

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS?

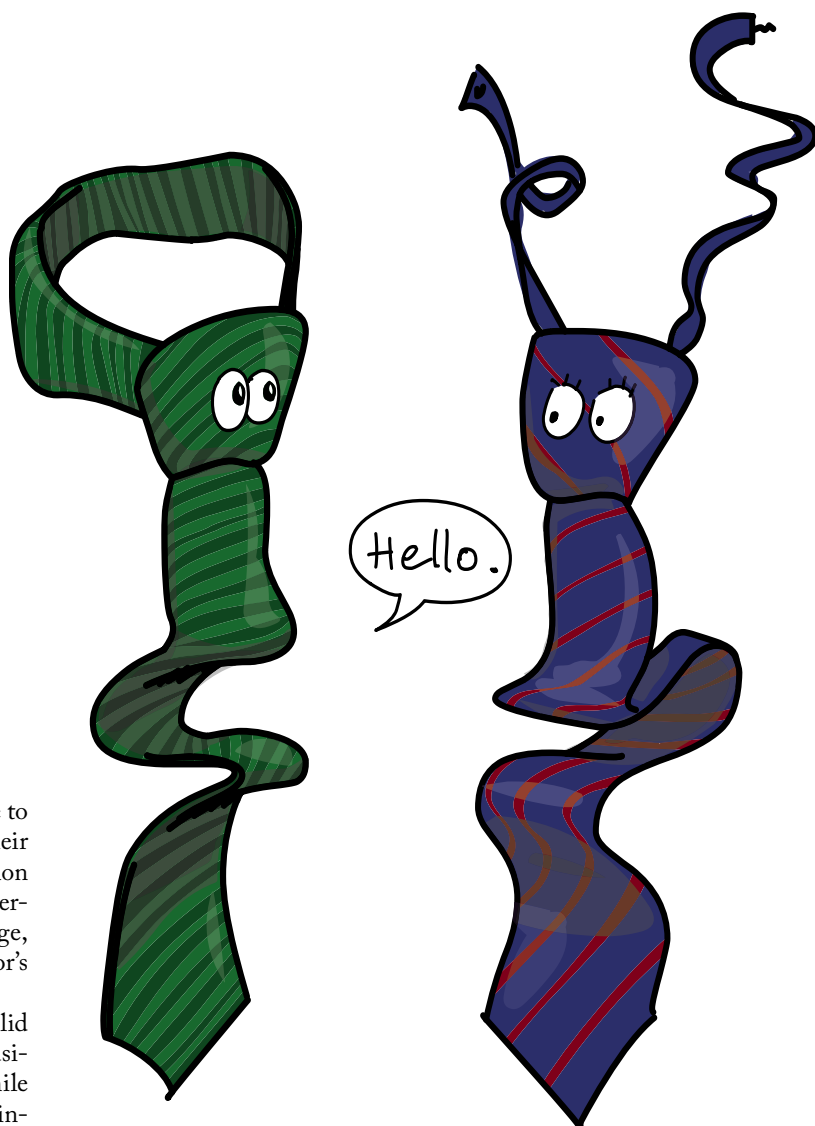
Communicating to other businesses means being mindful of other factors that have influence over your target groups.

By Dafydd Phillips

Accustomed as corporate communicators are to working with the public's perception of their company, what role does the communication function play in a business-to-business operation? If it means decreased media coverage, does that in turn limit the communicator's role? Communication Director decided to find out.

According to Nicolas Trad of the Reputation Institute, one valid role for the communications function to take on board in a business-to-business context is to assess groups and issues that, while not directly related to the client company, all have direct or indirect influence on it – what Trad calls the “stakeholder ecosystem.” “What corporate communications in business-to-business companies especially look at are other stakeholder groups around the client and how they impact the client”, says Trad. “Because increasingly we're finding the stakeholder ecosystem is still with stakeholders who impact the one you actually want to buy your product, also for business-to-businesses.”

