

## NORMALISATION AND DEVIANCE IN CHANGE

*Communication is not just about conveying information; the act of communication itself transforms the organisation, especially when communicating change.* By Alan Zaremba

**W**hen most people think of communicating, they consider it as an act of transmission. That is, they consider communication to be a process that involves getting a message from point A, to point B. The editor of the Journal of Employee Communication Management once told me that to him, communication meant getting what is in his head into someone else's head. This is a standard notion and an important one to consider. When a CEO delivers a message about a change in company policy, staffing, orientation – whatever the change might be – the desired outcome is for the varied audiences to understand the change. In other words, get the information from the CEO's head to the workforce.

**TRANSMISSION PERSPECTIVE** The transmission perspective likens communication to an act of filling a bucket with water and transporting it from one place to another. Person A has a message to send to person B, fills his or her bucket with the message and attempts to transport it so that B can receive it intact. This model recognises that the bucket can be jostled en route to the destination. Consequently, communication professionals examine the variables that can impede the successful receipt of a filled, unadulterated bucket. The transmission perspective acknowledges that communication is non-linear and that what jostles

the bucket could be relationships, biases, selective listening, timing, and many other variables. Regardless of the number and extent of the variables, this perspective considers communication to be something you do in an organisation in order to accomplish goals – like explaining, and facilitating the creation of, organisational change. While the transmission perspective has merit, it would be wise for communication professionals to consider complementing this notion with something called a constitutive perspective. This is an important viewpoint to consider, if for no other reason than a focus solely on transmission places, the very real constitutive function on the periphery of the corporate communicator's radar screen. Such marginalisation will inevitably undermine communication efforts and may also diminish the perceived value of the communication professional to the organisation. The constitutive perspective assumes that the act of interacting is a process that not only involves the transmission of information, but also shapes and defines the relationships between people and, by extension, the nature of the evolving organisation. Instead of something that is done in organisations, communication can be conceptualised as something that actually forms and constitutes the organisation. This may seem like an ethereal notion, but there are some very real benefits of considering the constitutional perspective especially for organisations that are concerned with communication and change. Consider the following example...

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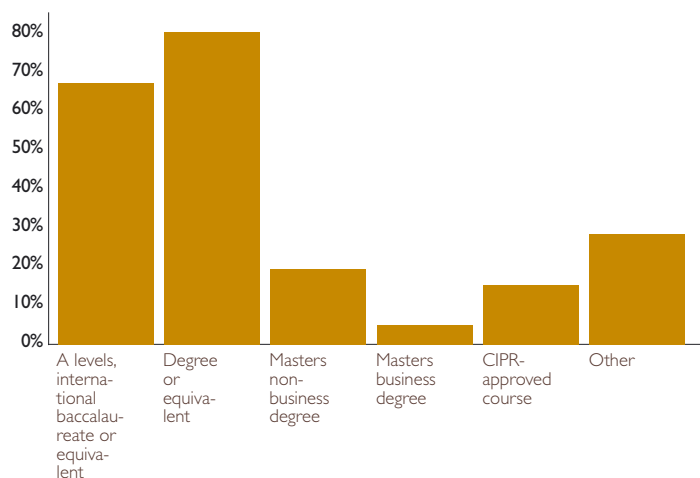


## FACTS & FIGURES

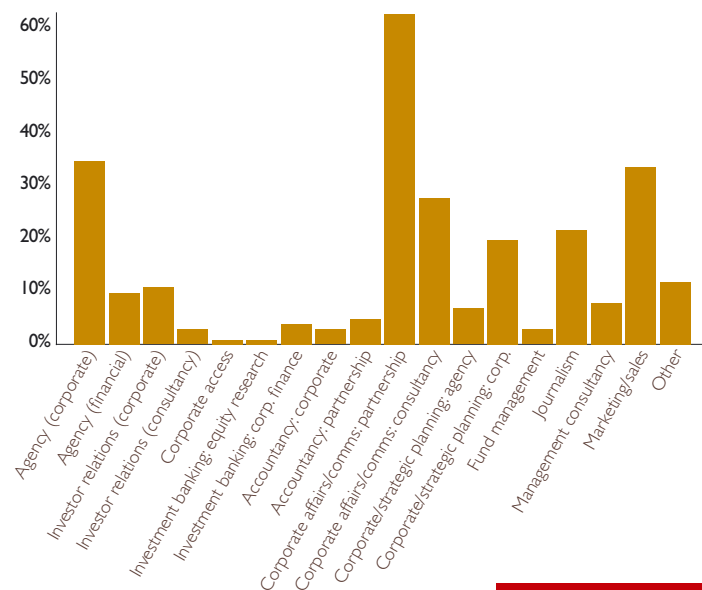
VMA Search, a part of the Search Group that specialises in Corporate and Financial Communications, published a comprehensive survey that targeted some of the industry's leading inhouse corporate communicators, shedding light on their role today and specifically the industry's salary trends from 2006-2008. They also canvassed readers of CorpComms

Magazine, eliciting more than 150 responses to a detailed online questionnaire. The charts highlighted here give a glimpse into the academic background and prior work experience of communications professionals, as well as basic annual salary trends over the course of the past few years. Taken from VMA Search and CorpComms Magazine.

