

HEARTS, HEADS & HANDS

Change in turbulent times can be a frightening prospect, but it does not have to be painful for all concerned. Following the principles of strategic communication with change management will provide timely reassurance to worried employees. by Terry L. McKenzie and Sheira Ariel

Let's get real. No one talks about change management when the change is something wonderful. For example, a change management plan because we are raising your pay 20 per cent? Not likely to happen. Change management plans kick in when an organisation is undergoing – or considering undergoing – hard, even traumatic change. The introduction of a new process, a change in the staffing model, a reorganisation are all good examples, because they all involve significant risks for the company. Sun Microsystems is a company that has been undergoing heart-wrenchingly difficult change for the past six years. Once the wonder of Wall Street, Sun crashed hard in the dot-com bust, and has struggled to recover ever since. We've undergone numerous reductions in force (we have laid off more than 45,000 people since 2001), massive reorganisations, a new CEO, at least three new executive leadership teams, large-scale outsourcing, new strategies, and new procedures. In the process, we have learned some hard lessons about change management and the critical role of communication in helping our employees adjust. Perhaps the most important lesson we've learned is that strong change communication is an effective, low-cost way to help the company manage risk and ensure a successful outcome.

KEYS TO SUCCESS We developed two tools at Sun to help us manage change through communication. We've found these two new approaches plus one tried and true method to make a huge difference to our internal clients:

1. *The Knowledge/Action/Attitude (KAA) Model (see model 1, next page): This tool provides us with a consistent method to document our environment, visualise where we want to end up, and identify the gaps that must be filled to get there.*

2. *The Seven Questions: By arming ourselves with these questions, we are able to raise provocative questions for our clients, helping them anticipate the road ahead, while gaining valuable insight into how employees feel about what is coming.*

3. *Employee Engagement: By focusing on how communication unfolds, we maintain trust and dialogue between managers and employees.*

THE KAA MODEL At the risk of stating the obvious, it's much easier to have a successful outcome if you know where you want to end up. There's a danger that as communicators we will view the world through the lens of an inform function – it's our job to tell. In times of upheaval, that's close to malpractice in our profession. For communicators to help a company and its employees adjust to change, we need to be as concerned with how people are feeling as to what they are hearing. And really, what's the point of tuning into feelings and knowledge if you don't know what you want someone to do differently tomorrow than they're doing today? That's why we've developed the Knowledge/Attitude/Action (KAA) model as an easy platform for our communication plans.

So let's look at a practical example (model 2, next page) in which your company needs to communicate a change in strategic direction that will require new skills, a different organisation structure, and the possibility that many employees will have new bosses. Job loss is also a possibility. What is on employee minds? So as we look at the present state and project to the future, we're not looking for miracles. What we are looking for are signs that employees are going to give the change a chance, and that they trust their leadership to take them in the right direction. In change efforts, that is half the battle.

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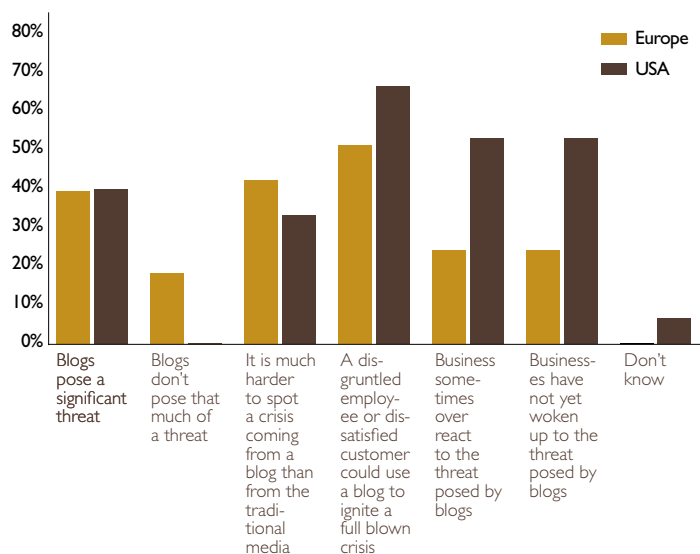