WINDS OF CHANGE To get a sense of the stakeholder ecosystem, Trad points to one example in particular: Vestas Wind Systems, a company involved in the manufacturing, selling, installation, and servicing of wind turbines – a seemingly clearly-defined business-to-business operation. But last year it launched a non-profit association called WindMade, which labels products as wind-energy friendly, winning the support of the UN Global compact along the way – no mean feat. So why did a business-to-business company like Vestas decide to divert energy, finances and resources away from its clear 'remit' to this new, unfamiliar project? Morten Albæk, group senior vice president, group marketing and customer insight at Vestas, explains: “Vestas is a market leader in an industry that is suffering from stagnating growth, driven partially by the global financial crisis, but also by its dependence on effective regulation and public policy around the world. At the same time an increasing number of large corporations have started taking direct responsibility for their own energy consumption. Companies like Google and IKEA are buy-



ing their own wind-farms and it is critical for Vestas to find an effective way to approach these new customers. With WindMade we are marketing directly towards this new segment and at the same time offering consumers the opportunity to pressure even more companies into following their lead.” So by publically communicating on a Big Issue relevant to the general public, Vestas is able to both connect with client companies and to gain traction with those companies' stakeholders. In other words, Vestas starts a public conversation about wind energy and is thereby able to touch groups that have influence over their potential clients: as customers begin to demand wind-energy, companies turn to Vestas for their needs. So even if you're a company that doesn't communicate directly with consumers you have to establish a presence and identifiable values.

ENGAGE IN DEBATES This is a lesson that has yet to be wholly received, finds Nicolas Trad. “There are many people who do not believe their company should focus on anyone other than their immediate clients,” he says. “And then there are the other people in the business who understand and advocate that other stakeholder groups impact the decision made by the actual client, even though you're a business-to-business company. And therefore you need to take a broader view on how people think of you than just understanding

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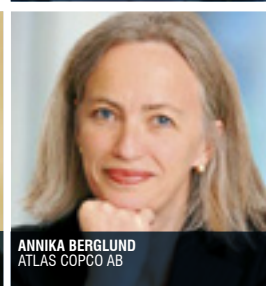
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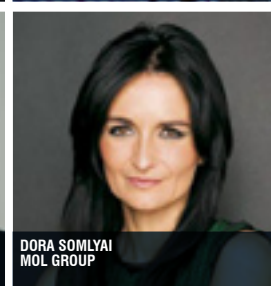
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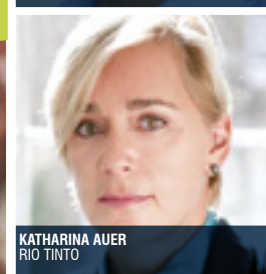
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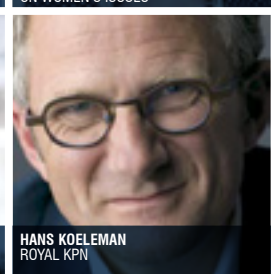
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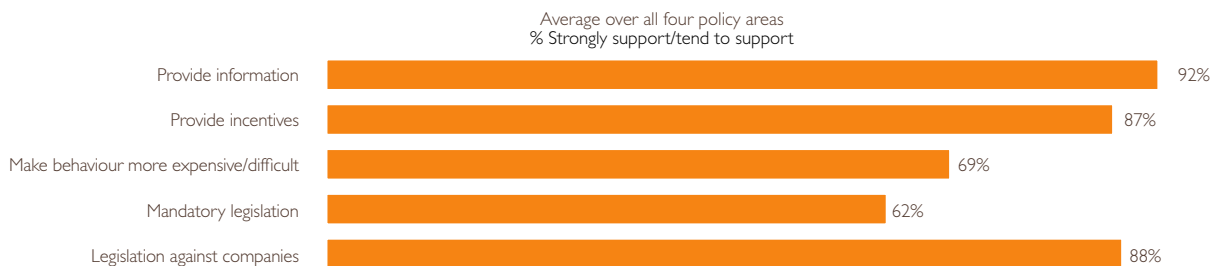
What lies between a nudge and a shove? A recent global report by Ipsos Mori into public opinion of behaviour change policy has revealed a complicated set of responses to the different ways that governments can influence behaviour changes, from information campaigns to legislation and tougher actions: from the gentle nudge of an advertising campaign to the emphatic shove of increased taxation. Targeting 18,500 people across 24 countries, the survey explores people's attitudes to different types of behaviour change mechanisms with a focus on smoking, unhealthy foods, saving for retirement and living in an environmentally sustainable way. A key lesson from the survey is that publics around the world continue to favour communication as a way of behaviour change used by governments. 92 per cent of the respondents cited the provision of information as the leading government behaviour change tactic, with making behaviour more expensive or difficult at 69 per cent and mandatory legislation at 62 per cent. The report

