

THE EDITOR

The current financial crisis offers us the opportunity to witness the whole spectrum of communications strategies in action, from internal business memos to governments' promotion (or not) of bank rescue packages. The next issue of *Communication Director*, due out in November, focuses on financial communications as practised in Europe today, and will explore this fascinating and complex field in detail. Meanwhile, in this newsletter, we present Elena Gutiérrez García's article from the previous issue, explaining the convergence between political and corporate communications. As ever, we also present recent appointments and upcoming events.

With best wishes,



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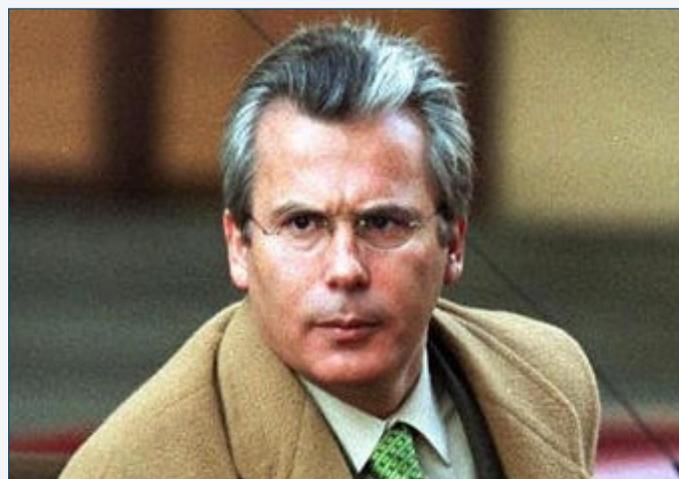
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COMMENTARY

The past is another country...

In Spain, Judge Baltasar Garzon is a celebrated figure, the kind of public personality regularly described as a 'maverick'. He is a dogged champion of the rule of universal jurisprudence, which holds that courts can hear cases of genocide and crimes against humanity wherever they occur and whatever the nationality of the defendant. But Garzon is not without his detractors, who see the media-friendly image he presents – whether crusading against Eta, al-Qaeda, or Pinochet – as flashy, vain or self-serving. His most recent move, however, could potentially be the most divisive of all. Last Thursday, he announced a judicial probe into the disappearances of tens of thousands of people during Spain's civil war and General Franco's dictatorship. It will involve for the first time a systematic process of opening mass graves. His decision has drawn flack from several sectors of Spanish society, not all of them conservative or reactionary voices. State prosecutors have



argued against a reversal of the across-the-board amnesty granted politically-motivated crimes, perhaps fearing that disinterring the past in this traumatic way could shake the delicate foundations of the country's transition from dictatorship to democracy.
By Dafydd Phillips

SIMILAR, BUT NOT THE SAME

An increasing convergence between Political and Corporate Communications helps highlight the similarities, as well as the differences, between the two.

by *Elena Gutiérrez García*

What do communications specialists working in politics and corporations have in common? Is it shared aims, analogous working methodologies, or similar professional profiles? Politicians, public institutions, election campaigns, executives, consumers and clients, advertising, social responsibility, lobbies, employees, activists, investors, reputation: these terms are realities which both groups of professionals have to work with, and this might lead us to think that Political and Corporate Communications follow divergent paths. However, analysis of the origins and current situation of these areas offers some ideas that can help us understand the ways that these young professions actually converge in substantial aspects of their work.

INCREASING CONVERGENCE The late twentieth century witnessed an exponential increase in the number of professionals and resources that organisations devote to communication. This was because both the political and corporate world had started to participate more actively in the public forum. One idea has been salient throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century: the need for organisations to make themselves heard. Issues such as climate change, sustainable economic development, intercultural relations, safe energy, etc., are instances in which the enormous complexity of public communication is obvious. Precisely these issues reflect the inevitable overlap between Political and Corporate Communications. Companies that participate in Public Affairs,

and parties or national/international institutions that handle private matters, are common currency in the process by which ideas develop and policies take shape. Among the recent examples we find that public institutions, businesses and other social groups play a part in trying to influence the social debate on the regulation of those private sectors that affect the public: the energy sector, pharmaceuticals, health care, and so on.

Moreover, in this context the media are an excellent example, because they serve as a platform from which the discourses of organisations can reach the citizen-consumer, so that the public can be persuaded. Edward Bernays' definition of "the engineering of consent" already prophesied that the declaration made by the in-

“Both Political and Corporate Communications specialists require good general, as well as specific, background and training.”

dustrialist Vanderbilt on the threshold of the twentieth century, "the public be damned", would not stand the test of time.

