

Reputation TODAY

A magazine for Public Relations and Corporate Communications Professionals

SPECTRA

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



28th November, 2020 | 12th December, 2020 | 30th December, 2020 | 9th January, 2021



#RTSPECTRA

SPECTRA

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



Day 1 SATURDAY, 28th NOVEMBER, 2020

- Fire Side Chat 1:** Rama Bijapurkar, Economist and Thought Leader and **Suresh Narayanan**, Chairman & Managing Director, Nestle India
- Special Address 1:** Madan Bahal, Managing Director, Adfactors PR
- Keynote Address 1:** **Sabia Schwarzer**, Global Head of Communications & Responsibility, Allianz; Followed by a conversation with **Himanshu Raj**, Mobile Premier League
- Fire Side Chat 2:** **Ellen Ryan Mardiks**, Vice Chairman, Golin and **Heather Woodard**, APR, Director, Multicultural PR & Brand Engagement, McDonald's
- Keynote Address 2:** **Russell Dyer**, VP & Chief of Communications & Government Affairs, Mondelez International; Followed by a conversation with **Ruchika Mehta**, The Park Hotels
- Keynote Address 3:** **Margery Kraus**, Founder & Executive Chairman, APCO Worldwide; Followed by a conversation with **Madhavi Jha**, Boeing India
- Fire Side Chat 3:** **Kerman Kasad**, Vice President, Global Communications & Brand, Project Management Institute and **Kanika Dayal**, Impact Research & Measurement
- Keynote Address 4:** **Kass Sells**, Global COO & President, International, WE Communications; Followed by a conversation with **Snehal Chitneni**, L'Oreal India

Day 2 SATURDAY, 12th DECEMBER, 2020

- Fire Side Chat 4:** **Amish Tripathi**, Columnist & Author (Director, Nehru Centre, London); Followed by a conversation with **Bianca Chose**, Wipro
- Special Address 2:** **Nitin Mantri**, President ICCO
- Keynote Address 5:** **Edna Ayme-Yahil**, Senior Director, Head of Communications, Brand & Sustainability, SITA; Followed by a conversation with **Sahil Chopra**, Stanza Living
- Keynote Address 6:** **Jerilan Greene**, Global Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer, Yum! Brands; Followed by a conversation with **Viju George**, 2020 MSL
- Keynote Address 7:** **Andy Pharoah**, Vice President, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Mars; Followed by a conversation with **Swati Sundareswaran**, Royal Enfield
- Keynote Address 8:** **Deia Campanelli**, Chief Communications Officer & Head of Sustainability, Wabtec Corporation; Followed by a conversation with **Payal Banerjee**, Sequoia Capital
- Keynote Address 9:** **Jonathan Adashek**, Chief Communications Officer, IBM; Followed by a conversation with **Vasundhara Mudgil**, Spotify India
- Fire Side Chat 5:** **Barby Siegel**, CEO, Zeno Group and **Torod Neptune**, Worldwide Group Vice President Marketing & Chief Communications Officer, Lenovo Group

Day 3 SATURDAY, 9th JANUARY, 2021

- Special Address 3:** **Justin Green**, President, Global Alliance
- Special Address 4:** **Rohit Bansal**, Group Head of Communications, Reliance Industries; Followed by a conversation with **Amrit Ahuja**, Communications Consultant
- Keynote Address 10:** **Christine Jones**, VP & Global Head, Marketing & Communications, AG&P; Followed by a conversation with **Michelle D'Souza**, Johnson & Johnson India
- Keynote Address 11:** **Shelley Spector**, Founder & Director, Museum of Public Relations; Followed by a conversation with **Mahul Brahma**, mjunction
- Keynote Address 12:** **Rick Murray**, Managing Partner, SHIFT Communications; Followed by a conversation with **Atipriya Sarawat**, FiServ
- Keynote Address 13:** **Patti Temple Rocks**, Author & Founder, Temple Rocks Consulting; Followed by a conversation with **Puneet Gupta**, INOX Leisure
- Keynote Address 14:** **Matthias Berninger**, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs & Sustainability, Bayer; Followed by a conversation with **Deepa Sridhar**, WarnerMedia
- Keynote Address 15:** **Gail Heimann**, President, Weber Shandwick; Followed by a conversation with **Arun Sudhaman**, PProvoke Media

*Order of speakers as of 1st November, 2020. For exact timing refer the website. Runs from 2:30 pm to 8:30 pm IST.

Cover Page photos from left to right and top to bottom: Amish Tripathi, Andy Pharoah, Barby Siegel, Christine Jones, Deia Campanelli, Dr Edna Ayme-Yahil, Ellen Ryan Mardiks, Heather Woodard, Gail Heimann, Jerilan Greene, Jonathan Adashek, Justin Green, Kerman Kasad, Kass Sells, Margery Kraus, Matthias Berninger, Patti Temple Rocks, Rama Bijapurkar, Rick Murray, Rohit Bansal, Russell Dyer, Sabia Schwarzer, Shelley Spector, Suresh Narayanan, Torod Neptune

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Reputation

Vol 5: Issue 2 | Price: ₹ 150/-

www.reputationtoday.in

TODAY

A magazine for Public Relations and Corporate Communications Professionals



INSIDE

100 Most Important Professionals in Indian Public Relations and Corporate Communication

30 Top Corporate Communication Teams from India

20 Global Indians

Columns from Regular Columnists

FOCUS: Young Stars in Indian Communications

INTERVIEWS

Andy Pharoah
Mars

Christine Jones
AG&P

Deia Campanelli
Wabtec Corporation

Edna Ayme-Yahil (Dr)
SITA

Jerilan Greene
Yum! Brands

Jonathan Adashek
IBM

Kass Sells
WE Communications

Margery Kraus
APCO Worldwide

Matthias Berninger
Bayer

Rick Murray
SHIFT Communications

Russell Dyer
Mondelez International

Shelley Spector
Museum of Public Relations

As we celebrate 72 years of our business in India, we look back with pride at our history and realize that the joy has been two-way!

Thank you for your love!

72 years

**OF BRINGING JOY TO
OUR CONSUMERS IN
INDIA...
AND THIS IS OUR
STORY!**

We gave India its first taste of chocolate in 1948 with our iconic brand Cadbury Dairy Milk, which today, is the country's most trusted brand.

At the heart of everything we do are our colleagues. Mondelez India has more than 3500 colleagues, spread across every corner of the country.

Over time, we have created products like 5Star, CDM Silk, Gems, Bournvita, Perk for our Indian consumers - many have now gone global.

We Make in India with a wide manufacturing and sales footprint, R&D, technology hubs, farming of cocoa and sustainability.

For over 55 years, our Cocoa Life Program has built a resilient cocoa community by collaborating with 100,000 cocoa farmers across four states in South India.

We are committed to the development of the younger generation with Shubh Aarambh that impacts the lives of children across 7 states in the country.

We lead the future of snacking in India with a portfolio of products in Chocolates, Biscuits, Beverages and Candies.

Consumers now enjoy their much-loved Bournvita, not only as MFD. But also through Bournvita Biscuits and most recently launched Bournvita Fills. Oreo continues to win hearts, in just a few years.



AND THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

PRINT LINE

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DESIGN



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and Measurement, 100 Most Important Professionals supported by Media Value Works and a link to an interesting study that The PRactice undertook (SMILE 101) to track the social media presence of over 100 professionals.

This issue also has two other interesting elements. It has a collection of interviews from the global leaders who will speak at SPECTRA. We posed just five questions to each of these super busy women and men. We also embarked on a project last year where we had an open invitation to professionals who wanted to commit to writing a weekly column on our online portal. We have honoured these columnists by dedicating a page each to them in order to share a column that they have especially written for this print issue.

That is the entire package. We hope you enjoy reading it. Please share with us your feedback at team at reputationtoday dot in. There are several organisations that walked with us on this journey of 2020. Before we end, we want to especially thank three companies who have supported us in making our past few months easier. First, the magazine is designed and produced by Kritikal Edge. The SPECTRA designs, including the outside covers are created by ANTS Digital. Last but not the least the outreach partner is One Source who have been at the forefront of helping the fraternity and we have also been beneficiaries of their goodness.

We hope 2021 will be a better year. We live with Positivity, Optimism and Hope.

