blockchain and... banking

Digitisation represents the future of banks – a new way to shape the customer journey on the retail side and to provide faster, more sophisticated and more appropriate solutions in the corporate and institutional banking universe. At BNP Paribas, we have been studying distributed ledger technology, which encompasses the blockchain, since 2011 and are members of a number of consortia working to develop standards in this field for the financial industry – notably the R3 international consortium and the LabChain working group in France. Each of the Group’s businesses is undertaking its own specific studies to determine how useful the blockchain could be and how to apply it. At our CIB division, for instance, we developed Cash Without Borders, a solution used in international payments. It eliminates delays, unexpected costs and processing errors; it thus improves the customer experience. By clearing, settling and reporting payments real time, Cash Without Borders paves the way for real-time cash management. Another example is BNP Paribas Asset Management has been among the first leading global asset managers to take part successfully in a full end-to-end fund transaction test late last year, using distributed ledger technology. While investors will benefit from reduced transaction time, BNPP AM will also profit from a sleeker, more streamlined system underpinned by technology and relevant for all fund types and geographies.

Blockchain and... insurance

AXA is the first major insurance group to offer insurance using blockchain technology through fizzy, a 100 per cent automated, 100 per cent secure platform for parametric insurance against delayed flights. For us, blockchain is a technology worth investing in since it offers tools to provide insurance differently. Maybe you’ve already heard about smart contracts, also known as a cryptocurrency, which is a computer programme that directly controls the transfer of digital currencies or assets between parties under certain conditions? Well, through these smart contracts it is possible to agree with your customers on a shared view of reality independently maintained by a ‘blockchain if/then function’. It also allows triggering indemnities automatically. Fizzy is a good proof of this: we offer direct, automatic compensation to policyholders whose flights are delayed. If your plane is more than two hours late, fizzy will indemnify you immediately. Some other features of blockchain make it also possible to more efficiently track claims processes and make them faster, more transparent and more trustful with the same status update shared to all parties and time-tracked. So from a communication perspective, blockchain can reinforce our relationship with the customers because it answers to their upcoming expectations in the fields of transparency and trust they want insurers to fulfil.

Blockchain and... FinTech

In its position papers, the European Association of Cooperative Banks (EACB) has pointed out that the arrival of FinTech start-ups has spurred innovation, accelerated the transformation of banks and opened the door to new win-win collaborations. Technology applied to Finance can help in delivering certain services in a more consumer-friendly way or in organising processes more efficiently. FinTech could bring solutions in the payments or securities areas too. Distributed ledger technology offers new opportunities and advantages and could provide for the development of more efficient trading platforms and payments systems. However, it is also at a very premature stage and its use holds several challenges for an implementation involving lots of clients. Interoperability is also highly beneficial, provided it is developed in a way that ensures high levels of cybersecurity, data safety and customer protection. Moreover, a number of banks have been reviewing new blockchain-based payment protocols available on the market for real-time payments. These solutions take advantage of the capabilities of blockchain to execute payment obligations netting and enable real-time clearing without the involvement of correspondent banks on each transaction. However, the EACB must caution that the growth of FinTech should not happen at the expense of financial and consumer protection as stipulated by the relevant EU and national legislation. The full benefits from technological innovation and healthy competition can only happen if the principle of ‘same services, same risks, same rules and same supervision’ is safeguarded.

Marianne Huvé-Allard
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Laurent Winnock
Chief Communications Officer and Director of Brand and Sustainability, AXA Belgium

Elisa Bevilacqua
Head of Department of Communications and Research, EACB (The European Association of Co-operative Banks)
Blockchain and... public relations

Given the disruptive power of blockchain, a growing number of companies from various industries are deploying proofs of concept across different enterprise scenarios. To be able to cash in on this technology, it is important to determine the merits of each use case and understand the key challenges and solutions available. According to the World Economic Forum’s September 2015 report, Deep Shift: Technology Tipping Points and Societal Impact, 10 per cent of the world’s GDP might be stored on blockchain by 2027. Although the digital currency bitcoin was developed to disrupt the financial sector, its underlying blockchain technology is now being adopted for a number of non-financial scenarios. The distributed ledger technology ensures accountability, immutability, auditability, and integrity of data, making it ideal for developing e.g. data-driven loyalty and reward programs, digital identity and digital rights management. However, enterprise blockchain is still maturing and imposes many challenges for public relations. Despite the hype, the technology is difficult for even technology journalists to understand and difficult to explain. That means public relations technology journalists to understand and difficult to explain. That means public relations

Blockchain and... the tech sector

The potential benefits of blockchain’s distributed trust mechanism are numerous: shared security, no trusted third party needed, public verifiability of interaction accuracy, process transparency, information integrity, data redundancy and homogeneity, timely data extraction, finality and immutability, provenance, decrease in costs, automation through smart contracts and integration with IoT devices, process optimisation. The amount of supported applications is huge: logistics, smart (energy) contracts, supply chain management, HR, distributed cloud storage, smart property, IoT, healthcare, ownership and royalty distribution, proof-of-ownership, e-voting. By design, blockchain is not just a novel disruptive technology: thanks to its characteristics, it allows for new interaction models. The technology has such a big impact that it fundamentally influences a company’s overall product management, organisation and business. Thus, the adoption of a blockchain requires a complete change of mind-set with regard to internal processes, resource planning, team expertise, partnership networks. So, before looking into its development, key questions we want to answer are: is blockchain the right solution to your business opportunity? What is the key value and impact of adopting blockchain, not only for you but also for your partner network? And which steps are needed to integrate blockchain in your current industrial processes and transform the baseline to a successful and improved business model? At Sirris we have experts who do in-depth research on the technology in its actual company context. This way they are able to help industrial companies to make the right decisions.”

For all of the brilliance that blockchain technology represents, the core challenge comes down to what I’ve started referring to as “the last millimeter” – that crucial spot where the data stored on a blockchain comes from a decidedly real-world source inhabited by erratic and flawed homo sapiens. It’s well and good to have a temperature sensor (in, say, a poultry delivery truck) record its data to a blockchain, but such a sensor can be foiled by an ice cube or well-chilled soda can. Using an “oracle” (a term of art for an off-chain authoritative data source) might be a good idea until perhaps that source comes under the control of a party you disapprove of.

But the solutions to these problems are relatively simple, and need not form additional rationale to support our industry’s characteristic reluctance to embrace this technology and the philosophies that support it. First, I argue that immutability isn’t necessarily the primary benefit of a blockchain but, rather, consensus. In other words, nothing gets written until all parties (or a majority, depending on the system rules) agree on the data. The more parties, the better. If the system was built to defraud its participants, the good news is that it would have to be completely up-front about its intentions.

Also, while it may be an easy matter to say, place that ice cube on top of the temperature sensor, this is mitigated by the use of multiple sensors—in effect making this kind of fraud economically infeasible. Resurrected for a blockchain world, the phrase vires in numeris (“strength in numbers”) not only describes the consensus mechanism for recording data but gathering it as well.

Finally, blockchain technology is transformative enough without having to oversell it as “truth.” For all the reasons described above, a shared version of digital truth—within an enterprise, between industry participants, and a broad range of stakeholders—already enables applications and communications scenarios that weren’t possible before. While a broad ‘seal of approval’ effort will be necessary to move this topic from B2B to B2C relevance (such that consumers are taught to value blockchain-recorded data more than conventionally recorded information), the potential impact on consumer marketing for sustainable, responsibly sourced products is substantial.
Current state of play

While many of the corporate-sponsored pilot projects that we’ve seen in this space have been stunning in their ambition and vision, no production-class case study in corporate adoption has yet emerged. I predict this will change in 2018. At the very least, the Australian Stock Exchange’s imminent deployment of blockchain technology could be highly instructive. We’ll likely see more deployments at scale this year.

My advice to all newcomers remains the same:
- Ask the big question: “What do you think you and all of the people that matter to your organization can do with a single, shared, permanent version of digital truth?” If you can respond to this with a convincing answer, you’re well on your way.
- Be practical: “Can this problem be solved decently enough through more conventional means?” Blockchain talent is expensive and the standards and tools are still in flux. Besides, rather than join the hordes of companies adding “blockchain” to their mission for a quick bump in coverage or stock price, it’s best to be seen as delivering.
- Investigate possibilities for consortia: even if blockchain technology fails spectacularly, it will be known for inspiring new ideas in intra-industry collaboration. Chances are good that there is a consortium focused on blockchain topics in your industry or market. Join it.
- See and be seen: closer to home, try to find local meetups about blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies in your area, depending on your interest. You’ll learn far more from engaging with the passionate people in this space than merely reading about the topic.

Toward a secure narrative

In closing, know that when you have access to a single, secure, consensus-based truth, you can start to conceive of what I have started calling a “secure narrative”—the result of pouring blockchain technology over conventional digital communications. In simplest terms: Traditional media publishing (e.g., print and broadcast) meant you could have ‘secure’ content (the printed word was what it was; you couldn’t un-ring a bell once broadcasted) but not ‘open’ (the means of production at scale were expensive). With the advent of digital publishing and social media, the content wasn’t secure (extremely malleable, in fact, as any Wikipedia-obsessed executive might tell you) but was very open—the barriers to entry were very low.

With blockchain technology, we can now conceive of both. In this exciting future, we can have previously unimagined certainty in our digital communications, plus the openness that can allow it to scale and be the most useful to the most stakeholders—companies, regulators, NGOs, media, and the public at large.

As such, blockchain technology stands to mend the frayed fabric of digital trust, and so our trade must make every effort to contribute meaningfully to this ecosystem. In fact, as the conversation around native advertising has borne out in the U.S., our trade stands to help lead the discussion of ethical behavior and meaningful integration. We therefore must approach this with confidence in the value of our trade’s contributions, but also due humility in terms of the role we will play in cooperation with the innovators and thinkers who are already building this future. We will only have one shot, lest any mishandled early efforts themselves become immutably recorded.

“In this exciting future, we can have previously unimagined certainty in our digital communications, plus the openness that can allow it to scale.”

Phil Gomes leads Edelman’s blockchain center-of-excellence and advises both enterprise and emerging companies on digital communications. His approach seeks shared surface area between hacker culture and corporate communications. Phil is widely considered to be the first PR professional to start a blog and the first to demonstrate blockchain technology’s potential impact in communications. He is also the communications director for the Chicago Blockchain Center, a public/private partnership.
EXTREMELY TOGETHER: HOW KOFI ANNAN AND 10 YOUNG ACTIVISTS TOOK ON VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Ten activists decided to fight against extremist groups using their own recruitment strategies: peer to peer communications designed to engage young people. 18 months after joining forces, they were awarded the Digital Communications Award 2017 for their achievements in reaching hundreds of thousands of young people.

BY BIJAN FARNOUDI

Bjorn Ihler was a teenager enjoying a few days away at a Norwegian youth camp when he found himself staring into the barrel of a loaded gun held by right wing extremist Anders Breivik. Breivik, then 32, killed 77 people that day, most of them teenagers. Breivik’s shot missed Bjorn who went on to study extremist narratives and how to counter them.

Around the same time, several thousand kilometres south, Hajer Sharief was just 19 years old when her country, Libya, descended into a bloody civil war that replaced organised oppression with the unstructured chaos, economic downturn and violence of Libya today. Appalled by the unhinged violence, Hajer founded Together We Build It, an organisation protecting women and youth in this increasingly hostile environment.

“We created a targeted counter narrative to the narrative of violent extremists, created not by policy wonks in conference rooms, but by youth on the ground.”
Harnessing the drive of the young

While the two stories above are anecdotal, they underline two points:

1. Violent extremism affects young people disproportionately. More than any other age group, the young are both perpetrators and victims.
2. Every attack leaves behind young people who are willing to fight back and to defend the values of unity, hope and pluralism against the divisiveness, hate and violence of extremists.

Harnessing young people’s drive to answer the dark absolutism of extremism with tolerance and optimism was Kofi Annan’s starting point for what was to become Extremely Together. With his foundation, Kofi Annan decided to organise the dispersed voices of those youth standing up to extremism in their communities, often at great personal risk, and to lend them political weight and reach beyond their neighbourhoods.

1. First, Kofi Annan and the team recognised that young people will listen to other young people first. We selected 10 inspiring counter extremists, including Bjorn Ihler and Hajer Sharief, and asked them to write the world’s first guide to counter extremism for young people, by young people.

2. Second, we recognised that, no matter how well-intentioned, a report from some non-governmental organisation would not make into the heart of affected communities and would not reach the young netizen of today. To break free from the dustiness of UN/NGO initiatives and to appeal to young people confronted with the lure of extremism, we gave the 10 their own identity under the banner “extremely together”. We wanted to reclaim the notion of “extremism” by sending out the message that one can be extremely constructive, helpful and positive.

We knew that the guide had to be available digitally, not just as a PDF but custom made for a scrolling digital native with video content for easy consumption and social media dissemination. The digital guide has a journalistic feel with each of the 10 presenting one chapter each, outlining a different approach to countering violent extremism.

3. Third, we needed to lend their voices political weight. In return for their engagement, Kofi Annan vowed to throw all of his gravitas behind them, giving them access to the highest political circles, to media, donors and to millions of his followers on social media. With each of the 10 functioning not just as the technical expert for the realities on the ground but also as the most effective and best connected influencer to reach their peers, we pursued a strategy of profiling them prominently, giving them a dedicated microsite and their own social media channels as Extremely Together. Their international recognition did not just give them credibility among their peers but also among their local political class.