FACTS & FIGURES

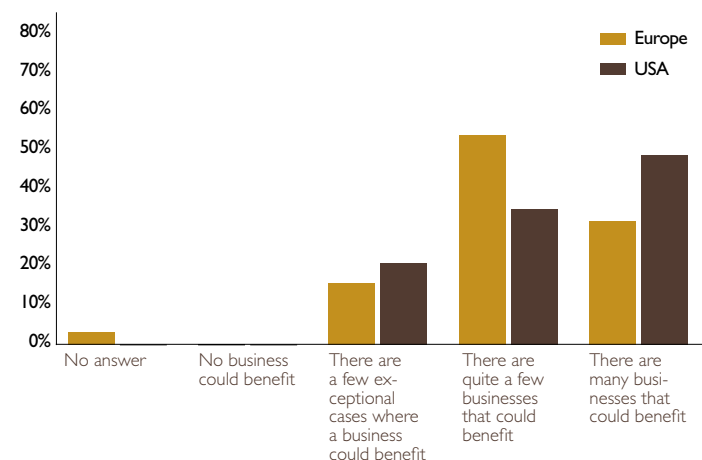
A recent survey undertaken by the Blog Relations (www.blog-relations.com) blogging and podcasting website has thrown up some interesting results on the ongoing relationship between PR professionals and blogs. The survey, which quizzed workers from Europe and the US, clearly shows how seriously companies are taking the social media revolution, with 50

per cent of respondents admitting to reading blogs at least five times a week. And, as the two graphs below show, the majority also believe that blogs and bloggers, can be a source of both opportunities and threats to the reputation of their organisations. It is clearly time for those firms who still have no online diary to get writing. *Taken from Blog Relations*

Can blogs pose a threat to corporate reputations?



Could businesses benefit from setting up their own blogs?



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COMMENTARY

Fuelling the fire of flu fear by Dafydd Phillips



The pork industry has its work cut out for it in the face of public alarm over swine flu, and the airline and travel industries have seen a slump in business. In contrast, the pharmaceutical industry has seen an upswing in their share prices, particularly Roche, which makes anti-flu drug Tamiflu, and GlaxoSmithKline, which makes anti-flu drug Relenza. EU officials have put forward the name “novel flu virus” in an effort to minimise damage to the agricultural sector, while the WHO stick to the dry “Influenza A(H1N1)”. Although the flu is not transmissible through consumption, consumer expectations may not see eye-to-eye with facts as the media gleefully hype up yet another lethal pandemic – remember avian flu? Although this scare will pass, to be replaced by another wave of fear mongering and doom-laden predictions, it will be of little comfort to those whose livelihoods have been affected: several nations have stopped imports of pork from Mexico, where the flu outbreak started, and some other countries in the Americas which have also been hit.

Imprint

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PERSONNEL



Xavier Duchemin
(Global Marketing & Communication Director)
Institution: Citroën
Start: June 01



France: Duchemin to lead global comms at Citroën

XAVIER DUCHEMIN, Managing Director of Citroën UK, has been appointed Global Marketing and Communications Director for Citroën Worldwide and will take up his position in June. Based in Paris, his responsibilities will include the recently reinvented Citroën brand and overseeing the deployment of the company's new identity, customer relationship and business to business model, and new product lines.



Alfonso Lopez Sanchez
(General Manager, Communications)
Institution: Endesa
Start: April 22



Spain: Sanchez appointed to Endesa

ALFONSO LOPEZ SANCHEZ has been appointed as General Manager of Communication at Endesa, the Spanish electric utility company. He comes from Enel, where he has been advising on communication and PR issues since 2004, a role which he coordinated with his position as Director. He has been a consultant to the European Commission as well as a partner of the pan-European network of political consultants FIPRA.



Matthias von Glischinski-Kurc
(Director of Communications)
Institution: Shell Germany
Start: May 25



Germany: Von Glischinski-Kurc takes over at Shell

MATTHIASVON GLISCHINSKI-KURC is the new Director of Communication and Economic Policy at Shell Germany. In this function he is at the same time responsible for corporate communication in Austria and Switzerland. Von Glischinski-Kurc takes over the position from Patrick Kammerer, who left in April to head communications for the global gas station division of the company.

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EVENTS



28.05.2009

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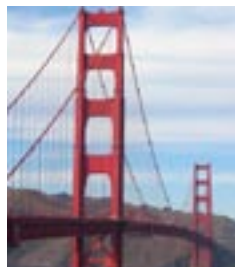


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