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

*There are far, far better things ahead
than any we leave behind.*

C S Lewis

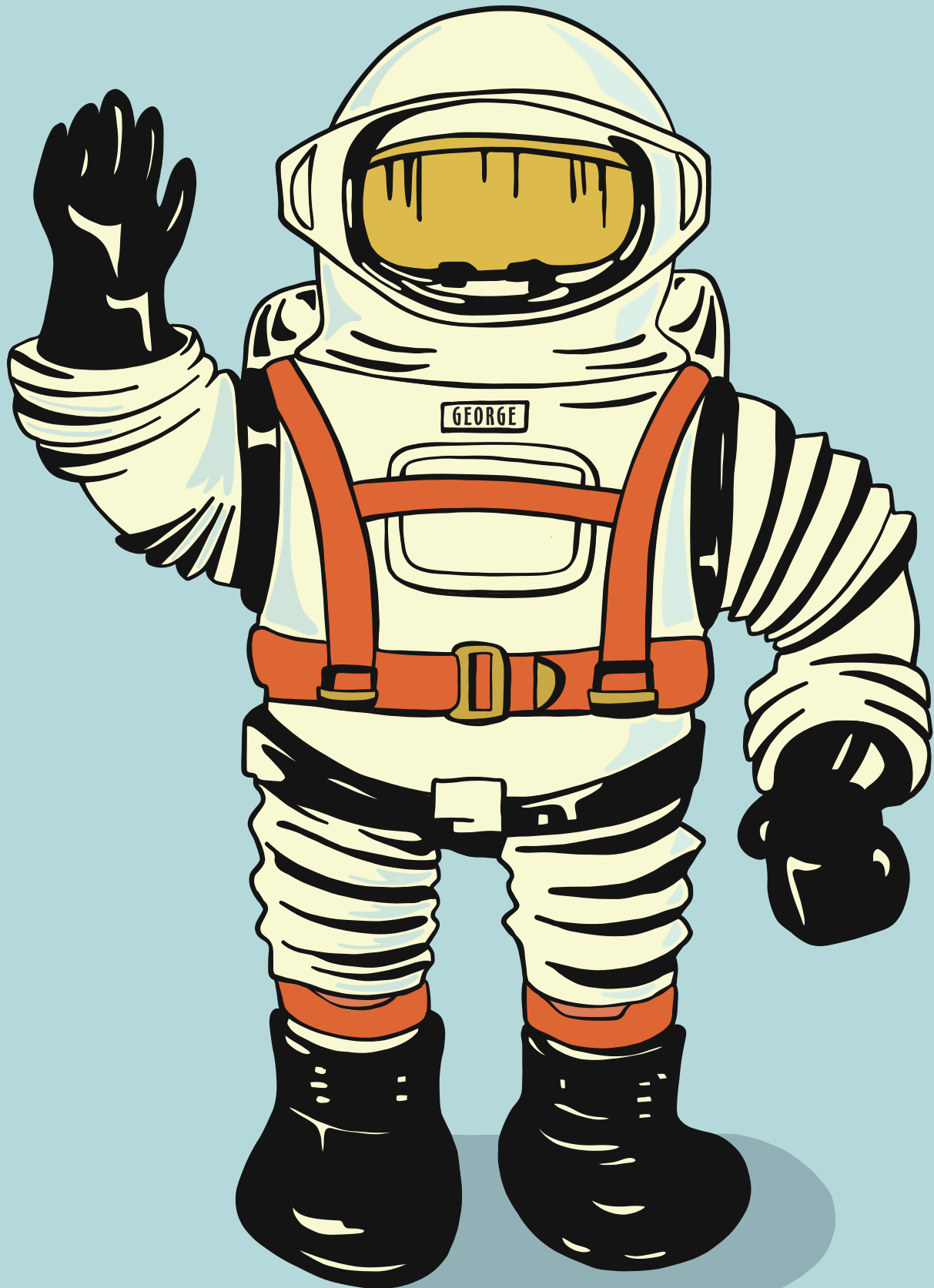


As you hold this magazine in your hand a lot of memories will flashback. Ever since the birth of PRAXIS in 2012 several professionals have looked forward to the annual summit to learn, to meet and to share. For those who have never been to one, the event is coming to you in the form of SPECTRA. When we decided to postpone PRAXIS a week into the first lockdown, we knew we would create an online experience and were clear we would brand it differently. We were advised against it but when we look back at the last seven months, we believe we got the fundamental right. We hope you enjoy the SPECTRA experience. You can read more about it in the column on the last page.

Every business had to pivot overnight to survive. It was not easy for us either. PRAXIS is our flagship annual event which helps us earn enough to pay our costs for the subsequent 12 months and with that source of revenue closing we had to think on our feet and innovate. We reached out to over a dozen companies offering to be their marketing and production partners in co-creating online events. Some called them webinars, but we deliberately did not use the word. We not only got a dozen companies partnering us, we also ensured every single event of the 50 we organised had a good response. We did that by setting a goal and working backwards to attain it. We measured the output and outcomes in true Public Relations style and can confidently say that we emerged triumphant with sheer dedication and passion.

What you have in your hands is a special issue. It contains our five lists – 20 Global Indians supported by WordsWork. 30 Top Corporate Communication Teams supported by Kaizzen, 40 Young Turks supported by Impact Research

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100 MOST IMPORTANT PROFESSIONALS

Reputation Today's 100 Most Important Professionals list is now in its third year. It was first brought out in 2017 and was a ranked list. Then in 2019, we brought out the second edition in alphabetical order. This year in 2020, we have ranked the Top 25 that include 27 professionals, two of who feature as a team. We have listed the next 68 in alphabetical order. We have also featured five leaders who we believe are important people in their own right. These include Arpana Ahuja, Jayoti Lahiri, Srishty Chawla, Tinu Cherian and Vikram Kharvi who lead powerful online networks of communication professionals enabling exchange of ideas, sharing of knowledge and keeping the India PR flag flying high. The effort that goes into working on this list is humongous as it involves three levels of research - Maintaining a database of a long list and constantly updating it; Polling over 500 professionals to get names that may have missed our radar; Conversations with several professionals over three months. We are grateful to MediaValueWorks for their support in presenting this list.

Sr No	Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
1	Rohit Bansal	Reliance Industries	Jyotsna Ghoshal	Johnson & Johnson India
2	Debasis Ray	Tata Trusts	Madhavi Jha	Boeing India
3	Roma Balwani	Vedanta Resources	Madhu Chhibber	Madison PR
4	Madan Bahal + Rajesh Chaturvedi	Adfactors PR	Manasi Narasimhan	Mastercard India
5	Prema Sagar	Genesis BCW	Manisha Chaudhry	Value 360 Communications
6	Amit Misra	MSL South Asia	Melissa Arulappan	IQVIA
7	Minari Shah	Amazon India	Mukesh Kharbanda	Fuzion PR
8	Sujit Patil	Godrej Industries	Nandini Chatterjee	PwC India
9	Nitin Mantri	AvianWE	Nandini Goswami	Abbott Healthcare India
10	Sumita Dutta	SAIL	Nandita Lakshmanan	The PRactice
11	Dilip Cherian	Perfect Relations	Neeraj Jha	HDFC Bank
12	Rakesh Thukral	Edelman India	Nitin Thakur	Max Group
13	Ishteyaque Amjad	Coca Cola	Paroma Roy Chowdhury	SoftBank Group
14	Rachana Panda	Bayer South Asia	Partha Ghosh	Samsung
15	Nazeeb Arif	ITC	Pooja Pathak	Media Mantra
16	Varsha Chainani	Mahindra & Mahindra	Pooja Thakran	Honeywell India
17	Sandeep Gurumurthi	Aditya Birla Group	Rachana Chowdhary	MVW Group
18	Seema Ahuja	Biocon	Rahul Sharma	APCO Worldwide
19	Anuj Dayal	DMRC	Rajan NS	Ketchum Sampark
20	Nikhil Dey + Valerie Pinto	Weber Shandwick India	Rajyasree Sen	HYATT India
21	Naresh Kumar	Powergrid	Rakhee Lalvani	Indian Hotels Company Limited
22	Ophira Bhatia	Mondelez India	Ramya Rajagopalan	Siemens, India
23	Paresh Chowdhry	Adani Group	Rashmi Soni	Vistara
24	Rajneesh Kumar	Flipkart	Raza Khan	Udaan
25	Purnima Sahni Mohanty	Microsoft India	Rishi Seth	6 Degrees BCW
	Aman Gupta	SPAG	Rohini Kute	Motilal Oswal Financial Services
	Ameer Ismail	Golinopinion	Rohit Rao	Kotak Mahindra Bank
	Anand Subramanian	Ola	Ruby Sinha	Kommune Brand Communications
	Anasuya Ray	Mars India	Satinder Bindra	Uber India & South Asia
	Aparna Thomas	Sanofi India	Shivani Gupta	SPAG
	Archana Jain	PR Pundit	Shubam Mukherjee	ICICI Prudentatial
	Archana Muthappa	Bangalore International Airport	Snehal Chitneni	L'Oreal India
	Aseem Sood	Impact Research & Measurement	Sonia Huria	Amazon Prime Video India
	Ashwani Singla	Astrum	Sunayna Malik	Archetype India
	Atul Ahluwalia	First Partners	Thomas Cherian	Netflix India
	Atul Sharma	Ruder Finn India	Tuhina Pandey	IBM, India
	Bharatendu Kabi	Hero MotoCorp	Vaishali Nigam Sinha	ReNew Power
	Bhavna Jagtiani	Edelman India	Varghese Thomas	TVS Motor Company
	Chhavi Leekha	IndiGo	Viju George	2020 MSL
	Deepa Dey	HUL	Vineet Handa	Kaizen
	Deepak Jolly	Consocia Advisory	Viraj Chouhan	PepsiCo India
	Deepshikha Dharmaraj	Genesis BCW	Yusuf Hatia	Fleishman-Hillard
	Dhrubajyoti Gayan	Candour Communications	Yuvraj Mehta	Larsen & Toubro
	Dimple Kapur	Piramal Group	Arpana Ahuja	APACD
	Gaurav Bhaskar	Google India	Jayoti Lahiri	PRCAI
	Gayatri Rath	Value 360 Communications	Srishty Chawla	One Source
	Heena Kanal	Pine Labs	Tinu Cherian	ICG
	Humsa Dhir	Cipla	Vikram Kharvi	IPRF
	Jaideep Shergill	Sony Pictures Network		
		Pitchfork Partners		

100

Reput

Most Important Professionals

In Indian Public Relations and Corporate Communications

 Rohit Bansal 1	 Debasis Ray 2	 Roma Balwani 3	 Madan Bahal 4	 Rajesh Chaturvedi 4	 Prema Sagar 5	 Amit Misra 6
	 Rachana Panda 14	 Nazeeb Arif 15	 Varsha Chainani 16	 Sandeep Gurumurthi 17	 Seema Ahuja 18	 Anuj Dayal 19
	 Aman Gupta	 Ameer Ismail	 Anand Subramanian	 Anasuya Ray	 Aparna Thomas	 Archana Jain
 Bhavna Jagtiani	 Chhavi Leekha	 Deepa Dey	 Deepak Jolly	 Deepshikha Dharmaraj	 Dhrubajyoti Gayan	 Dimple Kapur
 Madhavi Jha	 Madhu Chhibber	 Manasi Narasimhan	 Manisha Chaudhary	 Melissa Arulappan	 Mukesh Kharbanda	 Nandini Chatterjee
 Pooja Thakran	 Rachana Chowdhary	 Rahul Sharma	 Rajan NS	 Rajyasree Sen	 Rakhee Lalvani	 Ramya Rajagopalan
 Shivani Gupta	 Shubam Mukherjee	 Snehal Chitneni	 Sonia Huria	 Sunayna Malik	 Thomas Cherian	 Tuhina Pandey
				 Arpana Ahuja	 Jayoti Lahiri	

#RT100MIP

bit.ly/RT100MIP2020

*This annual list comprises three categories: the first 27 ranked; the next 68 in alphabetical order.

