

EVALUATE TO COMMUNICATE

A comprehensive communication audit can help determine and improve the direction and integration of communication activities

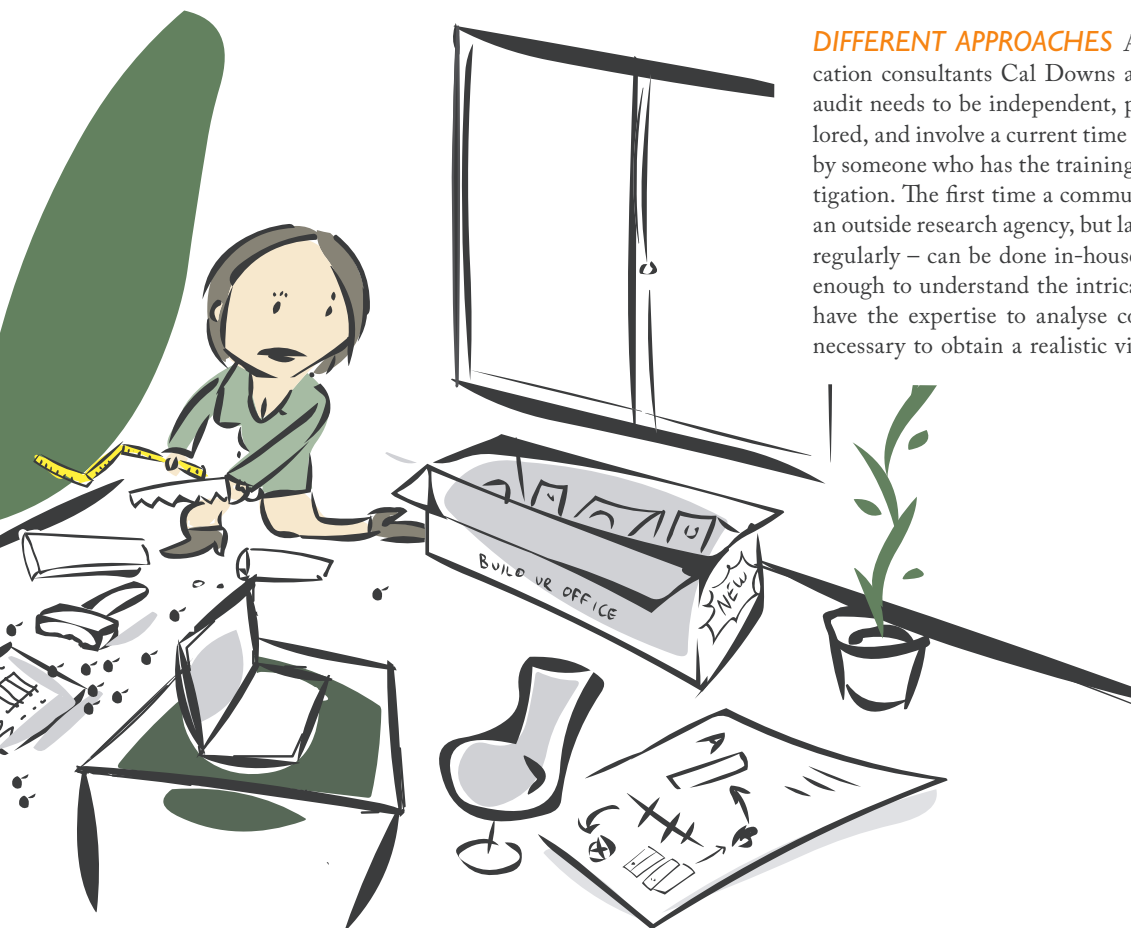
by Craig Carroll

Organisations should be concerned with organising their communications for several reasons. The legal and regulatory environments call for more responsiveness in how organisations address their internal and external constituencies. These are not always neatly distinct; they may overlap as boundaries between what is considered internal and what is considered external communication change, or may not be as clear as they used to be. Finally, as organisations age they grow, becoming increasingly more complex and embedded in webs of relationships at multiple levels, and often with greater geographical reach. Growth through mergers and acquisitions only complicates communications further. As an organisation becomes increasingly complex, so must its communications in order to help the organisation to achieve greater clarity, coherence, and coordination. Creating a communication department is one way to help an organisation make sense of the clutter of communications competing for attention within and between organisations for dissemination upward, downward, inward, and outward.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES There are a variety of approaches to organising and structuring a communication department. The primary ways are through centralisation, matrix, and decentralisation. In a centralised structure, all communication functions report to a senior level officer at company headquarters. In a matrix approach, communication heads in various subsidiaries may report to the company's management but also to the corporate communication team. In this approach, any press release sent out must be approved by the overall corporate communication team, which will review it with an eye to detecting possible conflicts with any of its subsidiaries. In a decentralised structure, communication professionals are nested within individual business units. Regardless of the structure chosen, uniting all communication sub-functions under one umbrella enables the communication department to ensure coordination and consistency in key messages. But the success of any communication department hinges on how well aligned the integration model is with how a given organisation works. For this reason, the best way to begin setting up a communication department is by conducting a comprehensive communication audit.