From grassroots to influencers

The group of 10 has since been invited to speak at ministerial events in their countries, to advise the UN as part of specially formed expert groups on extremism and the like. Over the past year, they have received seven different awards including the Digital Communications Award and have been covered in media around the world.

We created a targeted counter narrative to the narrative of violent extremists, created not by policy wonks in conference rooms, but by youth on the ground and online where extremists actively recruit. As our main spokespersons, the 10 youths did not parrot wisdoms dictated by highly paid consultants but relayed their own messages born of their own experiences, in a language accessible to their peers. This approach enabled us to enter a space that is for now largely occupied by radicals and extremists without competition, without dis-
WHAT DO CORPORATE AUDIENCES WANT FROM YOUR WEBSITE?

The best corporate sites challenge peoples’ perceptions of the brand and actively seek to influence stakeholders. To do so successfully, a thorough understanding of your audiences’ requirements and of user experience is critical.

BY ROWENA CROWLEY

Today’s best corporate sites challenge peoples’ perceptions and actively seek to influence stakeholders. To do so successfully, a thorough understanding of your audiences’ requirements is critical. Superunion recently carried out a user-focused review of FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 sites to evaluate how well the needs of stakeholders are being met and how seamless and enjoyable the user experience is.

Our research involved interviewing stakeholders to better understand their requirements and applying our criteria of what makes a successful user experience to 50 large, listed companies from Europe. The criteria we used were based on our 23 years’ experience in building corporate websites.

1. Stakeholders

A corporate website is the hub of a company’s online communications and the only place where all audiences converge. We focused on four key stakeholders: investors, journalists, potential employees and sustainability professionals. After interviewing a range of people from each audience, we compiled a list of tasks each group carries out when visiting a corporate site. We then evaluated how easy it was to complete these tasks in our sample.

Investors

Unsurprisingly, our panel look for a logical site layout that allows them to quickly find annual reports and results presentations. Additionally, they value tools that make their lives easier, including the ability to download key dates into calendars and find transcripts of earnings announcements that they can search, instead of having to listen to or watch the whole presentation.

Investors’ needs were the best met out of the four stakeholder groups. However, areas of improvement include:

- 100 per cent include the latest results and reports, however, they aren’t always easy to locate
- 36 per cent include an investment case

“Journalists’ needs were the least well met, despite being one of the most time-poor and influential stakeholders.”
Journalists Our panel said they want to easily get a snapshot of what a company does, including financial highlights, operations and employee figures. They also want the ability to access downloadable images, media team contact details and thought leadership, and sign up to news alerts.

Our analysis revealed that journalists’ needs were the least well met, despite being one of the most time-poor and influential stakeholders. For example:
- **50 per cent** allow users to subscribe to news alerts
- **32 per cent** provide blogs or Q&As which give personal views from management

Potential employees As potential employees make snap decisions about a company, sites need to quickly convey the culture and opportunities available. Our panel said job vacancies must be easy to find, the recruitment process should be clear and they want the ability to sign up for job alerts.

While 82 per cent of the sites made it easy to find vacancies, areas of improvement include:
- **38 per cent** provide the tools to sign up to job alerts
- **44 per cent** include recruitment process information
- **40 per cent** have benefits information

Sustainability professionals While this is a diverse audience group with different interests, common requirements include information on sustainability performance data, updates on sustainability activity, policies on key topics, and a reports archive. The panel expected to see sustainability content across the entire site to demonstrate that it permeates the whole company story.

Our analysis showed that most companies have a dedicated approach to sustainability communications. Areas of improvement include:
- **14 per cent** provide sustainability contact details
- **26 per cent** clearly feature performance targets on the site, not just in the report

2. User experience

A corporate website is a critical asset to build and maintain a company’s reputation and user experience plays a fundamental role. We rated the websites in our sample in four key areas:

**Content relevance and effectiveness** We looked for copy that is written with different stakeholders in mind, channels and formats being used appropriately to tell the story, and insights on key topics affecting the company and their place in the world.

This was the highest scoring area, with only 4 per cent being classed as leading. These results mirror what we’re seeing with our clients as companies have been investing in content over the past few years. The biggest pitfalls were sites with dense, unstructured information and outdated, irrelevant content.

**Site architecture and navigation** Site architecture should give you an instant feel for the scale of a business and its priorities, while also providing a logical structure. Page layout and content hierarchy should encourage exploration and recognisable conventions should be consistently applied, so you can explore intuitively.

“A corporate website is a critical asset to build and maintain a company’s reputation and user experience plays a fundamental role.”
Since joining Superunion in 2015, Rowena has worked for a number of cross-sector clients advising on digital and social media strategy, corporate branding and content development.

She previously managed Westminster City Council’s government website and spent three years at Google working in online marketing and communications. Superunion is a next-generation brand agency. Superunion is the convergence of five WPP brand consultancies and design agencies—Brand Union, The Partners, Lambie-Nairn, Addison Group and VBAT.

If you would like to receive a full copy of the research, including a list of the best performing sites, please contact Rachael.Stackhouse@superunion.com.

What does GDPR spell for your PR?

25th May 2018 sees the biggest shift to data privacy laws in 20 years. Whether inside or outside the EU, most of us will be affected.

There has never been a more important time to get your business and its communications in order.

We can help spell it out for your business, and help you embrace a new era in data privacy.
BIG DATA-BASED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Big data enable strategic communicators to analyse the needs, opinions, attitudes and behaviour of their stakeholders in even more detail. From the planning to evaluation, big data analyses make corporate communication more analytic and potentially more strategic.

BY CHRISTIAN WIENCIERZ AND ULRIKE RÖTTER

Despite their often-stated potential for corporate communication, studies show that only a minority of corporations and agencies make use of big data applications for their own communication. Communications must be careful not to miss the bus here, especially since disciplines such as marketing have become much more advanced in the field. This is why, in the course of a study funded by the Academic Society for Management & Communication, we interviewed 35 big data and social media analytics experts from enterprises, services providers and the sciences about big data in the field of strategic communication.

Variety as the greatest potential

Big data describes the utilisation of huge amounts of data which have no standardised shape and structure and cannot be handled with the help of standard software and regular database infrastructures. As demonstrated by our results, it isn’t the volume of big data but rather its variety and velocity which create added value for strategic communication: any kind of data from any source can be used in a variety of formats and at high speed, including text files, photos, data gathered from the Internet of Things, and so on. Corporate communicators use sophisticated listening tools to catch and process the needs, opinions, attitudes and user behaviour of target groups from around the world. By connecting this data to market data they can track evolving perceptions of their companies, brands and products in different countries, and this more or less in real time. Insights gained from big data analyses allow companies to carry out more individualised communications in marketing, public relations and internal communication than in the past (see figure 1 next page). Apart from these general potentials listed in Figure 1, big data also provide added value for the different phases of communication planning.

“IT ISN’T THE VOLUME OF BIG DATA BUT RATHER ITS VARIETY AND VELOCITY WHICH CREATE Added VALUE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION.”

Big data applications for situation analysis

Big data provide communicators with a broader knowledge base for situation analysis. In this context, share-of-voice analysis based on big data is especially worth mentioning. This improved market and competition analysis provides insights about which share of the online discourse one’s own brand or company has in different regions compared to
Marketing communication

According to the interviewed experts, almost all communication with customers will benefit from big data analyses – for example:

- Individual product and brand communication
- Online touchpoint analyses
- Predictive analyses of the spread of product and label messages
- Identification of topics or content marketing
- The processing of voluminous customer data for online marketing, and this almost in real time
- Identification of market shares by way of share-of-voice analyses

Public Relations

In the future, public relations will make even more intensive use of big data for:

- Individual communication with journalists, investors, politicians etc.
- Online touchpoint analyses
- The identification of topics for story telling
- Issues analysis and topical analysis for issues management or crisis communication
- The identification of relevant influencers
- The improvement of reputation management
- Share-of-voice analyses, among others for success measurement

Internal Communication

The possibilities of big data for internal communication are treated rather negligently, despite their huge potential. Such possibilities could include:

- Individual communication with staff members
- Automatised evaluation of internal communications measures
- The perception and understanding of messages
- Usage habits when it comes to internal media and channels

Formulating data-based strategies

With the help of a network analysis of user-generated content, communicators are able to filter out important bloggers and other influencers for certain regions, and find out if they support topics and opinions which might be suitable for the company.

Apart from a detailed analysis of company-relevant topics and of how these should be applied (i.e. which wording or which channels should be used), the optimisation of online-touchpoint analysis is another potential use of big data: for the sake of one’s own strategy it can be analysed how, when and most of all where (at which online touchpoints) the target group looks for information about a certain group of products or a topic, as well as in which ways it expresses its opinion. Detailed target group analyses of aspects like region and demography are also possible.

Automatised communications measures

Examples of the automatised implementation of big data communications measures are the use of bots for customer queries and real time or programmatic advertising. This purely data-based utilisation of advertising content is also based on predicative analysis. Just the same, the individualised adjustment of content is possible: motifs, colours or texts can be created in a way that allows for modularly composing them for each specific target group.

Evaluation based on broader data stocks

Finally, big data applications have the potential to clearly optimise the measurement of success and to do so in real time. Among others, different kinds of advertisement may be created in different versions, to find out which works best. For example, in the field of influencer marketing, it is possible to analyse which of the influencers the company cooperates with are most successful in which markets. These analyses also clearly reveal which posts work best at which time, as well as which language style is most likely to be accepted. Just the same, a continuous share-of-voice analysis can inform if and how public attention changes when it comes to a certain brand, certain products or certain companies.
when compared to competitors. This way, it is possible to react immediately to competitors.

How to ‘do’ big data

- Big data applications must be oriented at the goals of an enterprise. Before using an application it must be clear which of the company’s goals they serve. The services providers we have interviewed complain precisely about this: often, goals are only formulated in the vaguest terms. Furthermore, despite the possibilities of improved analysis offered by big data, no clean actual state is measured, which makes the evaluation of the success of big data measures much more difficult.

- Iterative processes and ways of thinking are indispensable. That is to say that the same or similar actions - such as the generation, cleaning and analysis of data - are repeated several times until the result of the application is in line with the set goal. The motto is: try and fail fast.

- Inner-organisational data silos must be reduced, and cross-departmental cooperation must be supported, e.g. among corporate communication, marketing and IT.

- As the ideal case of a suitable data infrastructure we have sketched a ‘data lake’ (see diagram). In contrast to the data warehouse, where only condensed data is stored, in an ideal scenario the data lake stores internal data (first party data), jointly used data (second party data) and external data (third party data) in a structured, semi-structured or unstructured form, close to the format of raw data. The structure follows the application when the data is needed, although experts point to the difficulty of aligning this ideal case with existing data protection laws.

- Ethical guidelines must be formulated for the use of big data in corporate communication, taking into consideration both the potentials and possible risks. At the same time an overview of existing data protection regulations is necessary.

- Finally, the awareness of the limits of technology must be raised: whoever attempts a strong simplification of complex communications patterns will always come up against natural limiting factors – such as in the case of sentiment analysis, where it is often not possible to classify verbal statements according to simple patterns.

Knowledge gained through the analysis of big data provides communication professionals with the possibility of communicating in a more strategic way, and big data tools provide communicators with new opportunities for illustrating the contribution of strategic communication to organisational goals.
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Despite their best efforts to prevent and control crises, every organisation will unfortunately and inevitably experience at least one at some point. The increasing complexity and interconnectedness of the supply chains that feed our industries inevitably lead to more complex issues that come to light more quickly and in higher definition than in the past (due in part to the rigour and reach of systems of control, monitoring and reporting that companies and NGOs have created). Add to this mix the democratic effect of social and digital media, which grants each connected citizen unprecedented reach and amplification of their voice, and the conditions are set for crises to become larger. What in the past may have contained within a specialised or localised audience, today can very quickly transcend borders, bringing new challenges and needs to those tasked to help companies handle their crises and issues.

Aside from the obvious increase in velocity that social networks bring to the spread of crises in our digital age, there is also an increase in frequency, driven both by the transparency of genuine issues that can be uncovered, researched and proven with digital tools, and the murky continuum of mistakes, misquotes and misappropriations – intentional or otherwise – that sometimes gets lumped together under the slippery term of 'fake news'.

To be sure, ever since the printing press was invented, the ability to create and share incorrect news, or even propaganda has existed. But in the age of Twitter, today’s crisis communications practitioner likely spends as much time busting the myths and setting the record straight, as they do monitoring and managing genuine issues.

Despite the acceleration and volume that digital and social media has brought to crisis management, the fundamentals remain unchanged: robust processes, clear roles and responsibilities, the right spirit, and good preparation are all as relevant in the digital environment as they were in the analogue world.

THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

Today, the conversation about crisis communications is dominated by digital and social media. But what matters most is ensuring that all audiences – whether inside or outside the organisation – are appropriately engaged and involved. The right level of stakeholder support can help to unlock opportunity in the most unfortunate of circumstances.

By Tom Armiteage
- Robust processes: the heart of a well-functioning crisis communications plan is a robust process that works across functions and business units and allows for crisis managers to efficiently handle a range of issues and situations at various levels of the organisation. With increasingly integrated supply and distribution chains, and more matrixed organisations, the need for a process that can work at local market, regional and global level and be fully understood across the organisation is a given.