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tical order; and the final five who are contributing to the community of communicators.

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

This year, in collaboration with our partner, we rebranded our annual initiative that recognises and rewards the emerging leaders from the world of consultancies and in-house communication departments, and 40 under Forty became 40 Young Turks. We extended the age bracket to include professionals under 45 who have never featured previously in our annual list. Besides access to learning sessions, the honourees feature on the cover of the print magazine. This edition has two covers and one of them is dedicated to the 40 Young Turks. We raise a toast to these men and women who now are part of a roster of 200 professionals who have featured in this list since 2016. Thanks to Impact Research and Measurement for supporting this effort. Refer to bit.ly/RT40YOUNGTURKS2020 to see the list online.



AMRIT RAJ

Global Communication Specialist
ByteDance
Most Inspiring Communicator:
David Plouffe



@AmritRaj86



bit.ly/RajAmrit

ANKITA UPADHYAY

Lead - Brand Communications
Mahindra Group
Most Inspiring Communicator:
Lavanya Wadgaonkar



@Ankitau



bit.ly/AnkitaUpadhyay

ANKOOR CHOUDHARRI

CEO
Concept BIU
Most Inspiring Communicator:
Tony Robbins



@CAnkoor



bit.ly/AnkoorChoudharri

ARPIT GARG

Vice President
Adfactors PR
Most Inspiring Communicator:
Nikhil Dey



@ArpitG8



bit.ly/ArpitGarg

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

AVIJIT SINGH

Vice President – Brand & Digital
Ketchum Sampark

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Tom Goodwin



@ChillChaudhary



bit.ly/AvijitSingh

BIANCA GHOSE

Chief Storyteller

Wipro

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Jeff Weiner



@BiancaGhose



bit.ly/BiancaGhose

DUSHYANT SINHA

Founder

ICCPL

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Bill Gates



@DushyantSinha



bit.ly/DushyantSinha

FLOVIE MARTINS

Associate Vice President & Head,
Corporate Communication & CSR

Future Generali India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Aparna Thomas



@FlovieMartins



bit.ly/FlovieMartins

HARINI KUCKNOOR SOMANNA

Senior Manager – Corporate
Communication

TVS Motor Company

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Faye D'Souza



@harinikucknoor



bit.ly/HariniKucknoor

HARSHENDRA SINGH VERDHAN

Head – PR & Brand
Communication

IFFCO

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Narendra Modi



@iamharshendra



bit.ly/HarshendraVerdhan

HIMANSHU NEGI

Manager – Media &
Communication

Indian Steel Association

Most Inspiring Communicator:
(Late) Atal Bihari Vajpayee



@himanshunegi25



bit.ly/HimanshuNegi

HITESH RAJ BHAGAT

Director – Corporate
Communications

Truecaller

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Simon Oliver Sinek



@hiteshrajbhagat



bit.ly/HiteshRajBhagat

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

HUSSAIN KALOLWALA

Founder & CEO

Kalolwala & Associates

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Steve Kemp



@TheKalolwala



bit.ly/HiteshRajBhagat

INDU SHARMA

Head - Corporate Communications

Reckitt Benckiser

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Nitin Mantri



@induksharma



bit.ly/InduSharma

IRA PRADHAN

Head - Communications

Mercedes-Benz R&D India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Barkha Dutt



@ipradhan



bit.ly/IraPradhan

ISHITA GROVER

Head - Corporate
Communications

OnePlus India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
(Late) Steve Jobs



@ishitag



bit.ly/IshitaGrover

JATIN AGGARWAL

DVP & Head - Public Affairs,
Communications & CSR

Groupe Renault

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Amitabh Bachchan



@jatin_indpr



bit.ly/JatinAggarwal

JOYITA MUKHERJEE

Associate Director - Talent Branding
& Internal Communications Lead

PwC India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Barack Obama



@Joyee_JM



bit.ly/JoyitaMukherjee

KANIKA DAYAL

Director - Business Development

Impact Research & Measurement

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Subrahmanyam Jaishankar



@kanika_dayal



bit.ly/KanikaDayal

KUNAL JOSHI

Senior Manager - Corporate
Communications

Hero MotoCorp

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Barack Obama



@KJ_tweetz



bit.ly/KunalJoshi

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

LIZEL NORONHA

Lead – Communications & CSR

JioSaavn

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Pooja Chaudhri



@PrivyLiz



bit.ly/LizelNoronha

MADDIE AMRUTKAR

Founder

Glad U Came

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Rajiv Talreja



@AmrutkarMaddie



bit.ly/MaddieAmrutkar

MADHU BALAKRISHNAN

Associate Vice President –
Marketing Communications

Xceedance

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Seth Godin



@Madhubala85



bit.ly/BalakrishnanMadhu

MADHURJYA SINGHA LAHKAR

Senior Manager – Corporate
Communications

NTPC

Most Inspiring Communicator:
(Late) Steve Jobs



@madhurjyalahar



bit.ly/MadhurjyaLahkar

NEHA BAJAJ

Founder & Managing Director

Scroll Mantra

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Freshers



@realNeha_Bajaj



bit.ly/NehaBajaj

NIKKY GUPTA

Co-founder & CEO

Teamwork Communication

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Narendra Modi



@nikkygupta4pr



bit.ly/NikkyGupta

POOJA TREHAN DHAMECHA

Founder

PRestaurants

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Sundar Pichai



@PoojaBD



bit.ly/PoojaTrehanDhamecha

PRABHAKARAN B

Group Business Director

Avian WE

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Steve Jobs



@iprabhakaran



bit.ly/PrabhakaranB

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

PREETI BINOY

Lead - Corporate Communications
& Public Affairs

Johnson & Johnson Consumer
Health India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Barack Obama



@preeti_binoy

bit.ly/PreetiBinoy

RASICK GOWDA

Head - Corporate
Communications

Cisco

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Devdutt Pattanaik



@Rasick

bit.ly/RasickGowda

REEGAL RANJAN MANTOO

Vice President

Value360 Communications

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Madan Bahal & Kunal Kishore
Sinha



@ReegalRanjan

bit.ly/ReegalRanjan

RIDDHI GORADIA

Associate Vice President -
Corporate Communications

Piramal Enterprises

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Oprah Winfrey



@RiddhiGoradia

bit.ly/RiddhiGoradia

RITWIK SHARMA

Product Communication Lead

vivo India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Martin Luther King



@ritwik_1987

bit.ly/RitwikSharma

SHIPRA SINGH

Senior Vice President

Ruder Finn India

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Barack Obama



@shiprasingh_79

bit.ly/ShipraSingh

SHVETA NANDA

Executive Vice President

Weber Shandwick

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Hasan Minhaj



@ShvetaNanda

bit.ly/ShvetaNanda

SURANGANA CHATTERJEE

Senior Director - Consumer
Technology Practice

Genesis BCW

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Meenu Handa & Prema Sagar



@Surangana

bit.ly/SuranganaChatterjee

RT 40 YOUNG TURKS

SUSHMIT SARKAR

Vice President - Public Affairs

MSL

Most Inspiring Communicator:
(Late) Robin Williams &
Raghuram Rajan



@sushmitsarkar



bit.ly/SushmitSarkar

TCA JAYANT

Country Director

Meltwater

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Harsha Bhogle



@tcjayant



bit.ly/TCAJayant

UDIT JOSHI

Head - Development &
Operations

Topline Consulting Group

Most Inspiring Communicator:
Nitin Mantri



@UDITJOSHI



bit.ly/UditJoshi

YAMINI REDDY

Account Director

The PRactice

Most Inspiring Communicator:
KS Narahari



@Y_am_L_Reddy



bit.ly/YaminiReddy

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Like every market across the globe, our learning from India is that consumer's aspirations are governed by quality, good taste and value at different price points. These parameters are at the core of Mars offerings.

Andy Pharoah

Vice President, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability

Mars

RT: You steer Mars' ambitious sustainability objectives to make the company's operations 'sustainable in a generation.' How do you go about with this goal?

AP: In 2017, we launched our Sustainable in a Generation Plan, which addresses key areas of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and features ambitious goals informed by science and rooted in our Five Principles. That plan focuses on three key areas: Healthy Planet, Thriving People and Nourishing Wellbeing.

So what does it mean to have a Healthy Planet? In that regard, we've set bold ambitions that are linked to climate action, water stewardship and land use, aiming to reduce our environmental impacts in line with what science says is necessary to keep the planet healthy tomorrow. Under this pillar are also included our plans to have 100% recyclable packaging by 2025. In addition to that, we believe that we can and should play a role in increasing opportunities for people in the workplaces and communities that we touch—hence our work for Thriving People. That ambition focuses on increasing income, respecting human rights and unlocking opportunities for women to improve the working lives of one million people in our value chain. Finally, there's Nourishing Wellbeing. People should have access to the products and information they need to maintain healthy lifestyles. Our ambition there is a commitment to advance science, innovation and marketing in ways that help billions of people and their pets lead healthier, happier lives today and into the future.