### The qualifications of a communications professional



### In what areas have you worked prior to your current position?



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## COMMENTARY

Europe veers to the right by Dafydd Phillips



Far-right and anti-immigrant parties made gains across Europe in Sunday's elections, as turnout figures plunged to 43 per cent – the lowest since direct elections began 30 years ago. In total, the far right is up eight seats on the 2004 European elections. This could either be the result of the economic crash – an unpleasant but temporary display of popular resentment towards governments' handling of the people's money – or it could be the most blatant indication to date of the souring of Europe's attitudes towards the other. What is clear is that the task of communicating an alternative vision of hope for the future has been fudged somewhere along the lines. This has aligned with a more pro-active approach taken by groups keen to work their way from the fringe; in the UK, a recent Alexa rating revealed that the far-right British National Party has the highest-ranking political party web site. Long-standing apathy towards the workings of the EU has this year opened the door for parties from the grubbier end of the political spectrum.

### Imprint

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Andrea Mizzoni took part in the Microsoft Students to Business Program, receiving free training and an internship at one of our partner companies. He gained confidence, real life experience, and a clearer path to his potential. Through Microsoft Unlimited Potential™, we are committed to helping 20 million people across Europe gain new skills for employability by 2010. For the rest of his story and more useful facts, visit [www.onmywayEU.com](http://www.onmywayEU.com)

## PERSONNEL

**YAHOO!**



Eric Brown  
(SVP Global Communications)  
Institution: Yahoo  
Start: July 01



### USA: Eric Brown moves from NetApp to Yahoo

ERIC BROWN, currently Vice President, Corporate Relations at NetApp, will in July follow his former colleague Elisa Steele to Yahoo, where he will take on the role of Senior Vice President, Global Communications. He will report to Steele, who left her position as SVP Global Communications at NetApp in March to become Yahoo's new Chief Marketing Officer. Brown takes over the position left vacant after interim PR head Brad Williams' departure.



Rob Faulkner  
(Head of Media and Communication)  
Institution: UEFA  
Start: June 01



### Switzerland: Communications restructure at UEFA

ROB FAULKNER, former head of media services at UEFA, has been promoted to Head of Media and Communication, replacing William Gaillard, who in turn has been appointed Adviser to President Michel Platini. Faulkner will take over the day-to-day responsibility for UEFA's external communications to the media and all media operations and accreditations, as well as overseeing the publications unit. He reports to General Secretary, David Taylor.

**GEA Group**



Donat von Müller  
(Head, Investor and Public Relations)  
Institution: GEA Group  
Start: June 01



### Germany: New role for von Müller at GEA Group

DONAT VON MÜLLER is newly in charge of investor relations and public relations with the mechanical engineering conglomerate GEA Group Aktiengesellschaft. He reports in this function to the Chief Financial Officer, Helmut Schmale. Previously, von Müller was Finance Director of GEA Denco Ltd and based in the UK.

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## EVENTS



**18.06.2009 - 19.06.2009**

### Corporate Social Responsibility in Times of Crisis

This conference, held in Sofia (left), Bulgaria, will aim to find the answers to the questions whether and to what extent the successful CSR policies contribute to the sustainability of the business in the time of world economic crisis. The expected result of the conference will be better understanding by the audience of the benefits of and approaches to CSR.

▶ European Commission for Employment, Social

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**10.06.2009 – 12.06.2009**

### The Changing Face of Media

Communications expert Dr Ansgar Zerfass (left) is one of the confirmed speakers for this conference hosted by the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication to study the effects of new media on evaluation.

▶ AMEC, Hotel Concorde, Berlin

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**16.06.2009 – 17.06.2009**

### Innovating Employee Engagement 2009

This is the year to be dead serious about business efficiency, productivity and value. This conference brings together practical solutions, valuable insights and peer brainstorming to drive engagement, loyalty and productivity.

▶ Communitelligence, Seyfarth Shaw, Chicago

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