- Clear roles and responsibilities: a well-defined list of accountabilities and responsibilities is essential to the smooth running of the crisis communications process, as is clear allocation of those tasks to individuals who are able to dedicate themselves during a time of crisis to executing them. Ultimately, any plan able to dedicate themselves during a time of crisis is absolutely essential to showing how seriously the company takes it. Crises are not a time for leaders to be absent from the stage.

- Preparation: the crisis communications plan can’t be created and then left in the drawer – it needs to live and breathe in the organisation and be well embedded in the broader team’s ways of working. Regular training and refreshers should be provided, not only to the crisis communications team but also to the owners of critical facilities and processes within the organisation. Increasingly, it makes sense to run training in a virtual environment since this reflects the reality of how crises and issues are handled today. Ensuring that the process runs just as smoothly with all those involved on a Skype call rather than sitting together in a situation room, is a useful preparation for a real event. That said, our digital world shouldn’t blind us to the need for an analogue plan B: these days everything lives in a folder on our laptops or a note in our smartphones, but during a power or network outage, having access to the crisis communications plan, phone tree, and conference call numbers in a hard copy format is essential!

**A more genuine form of engagement**

While many aspects of crisis communications remain unchanged, some have undoubtedly evolved. Digital transformation of our businesses and stakeholder environment offers us the possibility to invest in engagement and building relationships before, during and after crises in ways that were not present before. New ways of communicating and connecting give us the opportunity to build trust and gain benefit of the doubt in the eyes of stakeholders at scale, and create multiple outlets for us to share our side of the story in a transparent, rich and compelling way, as well as to have others share our story on our behalves. Engagement then, is an even more critical instrument in the toolkit of crisis communications and a key element in protecting and managing reputation.

In the past, communications consultants would target clients’ C-suites with the argument that by communicating and connecting proactively before a crisis even occurs, companies can help to build a reputational cushion that may mitigate some of the damaging effects of a crisis: some even described this as serving like an insurance policy, with the premium invested through communication “paying out” during a time of crisis and thus helping make a company’s reputation more resilient. In today’s world of sophisticated stakeholder audiences and greater transparency through digital media, such a mindset risks sounding somewhat one-sided: what is also needed is genuine dialogue with stakeholders and alignment between the
“Close collaboration and engagement can lead to improved outcomes and also result in partnerships with organisations that are willing to advocate on behalf of you.”

corporate goals and messages and the action that companies take.

What form this increased and more genuine form of engagement takes differs depending on the audiences we aim for and the kinds of risks we face as a business. A company that operates manufacturing facilities might implement a local stakeholder engagement plan, inviting government officials, employees’ families and friends, and local neighbours into a particular plant to help them see what goes on inside and to reassure about the safety and security of the operations there. Today, we must do the same but at scale, reinforcing the face-to-face and online engagement through our digital channels to our virtual neighbours and community members, helping them to see the effort and investment we make in safety, security and reducing the environmental impact of our operations, for instance. And offering them the opportunity to get back in touch with us through our corporate social media channels, of course.

From supply-chain management to employee advocacy

Even more complex is the social and environmental sustainability space where many companies have made tremendous progress in the past decade, working in collaboration and close consultation with other stakeholders to identify and take ownership of aspects of their supply chain that we were previously the source of crises. In the case of Mondelēz International, active engagement with suppliers, farmers, NGOs and civil society around cocoa growing has led to the creation and implementation of a 400 million USD programme to develop a sustainable future supply of cocoa, which in order to be achieved will tackle many of the issues our industry faces like the environmental impact of farming, water usage or the continued prevalence of child labour. This kind of close collaboration and engagement can lead to improved outcomes and also result in partnerships with organisations that are willing to advocate on behalf of you. The value of this form of advocacy, also in times of crisis, should be clear, since it can only result from a long-term investment of genuine commitment and energy to a shared cause.

Finally, another form of engagement will come to play an increasing role in mitigating issues and crises in the years to come: employee advocacy, already a strong and recognized force in the space of employer branding, recruitment and internal engagement, can help to pay dividends too externally. By living the values of an organisation, knowing at first hand the alignment between talk and action, and sharing a sense of pride in what the organisation is doing and creating, employees are in a unique position not only to advocate for a company at a time of crisis but also through their engagement to help it recover faster and more effectively from challenges. Social platforms that facilitate this engagement internally and advocacy externally must surely also be part of the suite of channels that communicators look to when seeking to find the opportunity in crisis. ●
THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE HASHTAG

How one university harnessed the power of the hashtag and became a symbol of academic freedom.

By Aranka Szabó

On March 28, 2017, the Hungarian parliament tabled higher education legislation that set new requirements for universities accredited in foreign countries. Several of the passages apply only to Central European University (CEU), threatening the university’s continued operation in Hungary. Thirteen days later, the legislation became law. Within those 13 days, CEU became a symbol of academic freedom.

Before the spring of last year, Central European University was a small English-language graduate institution in Budapest, with a steady flow of students from over 100 countries, dedicated alumni all over the world, proud and loyal academic and administrative staff, and a strong open society mission. And we remain that. But we lived in a bubble. That bubble was burst on March 28, and we had to take a good look at who we were and what we stood for.

CEU has always been a community, first and foremost. We are not, and have never been, a political organisation. We are a community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, supporters and friends who came together in an unprecedented and extraordinary way, to defend CEU, and with it, academic freedom in Hungary and beyond.

Building a plane while flying it

In the middle of a propaganda attack against the university, CEU leadership set up a response team to respond rapidly and strategically to government misinformation and to handle media inquiries. During the first CEU press conference of the crisis on March 29, CEU president and rector Michael Ignatieff called on the Hungarian government to “find a satisfactory way forward that allows CEU to continue in Budapest and to maintain the academic freedoms essential to its operation.” From that moment, our fight had a greater purpose than keeping the university in Budapest: defending CEU became synonymous with defending academic freedom.

CEU moved into crisis communications mode with no time to develop a comprehensive strategy or hire external consultants. What we did was to turn our passion for everything CEU stands for into a cause that resonates. CEU, its open society mission, academic excellence, local civic engagement, international community, values and principles were all reflected in #IstandwithCEU.

#IstandwithCEU first appeared on Twitter on March 28 and was soon embraced by supporters. By March 30, we had the #IstandwithCEU logo which we posted on social media, put on badges and temporary tattoos and banners hung from buildings across our campus. The hashtag became a form of protest, the symbol of the defense of academic freedom.

With the whole world watching

We also made a strategic shift from posting to institutional CEU social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube) exclusively in English, to adding Hungarian in order to engage with the local community more effectively. The first post in Hungarian, including the Hungarian version of #IstandwithCEU #aCEUvalvagyok, was shared on March 30. CEU’s first Hungarian Facebook post reached over 115,000 people, over three times the total number of followers at the time.

Our overall content strategy did not change – it only became more focused. On
“CEU is a university, not a political organisation, therefore we sought to find a solution through negotiations with the government.”

Facebook, we concentrated on showing CEU as a community of people, to contrast the often demonised image projected by government misinformation. Testimonials by students, alumni, staff and faculty, group photos of the CEU community expressing gratitude for the immense support we received from Hungary and abroad, video montages of CEU students expressing support for the University in their mother tongues; together with the concise visual of #IstandwithCEU/#aCEUvalvagyok, conveyed the message loud and clear.

While the CEU Facebook page became a mirror reflecting how we saw ourselves, the @CEUHungary Twitter and Instagram feeds opened windows on how the world saw us. Declarations of support began pouring in— from 19 Nobel laureates, the president of Germany, the presidents of Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Oxford, and thousands of researchers, professional organisations and individuals. CEU leaders appeared on CNN, BBC, in the New York Times and media outlets from Berlin to Sydney, Tokyo to Buenos Aires. People sent in photos of themselves with the #IstandwithCEU/#aCEUvalvagyok badges and hashtags from all corners of the world. #IstandwithCEU was embraced by influencers on Facebook and Instagram, and started trending on Twitter on April 1.

#IstandwithCEU called for support in our fight for academic freedom. What the university never called for, or endorsed, was demonstrations in its name. CEU is a university, not a political organisation, therefore we sought to find a solution through negotiations with the government. This stance, reflected on official CEU accounts, prompted volunteers to set up unofficial, non-affiliated social media accounts using some variation of #IstandwithCEU. The largest of these, on Facebook, was started by volunteers, including CEU students and alumni. We were in contact with the administrators – the page owners were an invaluable help in mobilising support beyond what the university was able to do on its own.

CEU’s dedicated network of alumni was another key factor in garnering support. An alumnus who works at the European Commission suggested a Thunderclap campaign on Twitter to call for European leaders’ help in time for a debate on the legislation known as lex CEU in the European Parliament on April 26. The Academic Freedom and CEU Thunderclap launched on April 25 with a social media reach of 3,081,575 people.

According to research by Milan Janosov, doctoral student at CEU’s Center for Network Science, and Professor Balazs Vedres, the CEU-related hashtags #IstandwithCEU, #aCEUvalvagyok and #LexCEU had a potential reach of 140 million on Twitter in April.

To date, there are 6,734 public posts on Instagram with #IstandwithCEU. #IstandwithCEU appeared on badges and banners, among many others, in San Francisco, Prague, London, Bratislava, Tallin, Dhaka, Tbilisi, Munich, New York and Paris, and was written in the sand in Bali, Iran and Iceland.

In June 2017, the Hungarian government entered negotiations with the State of New York, where CEU is registered and accredited, to come to an agreement that would enable CEU to continue operations in Budapest with its academic freedom intact. The negotiations resulted in a draft agreement, which has not yet been signed.

On October 13 2017, the Hungarian government announced a one-year extension to comply with the legislation. This means CEU’s future is still unclear. The university has taken all the necessary steps to comply with the legislation, so we continue to call on the Hungarian government to sign the agreement with New York.

So what did we achieve in the past 12 months? We stepped out of our cozy bubble and became one of the best-known universities in the world. And not just as any university; CEU now stands for academic freedom.

Aranka Szabó is digital content manager at Central European University, Budapest. She is responsible for developing and executing the university’s social media strategy, training staff on social media best practices, and creating content for CEU’s website. In spring/summer 2017, she coordinated the #IstandwithCEU/#aCEUvalvagyok social media campaign defending the university’s academic freedom after discriminatory legislation was passed in Hungary.
A new approach to crisis management is emerging which places it squarely on the desk of chief executive officers and their top communication executives.

Yet there are some companies which still regard crisis management as something that can be delegated downwards to middle managers or technicians who may be more used to responding to emergencies or IT failure. And there are still companies which think that a good business continuity plan is “all we need to be well covered.” The sad truth is that such ideas are not only wrong, but they expose the company to serious risk. Moreover, even some CEOs who are “crisis aware” are unsure of exactly what they need to do to protect their company from the terrible impacts of a crisis.

In reality, the problem doesn’t lie entirely with the CEO. Communication professionals need to share some of the blame. For too long some senior practitioners have allowed the executive group to treat crisis management as a largely tactical activity confined to writing a manual, holding the occasional simulation exercise, and hoping for the best in the event of an actual crisis. Plus perhaps organising media training for the CEO and a handful of other leaders.

But an effective leader doesn’t just know what to say to the media. He or she must be seen to do the right thing. Think no further than Air Asia CEO Tony Fernandes after one of his aircraft crashed off Indonesia in late 2014. In a model of both executive action and executive communication, he immediately flew to the scene and took centre stage. He made himself available to media, speaking alongside government officials, to become a focal point for company updates. He was the man with the facts and the man in charge. “I am the leader of the company. I take responsibility. The passengers were on my aircraft and I have to take responsibility for that.”

He used his personal Twitter account to communicate frequently with staff, passengers, and investors. And he personally escorted the body of one of the aircrew to the man’s home town in Surabaya. Little wonder PR Week carried the headline “AirAsia CEO Tony Fernandes has given a lesson in crisis management.”

Beyond doing and saying the right thing when a crisis strikes, companies need to heed an emerging new approach to crisis management which is shaking up the role of top executives and the senior communication professionals who advise them. It presents crisis management as a much more strategic activity – way beyond conventional incident response – with a strong focus on identifying and managing crisis threats before they strike. In other words, taking steps to prevent crises from happening in the first place.

This new approach begins long before the triggering event, and extends deep into the dangerous period after the crisis event seems to be over, yet when reputation may be at greatest risk.

“The new approach demands more direct top executive participation.”

The integrated model (see illustration) highlights that it is a continuous process with two distinctly different pre-crisis phases – crisis preparedness and crisis prevention. Crisis preparedness includes the conventional actions such as developing a response manual and training a crisis management team, but these actions are simply getting the organisation ready for when a crisis strikes. They do nothing to reduce the chances of a crisis happening in the first place. By contrast, the crisis prevention phase includes activities such as issue management and emergency response,
The integrated approach to crisis management highlights the role of top executives and senior communications professionals in working together at every phase. © Issue Outcomes P/L

designed to identify potential problems early and, most importantly, prevent them from becoming crises.

While the incident management phase focuses on standard crisis response, the post-crisis phase is a critical area which is frequently under-estimated. Many companies think it’s little more than operational recovery and restoration of business as usual. But this phase has been called the “crisis after the crisis,” when the company is seriously at risk from coroners inquests, government inquiries and litigation which may last months or even years, causing prolonged damage to reputation. Just ask Volkswagen or BP or Samsung. It’s this integrated approach which lies behind the new concept of crisis proofing – moving responsibility from the operational response centre up into the executive suite, and moving the leadership mindset from what to do in the event of a crisis to what can be done to prevent crises from happening.