RT. How does a brand like yours communicate in a market like India given that it was a late entrant with a couple of other chocolate brands being well entrenched?

AP: Like every market across the globe, our learning from India is that consumer's aspirations are governed by quality, good taste and value at different price points. These parameters are at the core of Mars offerings. We are catering to the demand of the consumers, by concentrating our efforts to provide innovative products that reflect their preferences - A compelling product portfolio, unique innovations and a strategy of providing consumers occasions and moments to enjoy. And in the end the consumer will decide as the consumer is our boss.

India is a hugely important country with a strong growth potential. Our categories have a lot of headroom to grow. That's as true for our Mars Wrigley businesses as it is for our Mars Petcare, Royal Canin and Tasty Bite businesses.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

AP: If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that actions matter, and communicators must play a vital role in building meaningful relationships and that it is especially important in times of crisis. In a year dominated by uncertainty, hyperbole and misinformation, both consumers and employees have turned in ever greater numbers to companies as trusted news sources. As I've mentioned, business has a role to play in society, and we can choose to make a difference. Looking to the year ahead, we as communicators have the opportunity to be more curious than ever and ask questions even when they're

uncomfortable. We'll need to be honest advisors that can help our organisations be their true authentic selves. This is really the beginning of an era of change, and as a profession we not only need to make our own changes, but be a voice for change in the world, too. I'm very optimistic that we can do that together, but it will require continual focus like we've never seen before and honest, open conversations. In doing so we'll ensure that those important changes—societal, sustainable or otherwise—really happen, and in doing so we'll be providing future generations with a real chance to thrive.

RT: You are a council member at the Asia Society Policy Institute. How does that fit into your professional journey?

AP: At the start of 2018 I became a council member for the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), roughly two years after joining the Mars, Incorporated team. . The mission of ASPI is to tackle many of the major policy challenges that the Asia-Pacific region is confronted with in terms of "security, prosperity, sustainability, and the development of common norms and values for the region." It's important to note that because for anyone who knows what our priorities are at Mars, they'll see a direct correlation there. Our own work just happens to be at a more global scale. Through our Five Principles and Mars' purpose—"The world we want tomorrow starts with how we do business today"—we're looking to provide many of the same things for the world at large. We also have a strong presence in Asia-Pacific, and as leaders it's important for us to not only commit business resources there, but to provide our experience and knowledge so that all people can have an equal footing for prosperity and growth.



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In a world where technology is ever evolving, it's hard to predict what tools we will be using for reputation management in 2025.

Christine Jones

VP and Global Head of Marketing & Communications

Atlantic, Gulf & Pacific (AG&P) Company

RT: You have had a long innings in the world's two leading firms spanning two decades in leadership positions. Do you miss life in a consultancy?

CJ: The experiences I have had in global communications firms and in-house departments have been equally rewarding. Consultancy life provided me with the opportunity to work with people who shared my passion for communications and allowed me to learn about many different industries and cultures. There was collective energy that was harnessed for our clients, underpinned by a strong sense of team. This shared purpose and the enormous fun we had in the pursuit of success are what I miss the most.

RT: Where do you see the role of reputation management evolving five years from now?

CJ: In a world where technology is ever evolving, it's hard to predict what tools we will be using for reputation management in 2025. Whatever the platform or technology, companies will need to be more intuitive and hyper-local as the world moves increasingly towards micro-communities getting their news and information in real-time from like-minded people. The challenge will be to avoid splintering communications and over-engaging, which risks removing a clear narrative and sense of 'who you are'. Companies must continue following the guiding principles that have stood the test of time:

- Being consistent in what you say and do
- Walking the talk – actions always speak louder than words
- Listening, then acting

- Treating employees with the same respect as external stakeholders
- Being transparent

RT: In a career spanning 30 years what have been your top five learnings that the current generation would benefit by reading about?

CJ: My top five learnings would be:

- Hire great people. If you don't think a candidate has just what you are looking for, then they are not the right one. Keep looking.
- Follow your gut instinct – it never lies.
- If it is still on your "To Do" list after two weeks, it's probably not worth doing. Drop it or suggest an alternative that will get it done.
- Delete emails from people you don't need to engage with. It's empowering and good for your mental health.
- Always keep up to date with the latest news. Knowing what is affecting the world around you keeps you informed and grounded.

RT: You have lived and worked in three continents. How does each of them differ in the way Public Relations is practiced?

CJ: This is an interesting question and one that is hard to answer as what was different two decades ago is probably not the case today.

In the 1990s in the UK, PR was still very much the poorer cousin of advertising. We had to work hard to obtain a share-of-wallet from the marketing budget. This forced PR teams to be very creative. I worked at the Saatchi & Saatchi agency, so creativity was an intrinsic part of the way we worked. I still see the UK as a powerhouse of new

and creative thinking.

Asia is so diverse that it's hard to know where to begin. However, I see a common thread across all countries, which is sheer hard work with a total customer focus. I am amazed by the way consultancy teams work to deliver to seemingly impossible deadlines. From Mumbai to Manila to Singapore and Beijing, this is a trademark of Asian firms.

Europeans are very pragmatic and academic in their approach. Working in the global headquarters of a European pharmaceutical company was inspiring, as I worked with some of the smartest scientists and executives in the world. There was mutual respect, and people were measured and calm, it was not frenetic.

In my native Australia, working life is about finding opportunities. Australians are positive by nature and we believe anything is possible. This can-do approach translates into a willingness to try new ideas and embrace change. I would say the industry here has re-invented itself really well, which is a reflection of this ethos.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

CJ: More marketing budgets available to execute great work that is not crisis management; More flexibility; More fun!



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-Robert Collier

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During times of great change, words and actions matter and those actions must match the words. My advice is to be honest and transparent, address the changes and uncertainties, and consistently lead and communicate with purpose.

Deia Campanelli

Chief Communications Officer & Head of Sustainability

Wabtec

RT: You have been at the forefront of change communications following the merger of Wabtec and GE Transportation to create a Fortune 500 company. What do communicators on the forefront of change and business transformation need to keep in mind?

DC: Open and transparent internal and external communications are the keys to a successful business transformation. As communicators it is our responsibility to help shape and drive the business strategy, not just be aligned to it, and it is our job to effectively communicate the organization's long-term vision and goals. Business transformation can be uncertain for employees and stakeholders, and in Wabtec's case we merged two organisations into a Fortune 500 company. During times of great change, words and actions matter and those actions must match the words. My advice is to be honest and transparent, address the changes and uncertainties, and consistently lead and communicate with purpose.

RT: What goes into building a robust approach to culture communications and engagement following a merger?

DC: I learned early in my career that every communication is a trust-building moment. That's why I feel very strongly that communications is an ongoing conversation, not an event. It's the ongoing conversation that turns information into understanding. It's the ongoing conversation that builds understanding and commitment amongst employees. And it's the ongoing conversation that helped our communications organization move with agility and communicate quickly as

decisions were made to earn trust from employees at every step. This is the lens I apply not just to mergers, but to all milestone communications.

RT: You have led the internal and external communications strategy for the organisation. Which one is more exciting and why?

DC: It's never one or the other, but both. Reflecting on where we are today, however, it is a particularly exciting time to be telling Wabtec's story externally. As the world's foremost rail technology company, we have a unique perspective on the global trends that are impacting our customers and other stakeholders, namely: climate change, automation and digitization, and urbanization. As such, we are committed to leading the way in creating a more sustainable freight and passenger transportation network. We have a great story and a proven track-record that I'm really proud of when it comes to reducing carbon emissions through innovative technology that truly moves and improves the world.

RT: How do you see reputation management evolving five years from now?

DC: In the next five years I expect to see a greater commitment from brands to drive societal change, and a greater willingness of business leaders to be out front on issues. 2020 has shown that consumers expect brands to not sit passively on the sidelines, but rather take an active stance on issues of societal and environmental importance. I believe that in the next five years it will be the standard, not the exception, for businesses of all sizes to lead on such matters.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

DC: The pandemic has exposed a number of risks and vulnerabilities for organizations, and communicators will need to address these challenges. I think we will see the development of communications with CSR at the core, and a greater emphasis on data as tools become more mainstream and frankly, better. In addition, the pandemic has fundamentally changed how and where we work, while leaving many remote employees feeling like they are out of the loop. The role of internal communications will be paramount as companies look to drive effective cross-business collaboration, align the organization on short- and long-term strategy, empower employees and engage with them, as well as foster a connected (yet remote) culture.

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I am passionate about the topic of diversity and inclusion and now in my current role, where I am responsible for sustainability, I am able to influence how my company addresses this key topic.

Edna Ayme-Yahil

Head of Communications, Brand and Sustainability

SITA

RT: You have worked across multiple countries in Europe and in diverse sectors ranging from tobacco, technology, logistics, automobile and now travel. Which sector is the most challenging and why?

EAY: If you look at this question purely from the sector perspective, then tobacco is by far the most complex sector for a communications professional. Communicating about a company that makes a product that kills people is an incredible challenge and I learned a lot from working with the professionals at PMI.

RT: Tell us more about the book – Women in PR that you co-authored earlier this year?

EAY: It was great to collaborate with Professor Ana Adi who is not only a titan in the field of communications research but is also my good friend. I am passionate about the topic of diversity and inclusion and now in my current role, where I am responsible for sustainability, I am able to influence how my company addresses this key topic. I am a mom, a wife, and a “woman in PR” and it was great to be in contact with so many practitioners and academicians, who are engaging in this field.