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES According to organisational communication consultants Cal Downs and Allyson Adrian, a communication audit needs to be independent, professional, diagnostically skilled, tailored, and involve a current time frame. The audit needs to be conducted by someone who has the training that qualifies them to make the investigation. The first time a communication audit is done, it is best to hire an outside research agency, but later audits – which should be performed regularly – can be done in-house. The auditor needs to be professional enough to understand the intricacies of organisational politics but also have the expertise to analyse communication. Skills in diagnosis are necessary to obtain a realistic view of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. The diagnosis needs to be comprehensive, not just related to the areas of change that the programme evaluator would like to implement. A communication audit may be based on criteria set by professional associations, pet theories of the auditor, purposes dictated by management, benchmark comparisons with peer organisations, internal comparisons over time, current management fashions or notions of leadership and effectiveness, or objectives against which the organisation should be judged. Audits are most effective if linked to organisational outcomes,

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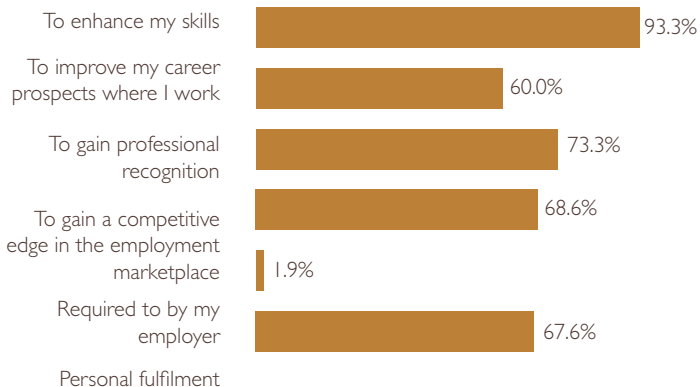
FACTS & FIGURES

A common goal shared by communications associations everywhere is the increased professionalisation of the industry, and one of the more visible emblems of this drive is the growth of academic and training courses offered by universities and institutions across Europe. One such example is the UK's PR Academy: an organisational member of the British Institute for Learning and Development, the academy takes in more than 500 PR and communication professionals as students each year, either through online courses or at its London offices. The academy recently surveyed their current and past students to find out more about their status and views on professional qualifications. This inaugural annual qualifications trends survey proposes some suggestions as to why

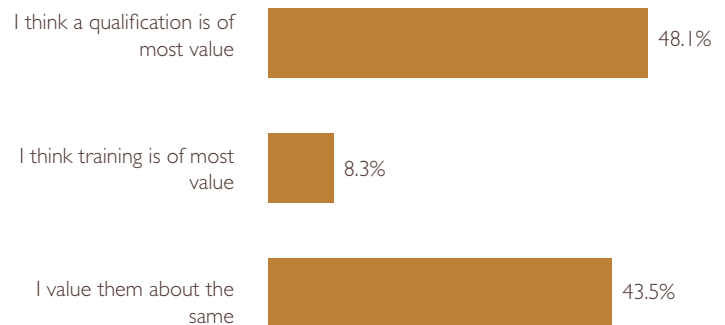
professionals devote their time and energy to pursuing a qualification (below left); the report states that "other comments" included recognition by employers and recognised accreditation. Could extra training be a means of securing jobs and strengthening qualifications? In another of the survey's segments, the survey asks whether respondents value training or qualifications as most important (below right), with both options receiving a fairly similar amount of votes. It will be instructive to keep track of any changes in the findings as the survey continues into the future. Click on "Read More" to read the whole survey. *Taken from The PR Academy, Qualifications for Communications Professionals Trends Survey 2011*

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Why people are studying (or have studied) for a professional qualification



Training v Qualifications: Which is valued more highly?