also highlights the importance of communication campaigns in setting the scene for subsequent legislative enforcement, such as the UK and Ireland's smoking bans. It reads: "These smoking bans were preceded by years of softer interventions from comms campaigns, price mechanisms, more targeted bans on smoking on transport, seeing public space bans introduced in other countries and so on. Indeed, the debate encouraged by raising the possibility of a ban itself caused views to shift significantly in favour in a relatively short space of time." While emphasising the fact that a mixed approach – including 'soft' measures as well as legislation – is necessary, the report calls for policy-makers to draw "on a broader notion of public preparedness that understands public acceptability as part of a cycle of change and not simply as a static indicator of support." *Taken from Ipsos MORI, Acceptable Behaviour? Public Opinion on Behaviour Change Policy.*

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Support for intervention across the board, although individuals are warier of restrictive legislation

What, if anything, do you think government should do?



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PERSONNEL



Peter Wübben
(Head, Corporate Communications)
Institution: Metro AG
Start: March 12,



DE: Wübben appointed Head of Corporate Communications

PETER WÜBBEN has assumed the position of head of corporate communications for Metro AG, the diversified retail and wholesale/cash and carry group based in Düsseldorf. He is responsible for external communications and media relations, internal communications, public relations and online media of Metro AG and its wholesale subsidiary Metro Cash & Carry. In his new responsibility, Wübben reports to the CEO of METRO AG, Olaf Koch.



Valerie Perruchot Garcia
(Director,
Public Affairs & Communication)
Institution: Janssen France
Start: February 27



FR: Perruchot Garcia moves from AXA to Janssen France

VALERIE PERRUCHOT GARCIA has joined Janssen France, the French subsidiary of Janssen France pharmaceutical group Johnson & Johnson Health, as director of public affairs and communication. Garcia's most recent position was as director of internal communication at insurance group AXA, which she took up in April 2008. In 2010, She also co-founded and was vice-president of communication at Financi'elles, a network for women working in finance.



Andrew Gowers
(Director, External Communications)
Institution: AFME
Start: March 01



GB: Gowers heads external communications at AFME

ANDREW GOWERS has been appointed director of external relations at pan-European lobby group the Association for Financial Markets in Europe (AFME), whose membership includes most of the big US and European banks operating across the continent. Gowers was previously head of communications for BP. He was also formerly editor of the Financial Times newspaper and head of communications and brand management at Lehman Brothers.

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EVENTS



21- 23.03.2012 2012 EFMD Conference

With a focus on the theme of creative approaches to external relations, this event is the latest from EFMD, and is aimed at international, external and corporate relations, PR, marketing, communication and alumni professionals.

► EFMD, Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration

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22.03.2012 Building Trust Through Communication In Times Of Crisis

Professor Anne Gregory (left) of Leeds Met University, UK, is among those taking part in the 27th edition of CIOM, organised by the University of Navarra, Spain.

► Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona

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22 - 23.03.2012 The Ritual of Public Apology

Apologies are important to mend damaged interpersonal relations. The ritual of apology has also become important in intergroup relations. This programme will investigate how the concept of apology is applied in the fields of communication and media, law and diplomacy, business and public relations.

► UCSIA, the University of Antwerp

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27.03.2012 Digital Communications For The Healthcare & Pharmaceutical Industry

This seminar will explore the implications of social media for healthcare communications. It will provide case studies from companies who are making the most of the digital channels.

► PR Week, CBI Conference Centre, London

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