What’s crucial here is that such a change cannot be driven by technical managers who may think that crisis management is the same as crisis response, or emergency management or operational recovery.

The new approach demands more direct top executive participation, which brings with it the need for new leadership skills beyond just chairing the crisis management team or acting as spokesperson. It requires top executives to allocate time and resources to:

• Analyse risks to be ready for the most obvious or likely crises.
• Provide leadership to develop a crisis-aware organisation.

These are all areas within the expertise of communication leaders, who might already be doing some of these things. The big difference is to see them as part of an integrated and systematic executive approach to crisis proofing the organisation. A central problem is that effective crisis preparedness requires a genuine commitment, and some executives don’t see that as a priority.

A famous study at Oxford University showed that when a crisis struck, the share price of badly-prepared companies fell further and recovered slower than that of well-prepared companies. In fact, 12 months after a crisis, the share price of well-prepared companies was, on average, 22 per cent ahead of the badly-prepared. With 22 per cent of company value potentially at risk, crisis preparedness should be a no-brainer in the executive suite. But it’s up to communication professionals to show top management that crisis preparedness is a vital bottom-line investment, and to help implement change.

![Tony Jaques](Photo_Pri.jpg)

Dr Tony Jaques is director of the consultancy Issue Outcomes Pty Ltd, and was formerly Asia-Pacific issue manager for Dow Chemical. He also teaches on the postgraduate programme at RMIT University, Melbourne. His latest book is Crisis Proofing: How to save your company from disaster (Oxford University Press, 2016).
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HOW TO BE A GOOD SUMERIAN

Communicators are the creators and the keepers of content. By doing this job effectively, they have the foundations to efficiently build content that keeps the story straight and authentic.

BY WHITNEY FOARD SMALL

It might not be the oldest profession, but the Sumerians had Masters of Tablets, and in eighth century BC, the King Ashurbanipal of Assyria introduced librarianship as a profession. In the king’s library, all tablets were catalogued and arranged by subject matter or information type, and each was given an identification tag. Content tagging. In the eighth century BC. Wow.

For centuries, we have been taught the importance of content. More recently, we’ve been reminded of the need for authentic storytelling. All true. All needed. After all, people have been telling stories long before tablets arrived. But all of this is easier said than done.

At Thai Union Group, we have been focusing on how to effectively use storytelling to support our story pillars: sustainability, innovation, corporate and brand reputation. To do that, we had to take a hard look at how we could effectively and efficiently build content that met our needs but didn’t blow our budgets sky high.

Remember the 80/20 rule

We started by making some rules for ourselves. First, we would concentrate on creating content that met the needs of 80 per cent of our constituents. For some of our markets, that meant they would get more than they had previously, and for others it meant they would have access to content they previously couldn’t afford. We were determined to make economies of scale work for everyone.

Second, we needed to think globally to locally and then locally to globally. What does that mean? The content had to be effective at each level, so while 80 per cent might be the same for all, we would leave 20 per cent for localisation as needed to be fully effective. For example, we would build editorial packages with 80 per cent the same content, and 20 percent localised expert quotes, endorsements and images. Creating once for many.

The 3Rs: reuse, renew, recycle

We also needed to think about content as packages of words, images, graphics, infographics, videos and animations that could be reassigned constantly into new uses—new packages, really. We had to figure out what languages, voices and tonality for editorial, voiceovers, subtitles, captions... well, you get the picture: a lot of complexity to get our content fully working for us.

For example, we decided that we needed to do a series of educational animated videos about specific fishing sustainability topics. No opinion, no commentary, just pure education. We looked at how to make these videos the most effective for Thai Union’s use, as well as for our brands. But in doing that, we recognised that these videos could also work for our retail customer’s online use.

Keeping this broader goal in mind, we built storyboards that met our educational goals and allowed us to voiceover in different languages and accents, and subtitle as needed. We then top and tailed the videos for each brand, effectively creating endless branded editions for global use across a variety of channels. We embedded them in editorials for use online and made them available by download for educational use.

GIGO: garbage in, garbage out

As we got better at planning our content and making it work harder for us, we decided to look at some of our existing assets. It quickly became a clean-up campaign, with more
content moving to the archive cabinet than to the current pile. This was particularly true with corporate documents, including Q&As. So we decided to strengthen our documentation governance, using document ownership and ‘dead by’ dates, so they are discarded after a stated date and a new version retrieved. Typically, we republish documents every 60 to 90 days, or sooner if the situation warrants it. When dealing with evolving issues, this governance helps keep responses current and correct.

Sweating the assets

Now, what’s great is that we had all this content created for global use, made to be deployed easily, scrubbed clean for copyright issues, images all properly licenced, ownership established and we were feeling rather pleased with ourselves.

But wait a second. How were we going to take all of this wonderful content and make is available to our global team? How could we avoid having content ‘disappear’? You know, the “Oh, I think that is on so and so’s computer...”. Or receiving emails and phone calls asking: “Hey, I am looking for a graphic or image representing xyz...”.

We needed to find a way to make the content fully searchable and available 24/7 to our global team. We looked at a variety of solutions and then finally decided to join the cloud crowd.

The cloud met our needs for governance and easy search, for keeping our people safe with legal, licenced and approved content, and for peace of mind. We know where to find our well-tagged, well-ordered content, and we can put it to work in myriad packages – making our assets sweat.

Communications is the creator and the keeper of content. In those companies that still have archivists, ask them who they work with and they will tell you communications. History matters, it is part of every story, so we have an obligation to guard it and keep it safe and searchable. Technology gives us so many methods to tell our stories in entertaining and effective ways, at a fraction of previous costs. We owe it to our companies and to the professionals that come after us to guard our companies’ histories, memories and assets. Communicators are always multitaskers, so maybe we just need to add creators, librarians, curators, custodians and historians to our list of titles.

On our journey to feeling like good Sumerians, we found the following rules useful in making our cloud a happy cloud.

How to make a Sumerian master of tablets happy

1. Never, ever leave your video footage, either raw, a-roll or b-roll with your agency. For that matter, never leave any content assets with your agency. It is your asset, keep it safe. It is too valuable to lose and you will kick yourself (or your predecessor) when you can’t find it.
2. Be a good Sumerian and set up your filing system logically with short manageable file names. What’s in a name? Only what you must have to recognise the content.
3. Set up tags in advance. Do not let users make up their own. Add new tags only when there is uniform demand. What’s in a name? Only what you must have to recognise the content.
4. Use really full descriptions of your content so users can find content easily (“CNY party” really isn’t going to do it).
5. The use of ‘dead by date’ documentation governance is important. Get that old stuff out and into archive.
6. Use approval libraries to make sure you are always looking at the latest version and approving the final, most up-to-date version, for use; this will keep everyone safe and avoid publishing accidents (we hate those, don’t we?).
7. Mark content for either internal or external use (another safety device: fences are good!).
8. Encourage people to explore the content and build new packages and share (sharing is good too).

Are you feeling a little inner-Sumerian glow? Can you feel King Ashurbanipal may be smiling over your shoulder? Or are you just ready to be better prepared to meet today’s needs for excellent content, immediately available and cost efficiently prepared?

No matter which, I suspect King Ashurbanipal would be very proud.
CONTENT IN THE CHANGING B2B LANDSCAPE

Changing attitudes toward digital media have led to a new dimension of B2B communications. To stay ahead of these changes, companies operating in this field need to think about their content marketing in fresh terms.

BY FIONN KIENZLER

Changing attitudes toward digital media on part of buyers have led to rapid changes within B2B communications. A 2015 study by market research company Forrester found that 74% of business buyers conduct more than half of their research online before making an offline purchase. The implication of these findings is clear: B2B companies need to change their approach to marketing and communications radically in order to stay in touch with their target audiences.

With the change in buyer attitudes and expectations toward B2B companies comes the inevitable need for a redefinition of the categories with which to measure a campaign’s success. The sole KPI for B2B communications used to be measured in reach. To be sure, reach is still a very important aspect, yet the advent of online marketing brought with it the possibilities of measuring nearly all components of communication campaign’s including revenue generated via new business. Therefore, factors such as lead generation, branding and/or reach should be included and constantly monitored.

Whereas many campaigns often focused on a primary target, it is important to widen the scope and pre-define multidimensional communication goals. Take for example a study on the challenges of B2B marketing. It can be used for manifold purposes: creating reach by spreading it online, strengthening one’s branding through media attention, generating backlinks from other sites as part of your SEO strategy, or generating leads through downloads. This example also underlines a key benefit of multidimensional campaigns: synergy creation.

Throughout the years I have closely followed the changing attitudes within B2B communications. In the past, I encountered many skeptical questions when explaining the benefits of content marketing to company representatives. This has changed dramatically. Business to business marketers are now eager to revamp their communications strategies and departments as current research suggests and with new multidimensional campaigns come organisational changes.

Five ways to increase the impact of your B2B content

Content marketing means coming up with unique and innovative content ideas that add value to the audience and reach the full potential of brand awareness. But what does that mean in terms of effective B2B communication? In order to increase the visibility of a company as well as the impact of its content, five changes need to be implemented within the strategy framework.

1. **The imperative of digital: B2B is driven by users that make decisions.**

   Whoever is responsible, whatever the company, B2B communication mostly happens in print. Put simply, print products appear to be more high-quality due to its haptic quality. Meanwhile, the digital approach happens as an after-thought, with, at best, a PDF version of the brochure or a
booklet. Those who create eBooks or white papers are the innovative few who invest in content that is created for digital, works just as well on mobile and supports the lead generation will drive tomorrow’s decision making. That’s because decision makers are users too: whether they are aware of it or not, they will be looking for the best experience while they research options.

2. **Purpose driven communication: content is servant, not master.** In a cross-media world with multitudes of ways to distribute content, the communications strategy needs to be even clearer in its objectives. Content needs to serve the touchpoints: your audience is made of recipients with certain expectations and intentions depending on the channel where it receives your message. A clear objective helps to navigate the content-touchpoint conundrum and to make the right decisions on when, where and how to adjust the content to address the user’s needs most effectively.

3. **Communicate to sell: content with the persuasion of a salesman.** Marketing and sales need to grow together to create a financial outcome. The marketing strategy should produce problem-solving content that is relevant for the potential client and tangential to the company’s USP: first by giving answers, second by connecting these answers to a sales process. As soon as readers turn into leads, a nurturing process needs to kick in, following up every lead and delivering content which inspires the potential client to further action. At the same time, it is necessary to evaluate the user’s interaction with the content in order to identify the most important questions. This way the company can be profiled as an authority in its segment. The content creation must purposefully cultivate the company’s standing in the eyes of its target groups.

4. **Understand the user: intentions lead to true needs.** The difference between a user and a customer is the intention which leads to an expectation. A customer is already in touch with the company and must be nurtured according to his or her needs. A user could be anyone and yet can be tracked down when it comes to the intentions based on his or her behaviour, including the search requests. Depending on the channel, the user will have been led there by different intentions. With that in mind the user obviously has specific expectations regarding elements that make a great content in his eyes. Companies need to make sure that they understand the intentions behind search queries and user reactions in order to match their content with the expectations at any time of the customer journey. The result will be a higher conversion rate.

5. **Connect the smart way: social media pays off if you stay flexible.** When it comes to B2B content marketing, professional social networks such as LinkedIn and Xing are especially smart moves. These platforms are the perfect social tools to get connected and to identify relevant social groups. A strategic output means individualising content according to your leads and the characteristics of the platform. Since the social dynamics of a target group always change according to the context, you need to design content that can work cross media. A decision maker in a LinkedIn group gives his attention to expertise that serves his interests. The same user expects different content in his Facebook newsfeed, whether light entertainment or news. The message might stay the same but the format needs to be adjusted according to the medium.

The new B2B landscape is an opportunity for communications to become an even more significant function, organising campaigns at the crossroads between public relations, marketing and sales and measurably contributing to new business. Through this more direct contribution to the company’s success, communications will have a standing comparable to finance and sales.

“**As soon as readers turn into leads, a nurturing process needs to kick in, following up every lead and delivering content which inspires the potential client to further action.**”

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The real impact of GDPR is about to hit

No one can fail to have seen or heard of the GDPR. But what it actually means for organisations is less clear. The implications reach far wider than the marketing or legal teams. It is not just a technical change, so its meaning and compliance need to be communicated – otherwise there will be trouble, and big fines, ahead.

BY ALEXIA ELASSADI AND STUART THOMSON
What is the GDPR?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a piece of legislation which will overhaul data protection law in the EU. It comes into force on 25 May 2018 and will harmonise EU data protection law. (In the case of the UK, the principles enshrined in the GDPR will continue to apply post Brexit by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill).

There is a lot that could said about the GDPR but this article highlights the data protection principles and the practical steps organisations can take to prepare themselves before May 2018.

Throughout this article, we use the term ‘personal data’. Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. This is a broad term which includes identification by reference to a name, identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the individual’s physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity.

How does the GDPR differ from current, national data protection laws?

The GDPR is wide-ranging. Not only will it impact nearly every organisation that is based in the EU, but it will also apply to non-EU organisations in certain circumstances.

The GDPR imposes greater compliance obligations on data controllers and data processors, and it gives data subjects more powerful rights to enforce against them.

The data protection principles

There are seven data protection principles. Most of these will already be familiar, but the GDPR will impact their scope in varying degrees.