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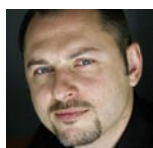
Online Communications Conference

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Speakers include



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Manager of Communications, Van Marcke Group



Christoph Rust
Head Project European Product Public Relations, Honda



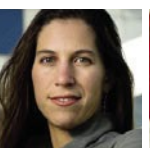
Julia Emmerich
Head Project Coordinator, Electrolux



Anne Villemoes
Head of Communications, Danish Crown



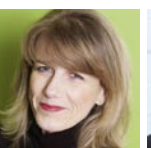
Kai Rosenberg
Senior VP of Corporate Communications, Telenor Group



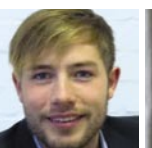
Aurélie Valtat
Online Communications Manager, Eurocontrol



Margaret O'Donnell
Digital Media Manager, British Red Cross



Isabelle Ratinaud
Marketing Director, Monster UK & Ireland



Mads Holmen
Planning Director, GoViral



Raimund Schmolze
Head of Ideation & User Experience Development, Deutsche Telekom

PERSONNEL



Fabienne de Brébisson
(Corporate Communications Director)

Institution: Valeo

Start: Feb 14



France: de Brébisson joins Valeo from Michelin

Valeo, the French automotive components manufacturer, has announced the arrival of FABIENNE DE BRÉBISSON as corporate communications director. She has been tasked by Jacques Aschenbroich, Group CEO, with reinforcing Valeo's image both internally and externally, in line with the Group's strategy. de Brébisson has been PR director with the Michelin group since 2001, having begun her career at Air France in 1984.



Josep Martí Blanch

(Secretary of Communications)

Institution: Catalan Government

Start: Feb 15



Spain: Governmental role for Martí Blanch

Journalist and communications consultant JOSEP MARTÍ BLANCH is the new secretary of communication for the Catalan Government. He is responsible for coordinating the government's internal communication policy and media relations. Previously, Martí Blanch was director at Mapa Media, worked in public relations at Schneider Electric, and taught corporate communication at Universitat Ramon Llull.



Friedrich von Heyl

(Head, Corporate Communications)

Institution: Phoenix

Start: Feb 01



Germany: von Heyl replaces Teichert at Phoenix

Dr. FRIEDRICH VON HEYL has taken over responsibility for internal and external communications at the Phoenix group, the pharmaceutical distribution company. He reports directly to CEO Reimund Pohl. von Heyl follows Olaf Teichert, who had been in charge of communications in addition to his key responsibility as head of legal. Before joining the group, von Heyl was head communications of the German subsidiary of AstraZeneca PLC.

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EVENTS



10.03.2011 – 11.03.2011

Communicating Change

Given the current business, financial and political climate, this conference will seek to assess the new definition of change communication. Nelleke Barning (left), director of communications at DSM Nederland, is just one of the speakers lined up for this event.

► Quadriga, Fleming's Hotel, Vienna

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30.03.2011 – 31.03.2011

Media Management in Crisis Communication

This interactive programme will equip you with best practice skills and techniques to prepare for a crisis in whatever form it takes. You will learn from real life case studies and benefit from the extensive experience of our specialist trainer.

► Marcus Evans, London

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31.03.2011 – 01.04.2011

The Corporate Communications Experience In Belgrade

An unprecedented amount of the world's most prominent communications professionals (such as Nick Sharples of Sony, left) will be in Belgrade to discuss the latest challenges, issues and trends facing communications.

► theworld, Hyatt Regency Belgrade, Serbia

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12.04.2011

The New Branding Imperatives

The Università della Svizzera Italiana hosts this strictly limited event, featuring Prof. Kevin Lane Keller of Dartmouth College and Dr. Uwe Ellinghaus (left), director of brand steering and brand management at BMW.

► BMW Training Centre, Dielsdorf

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