RT: What is the one achievement in your glorious career in corporate communications that stands out for you?

EAY: I can’t answer with just one achievement! In the past 18 months, I have been faced with two huge challenges that are unparalleled in my career. The first was when I was leading marketing and communications at Panalpina, a top five global Freight

Forwarder. In 2019, the company was unexpectedly purchased by DSV, a competitor. I was at the time responsible for Investor Relations as well as Corporate Communications and needed to manage the initial defense with an activist investor. Then, once the purchase was announced, I managed the transition communications including the internal communications for the period between April and August 2019. After the deal was completed, I helped the new CEO with the integration communications until I left the organisation along with most of the management team. The second big challenge for me—as well as for most communications professionals—has been managing the COVID crisis. I began my new role at SITA the day that the company went into quarantine and work-from-home mode. The speed of change and the intense need for a new internal communications framework to support the company added to the stress of a totally new job and new team! Both of these experiences—M&A and COVID—have forever shaped me as a communications professional and a team leader.

RT: Having taught at various universities in the early part of your career, which would you prefer if you had to start all over again – academia or the corporate world, and why?

EAY: I loved studying at university. I went to Stanford in the 1990s at a time when people were dropping out to start companies like Google ... yet I stayed and got not only a BA but also continued to do my MA and PhD in medieval history at UCLA. My graduate research had me travel to Paris where I worked in

the archives nationales looking at legal documents (mostly trial transcripts) from the 15th century. I would never give up on the intellectual challenge of getting a proper “humanistic” education that included reading Latin, history, philosophy and literature. However, towards the end of my degree, I realised that whilst I loved research, I didn’t want to limit myself to one topic for the rest of my life and I was not terribly keen on teaching—I yearned for more breadth in my intellectual pursuits. I also realized that I wanted to have a career where I interacted with people and worked in teams, rather than be alone in the library all day. This is why, towards the end of my PhD, I took an internship at UNESCO, which eventually turned into a job in communications and set me on the path that I am today. I hope one day soon to go back to teach as an adjunct professor in addition to my “day job” because I love the mix of intellectual pursuits and practical ones.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

EAY: I am usually an “Energizer Bunny” type of person... I just keep going, and going, and going ... I hope for my sake and that of my colleagues that we find a vaccine early in 2021 and that things begin to get back to normal a bit.



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More than ever, communicators need to show up with great content, an important and convincing perspective, and then be aggressive in prosecuting their case. The bar has been raised to be compelling and interesting, and be seen as a trusted alternative for the media.

Jonathan Adashek

Chief Communications Officer

IBM

RT: What does it take to be the driver of reputation at one of the most iconic technology brands?

JA: IBM's history has been built on reinvention, as well as adhering to the company's purpose to "Be Essential." These two key points are foremost on my mind when thinking about reputation. How are we consistently reinventing ourselves and what are we doing to stay essential?

The reinvention component is all about using technology to improve business and making the world better through our technology and our actions. In communications, we have a big impact on driving that reputation. Since we are not a consumer brand, we need to tap into the stories and examples that resonate with all kinds of audiences. We need to have a front-row seat to help steer IBM as we develop programs and points-of-view to ensure that they support our reputation and are meaningful to the average person.

Initiatives such as STEM for Girls and Open P-Tech, help further IBM's reputation as a company committed to using tech for good, while programmes like Call for Code and Emb(race), are helping to change the conversation on how we respond to natural disasters, global pandemics, opportunities for underrepresented professionals in the tech space, and other social issues.

But what does it take to make this all happen – a great team. The best laid plans never get off the ground if you do not have the right people to bring them to life.

RT: How do you see Public Relations evolve in 2020, given that the world is

witnessing the unexpected?

JA: There is no doubt that we live in a changing world, and that the full effects of those changes may not be known for some time. The way we work is different, with more and more employees working remotely, less travel and even changed office environments. I think you will be seeing a lot less large-scale events. In a post pandemic world, I would say that it's less likely that you will see someone fly from New York to Mumbai for a meeting and fly home the next day.

But it's more than just being there, face-to-face, important as that has been. More than ever, communicators need to show up with great content, an important and convincing perspective, and then be aggressive in prosecuting their case. The bar has been raised to be compelling and interesting, and be seen as a trusted alternative for the media. The best communicators will need to keep refining their messages, keep earning trust, and keep showing the relevance of their client and brand.

That's what it'll take to win now, more than ever before, and that's what we're helping our teams achieve at IBM. The good news is that we are living in a geo-agnostic world. With so many teams using remote-learning tools, we now have the ability to tap into teams on a global scale in a way that we have rarely, if ever, been able to do.

RT: You have the rare distinction of being one of the few CCOs who has been based across three continents. How do Europe, North America and Asia differ in terms of corporate

communications?

JA: I would say that there are not just differences in regions, but differences between countries. You can't talk about Asia or Europe in one broad brush. I have found there are important differences in styles and approaches to corporate communications around the globe, so the first thing is to accept that it takes adaptability and an understanding of the cultural roots of communication styles in order to succeed.

The second point is to trust your local team and the knowledge they bring to the table. I've learned from working in different countries that your local teams will know how to deliver the message in a way that adapts to the culture you're operating in.

And the third point is that some things need to be true wherever you go – your company's values for example – those don't change. Your tactics may differ due to the market, but your brand and its value are consistent globally.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

JA: The key is adaptability. The messages are going to change rapidly, and the tools for delivering those messages are going to change just as fast. In order to communicate effectively in the world in which we're living these days, you have to almost stay one step ahead of the message. To anticipate what is coming before it does. That's not an easy thing in a climate like this, but that's the challenge we as communicators face every day.

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Strategically crafted messages and ideas have the power to shape cultures, movements and even the competitive advantage or potential of a company or brand.



Jerilan Greene

Chief Communications and Public Affairs Officer

Yum! Brands

RT: You lead global reputation and corporate positioning of the Yum! Brands portfolio of restaurant brands. How has the journey been?

JG: The journey has been rewarding and enlightening. In 2011, I joined Yum! Brands as the VP of Public Affairs while the company was accelerating its growth into China, India, emerging and developed markets while deepening its commitment to corporate social responsibility and global hunger relief. Almost 10 years later, we have transformed our business model with people, social purpose and technology at the forefront, grown to four brands across 50,000 restaurants in 150+ countries and territories, and are positioned to emerge—with some hard work, investment, empathy and partnership—as an even stronger company from the most challenging pandemic and period of social unrest we have seen in recent history.

RT: What does the world of communications lack that it needs to fix sooner than later?

JG: Strategically crafted messages and ideas have the power to shape cultures, movements and even the competitive advantage or potential of a company or brand. Expert communicators and reputation-builders must always stay focused on what communications, internal communications, public engagement and social impact can do to help realise a brand's or company's best performance and highest contribution to society.

RT: You began your career in banking. What led you to Public Relations?

JG: My first jobs in high school were in retail and as a university research

laboratory assistant, which both helped me save money to leave home in San Antonio, Texas and attend Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. While attending Northwestern, my first professional job was in the commercial lending division of a Chicago banking branch now known as Chase Bank. Working there, with really supportive commercial leaders, opened my eyes to a career in business when previously I had been considering a more traditional route into law school. After finishing college, I started a career in management consulting with a specialty in human capital, change leadership, communications and mergers and acquisitions at companies like Towers Watson and Deloitte. In addition to earning my MBA, these multi-disciplinary experiences led me to my next phase of learning and leadership at public relations consultancies which wanted to leverage the skills I had learned helping Fortune 500 teams and organisations build strong strategies, reputations and cultures during times of change and crisis.

RT: What role can communicators play in ensuring diversity and inclusion in the organisations they serve?

JG: Work with your board of directors, C-Suite and Chief People Officer to see and approach equity, inclusion and diversity as transformative strategies, treating them with the same rigor one would address any important business challenge or opportunity. Think about the brands that are no longer in existence because they did not adapt to changing consumer or technology trends. The same

obsolescence can happen when brands fail to understand and act upon the social landscape changing right around them. Create a vision and a movement to own it, then measure and report progress transparently. Ask your firms to bring diverse account teams to your company's greatest challenges. Resist the urge to focus only on the optics of diversity, rather than the transformative opportunity it actually offers.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

JG: More pivotal moments to be of service and counsel to their C-Suite who are learning to navigate the new social, environmental and public health landscape.



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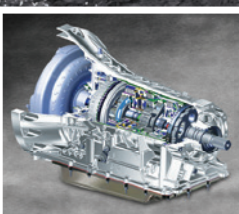
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When you are providing that level of problem solving to clients and working with great people on a daily basis, it gives you energy and inspiration to tackle the next big idea.

Margery Kraus

Founder & Executive Chairman

APCO Worldwide

RT: You set up APCO Worldwide 36 years ago. What milestones do you see the company achieving in the next four years as it turns 40?

MK: I want APCO to make a difference in tomorrow's world by paying attention and taking on the issues of our day including things like climate change, equity, access in general, and to technology, and global health.

To continue doing this work, I want to keep client satisfaction high and to help our clients continue to see around the corner and operate with agility. And as we continue to celebrate our culture of collaboration and our global integration of services, I look forward to ensuring we are firmly established in all regions of the world and maintain our majority women ownership.

And, of course, being a great place to work for our employees.

RT: What led to the creation of APCO in 1984?

MK: At the time, I was on the founding team of the Close Up Foundation—a nonpartisan, nonprofit civic education organisation in Washington, D.C., which offers programming to educate and inspire young people to participate in their government. Working with the foundation, I met government leaders from both sides of the aisle and was introduced to the law firm Arnold & Porter (A&P).