1. Fair, lawful and transparent processing.
Personal data must be processed in a way that is fair, lawful and transparent to the data subject. This means that organisations must tell individuals what personal data they are collecting, why they are collecting it, what it will be used for and how long it will be kept for. They must also be informed about their various rights. All of this information must be covered in an organisation’s privacy policy.

It may not always be practical to present a single document (such as the privacy policy) to an individual in order to communicate how you will be using their personal data. In these cases, short statements known as fair processing notices will be useful. Fair processing notices can feature on documents such as application forms or on first or ongoing communications with data subjects. They can summarise how personal data will be used and signpost people to the more detailed privacy policy. Organisations may wish to check what their relevant supervisory authority recommends in terms of communicating privacy information. To give an example, the UK’s Information Commissioner’s Office believes it is good practice to develop a blended approach, using more than one method to present privacy information to data subjects.

Organisations must also create a ‘record of processing activities’ which details the categories of data subject and personal data collected from them, the purpose for processing, the condition for processing, categories of recipients, retention periods and security measures that are in place to protect their data. This is an internal document which the organisation must be able to provide to the relevant supervisory authority on request.

In producing this record, organisations are encouraged to review the processing they carry out and identify a lawful basis for all their data processing activities. If the basis is consent, the organisation should review how consent was obtained and clear any names from its database where it cannot prove how consent was obtained. Under GDPR, consent must involve an affirmative action by the data subject, be clearly presented and be as easily revoked as it is given.
Finally, if the organisation shares personal data with third parties, it must explain this in the privacy policy and review (or implement) any data processing agreements it has in place with the third parties.

2. Purpose limitation. The data subject must know the purpose for which you are collecting their data, at the point of collection. Before you use this personal data for another purpose, you must consider whether it is compatible with the original purpose for which it was collected.

3. Data minimisation. The personal data your organisation collects must be limited to the purpose for which it is processed. In other words, don’t collect absolutely everything about the data subject.

4. Accuracy. Organisations must ensure that the personal data they process is accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date. They must also take reasonable steps to ensure that any inaccurate personal data is erased or rectified without delay.

5. Storage limitation. Organisations must ensure that personal data is kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for ‘no longer than is necessary’ for the purposes for which the personal data is processed.

To comply with this principle, organisations must review their data retention policies (or produce one). They must also be prepared to justify their reasons for retaining personal data for the periods they have selected.

6. Data security. Organisations must use appropriate technical or organisational measures so that personal data is processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. These measures would be set out in an organisation’s IT security policy. Finally, organisations must also have procedures in place for detecting, investigating and reporting data breaches.

7. Accountability. The GDPR introduces an overarching accountability principle, which requires organisations to demonstrate compliance with all of the principles. In doing so, organisations must:
   - set out the direction for data protection compliance in a framework of policies and procedures. This would be covered in a data protection policy, which is an overarching, internal policy which cross refers to all the other policies. One of its purposes is to inform staff about, and to direct them to, the various policies adopted by the organisation;
   - monitor compliance with their policies;
   - implement data protection training for all staff;
   - implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to show that it has considered and integrated data protection into its processing activities (otherwise known as ‘privacy by design’, which includes carrying out a Privacy Impact Assessment to identify and reduce privacy risks of any projects adopted by the organisation); and
   - appoint a data protection officer or designate lead responsibility for data protection compliance to a suitable individual within the organisation.

" Whilst there are undoubtedly some serious organisational changes required, cultural and behavioural change is needed as well."
Action points

The requirements under the GDPR may seem overwhelming and extensive, and organisations might not know where to start. In advance of 25 May, the key actions and deliverables for organisations to focus on include:

- creating a detailed record of data processing activities;
- revising or issuing privacy policies and notices;
- adopting a data protection policy;
- amending existing or creating new data processing agreements with third parties;
- reviewing or issuing an IT security policy;
- implementing a procedure for managing personal data breaches;
- ensuring all parts of the organisations are aware of the privacy by design requirements and implementing a Privacy Impact Assessment process; and
- training staff and testing systems.

Communications

The GDPR dramatically increases fines for non-compliance. The maximum fine for a single breach is the greater of EUR 20 million or four per cent of annual worldwide turnover.

That being said, there is still sufficient time for organisations to get in shape and achieve compliance. Whilst there are undoubtedly some serious organisational changes required, cultural and behavioural change is needed as well. Teams will have to know what they can and cannot do under the new regime. That makes the communications of critical importance. Training and regular engagement needs to be the order of the day.

But more than that, organisations also need to consider what to do if they themselves identify failures and breaches. What should individual employees do? Are they aware of what the policies and procedures require in practice?

And what happens if organisations get this wrong? Individual regulators will undoubtedly be on the look-out for breaches: so someone has a crisis just waiting to happen. As with any such problem, the more preparation that can be done the better. So the communications teams need to understand what steps have been taken to adapt to the “new world” and detailed records of all the changes, training, education and procedures need to be kept.

Those that choose not to take GDPR seriously are taking a huge gamble with their reputations, finance and careers. Those dealing with it properly need marketing and communications professionals, and lawyers, working together. That is not always without its own challenges.

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Alexia Ellassadi is a solicitor in Bircham Dyson Bell’s commercial team. Her practice areas are data protection, commercial contracts and intellectual property. In the run up to May 2018, Alexia has been advising a range of clients, including charities and businesses, about various aspects of GDPR compliance.

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A new frontline in corporate reputation

Under GDPR, data privacy and security will become the new frontline in corporate reputation, and companies that strive to better understand their customers’ fears and needs will have a profound opportunity to strengthen their loyalty.

BY DANIEL GOLDFING
According to our survey of 2,000 adults, 64 per cent of people currently trust companies with their personal data. The strongest reasons for trusting companies are because ‘they are an established brand/have a strong reputation’ (29 per cent) and because ‘they have been my provider for a long time’ (18 per cent). Specific data practices, such as transparency relating to data privacy policies or using data for reasons other than its original purpose, are considered to be less important, although this is in many ways a false distinction to make. If companies fail to shore up their data defences, it is their brand that will take the hit.

Trust is highest in banks, followed by insurers, then energy companies, and finally television, phone or internet providers. This is likely to be primarily due to customer understanding of the complex regulation banks have to adhere to. The low churn among banking customers compared to energy or internet providers also works in their favour.

However, although long-standing relationships and brand reputation are important, transparency and communication also matter a great deal. Our findings reveal that trust is correlated with knowing what data companies hold on them, true for 54 per cent of bank customers compared to only 40 per cent of energy customers. This is partly because banks are considered by 55 per cent of people to send ‘the right amount’ of communication regarding their personal data, compared to 46 per cent in other sectors. On average, a third of people (33 per cent) currently receive no information whatsoever about the personal data held on them.

Going forward, the companies that customers trust to protect their data will not necessarily be those that claim they are the best at data privacy, as Marcus Scott, chief operating officer at TheCityUK, points out: "If you think of the brands the public trust, it’s not because they say they’re trustworthy, but because they demonstrate it. Firms that say they have the best data guardianship in the industry may be setting themselves up for a fall.”

To earn a reputation for good data privacy management, companies need to show it matters to them through action. This will mean ensuring personal details given in one context are never used for other purposes, providing information that genuinely benefits customers rather than ‘marketing fluff’, and responding quickly and fully to customer queries about how their data is stored and used.

Ear of the board

Reputational risk is a board concern. As such, it is the board’s responsibility to actively monitor and oversee data governance activities.

However, not every board is ready to accept data governance as a commercial and strategic driver, and chief data officer is not yet a standard senior level role. Edward Tarelli, director of operations at E.ON, is concerned about the possible effects of this gap: “My worry is that many organisations have a middle manager focused on GDPR who doesn't have sufficient access to senior executives.”

That said, data governance is becoming a much more professionalised activity. Chief data officers, where they exist, act as guardians of data within a company and determine the data governance strat-
They have technical knowledge, legal awareness and business insight. Companies without one need to create this position and give their CDO a seat at the executive table.

Data breaches: preparing to respond

Preventing the loss of confidential data is paramount. But being prepared to act if something does go wrong is also critical to an effective data governance strategy. Our research reveals that companies could risk losing up to 55 per cent of customers if they suffer a significant personal data breach. As many as 30 per cent of affected customers would 'switch provider immediately' and a further 25 per cent would 'wait to see a media response/what others say and do' before switching.

Given the expected rise in data breaches under GDPR, this potential threat to customer retention highlights the choices companies need to make now, for the sake of their business.

Companies would be wrong to assume this is an issue the public are unaware of or uninterested in; our research shows customers are becoming savvy about data protection. As Edward Tarelli describes:

"Reputational risk is a board concern. As such, it is the board’s responsibility to actively monitor and oversee data governance activities."

"Highly visible cases of recent data breaches have brought data privacy and security to the forefront of consumers’ minds."

Yet, many firms will fail to get their data house completely in order before GDPR’s May 25 deadline.

In our experience, nearly all companies have multiple versions of customer information saved to different systems. These firms cannot trace the source of their data or confirm its validity. They also struggle to establish a lawful basis for each data processing activity, exposing them to higher risk of a data breach. Under GDPR, it will be critical for firms to establish integrated data systems for the secure storage of personal data and the processing of subject access requests.

A robust infrastructure not only protects, it also enables meaningful insights to be derived from that information. This will allow businesses to act quickly and flexibly to respond to changing trends, giving them a competitive edge.

Lightning could strike twice

Even if customers do not choose to switch provider in the event of a data breach, because the perceived hassle factor is simply too high or they believe they are safer staying where they are, a loss of trust is inevitable and no company is immune from a second lightning strike.

The definition of a data breach within the GDPR is extremely broad and will require companies to consider the full range of scenarios that could occur. Breach management processes will need to accommodate additional requirements that necessitate a formal response and notification to the ICO where people’s rights and freedoms are at risk, and no later than 72 hours after having become aware of it.

At the same time, companies will need to engage internal or external experts and escalate the situation to the accountable executives without creating overly burdensome operating processes. They will
also need to be prepared to tell customers if their data was affected, whether they need to change their passwords and any other sensitive information, and if the leaked data could be further compromised.

Contagion effect

Companies should be warned: rightly or wrongly, customers will look across the entire sector if a firm experiences a leak. As Edward Tarelli explains: “I’d be very concerned if any organisation in our industry, regardless of size, had a major breach because it would pull the rest of the industry into that negative perception.”

Companies cannot be fully protected against this, but they do have options. Peter Jackson, chief data officer at Southern Water, acknowledges there is a choice to be made: “Companies need to consider what they would do in the event one of their close competitors experiences a data breach – whether they would acknowledge it and release their own communications to reassure customers or just wait and hope it doesn’t affect them too.”

Whole team effort

Many companies will treat GDPR primarily as a compliance or an IT issue. Clearly, technology will play a huge role in preparing for implementation and it would be foolhardy not to ensure compliance. But what good management teams should strive for is buy-in from the whole team.

Telling staff that GDPR is the law and we simply have to live with it will not ensure continued compliance, nor will it get the team working together to exploit the potential commercial opportunities the regulation brings. For GDPR isn’t just about being prepared for a crisis. It is about proactively speaking to customers and explaining what data is currently held on them and why, so you can engage them in a healthy and commercially beneficial conversation. Just the exercise of finding the data and understanding where you obtained it from presents a massive “opportunity.” Carrying out re-consenting requests, for example, is a chance to capture more data on your customers, so you can make sure they get the right products to satisfy their needs.

Ultimately, companies should strive to be in a position where customers actively share additional information with them because they are trusted to use it well. Get there and a whole world of opportunity opens up, in creating truly bespoke products and services, anticipating and responding to changes in behaviour and trends, and rewarding and retaining customers. GDPR can set a new path for growth.

"Rightly or wrongly, customers will look across the entire sector if a firm experiences a leak."


DAN GOLING
DIRECTOR, RISK & COMPLIANCE
BARINGA

Dan Golding has over 15 years of risk and regulatory change experience across financial services, energy and media. Dan leads Baringa’s GDPR capability and has worked with clients globally to assess the impacts of the new regulatory obligations, design compliance strategies and mobilise transformation programmes to mitigate risk. Dan regulatory publishes thought leadership on data privacy and security, and contributes to numerous publications, industry working groups, forums and conferences.
“A gear shift in the culture of data protection.”

The GDPR reinforces a wide range of existing rights regarding digital data and establishes new ones: Communication Director spoke to Giovanni Buttarelli, the European Data Protection Supervisor – who has been involved in the development of GDPR from the beginning – for his view on the evolution of the regulation, its fitness for purpose in a world of cross-border data flow, and whether it will help or hinder the development of innovative technology.

INTERVIEW BY DAVID PHILLIPS
From your perspective, what's new about the GDPR that makes it different from the Data Protection Directive which it replaces?

The GDPR represents a gear shift in the culture of data protection, and from our viewpoint, the merits of this legislation are not only about harmonising a framework which was lacking coherence and uniformity of approach across Europe; more significantly, the GDPR aims to produce a change in the way we conceive, dream of and speculate about an enforced set of data protection rules.

I'll focus on just two points of main innovations. The first is the reinforcement of the subjects' rights with new rights such as those on data portability, privacy by design and privacy by default. Second, and what is essential to me, is the cutting of red tape and focusing on more accountability for the operators. This is at the very centre of the reform. We will treat data controllers as auditors. They will be required to better impact the data processing they engage in, and they will have much less need to go to national supervising authorities for general prior notification, and to wait for a reply. So they will carry responsibility for their operations and they will also benefit from the new data protection officers. We used to call him or her the 'faithful guardian of compliance'.