NEW CHALLENGES Since contemporary society has developed increasingly sophisticated media, people now have a greater capacity to obtain information, assess their options critically and decide how to vote, purchase, spend their leisure time, choose entertainment options, and so forth. The citizen-consumer can inform him or herself through multiple channels in order to make better decisions, and new technologies are providing ever-increasing means of doing so. Both political and business organisations are responding to various new challenges: saturation of information and messages, citizen initiatives (user-generated content, citizen

journalism), pressure groups, web 2.0, greater political participation of social groups, demands for greater transparency, employee empowerment, trends towards corporate social responsibility, increased competition for business and for media space, citizens' apathy towards politics, and so on.

These trends have meant that there is an increasing overlap or convergence between the worlds of politics and business in the ways that they manage their relations with the public. Just as some decades ago the political sphere inherited new approaches from commercial marketing, politics has also taught corporations that to mobilise the electorate or use grassroots tactics can be useful to achieve greater commitment on the part of their stakeholders. Equally, companies have had to adapt to a new regulatory framework which obliges them to do political communication in order to defend their interests on the global field.

A TREE THAT IS STILL GROWING Both Political and Corporate Communications specialists work in a profession which requires good general, as well as specific, background and training. They have to take into account that they work in complex environments which require them to take on similar responsibilities. They need the strength to carry out strategies and make valuable contributions to their organisations, even though they also offer - to their own organisations and to the public - specific products or benefits, news services and other media-related functions.

The Head of Communications, in both political institutions and corporations, has to have an all-round education as well as specific training that equips him or her to handle the natural complexity of each type of organisation, be it public or private, commercial or non-profit, and to direct communicative actions according to the contents or messages and the types of audience that the institution wishes to address. Nevertheless, the high degree of professional and technical specialisation may sometimes lead these experts to forget that their work belongs to the world of the social sciences. Knowing how to communicate effectively means knowing others, knowing the public, knowing the people who, whether they are

clients, voters or employees, live alongside organisations in a given social, cultural, political and economic environment. Good professionals must therefore have a solid multidisciplinary background. Otherwise, how could they interpret the issues, the results of sociological or market research, or of public opinion surveys? How would they be able to develop messages that people can relate to, and how could they detect and address people's needs and expectations? In this sense, both political and corporate communication require trained professionals who can succeed in related disciplines such as economics, politics and sociology, because communicating means providing information about real issues, and our first task is to find out what these are. Professionals recognise that transparency is not only essential in firms that are quoted on the Stock Exchange. Public institutions and international organisations must also provide as much information as possible so that citizens can participate in public policies. In short, openness to dialogue with stakeholders is becoming a general prerequisite in the work philosophy of public and private organisations alike.

RESOURCES The communicator's intellectual resources ensure that they will manage the task adequately. Communications managers working for governments and corporations both agree that communications must be handled coherently, globally, and, above all, strategically. Here, strategy means a way of understanding communications within the management of organisations. That is, communication must be an integral part of the definition of

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Tale of Two Disciplines

- Both areas react to increasing media plurality, which fosters convergence.
- Professionals must have solid multidisciplinary backgrounds, as well as ability to specify.
- Shared understanding of what communications is about benefits both disciplines.

policy. This concept is enjoying increasing importance in the business world. Prof. Joep Cornelissen has explained that “many organizations now place communications at a higher position within the organisations’ hierarchy and appreciate communications prac-

“Politicians and company directors are increasingly aware of the value that intangible factors confer on the organisation.”

tioners for their input and strategic involvement in decision making concerning the overall corporate strategy of the organization.” Professionals recognize that their function relies on the support provided by a shared understanding of what communication is about. One of the constants in academic and professional journals is the idea that communication requires a clearly defined internal role and precise guidance. Will politicians and executives allow communication to become a top-level managerial function? Current trends suggest that this is likely, at least in large organizations. Politicians and company directors are increasingly aware of the value that intangible factors, such as brands, reputation and leadership, confer on the organization. Communication seems to be a channel that can ensure that the public will have a positive view of them.

MEASURING RESULTS Another shared element is the link between the term ‘strategy’ and a certain methodology of shared work: research, planning and evaluation. We can communicate better if we know the environment. Political Communication seems to be ahead of Corporate Communication in this respect, in its use of rigorous and systematic research. Opinion polls and surveys tend to be crucial during elections, and for governments in general as a way of finding out how much support their policies enjoy among the citizenry. The main obstacle to the inclusion of research among the communications strategies of institutions and corporations is usually unwillingness to invest money, and the lack of a professional culture.