When some of the partners at A&P wanted to start a consulting firm, they believed I had the right experience, and I was excited to test my ability to use the skills I had to develop something new and different. So I left a job I really loved for the unknown and that was the beginning of APCO. Over time, I led

APCO through an exit from the law firm and eventually to its independence, making APCO one of the largest privately-owned consulting firms in its field in the world and the largest that is majority women owned.

Today, we have over 800 people around the world, based in more than 30 markets.

RT: You have said that you have no plans to slow down – or step down. What is the inspiration that keeps you going?

MK: From the beginning, APCO's purpose has always been to have a place where really smart, and nice, people can come together and have a fulfilled career while solving important problems for our clients, and whenever possible, finding solutions that contribute to a better world.

I love the people with whom I work and their energy and creativity give me great passion for what I am doing. When you are providing that level of problem solving to clients and working with great people on a daily basis, it gives you energy and inspiration to tackle the next big idea.

RT: Instead of aiming at a work-life balance, you believe in 'blending the two'. Can you elaborate on this?

MK: Being torn between the demands of work and the pull of family obligations leaves many frustrated and exhausted, and I've been asked hundreds of times about how to balance it. Everyone has to have their own formula, but for me, the answer has been blending the two, and finding ways to take lessons from home to work and vice versa. My professional success has been a function of a supportive and engaged

family, and my ability to be fully engaged with my family has been a function of a fulfilled professional career. I have learned a great deal from both, which I have categorised in my recent book, *Roots and Wings*.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

MK: During COVID, we have reaffirmed that communications is more important than ever. Helping our leaders find the right methods and words to lead their organisations and engage with their stakeholders is more important than ever. That puts us all front and center within our organisations and to our clients, helping them find ways to share their views and tell their stories. This means listening as much as talking and creating lines of communication that educate and inspire.

COVID has also taught us to look at our values and our purpose and to be clear about both. Communicating around these important topics and getting alignment among our staff and our stakeholders will be the difference between good companies and great companies.

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Seraphim
Communications
Moderator

Wednesday, 24th June 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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#RTPRIMETIME

Reputation
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PRIME TIME

AN INITIATIVE OF
Reputation practice

**Special Edition
The Social Media Influence
of Communicators**



Ankit Vengurkar
Xiaomi
India



Vandana Shetty
Oracle
India



Vansha Chavani
Mahindra &
Mahindra



Vincent Henda
Kaizen



Yamini Reddy
The PRactice
Moderator

Wednesday, 26th Aug 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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#RTPRIMETIME

SPAG DIALOGUE | THE POLICY SERIES

In association with **Reputation**

Impact of COVID-19 on online content and policy



Rajesh V. Mah
Provoker



Gavinraj Bhatia
JioMart & Flipkart



Harsha Roy Chowdhary
Zomato



Sajay Khan
Khan & Co



Arun Gupta
SPAG

Date: Friday, 24 July, 2020 **Time: 3PM - 4PM (IST)**

Register here: bit.ly/POLICYDIALOGUE1

A series of online events that aim to address policy issues across sectors.

#PolicyDialogue


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SERIES


Innovation During and Post COVID-19
The Business to Business Perspective
Register at: bit.ly/IFOSJULY8




ARUN SUDHAMAN
PROVOKE MEDIA - MODERATOR




ASHINAY KUMAR
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES



ARPANA K. AHUJA
SHELL




DEEBA ALI
ORACLE




GAYATHRI SHARMA
ROLLS ROYCE



RACHANA PANDA
COMMUNICATIONS LEADER



ROMA BALWANI
VEDANTA



SUNIET BEZBAROO
DELOITTE

Wednesday, July 8th, 2020
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm (IST)

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Reputation practice

Special Edition on Global Indians
What goes into preparing
for and succeeding in an international role



Anusha Prakash
OnePlus
London



Bhishika Basu Thakur
WPPGIB
Deloitte



Lavanys Warganekar
Nissan Motor Corp
Tokyo



Nikhil Khanna
Fitbit
Singapore



Neha Mathur
Raslogi
WordsWork
Moderator

Wednesday, 29th July 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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In association with **Reputation**

Consumer Safety and Transparency: Food & Nutrition



Ishaque Amjad
Coastal India &
South West Asia



Ophire Sheth
Kudamasa,
India



Pankaj Mahajan
Cargill,
India



AMAN GUPTA
SPAG

Date: Friday, 21 August 2020 **Time: 3PM - 4PM (IST)**

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A series of online events that aim to address policy issues across sectors.

#PolicyDialogue

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WFH technology: Security and Privacy Policy



Chit
Covington &
Cape



Jagmeet
Bhatia
Digital Health



Kuppuswamy
Krishnamoorthy
Tata



Neelima
Chandell
Microsoft



AMAN GUPTA
SPAG

Date: Friday, 11 Sept, 2020 **Time: 3PM - 4PM (IST)**

Register here: bit.ly/POLICYDIALOGUE3

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#PolicyDialogue


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Innovation During and Post COVID-19
The Policy Perspective
Register at: bit.ly/IFOSAUGUST12




DILIP YADAV
FIRST PARTNERS
Moderator




AMRIT AHUJA
MICHAEL & SUSAN DELL
FOUNDATION INDIA &
SOCIAL FINANCE INDIA




ANASUYA RAY
MARS WRIGLEY INDIA
(MARS INC)




ARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN
BAYER



BHAVNA SINGH
OPPI



JYOTSNA GHOSHAL
MSD



LATIKA TANEJA
MASTERCARD

Wednesday, August 12th, 2020
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm (IST)

#IFOS

RT ONLINE EVENTS

Regional Prime Time

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New Normal - Blessing in Disguise for Regional PR

Arpan Bhatia
Coca-Cola
 Shanu Anand
Metro Cash & Carry
 Neha Shah
Amazon
 Pooja Khanna
Panasonic
 Mukesh Khurshida
Fusion PR

Wednesday, 5th Aug 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

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Communication beyond Metros in the New Normal

Rajul Nag
ShareChat
 Rishi Sharma
Vivo
 Shivika Malik
PepsiCo India
 Vasanthi Ramakrishnan
Flipkart
 Mukesh Khurshida
Fusion PR

Wednesday, 1st July 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Regional India and the spirit of celebration in the new normal

C Lakshmi
Indigo
 Himanshu Kapadia
Grass Industries
 Puneet Gupta
INOX
 Rishabh Lohani
HCL
 Mukesh Khurshida
Fusion PR

Wednesday, 2nd Sep 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

Sign up bit.ly/RTPRIME6

Regional Prime Time

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Reputation

The Future of Influencer Engagement

Amita Mittal
Mytra
 Faisal Khan
MotorBeam
 Kamal Khosla
CinConnect
 Shilpa Arora
ClicLifeStyle
 Ush Mathur
MS Motor
 Shreya Krishnan
Adhikar, Promise Foundation

Wednesday, 16th Sep 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

Sign up bit.ly/RTPRIME7

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

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How Marketers and Influencers are Navigating Brand Narratives!

Anshika Mehta
Lenskart
 Julia Ganesa
Philips
 Nisha Kaul
Influencer
 Sagar Purohit
CinConnect
 Suman C Chhabra
Influencer
 Kinika Shankar
PSAI

Wednesday, 30th Sep 2020
6:00 pm to 7:15 pm (IST)

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Regional Prime Time

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How is Communication Influencing Buying Decisions in the New Normal

Gaurav Sinha
Audi India
 Korla Swarnika
Swarovski
 Binod Agarwal
Puravankar
 Snehal Chitambar
L'Oréal India
 Mukesh Khurshida
Fusion PR

Wednesday, 7th Oct 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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Regional Prime Time

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Communication in 2021 and beyond

Anubhuti Yadav
BMC New Delhi
 Deepshikha Chaturvedi
Genesis BCW
 Dr. Samir Parikh
Fortis Healthcare
 Sujit Padi
Godrej Industries
 Mukesh Khurshida
Fusion PR

Wednesday, 4th Nov 2020
6 pm to 7 pm (IST)

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Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Dimple Kapur
Priceroll Group
 Ritesh Mehta
State Bank of India
 Shilpa Desai
Fullerton India
 Anura Husain
Adfactors PR

Friday, 8th May, 2020
3 pm to 4 pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

Sign up at - bit.ly/CommsAhead1 to join the Zoom webinar

Focus - BFSI Communications

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Anand Raju
PayNearby
 Anand Subramanian
Ola
 Jyotsna Kishore
Vogly
 Rishabh Wadhwa
Snapdeal
 Rogee Darashah
Adfactors PR

Friday, 19th May, 2020
3 pm to 4 pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

Sign up at - bit.ly/CommsAhead2 to join the Zoom webinar

Focus - Communications in Start-ups

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Bhavna Singh
QTV
 Jasvika Dhillon
Fortis Healthcare
 Magline Ruffino
Rachar Diagnostics
 Manjira Sharma
Lupin
 Nauman Gurehshi
Adfactors PR

Friday, 22nd May, 2020
3pm to 4pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

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Focus - Healthcare Communications

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Sumita Datta
SAIL
 Anuj Deyal
Delhi Metro Rail Corporation
 Abbas Akhtar
BFL
 K. M. Prashanth
ATPC
 Samir Kapur
Adfactors PR

Friday, 29th May, 2020
3pm to 4pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

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Focus - PSU Communications

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Jatin Aggarwal
Orange Renault
 Rajesh Mani
Avalar Jayland
 Satinder Bindra
Uber
 Swati Sundareswaran
Royal Enfield
 Percy Dubash
Adfactors PR

Friday, 3rd July, 2020
3pm to 4pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