Are you satisfied with the GDPR? Are there aspects where you feel it could have gone further?

As I've told everybody, the GDPR is not the best piece of legislation ever; we've known this since the very beginning. But when you compare it to the previous legal framework it marks a landmark advancement and its success will very much depend on a pragmatic approach. There are a few missing pieces of legislation – for example, the e-Privacy Regulation, which is key, but currently in the middle of a trade lock. The GDPR is much more technologically neutral and flexible. But flexibility doesn't mean lowering safeguards, it means that instead of 25 new legislative rules to be adopted by delegated acts, we will benefit from guidelines to be adopted in consultations, in an inclusive way with data controllers and depending on real needs, and not in one shot.

An important feature of the GDPR is that it is extraterritorial. In a digital economy, how will companies based in the EU manage to stay competitive with markets outside the EU – and consequently enabling/benefiting from the free flow of data – while adhering to GDPR?

Do you foresee personal data issues becoming the subject of trade agreements?

We should consider that first of all we are not speaking about EU citizens but about people in the EU, so the reform is to be applied to everyone regardless of his or her own nationality. In the digital environment, the notion of territoriality and borders is disappearing. It doesn't make sense to focus on where the company has its headquarters, its servers instead of the people for whom data is collected. The GDPR is not the best piece of legislation ever. But when you compare it to the previous legal framework it marks a landmark advancement.
"In the digital environment the notion of territoriality and borders is disappearing."

or its subsidiaries. What is essential is that you should focus on the place where the services are offered. And there is no space for a divergent approach between European companies offering goods and services locally in the EU and people acting remotely. There is a concentration of markets in the hands of a few companies largely established outside the EU. About trade agreements, President Juncker has been very clear to say that these data protection and privacy rights are non-negotiable. I’m not excluding that certain trade agreements may focus on minor issues, such as those relating to trade secrets for instance, or to cloud computing service, but increasingly - and Microsoft’s case against the US department is a leading example - we need to have a global solution to important issues concerning, for example, access by law enforcement bodies, e-evidence and so on. These are not issues that can be unilaterally imposed by any one country.

What’s your impression of how US companies are dealing with GDPR?

I’m impressed by what I see. In 1998, when the First Directive was about to enter into force, everyone, but particularly in the US, was pushing for an extension, they were not ready, they were contesting the rules. But today we’ve received statements from giant companies that they are proudly ready to comply. My perception is that Europe has identified a good approach and therefore there is growing interest and awareness among US companies. Of course some of them are not very well prepared, but I see more problems among small and medium enterprises, while for the giants there are in principle less strategic critical issues.

Do you believe that data protection has become an integral part of a company’s corporate social responsibility?

I do, because what we’re asking is to embed data protection in the day to day life of a company. We also focus on the reputational risk and liability of the company as a whole. Member states have a marginal maneuver in defining the relevant sanctions in addition to those identified in detail in the GDPR. The GDPR focuses on details of administrative pecuniary sanctions but it doesn’t say anything specific about corporate liability and penal responsibilities which are included in the law of many member states. What I see is a trend where data protection is much less an issue to be – stupidly, in my view – delegated to IT people, to data protection officers or to the legal office, but is increasingly an issue which is relevant to top-level management. So I’m expecting more strategic implications in terms of allocation of resources to be dedicated to privacy impact assessment, and I’m expecting new approaches in terms of reporting lines.

I would also stress that GDPR is not only a source of obligations and requirements. It is a business opportunity, because I see an unbelievable amount of market opportunities, particularly for European companies interested in developing apps for privacy by design, or privacy default software or codes of conduct, not to mention new professions such as those concerning data protection officers and coordinators, accreditation certification... I could continue.

In a hyper-connected, IoT world of exponentially growing innovation — especially AI and robotics — is GDPR really fit for purpose as a primary source of legislation on data privacy? How can we be sure that GDPR won’t hamper developments?
We don't want to slow down innovation, we do not consider any technology as harmful as such, or that one technology can jeopardise individuals’ rights more than others. We try to anticipate the challenges and focus on future developments to empower distributors and designers, developers, producers – so everybody who is not under the lens of the GDPR, because GDPR is only applicable to data control. The most important point to me is that not everything which is technically feasible is also morally tenable. There is an issue of sustainability from an ethical viewpoint and this relates to every kind of sector. The question is not the technology as such but how it is developed in practice.

Of the latest development in the past few years — cloud computing, Big Data, PIMS, IoT, AI – which, in your opinion, has been the most ‘harmful’ from a data privacy perspective?

When I chaired the working group that drafted the first telecom directive, we were not prepared to apply it to the internet, which became reality a little bit later. We didn't imagine the success of social networks, which brought a lot of problems from a data protection viewpoint. On the other hand we have been very timely in approaching issues such as internet of things. The internet of things is still not a big reality and perhaps it will be replaced by something else, while for instance on drones we have been very successful and what is happening now on EU and national level is consistent with our input. So I'm not scared of specific technologies. Of course, now the attention is on big data, on robotics, on artificial intelligence, but looking to the future gives you a lot of inspiration to be of help to society as a whole. Of course we are focussed on the present but if we want to be effective, attention should be paid to good innovation.

"What I see is a trend where data protection is... increasingly an issue which is relevant to top-level management."
When regulation does you a favour

Compliance happens. So why shouldn’t your marketing communications turn it into a positive experience for your customers and your bottom line?

BY JONAS ANDER
Everyone knows the power of data. Now the European Parliament and Council is handing you the greatest reason ever to put that data to work. The reason is the GDPR, an acronym that’s striking fear in the hearts of many, but should rather be greeted as an opportunity.

What some well versed in the GDPR don’t know, however, is that the “D” in GDPR is wide reaching. It’s not primarily AI and VR data – we’re talking about every little bit of personal information stored in your CRM and other data bases, web technology, social media clicks, smart phones and even smart meters which show water consumption. The GDPR requires you to build privacy safeguards into every digital product, service and website – and the default privacy settings for these must be in the “on” position. It’s not just Europe, either: it applies to anyone who does business with the European Union’s residents.

Starting May 25, violators will be looking at fines of up to 20 million euros or four percent of their global turnover, whichever is higher. And that doesn’t include what the bad publicity will cost them.

Do it for your customer

If four per cent of your global turnover isn’t reason enough to get your data in order, consider the fact that the way many companies use personal data is already annoying the customer. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that 90 per cent of organisations claim to focus on personalising the customer experience, but only 40 per cent of shoppers say the emails they receive are relevant.

Take me, for instance. Last month I booked a Paris hotel room online only to immediately begin to see ads suggesting I spend a weekend in Paris. I received the ads only after I’d already bought the service. If the booking website had bothered to use transaction data, instead of just discovering that I was lurking on their website, I’d be a far happier customer. I’m still receiving two emails a day. It’s 2018 and this kind of thing doesn’t have to happen. Equally important beginning May 25: it’s a use of data that customers don’t mind.

If it isn’t exactly news to anyone that data can be used to improve the customer experience, why aren’t more companies doing it? It’s because many companies don’t even know what kind of data they have. Bigger and older companies are sometimes put off by the prospect of merging 15 different CRM systems, legacy systems and data coming from everywhere. But the GDPR has now given them a reason to take action: not complying will be more expensive than doing what they already should have done.

"If you don’t need consent under national law, you may in certain situations rely on legitimate interests for marketing. In particular, email marketing could indeed be considered a legitimate interest from time to time."
Dealing with your data

My view is that companies will need to choose one of three approaches:

1. **Panic.** The most risk-averse approach is to seek consent everywhere. Without consent you remove a person from your CRM. You even strip personal data from company cell phones. But since consent is not the only possible legal way to process personal data, this approach seems extreme to me.

2. **Screw it!** Some will take the position that as long as you’re not completely stupid, the GDPR won’t affect you. They’ll say that if you’re not spamming

you’re probably okay. This may be theoretically true, but FlyBe and Honda ran into trouble in early 2017 with electronic marketing campaigns. They were fined for sending marketing emails to consumers without their consent. Honda’s mistake could have happened in any massive organisation where data is collected in many places by a variety of people. Yes, it was preventable and they should have been more careful, but if it can happen to Honda it can probably happen to you, making the “screw it” approach not my first choice.

3. **Keep calm, and market on.** I advocate the middle ground, which means that you document everything about how you process data internally, have a person in charge of managing your data, and base your activities on legitimate interests whenever it is legally possible. Weigh your company’s raison d’être against the hassle of having to obtain consent in order to process the data of individuals. If you don’t need consent under national law, you may in certain situations rely on legitimate interests for marketing. In particular, email marketing could indeed be considered a legitimate interest from time to time.

   Another proponent of the middle ground approach is my company’s senior marketing automation consultant, Mathias Jonsson. “Shit happens and will continue to happen,” Mathias says. “You have to take precautions, and if it happens you have to inform people.”

A plan of action

Your first step is to clean up your data and take an inventory of everything you have. Don’t forget your excel lists and sales lists stored on Sharepoint or elsewhere online. These are also subject to the GDPR. Once you know what you have, start to consider if keeping that data has a legal basis, such as for example your legitimate interest as a commercial enterprise.
Perhaps you keep a list on Google Drive of everyone you sent a corporate Christmas present to in 2014. (Was that the year you gave the cheese plate?) You will either need to erase this list or stipulate that you’re holding it because you plan to give the same people a Christmas present in the future. This may be your legitimate interest. (You could also view the GDPR as an argument not to give crappy presents.)

Carefully consider the personal data you hold, present both in emails as well excel files or elsewhere. Perhaps you have iPhone data about customers’ heart rates. Marketing to those people about walking more steps would not only be a bit creepy, it would probably be unlawful, except if you have an explicit consent from the customer. Abuse of mobile phone data is also where the higher fines may come in. The companies most affected will be those who possess the “creepy” data – Google, Facebook, and Apple. It remains to be seen how these companies will choose to deal with this data.

**Time and money: what’s it going to cost you?**

Of course you should have begun examining your data a year and a half ago. But if you didn’t, and if you start right now, it will likely take a minimum of six months until you’re ready to follow best practices. While it’s impossible to say what it will cost your company, the GDPR compliance readiness projects my company, Nortal, has worked on have started at around 500,000 euros. For bigger companies it can even exceed 10 million.

The good news is that this is money well spent – do it right and the money you spend on compliance can eventually produce a positive ROI. After all, you’ve long known about the power of data. Look at the GDPR as the best excuse you’ll ever have to finally put that data to work for you and your customers. I’m not usually one who cheers about more government regulation, but the GDPR really is good for everyone involved.

**Good marketers will thrive**

Consider this: how you use data will be a huge part of your brand perception in the future. Think of the way corporate social responsibility is viewed today and you’ll have an idea of data’s future importance when it comes to corporate image.

Not only will the correct use of data allow the hotel booking sites to stop annoying me, they’ll be able to put their marketing money much lower in the funnel. What they spend will produce a much higher return. Marketing communicators will quickly come to understand that better use of data can actually produce a better society. Those who think this way will thrive under the GDPR.

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**JONAS ANDER**

**CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER**

**NORTAL**

Jonas Ander has more than 20 years of experience as an entrepreneur and innovator in aligning sales and marketing, CRM, and marketing automation. Prior to joining Nortal in 2016, Jonas was CEO of Element, a demand generation, lead management and marketing automation agency. He has also worked as a marketing director at business and technology consultants Valtech, a partner at venture capital business Biondi Industries, and a founder and board member of Adintelligence.
Metadata: curse or cure for GDPR compliance?

GDPR requires companies to delete all information that can be associated with a person at their request. However, data isn’t just the blog comment you pen or the like you cast, but also everyone who links to you, likes your content, shares your profile and all the other myriad ways that data can be used and reused, making deleting every reference to anyone a logistical nightmare.

The solution to this challenge lies in metadata.

BY SEAN MACNIVEN
metadata
noun, plural in form but singular or plural in construction | meta·da·ta | -ˈdā-tə , -ˈda-
also ˈdā-
Metadata allows organisations to map and locate everywhere that the various bits of data it holds about an individual resides, identify the privacy-sensitive data items, and helps organisations determine if, when and how a hack occurred.

The European Commission defines personal data as “anything from a name, a home address, a photo, an email address, bank details, posts on social networking websites, medical information, or a computer’s IP address”. Any kind of sentiment mining, opinion mining or tracking of customer behaviours such as click-through rates, browsing history, likes, shares, comments, bookmarks or endorsements, trigger GDPR concerns and regulations if these activities are or can be used to identify a private person. While GDPR uses the presence of large fines as a motivating factor towards universal compliance, no regulation can capture more than a small fraction of the ways in which a natural person can be identified, regardless of their level of explicit anonymity. As human beings are fundamentally social animals, anyone on the grid is transparent, whether directly or indirectly, by way of their own activity, or the activity of those to whom they are connected. Metadata makes it all possible.

The curse
However benevolent the aims and vision of GDPR may be in creating a common-information market for the EU, it is - by the very nature of connected data today - limited in its ability to effectively defend its citizens against data mining, which may very easily lead to de-anonymisation.