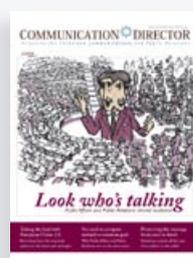
Political and corporate bodies require specific types of communication adapted to their special needs. Branches develop when the

professional has to provide creative solutions in particular social and organizational contexts. We could say that the professional reality is multi-dimensional, and that the professional ‘tree’ produces a wide variety of fruits, some of which are better than others.

Herein lies the main differences between these areas. For example, Political Communication inspires a different handling of messages and media during an election campaign, or the professional is at the service of an institution run by a political party. The nuances are therefore different. The same phenomenon can be observed in the corporate sphere. The ongoing debate as to the convergence or divergence of marketing and PR shows that there are niches where specialization takes place. Similarly, it is not the same to handle the communications of public corporations as those of small businesses. To sum up, Political and Corporate Communication definitely produce different results.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT Political and Corporate Communication do have one thing in common: they both still seem young. Communication is a young profession but it has experienced considerable growth during that time. On the other hand, both areas are still facing challenges, and there is room for improvement regarding the professionalism and training of practitioners, clarification of ethical issues, recognition of internal roles within organisations, the profession’s social recognition, and so on. None the less, there is no doubt that the profession has reached high standards in its work over the last few decades, and that these challenges offer opportunities to improve and develop in the future, so that we can consolidate our status as a profession. |

STORYTELLER



This article is published in the latest issue of Communication Director, “Look who’s talking: Public Affairs and Public shared audience.”

Elena Gutiérrez García holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Navarra, Spain. Her doctoral dissertation was awarded the 2004 Annual Outstanding Doctorate Award. She is the Deputy Chair of the Master in Political and Corporate Communication at Navarra, where she lectures in Management of Strategic Communication Projects.

WHO IS THIS MAN?



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Recent Appointments from the World of Communications / October 2008

 Deutsche Post



Christof Erhardt
(Head, Corporate Communications)
Institution: Deutsche Post World Net
Start: March 01 2009



Germany: Erhardt leads Corporate Comms at Deutsche Post

CHRISTOF ERHARDT, currently Director of Global Corporate Communications at the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) in Ottobrunn, transfers to Corporate Communications next year at Deutsche Post World Net in Bonn. He succeeds Manfred Harnischfeger, who remains in an advisory position. In his new position, Erhardt is responsible for company-wide internal and external communication, Corporate sponsoring as well as world-wide development.

 ACCOR



François Vieillard
(Director of Communications)
Institution: Accor
Start: Oct 01



France: New Director of Comms at Accor

FRANÇOIS VIEILLARD has been appointed Director of Communications for Accor, the French hotelier operating in nearly one hundred countries. He takes on responsibility for all internal and external communications for the chain and its subsidiaries. Previously, Vieillard worked in communications at EuroDisney and the French subsidiary of InBev, as well as Director of Communications and member of the executive committee at Saur.

 CREDIT SUISSE



Sandra Kobelt
(Head of Corporate Communications)
Institution: Hirslanden
Start: Oct 01



Germany: Korschinowski fills new position at Credit Suisse

As of November 1, BJÖRN KORSCHINOWSKI will be the new Head of Corporate Communications Central Europe at Credit Suisse in Frankfurt/Main. In this newly-created position he will be responsible for all future media relations in Central Europe. Korschinowski, whose previous role as Director of Corporate Communication at Citibank and Citigroup, will in his new role report to Michael Ruediger, CEO for Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Central Europe.

 hirslanden



Sandra Kobelt
(Head of Corporate Communications)
Institution: Hirslanden
Start: Oct 01



Switzerland: Kobelt succeeds Brogli as Head of Corporate Comms

SANDRA KOBELT is Head of Corporate Communications at the Hirslanden group of Swiss private hospitals. She succeeds Urs Brogli, who now heads the company's Public Affairs division. Kobelt is responsible for all external and internal communications, media, PR as well as the medium-referred support of medical services at the Group's thirteen hospitals. Her previous communications work has included positions at Kuoni and Shell, as well as working in Public Affairs with Mars Switzerland AG.

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Recent Appointments from the World of Communications / October 2008



Günter Gaugler
(Director Corporate Media Relations)
Institution: SAP
Start: Oct 01



Germany: Gaugler leads Media Relations at SAP

GÜNTER GAUGLER is the new Director of Corporate Media Relations with the software producer SAP, based in Walldorf. In this role he is responsible for all Corporate and Financial dimensions of Global Media operations of the company. Gaugler previously led the Global Media department of the Infineon Technologies group in Munich. In his new position at SAP he reports to Christoph Liedtke, Vice President Global Relations.