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Focus - Communications in Mobility Companies

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Harleen Sachdeva
Newest Polaris Enterprise
 Mihika Kumar
HMD Global
 P Balaji
Vodafone Idea
 Tuhina Pandey
QTV
 Priti Setia
Adfactors PR

Friday, 17th July, 2020
3 pm to 4 pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

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Focus - Communications in Technology and Telecom companies

Regional Prime Time

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Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Dr. Anubhuti Yadav
BMC New Delhi
 Dr. Padma Rani
BMC Bangalore
 Rajeev Chawla
JVC Mumbai
 Dr. Ruchi Jaggi
SMC Pune
 Madan Bahal
Adfactors PR

Friday, 31st July, 2020
3 pm to 4 pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

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Focus - The Future of PR Education

Regional Prime Time

AN INITIATIVE OF

Reputation

Navigating Reputation in the Post-COVID era THE COMMUNICATORS' ASSEMBLY POINT

Amrit Anand
Paytm Payments Bank
 Meghana Bangalore
Urban
 Prasidha Menon
OVO
 Sunil Param
Pine Labs
 Arpit Garg
Adfactors PR

Friday, 28th August, 2020
3 pm to 4 pm (IST)

#CommsAhead

Sign up at - bit.ly/CommsAhead8 to join the Online Event on Zoom

Focus: Communications by Unicorns



As a company active in the fields of health and nutrition, Bayer can make a major contribution to sustainability. And in my role, I can make a significant contribution. Just as the desire to strengthen sustainability led me to become a politician, it was the same desire that motivated me to take the position at Bayer.

Matthias Berninger

Head of Public Affairs, Science & Sustainability

Bayer

RT: “The world must find a new balance between production and protection”. How are you achieving this balance at Bayer?

MB: Bayer’s approach is to focus on the science, even when it is inconvenient for us. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that we can reduce our environmental impact by changing our behavior. But, at what price? Millions of people have lost their jobs and the economy has collapsed. That is why we firmly believe that we need break-through innovations so that the 8 billion people, who will soon live on earth, can thrive within planetary boundaries. Therefore, we are transforming our business model in order to achieve a balance between production and protection in the areas of health and nutrition. One example are synthetic fertilizers. They enabled farmers to meet the growing demand for food throughout the 20th century, but their use has a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 2% of GHG emissions worldwide, and on the ecosystem via nitrogen runoff. With Gingko Bioworks, Bayer co-founded the company Joyn Bio, which is seeking to develop a paradigm-shifting technology that would enable nitrogen fertilizer to be produced by microbes.

RT: Your plan was to become a teacher, but that changed after you got elected as youngest ever German MP in 1994. What led to you getting into politics?

MB: The first UN summit on climate in Rio 1992 made us aware of the need for transformative change. I wanted to support political forces that strengthen sustainability and I am glad

that this mindset is now increasingly becoming mainstream, most notably demonstrated by Europe’s and China’s commitment to achieve carbon neutrality, God willing still during my lifetime.

RT: How did the transition from politics to the corporate world happen?

MB: When I was elected for the fourth time, it felt I was on the verge of losing my independence. I did not want to become the type of politician who would bend in order to get reelected. That’s why I decided to move on. I was blessed with an opportunity outside of Germany, first in Brussels and then the US, which allowed me to combine my general experience in government and parliament affairs with an increased understanding of business. For that, Mars was a wonderful company which has the reputation of being a breeding ground for excellent business leaders for good reason. When I was offered the position of Head of Public Affairs, Science and Sustainability at Bayer, I saw a great opportunity. As a company active in the fields of health and nutrition, Bayer can make a major contribution to sustainability. And in my role, I can make a significant contribution. Just as the desire to strengthen sustainability led me to become a politician, it was the same desire that motivated me to take the position at Bayer.

RT: Would you go back to politics in future? Why?

MB: I have the old-fashioned belief that politicians serve their countries. Therefore, if I was asked to do that on

a national or any other level and felt I could genuinely make a difference, who knows? For now, I feel I can bring my experience to help transforming health and agriculture to the table.

RT: What should communication professionals look forward to in 2021?

MB: The pandemic has changed the world and will not be over. This will change the environment in which communicators operate for a longer period than initially expected. The pandemic has driven digitalisation in many areas – including communication. Today, many events take place only digitally. That brings opportunities – but also challenges. Communicators should ask themselves how they can be resilient and succeed by establishing new approaches.



- Translation
- Transcription
- Content Writing

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The days of being able to succeed in PR without being as comfortable with numbers as we are with narratives are over.

Rick Murray

Managing Partner
SHIFT Communications

RT: What are the key trends that are changing the game in the PR business?

RM: I could say purpose, ESG or the blurring of the lines between all communications disciplines, but to me, being able to deliver on each of those across paid, earned, owned and social channels is now table stakes. The one big unavoidable trend I see is this: we are all increasingly accountable for producing tangible results that change how people think, feel and act. That means we all need to get a lot smarter about goal-setting; our programs need to be designed with beating those goals in mind; and we need to track our performance and adapt what we're doing based on what we're seeing in real time. The days of being able to succeed in PR without being as comfortable with numbers as we are with narratives are over.

RT: You have had a prolific career initially in marketing and later in consulting. What has been the highlight of your 40 years in corporate North America?

RM: First off, it's not all be in the US; I've spent 10 years, of the 40 years, over two separate stints in Canada, and loved each. But I'd have to say that the highlight isn't a role or an accomplishment, it's the people I have been privileged to work for and with. I've been part of some amazing teams, and I've also had the chance to give many who were just starting out their first shot. It's incredibly gratifying to see their careers flourish. At the end of the day, I think that's the most important mark any leader can make.

RT: SHIFT was an early champion of the integration of digital and social

media in traditional PR. What's the next big thing for the company?

RM: We're in the process of launching a new offering we're calling Optimised PR. Our data was telling us that 90% of earned content had no measurable long tail value. Basically, because it wasn't optimised for SEO, it essentially became invisible shortly after it first appeared. Our teams can help clients create content that outperforms their competitors' where it counts – the funnel. And we're willing to back that statement up with performance-based compensation.

RT: You have been a major champion of diversity and inclusion at the workplace. What drives you to do that?

RM: Simply this: it's the right thing to do. Indeed, it's always been the right thing to do, yet for any number of reasons – including what I can only believe is systemic racism – the PR industry in North America is still largely white, and its leadership largely male. A few years back we were doing some on campus recruiting and weren't seeing any diverse candidates from the PR or Communications programmes. We dug a little deeper to learn that one of the reasons why many diverse students didn't even know what PR was. They were majoring in liberal arts. Yet so many consultancies prioritise candidates from PR and Communications programmes because they feel their onboarding will be easier. That's not good enough. We have to work harder to correct a century of inequality. All of us, SHIFT included.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

RM: I believe the unpredictability that we have been waking up to every day since COVID hit will be with us until a proven vaccine has been made available to the majority of the population. Realistically, that means another year plus of remote working, remote schooling and way too much family time. It's another year where everyone you speak with will be super stressed out and doing their level best to keep themselves together. And it's another year where some businesses will thrive while others will struggle to survive. As hard as it may seem from time to time, we're the ones called on in a crisis, so we need to buckle up and help our companies and/or clients ride out the storm. The upside? Leadership will come to place greater value our counsel on a day in and day out basis.

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Content Creation
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AWARDS WON:



NOMINATION:





Communicating corporate purpose is the easier part. It is embedding that purpose inside the company, ingraining it in our decision making as a business, that is both more difficult and more important.

Russell Dyer

VP & Chief of Communications and Government Affairs

Mondelēz International

RT: You have a challenging job working on some of the greatest brands and ensuring they stay relevant. What is your mantra to ensure you communicate right?

RD: I have several business adages that I try to carry with me throughout my work day. One that has always echoed in my head is “how you do anything, is how you do everything”. I think this is particularly true for communicators and corporate and brand communications. The power and importance of authenticity is central to any purpose position these days. Companies and brands need to be very intentional about their actions as one decision or disjointed position can quickly define your story and your reputation for years to come. It also speaks to the need to prioritise and focus on doing the handful of things that matter most to the best of your abilities.

RT: Mondelēz has a historic legacy in India, thanks to Cadbury, which is almost a generic name for chocolates. What helps it stand out given that competition has increased dramatically over the last decade?

RD: We have been proudly making in India for more than 72 years and bringing some of India's most loved brands to consumers over the years including Cadbury Dairy Milk, Bournvita, Oreo, 5Star among others. After seven decades of love, CDM continues to remain India's favourite chocolate brand. I think we have remained an icon despite growing competition because our products connect with the consumers on an emotional level. We do this through breakthrough advertising and continuous consumer-centric innovations. We firmly believe

in the power of purpose and have exercised it in different forms over the years. Our latest Generosity campaign (#SayThankYou) for Cadbury Dairy Milk is a testimony to these ideas in action.

RT: Mondelēz has aimed to redefine its purpose as consumers looked for healthier and more sustainable ways to satisfy their cravings. How do you communicate this purpose?

RD: Communicating corporate purpose is the easier part. It is embedding that purpose inside the company, ingraining it in our decision making as a business that is both more difficult and more important. We are two years into our purpose journey and we are learning and improving every day. Though robust leadership engagement, marketing capability building and ongoing storytelling we have established our purpose as the lens through which we see the world. We have integrated Snacking Made Right not only into our corporate identity, rituals and routines, but also our 4-year roadmap for how we measure success as a business. We fundamentally believe purpose cannot just be a story that lives outside of the operations of the company. It needs to be infused in the organisation and I am very proud of how far we have come in such a short period of time.