GDPR promises to limit companies from hitting the nail on the head and abusing the rights of individuals to control of their data; it does not, however, stop an enterprising data scientist or rogue nation from hitting everywhere else, through which any nail is quickly exposed by way of absence. To provide a contemporary example, a 2017 study by researchers Jessica Su et al. entitled De-anonymizing Web Browsing Data with Social Networks found that “browsing histories contain tell-tale marks of identity" that alone can be used to determine a user’s Twitter account even in the absence of having ever tweeted. The method could determine over 70 per cent of users from the set of 400 volunteers using 30 links originating from Twitter alone, and rose to 86 per cent when 50-75 links were provided from their history. This means, without any identifying information whatsoever, individual identity can be inferred from simply providing web browsing history alone.

Another feature of modern life however is the ubiquity of GPS sensors in modern phones. Work by the MIT Media Lab under Alexander Pentland (see his excellent book Social Physics for further reading) has explored the numerous ways in which basic GPS data and credit card histories can de-anonymise even the most astute defender of personal privacy. In this spirit, a 2015 study entitled “Spatio-temporal techniques for user identification by means of GPS mobility data” (Luca Rossi et al. 2015) found that GPS data was a powerful source of identifying individuals even in the absence of personal information, based upon the fact that humans are fundamentally ha-
bitual. Indeed, the researchers found that “as little as two spatial points are sufficient to uniquely identify nearly 100 per cent of the users”.

In addition to the more indirect ways in which de-anonymisation can take place, as social media-based news feeds in the 2016 US elections and the UK’s Brexit vote have shown, humans like humans who are similar to themselves, a principle known as homophily. This desire to believe in and engage with those similar to ourselves has led to a system of reinforcing existing beliefs at all costs rather than challenge them and promoting critical thinking, whilst also making us all the more transparent. Homophily aside, internet based businesses have been gathering and tagging individuals in order to increase their advertising revenue, as a new study by Cabanas et al. entitled “Facebook Use of Sensitive Data for Advertising in Europe” has revealed. The study found that 73 per cent of European Facebook users have been tagged with sensitive interests by the social networking behemoth, translating into 40 per cent of the EU, or around 200 million citizens.

Considering why we are attracted to social networks, and our inherent biases with regards to people and opinions that match our own, the challenge that we are faced in terms of our ability to be truly private persons, seems to be the very thing that has made us successful over more physically imposing species: our social connectivity.

The cure

Considering how much personal data human beings create, to what extent might intelligent metadata

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**WHAT ARE METADATA?**

While metadata have often been described as “data about data”, it is arguably more accurate to think of a piece of metadata as “a statement about a potentially informative object” (According to Metadata by Jeffrey Pomerantz 2015). In this definition, metadata provides context around a data object that may, given the proper context, be informative and thereby valuable to an observer.

Metadata is often thought of in three main categories:

1. **Descriptive.** The simplest, oldest and most common type, descriptive metadata includes, among others, the 15 properties used by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative used to describe resources:

   1. Contributor
   2. Coverage
   3. Creator
   4. Date
   5. Description
   6. Format
   7. Identifier
   8. Language
   9. Publisher
   10. Relation
   11. Rights
   12. Source
   13. Subject
   14. Title
   15. Type

   For digital data such as blog posts and so forth tags, categories, usernames and IDs, number of comments, ratings and so forth constitute additional metadata.

2. **Structural.** Describes how objects are compiled, organised or designed, such as tables of contents, page and chapter numbering, indices as well as relational data such as image X was included in document Y.

3. **Administrative.** This includes file types, access permissions, rights metadata, preservation data required for archiving, image resolution, file formats, compression type used, license information, copyright dates and so forth.
management be the cure? As Deloitte notes, “managing your metadata is a prerequisite for providing insight into data flows and related controls in your organisation”, which seems obvious considering that databases cannot be effectively queried or managed without metadata.

Indeed, metadata are an indispensable tool for companies to be able to even know, let alone compile, information held about an individual. Just as the work of linguistic psychologist James Pennebaker has shown that the otherwise invisible function words of a language (such as pronouns, articles and so forth) can illuminate intention, age and even personality traits of a speaker, metadata describe form and function of data objects in the informational multiverse.

As every data object may be described by many metadata objects, which themselves may be shared across many other data objects, each thread in the data-tapestry has the ability to reveal the greater tale that individual data objects represents. That story however is invisible at worst and incomplete at best, without an intelligent and comprehensive metadata strategy. With proper planning however, a company will be able to meet the requirements of GDPR with no more than a few clicks, obtaining a complete record of every document, comment, or interaction pertaining to a customer or employee, at any given point in time. The rewards go well beyond compliance however, as metadata together with unstructured data comprise up to 90 per cent of a company’s data landscape, known as ‘dark data’, or “the information assets organisations collect, process, and store during regular business activities, but generally fail to use for other purposes” (Gartner 2018). Indeed, metadata management is vital for understanding and unlocking the value of dark data and may lead to powerful insights into business operations, whilst completely respecting regulations.

We must accept that the risk of identification is an omnipresent threat in everyday life, yet the very mechanisms that make digital opacity so challenging may also be the very devices that make GDPR more than just a punitive regulation, and an actual roadmap towards personal data control and the right to be forgotten. While GDPR aims to protect the individual, it also provides a framework within which research can be conducted safely and respectful of every individual’s rights, facilitating responsible exploration over exploitation. We should remain vigilant however, and remember that while crossing the road, it is always better to look left and right. Not everyone follows the rules, and the rules themselves are rarely comprehensive.

"With proper planning a company will be able to meet the requirements of GDPR with no more than a few clicks, obtaining a complete record of every document, comment, or interaction pertaining to a customer or employee."

SEAN MACNIVEN
GLOBAL HEAD OF SEARCH AND COMMUNITY
SAP

Sean MacNiven is the global head of search and community within SAP’s product support organisation. Prior to this role, he led the public relations social media team, and the implementation and development of most of SAP’s key internal and external online news platforms. He is also an active researcher around communications, reputation and change management.
Could GDPR spell the death knell for unsolicited media outreach? With Ireland being home to many European headquarters of US tech companies, we asked two Dublin-based experts – Stephanie Tutton, senior analyst at EuroComply, and Paul Hayes, founder of Beachhut PR – for their insights into how GDPR will affect media engagement and public relations.
Stephanie, what’s the most common question your clients ask you about GDPR?

There are a number of questions that crop up frequently, partly because the GDPR has introduced more questions than it has answers, but also because there are a lot of reinforced misunderstandings circulating about what GDPR compliance actually means. I think a lot of questions boil down to: do I need to delete my entire database because I don’t have consent? Data is money for companies and we understand that. There are other grounds that you can rely on and we want to focus on helping our clients with that.

Paul, one key part of the conversation at the Dublin Debate is the potential impact of GDPR on media relations. What are your thoughts on this?

Obviously, the challenges of preparing will be much greater for smaller businesses who may not have the expertise, or resources to ensure compliance. For these entities, now is the time to educate themselves on the kind of support out there, whether technological or otherwise. They may eventually require investment in the kind of tools and consultancy to ensure they are able to operate. Eventually, if GDPR spells the end of “spray and pray” practices then what remains will be more quality, targeted outreach. We have become too dependent on the “Hi there” email that should be the follow-up, not the initial contact. Such practices are soon to enter a period of reckoning under GDPR.

What kind of processes should be in place to raise awareness within the company about GDPR and data protection, and what kind of questions do communicators need to be asking now about the state of their company’s data protection handling?

Stephanie: There are several effective ways of raising awareness within a company about data protection. Firstly, make sure that staff receive adequate training and have clear guidance in their employee handbooks. Employees should know how to recognise a breach, and should know the reporting line in their department if one is detected. There needs to be someone to take ownership of compliance or it doesn’t get done, so departmental heads must be informed and ready to act.

Paul: The very real danger will be for those companies who operate too far away from actual established media relationships – those who rely on very wide dissemination of unsolicited information to journalists. These kinds of practices have the potential of majorly impacting the turnover of smaller companies in particular. Therefore companies will need to audit the internal practices of individual employees and provide proper communication and training to ensure compliant practice. Externally, we need to be as transparent as possible with all of our stakeholders, whether they are journalists, clients or investors when it comes to our data management practices. Under GDPR no one will be able to run and hide.

"A lot of questions boil down to: do I need to delete my entire database because I don’t have consent? Data is money for companies."
"Businesses are starting to listen to their customers and are introducing much more digestible privacy policies."

When launching a campaign, how critical is it to be aware of not only the data that is used in targeting but also the prospect of data leakage and/or theft during the campaign?

**STEPHANIE:** Data leakage is tricky as it can often go unnoticed. Where a person’s behavioural characteristics and interests are being processed in the context of providing targeted ads, this data may include sensitive personal data (ethnicity, religious beliefs, political views, sexual orientation). When it comes to calculating fines, the regulators will be taking into account the ‘nature of the personal data’ subject to a breach and so sensitive personal data should be given particular attention and good protection under GDPR.

Are companies doing enough to push the subject of data protection as part of their corporate reputation management? I’m thinking of when Apple refused to hand over their customers data to the US government, and the huge reputation boost they received in the wake of that...

**PAUL:** GDPR is a codification of what we should always have been doing. We welcome it as a minimum guarantor for our clients that we are treating data correctly. Whether we are dealing with a couple of journalists or millions of customers the same standards should apply. Since we are in public relations, we will be front and centre of the firing line, and thus we have to be above reproach. Public relations agencies for the first year will be scrutinised heavily. We have to operate beyond GDPR. The good thing is that the nature of our data tends to be straightforward. We tend to hold non-complex and non-controversial data, unlike many healthcare organisations for example. However, public relations will be the testing ground for GDPR, the battlefield where this legislation will be tried and tested. Smaller agencies will likely be the first casualties, so for them, being compliant will be the difference between make or break.

**STEPHANIE:** I think that companies are becoming increasingly aware of the great reputational boost that can be gained from enhancing GDPR compliance. In the wake of this I do think it’s important that we hold businesses to their word as well, as there is a risk that businesses will not always practice what they preach. It is in all of our interests and is a collective effort that we make sure that personal data is being protected responsibly and effectively after we volunteer it to

"Public relations agencies for the first year will be scrutinised heavily. We have to operate beyond GDPR."
How is the way that companies are communicating about privacy changing? Many companies share a short privacy statement via email – is that enough to replace the multi-page privacy policies of old?

**STEPHANIE**: Businesses are starting to listen to their customers and are introducing much more digestible privacy policies, which is a positive change. Companies are using privacy as a competitive advantage as people are naturally becoming wary of how their data is being used. When it comes to privacy policies, more is usually less. To create a clear privacy policy, you need to consider your audience. If the majority of your audience are children, provide very simplified language for example. If your audience is a very varied age group, you can consider providing both a more detailed policy, and alongside this a simplified version for the younger audience. It’s also important to remember, clarity and transparency is great, but it’s really important business don’t feel that this gets them off the hook. Processing personal data should be done responsibly first, and communicating this to customers should come after.

**It’s early days, but when do you predict companies and advertisers will be seeing the consequences of the GDPR?**

**STEPHANIE**: Once GDPR is in force, companies handling personal data in a reckless manner will simply lose business, these kinds of practices are already being recognised as unacceptable. In terms of the behaviour of the regulatory authorities, it is unlikely that they will start becoming trigger happy for the sake of it by handing down lofty fines. Regardless, the impact of GDPR will be felt. Not meeting the revised procurement standards for example will inevitably cause problems.

**PAUL**: We have been operating under the guidelines of GDPR for some time, but like many other agencies, who do not have specialised resources in place, such as a data protection officer, we will likely only truly comprehend the consequences once it actually comes into effect. It is from the mistakes of others that we will gain a better understanding of the boundaries in which we should legally operate on a daily basis. Every sector holds different depths of data. From a public relations viewpoint, it feels only right that we should have these kind of regulations. There may be initial teething problems with regards to the abuse of power with GDPR on both sides, but it is good for getting all of our houses in order. We have no excuse in the public relations industry not to get this right, because our data is not very complex. Bad public relations practice will fall to the wayside.

**STEPHANIE TUTTON**

**SENIOR ANALYST**

**EUROCOMPLY**

Stephanie is a data protection subject matter expert and senior Analyst of EuroComply responsible for Central Europe. After completing her law degree at the University of Law in London, Stephanie completed her Masters in European Union Law at Leiden University where she specialised in data protection law. She was contracted as an international consultant for the OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) the world’s largest regional security organisation and worked for the EU’s judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust.

**PAUL HAYES**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND FOUNDER**

**BEACHHUT PR**

Paul Hayes drives strategy for a wide variety of tech clients in multiple verticals and geographies. He and has mentored over 150 startups through Launchpad, DCU Ryan Academy and Dogpatch Labs. He works with founders on all aspects of their strategic communication from fundraising to IPO. Paul has extensive experience in technology communications and notably developed the messaging for early Irish tech success stories such as Havok and Demonware. Paul is also the EACD’s regional coordinator for Ireland.
Public research in a compromised field

If data is the new oil, online communication and, in particular, social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, among others), are its “forty-eighters”, highly successful first wave of prospectors.

But social data is compromised by these greedy prospectors: it is being seized and manipulated by certain economic interests, leading to a fundamental shift in the relationship between research and the public good, and it generated new means of control and surveillance.

Compromised Data: From Social Media to Big Data explores how to conduct critical research within a compromised social data framework. The global line-up of contributors explores the limits and challenges of social data research in order to posit new modes of doing public research and argues that the world is witnessing a fundamental reshaping of the social through social data mining.