Eleanor Conroy
(Director of Public Relations)
Institution: InterContinental Hotels
Start: Sept 29



UK: InterContinental Hotels hires Conroy to Direc

ELEANOR CONROY has joined InterContinental Hotels Group as Director of Public Relations for EMEA. She joins the Group from Saachi & Saachi, where she was responsible for day-to-day press liaison, crisis communications and acted as agency spokesperson since February 2007. Prior to that, Conroy worked in a variety of communications roles at Cohn & Wolfe, Edelman, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the BBC.



Patrick Mauron
(Head of Corporate Communications)
Institution: Precious Woods Group
Start: Sept 01



Switzerland: New communications role for Mauron

Since last month, PATRICK MAURON has been Head of Corporate Communications at the Precious Woods Group, the European supplier of FSC-approved tropical woods. He is responsible for all internal and external communications. Mauron has several years of experience in the communications industry: a trained journalist, he has media experience, with amongst others Ringier and Tamedia, as well as agency experience.



Casia Zajac
(Head of Communications)
Institution: ABTA
Start: Oct 01



UK: ABTA hires Zajac to head communications role

The British travel association, ABTA, has recruited CASIA ZAJAC as Head of Communications. Zajac took up the post after an internal reorganisation of the ABTA Management Team by Chief Executive, Mark Tanzer. She has overall responsibility for communications including the Public Relations and Media Relations Unit. Prior to this, Zajac was Chief Executive of the Inverness Chamber of Commerce in Scotland.



Tilman Eberle
(VP, Communications)
Institution: Doodle
Start: Oct 01



Switzerland: Doodle appoints Eberle as VP of communications

Zurich-based Web 2.0 service Doodle has a new Vice President of Communications. TILMAN EBERLE has responsibility for Public Relations and Communications. Before joining Doodle, Eberle was for several years PR advisor with Burson Marsteller Switzerland, where he was responsible for clients in the fields of Healthcare, science and Corporate Communication. Prior to that, he was for six years responsible for environmental communication with Orange Switzerland.

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EVENTS



16.11.2008 - 23.11.2008

Corporate Management: Restructuring & Change Management

More than 70 per cent of companies introducing structural changes fail to execute such restructuring correctly, resulting in certain degrees of failure, partially due to their inability to manage and implement the necessary restructuring management tools available to the company. During this seminar, participants will be able to hold individual consultations and receive practical advice on the questions regarding corporate management, change management and restructuring, risk management, IPO and project financing – specifics to CIS companies, as well as additional topics.

Leading Ventures Associates,
London

[➔ More](#)

22.10.2008

Seminar on Media Training



If the prospect of a media interview get you running for the hills, this half-day seminar, organised by the British Chamber of Commerce, promises to make you familiar with the basics of media training and maybe even turn you into a seasoned pro.

Be Manos Hotel, Brussels

[➔ More](#)

22.10.2008 - 24.10.2008

Europe INNOVA Conference



The Europe INNOVA Conference 2008 will focus on accelerating innovation in Europe and how to optimise knowledge transfer, strengthening industry's innovation capacity through strategic partnerships and supporting innovative entrepreneurs.

IRE Secretariat,
Lyon

[➔ More](#)

22.10.2008 - 25.10.2008

ETNO General Assembly Forum



Three days of high-level events held by the European Telecommunication Network Operators, including a forum on "Finding the Right Balance for Competition, Investment and Consumer Benefits", as well as a CEO Summit Meeting.

Fondazione Cini,
Venice

[➔ More](#)



17.11.2008 - 18.11.2008

European Media Leaders Summit 2008

The Summit, now in its fifth year, promises two days of debate and networking. It brings together the leading lights in the media world from broadcasters, content owners, cable and satellite operators, telcos and new media companies from across Europe, to convene and deliberate the big industry trends and challenges facing the media sector in 2008 and beyond.

Renaissance Chancery Court Hotel,
London

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29.10.2008 - 31.10.2008

Languages and The Media Conference



A bi-annual international conference dedicated to the subject of language transfer in a changing media landscape (Video, DVD, digital TV and cinema).

ICWE GmbH
InterContinental Hotel, Berlin

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03.11.2008

Lobbying in the EU

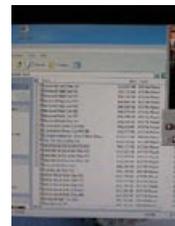


Subtitled "How to represent and defend your interests in Brussels", the workshop will examine: the EU institutional landscape and the relations between these institutions, the decision-making processes, and the ways to work and influence the system.
Le Chatelain All Suite Hotel,
Brussels

[➔ More](#)

19.11.2008 - 20.11.2008

Future of the internet



The DigiWorld Summit will seek to address various issues, including high-level specialty sessions and plenary sessions, with the presence of South Korea as this year's Guest Country.
Le Corum,
Montpellier, France

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