Compromised Data: From Social Media to Big Data edited by Ganaele Langlois, Joanna Redden and Greg Elmer; Bloomsbury

Social Media

A beginner’s guide

Promising a “quick and easy guide” to mastering social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, snapchat podcasts and more, this freshly-updated book explores how such quickly-evolving tools can actually add to your bottom line. Unafraid to cover the basics of social media communications, this is ideally meant for the social media marketing beginner, but also acts as a refreshing reminder for anyone involved in this field of work. A handy-sized, information-packed guide that includes checklist, quick facts and actual case studies is hard to beat, and social media trainer Linda Coles’ to-the-point writing style is the best kind of advisory voice.

Social Media for Business: Foolproof Tips to help You Promote Your Business or Your Brand by Linda Coles; Wiley, 2018
Playing the game

Based on scholarly research and practical case studies, this fascinating book includes interviews with such diverse sources as Hilary Mantel, Jay-Z, Simon Cowell, Bernie Madoff and LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman. An entertaining history of the power of image-shaping – from ‘the historians of Ancient Rome to Holbein’s portrait of Oliver Cromwell – contrasts nicely with a look at the art of apology in contemporary life, from Pope Francis to BP. An especially telling section explores the case of the ex-Sir Fred Goodwin, the former chief executive officer of the Royal Bank of Scotland, whose rise from humble origins to the upper echelons of finance, and hubris-driven fall after losing the reputation game. Whether writing about Suetonius or Snapchat, the authors present a cohesive and compelling argument about the key elements of reputation management: from prioritising certain values to establishing trust, fighting fake news to actively courting controversy. A hugely entertaining read.

The Reputation Game: The Art of Changing How People See You by David Waller and Rupert Younger; Oneworld, October 2017

Leading with stories

Towards the end of last year, Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced the launch of their Storytelling Project, an attempt to measure and create engaging and marketable narratives by artificial intelligence. Faced with this potentially existential threat, professional communicators might want to remind everyone of the business case for great, human storytelling. Trust Me I’m Human explains why storytelling works at work, how you can become a better business storyteller and what your organisation can do to create a practical and inspiring storytelling culture – and why it matters. From customer experience to employee engagement, change processes to sales, author Mick Mooney reinforces exactly why “storytelling is a business superpower”. What readers will find powerful here is that this is a book free from abstractions about authenticity: practical examples of how storytelling moves the needle in countless organisations fill the book, and it explores how leaders can leverage storytelling to not only improve their communication and results, but also their team’s level of emotional intelligence. Importantly, Mooney argues that storytelling belongs to every department in the organisation: after all, it works best when it becomes part of the culture of a company, from the top down.

Trust Me, I’m Human: Why Storytelling Works at Work by Mick Mooney; RedFox Books, March 2018
LAUNCH OF EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION MONITOR 2018

Survey invites respondents to share insights and experiences.

Practitioners working in communication departments and agencies across Europe are invited to take part in this year’s European Communication Monitor (ECM). The ECM is known as the largest scientific study of the profession worldwide and has been identifying trends in the profession for more than a decade. Its annual reports provide invaluable insights for leaders in the field.

This year’s monitor addresses highly hotly-debated topics such as the challenges of fake news and how to tackle them, how to provide information for decision-makers, leadership in public relations, job satisfaction, and stress and work-life-balance of communicators. The survey will identify characteristics of excellent communication departments and explore commonalities and differences across Europe. Country-to-country comparisons and benchmarks of different types of organisations (companies, non-profits, governmental, agencies and so on, etc.) will make the results relevant for everybody in the field.

The ECM 2018 also marks the start of the next exciting phase for this joint endeavour of academia and practice. The data gathered in Europe will be complemented by similar surveys in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and – for the first time – in North America. With more than 80 countries covered and 50,000 participants to date, the Global Communication Monitor series is the only truly global study of strategic communication. Ansgar Zerfass, chair professor at Leipzig University and leader of the study series, says: “We are proud that the leading universities and researchers in all major countries are active collaborators of this initiative. This helps us to take an informed international perspective. Renowned and strong partners from the profession assure that we explore relevant topics and that filling in the survey is inspiring for respondents.” All results of the studies are available for free. A new website with reports, publications, videos and interactive self-assessment features will be launched later this year.

Practitioners filling in the questionnaire at www.communicationmonitor.eu will receive a full report of the results. They can also participate in a prize draw for five Amazon Echo Dots. Privacy is fully respected and participants cannot be identified. The online survey is available at www.communicationmonitor.eu.
RECENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EACD’S CALENDAR

EVENTS REVIEW

28 November, Copenhagen

Power to the People

With the recent dramatic advances in information flow and influence patterns, public opinion spreads faster and matters more than ever. But does it actually impact companies’ financial performance? Should companies pay more attention to public opinion, or maintain their traditional focus on customers alone as a driver of commercial success? And what about B2B companies – should they care about what the general public thinks and feels about them? We heard from four leading Scandinavian organisations on how they view the link between reputation and performance, and what they do to build and maintain positive public perceptions. The speakers were: Steffen Lüders, head of communication and stakeholder relations at Novo Nordisk Foundation and Novo Holdings A/S; Pia Stoklund, head of group communications at Nets A/S; Camilla Ramby, senior vice president, brand, marketing and communication at Danske Bank; and Astrid Gade Nielsen, vice president, group communications, Danish Crown. The moderator was Shahar Silber-shatz, chief executive officer at Caliber – our thanks to them all.

30 January, Brussels

Employer branding in the Brussels bubble

The EU might have experienced ups and downs in the past years but interest in careers in European policy making shows no signs of abating. Nevertheless, employers in the EU public affairs sphere face a growing issue of attracting and retaining the right kind of talent. David Bearfield, director of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), gave opening remarks on how EPSO is preparing for the millennial generation and empowering employees to become brand ambassadors. Bela Dajka, the EACD’s EU Institutions working group coordinator, moderated the ensuing panel discussion between Claudine Camilleri, head of communication and attractiveness at EPSO, Natalia Kurop, director at Ellwood Atfield Brussels, and David Webber, partner and the head of EU affairs practice at Odgers Berndtson. The discussion highlighted the need for leaders in public affairs who are flexible, innovative and willing to take risks. Your organisation should have a unique value proposition to attract younger generations who look for a purpose in their work, here being the success of the European project.

24 January, Milan

Personal branding and social CEOs for business

Earlier this year, communicators met at LinkedIn Milan to explore how CEOs can find an authentic voice on social media to benefit their organisation. Participants were also presented with research on how companies which encourage all their employees, not just top executives, to be active presences on social media are more likely to attract top talent. The event focussed on the two main challenges involved with having your CEO on social media: first, social CEOs cannot be packaged like brands. Like us, they have a human voice, which is far more complex and must be honestly presented to come across as authentic. Second, companies should be cautious of being overly identified with their CEO’s personal branding. What happens when a CEO leaves? Participants agreed that it is the role of communicators to manage the transition between CEOs and to turn it into an opportunity to leverage the positive personal branding of the former chief executive, to start building on the successor’s own brand, and to broaden the stakeholder audience.
COMING UP IN YOUR REGION

EVENTS PREVIEW

15 March, Oslo

Big Data + Small Data for smarter stakeholder management

Social media, multiplication of stakeholders, crisis of trust in traditional media – managing brand and reputation in this environment is more challenging than ever. However, thanks to smart combinations of big and small data, communicators can also know more about their audiences than ever. Defining the networks of influence (who influences whom) paired with insightful opinion research informs the most effective communications strategies.

Our speakers Lukasz Bochenek and Ingrid Helsingen Warner, managing directors for Leidar Switzerland and Norway respectively, will help you discover new trends, look at the best practices and develop action plans that can be applied in daily work.

23 April, Darmstadt

Future proof your brand

After the first successful session in London the next coaching day with VIM Group on how to future-proof your brand will take place in Darmstadt, Germany. Senior figures in the Merck communication team – Constantin Birnstiel, Axel Löber and Katrin Menne – will share their insights on the company’s radical rebranding. Participants will hear about the challenges of implementing the new brand across 100 locations globally, and how Merck is transforming their 50,000 employees into brand ambassadors. Key findings from the German Brand Monitor on the success of internal branding will be presented by Hans Meier-Kortwig, chief executive officer, GMK Markenberatung. Marc Cloosterman and John Bache of VIM Group will also be on hand to discuss brand longevity in the digital era.

For more information about EACD events, visit www.eacd-online.eu/activities.

NEW APPOINTMENT

New regional coordinator for Netherlands

Frank Körver, partner at Amsterdam-based consultancy GKSV, joins Nanne Bos, head of global brand management at Dutch multinational banking and financial services corporation ING, as the EACD’s regional coordinator for the Netherlands.

In his role at GKSV, Frank Körver is a trusted advisor to communication directors of many renowned companies in the Netherlands. Frank is a recognised expert on strategy development, (re)organising communications functions, and structured problem solving. His purpose is to help his clients realise outstanding results by providing them with solutions in the field of strategy, leadership, and reputation. On occasion Frank provides interim support to strengthen management teams. He is also a member of the board at Stitching Business Club Cobra Museum and guest lecturer at EURIB, the European institute for brand management.
NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME!

The following communicators have recently joined the EACD

Cecile Abeille Regional Corporate Communications Director, EMEA, Estee Lauder, Paris, France Marianne Dunning Nouwens Head of Corporate Communications and Branding, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek, Amsterdam, Netherlands Mary Beth Henson Head of Communications, L-acoustics, Marcoussis Cedex, France Sajita Nair Communication Partner, Pandora A/S, Copenhagen V, Denmark Helen O’Reilly Head of Communications and Press Relations, Médiation du crédit aux entreprises – Ministère de l’Économie et des Finances, Paris Ayce Ozatalay Corporate Communications Manager, Turkish Educational Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey Blanca Palao Head, Operations Change Management, International Air Transport Association, Madrid, Spain Rosalind Pereira Director Advancement Communications, INSEAD Business School, Fontainebleau, France Mona Saarinen Communications Manager, Nokia Networks, Espoo, Finland Patrick Settelen Head of Group Communication, Bluestar Adisseo, Antony, France Markku J. Tuominen Brand and Communications Director, Accountor Holding Oy, Helsinki, Finland Luis Gonzalez Canomanuel President and CEO, IPRN, Pozuelo, Spain Konstantinos Alexandropoulos Communications Executive, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Larnaca, Cyprus Tessa Bartlett Director of Communications, University of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom James Foster PR and Communications Manager, ND Group B.V., Eindhoven, Germany Lori Gustavus Director of Communications and Marketing, Quantis, Paris, France Michael Knowlton Global Director of Communication, Greater Europe Mission, Monumen, United States Leonoor Koole Corporate Communications Strategist, Tata Steel Nederland Bv, Velsen-Noord, Netherlands Estefania Lacarte Jadraque Head Communications South Europe, Groupon, Madrid, Spain Ann Michelle Mondragon Global HR Communications Specialist, Givaudan, Zurich, Switzerland Andrea Polo Communication Director, Facile.it, Milano, Italy Stefan Rathausky Vice President Corporate Projects and Communications, RHI AG, Wien, Austria Sabine Schumann Head of Communications, EIT Health, Munich, Germany Tina Skjalm Chief Communication Consultant, Danske Bank A/S, Copenhagen, Denmark
5 tips for creating compelling corporate stories

Engaging audiences on traditional or social channels requires finely honed storytelling skills. Most companies have great stories to tell, but finding and packaging them continues to be a struggle for most communications departments. Here are five ways to ease the pain.

1. Think like a journalist
   The natural starting point for the corporate storyteller is to think about what the brand wants to say. But a more fruitful starting point is often to focus like a journalist on what the audience might be interested in. It’s usually easier to link a quirky story back to a corporate message or proof point than it is to make that dry message house more interesting.

2. Think like a showrunner
   From E.R. to The Good Wife, we live in the age of the long story arc. Every episode has a story, but the series unfolds over time. Every story you tell should ideally have a beginning, middle and end, and over time you want your episodes to build. Of course, your long story arc should correspond as closely as possible to the story of your brand.

3. Go beyond the communications department.
   Stories happen in the front lines, in the back rooms, in the homes of consumers, and in offices of suppliers or partners. They almost never happen in the communications department. So get out there into the field and onto social media. Think like a journalist to sniff out what’s interesting, then find the right framework to tell the story.

4. Remember the classics
   There are several archetypical stories that people keep coming back to. You know them already: slaying the beast. Rebirth and renewal. The quest or search for an objective. Rags to riches. There’s a reason these story forms have worked across cultures and across millennia – they are universal and, unlike the news, they never get old. Adopt them whenever you have the opportunity.

5. Don’t sell, ever
   People don’t like being sold to, now more than ever. Your audience, whether internal or external, can and will spot your sales pitch a mile off. Then they will tune you out or switch you off. Your job is to engage. Do it well and you will not only capture and hold your audience’s attention, but you’ll also leave them with a positive thought or conclusion. That, in every sense, is the moral of the story.
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When updating or changing a brand, people tend to only think about the strategy and the visual identity, but how do you make your brand really work for the organisation?

In the book ‘Future-Proof Your Brand’, Marc Cloosterman and Laurens Hoekstra from VIM Group share their insights and tips on how to implement, manage and optimise your brand performance; now and in the future.

vim-group.com/future-proof