RT: What is the most exciting aspect of working in a chocolate and snacking company?

RD: My children are ages eight, seven and five. I try very hard to see my job through their eyes as the wonder of our brands and categories bring them endless joy. While not every day feels like a magical day inside a chocolate

factory, remembering the important role our brands play in consumers' lives fills me with great pride. You see this most pronounced in a time like the pandemic. Consumers all around the world have reached for the comfort and security of our brands and that is not something we take lightly. Every single day we need to earn that trust.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

RD: Unfortunately, much of 2021 will look a lot like 2020 in terms of the management of the pandemic and our global path to recovery. If you are a successful communications professional, then you thrive on change and challenge. The good news is 2021 will continue to bring plenty of each! Our leadership has spoken about the importance of ‘accelerating into the turn’ and making sure that we define and shape how we want to emerge stronger from this crisis and double those efforts over the next 4-6 months. Corporate communications were essential in 2020 given everything we have faced internally and externally. At Mondelēz International our corporate affairs teams are looking forward to continuing to prove the tremendous value we can bring in the year ahead.

Reputation TODAY



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Tata Consultancy Services
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Austin



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Tinder Inc
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Priyanka Bajpai
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When you look at PR as the underlying force behind social movements, you can see how public relations can be used for the public good.

Shelley Spector

Founder & Director

Museum of Public Relations

RT: You run the Museum of Public Relations in New York city, which is very unique. What led to creating it?

SS: Yes, the Museum of Public Relations is unique. In fact, it is the only museum in the world dedicated to PR history (although I have long wished that there'd be PR museums in other nations!). What led to creating it? It was Bernays, actually, who had the idea to create such a museum, and one day, at Bernays's 101 birthday, he asked me and my husband, Barry, to create it. Of course, we had no idea how to create a museum, but thought we could figure it out. Little did we know how complicated a job that would be, or how rewarding! After Bernays died, in March 1995, his family invited us up to Bernays's house in Cambridge, Mass. to choose the artifacts we wanted to showcase as our first exhibit at the museum. Today those same artifacts—an oil portrait of Bernays, his inbox with original documents inside, many of his books, framed newspaper stories—are displayed at the museum in New York City.

RT: Tell us one of your most memorable moments with Edward Bernays?

SS: I'd say it was the very first dinner we had with Bernays, at the Waldorf in New York City, in October 1985. Bernays was 94, but had all his wits about him. It was mind-boggling to hear his stories; he seemed to have worked with every VIP of the 20th century. And his recall for details was magnificent. He told us about working with Pres. Calvin Coolidge in the 1920s; how he came up with the Torches of Freedom campaign; the impact of his consumer products

campaigns in changing American behavior; and the very important influence of his double-uncle, Sigmund Freud. Little did we know at that dinner that over the next ten years we'd be having dozens of dinners with Bernays

RT: How has Public Relations changed over the years, ever since you had started 40 years ago?

SS: When I first got into the field, we had no personal computers, email or Internet. We wrote press releases on typewriters, mailed them through the post office and created media lists from printed directories, from Burrelle's or Bacon's.

We also spent much more time getting to know the media (eg. those famous three-martini lunches were a real thing!) and entertaining clients. Since there was no such thing as social media, we depended a lot more on traditional media relations to get our clients known, so that means we had to be a lot more creative in coming up with campaigns: they had to be much more novel, and newsworthy, to get the attention of the press.

RT: You had said in an interview that you "love inspiring young people about using PR as a force for good in society". How do you go about doing this?

SS: When you look at PR as the underlying force behind social movements, you can see how public relations can be used for the public good. This is as true in India as it has been in the US, during its social movements from the American Revolution, up through the anti-slavery

movements, to women's suffrage, and up through the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. All these movements had to use public relations strategies to win the hearts and minds of the public in order to change society. When you present public relations as a force for good — instead of just a way to sell products or build a company's image— then we can encourage more socially minded students to join the field.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

SS: I think it very much depends on the situation of the pandemic. Here in the US, the virus has had a very negative impact on the PR business, especially, those in travel and hospitality, retail, and all non-necessities. Plus Americas are consumed, rightly, with news of the economy, the elections and their health. If we get back to "normal" - or closer to it - I think our field will come back bigger and better than ever.



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Around the world, brand communicators have needed to demonstrate a new level of agility to navigate both this global pandemic, from real-time business continuity planning through to executive, employee and customer communications.

Kass Sells

Global Chief Operating Officer and President, International
WE Communications

RT: How does Purpose stand out in comparison to corporate responsibility?

KS: So often, CSR or ERG can be seen as box-ticking exercises or bolt-ons without true alignment to a business strategy or a brand's values. Purpose, on the other hand, is a higher goal – one that must go beyond short-term self-interest and provide the why. Why does an organisation exist? Why does it do what it does? And how can that organisation conduct successful business while making a positive impact on society?

Purpose affects every aspect of business, impacting an organisation's communication strategy, how it conducts its core business, and how it engages and retains employees. Because it provides direction and informs your strategy, it must be rooted in truth and authenticity. If the way you work as a leader, and the way you work as a brand, doesn't consistently align with your purpose, you're doing something wrong. So, should CSR efforts need to align with purpose? Yes, but purpose should be the north star.

RT: You said – “Communicating authentically, doing so in the best way your brand knows how and showing you care are first steps in the right direction”. What steps should companies take to do that?

KS: All organisations – regardless of size or length of time they've been in business – should use authentic, human communications to engage their stakeholders, from employees to customers. All can follow three basic steps:

- Be purposeful. Use your company's unique purpose to lead your

communications and inform your business decisions. Recent research shows that 70% of professionals believe that purpose can drive customer loyalty, so let it benefit every aspect of your business, from strategy to reputation.

- Be prepared to act. There's little point in having plans and strategies in place if you're not committed to following through for the benefit of your clients, customers and employees.
- Be human to the core. Treat your employees and your customers like human beings, act with empathy and build deeper connections by showing up in local communities and in the world.

RT: What are the big challenges facing the Public Relations business today?

KS: Around the world, brand communicators have needed to demonstrate a new level of agility to navigate both this global pandemic, from real-time business continuity planning through to executive, employee and customer communications. After the shock of the initial months of the outbreak though, we're seeing businesses re-evaluate their approaches to everything, including their brands, events, product launches, social media, marketing, customer relationship marketing, and so much more. Across the entire marketing spectrum brands are doubling-down on their investments and innovations into smarter digital approaches, technology and data-led solutions.

Another issue that has been brewing for a while now, is the attention economy, with so many brands and businesses fighting to catch the eyes and ears of potential customers. That's why forward-thinking PR and communications leaders are

looking to lean further into integrated communications approaches. Comms strategies can no longer be based around executing one or two tactics really well; we now need to take a wholly integrated approach to reaching customers, with messaging that meets them where they are, demonstrates humanity and respect and aligns to the issues about which they are most passionate. We do that best by leveraging data and analytics to inform insights-driven approaches to ensure that these successes are both replicable and constantly evolving.

RT: What should the communication professional look forward to in 2021?

KS: The world and our industry have changed immeasurably in 2020, and we can't expect a return to the communications environment that existed before the current pandemic and 2020's social movements. We should all get comfortable with being uncomfortable for a while longer. But with these changes will carry us into the next normal, and they bring with them opportunities for improvement. Chief among these is the opportunity for brands to lead with their purpose and influence positive societal change.

Our Brands in Motion research shows us that 74% of consumers expect brands to take a stand on important issues such as climate change, social justice and inequalities. As purpose continues to make inroads into corporate culture and business strategies, I'm optimistic that we can look forward to the tide turning to more brands meeting consumer expectations with bold purposeful action which has a positive impact on society, solving the problems which affect all of us. We PR and communications leaders have the opportunity to not just be at the forefront of that change, but to be its drivers.

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dab

To play with
our rainbow
arch
COVID hit us
in March



Amidst hope
and confusion in April
Trended Quarantine and
Chill



Work, Shelter
and food
were taken
in stride by May
'Cut and Survive'
is all everyone
could say

MISERY not ending
SOON came
realisation in June

In 2020, Fuzion completed a decade of exploring communication across Regional India.

We did not want to celebrate the way we did, but we are bidding adieu to this year with a lot of gratitude and hope. Looking back at the human spirit and resilience with which our Industry weathered the storm, made us want to spread a positive message of happiness and prosperity.

From all of us at Fuzion to all of you reading this, wishes for an amazing 2021.



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COMPASSION
could FLY

MIRACLES
happened
in JULY

Embracing
change,
Boundaries in our
minds just
arrived new
possibilities in

August

NEW Normal
was not
NEW anymore
We started
living a little again
in September

Love, festivals and
GRATITUDE
all the more made us see
a NEW Light in
October

Slowly ending
the gloom
and scare,
we started
building again
in
November

Always
been about
NEW
BEGINNINGS
in December
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Tapping the Potential of Storytelling

- Tina Mansukani Garg

Have you ever wondered why you find it easy to explain the Archimedes Principle but struggle with the Pythagoras theorem? Well, the reason is simple – you remember the former because of the iconic ‘Eureka!’ story! Somehow, this seems to be imprinted on to our memories, despite having only heard it when we were much younger. To me, this is the true power of a story.

I remember reading an interesting interview in Forbes with Dr. Murray Nossel who helps corporations use storytelling to transform business communication. He explains how businesses can use stories to strategically communicate vital bits of information. According to Dr. Nossel, the quality of the connection that results from storytelling is deeper and more resonant. This got me thinking – when consumers relate better to communication that is centered around their experiences, as marketers, we must harness the untapped potential that stories possess, which includes:

The potential to inform and transform: Stories tap into our hearts, minds, and souls. As marketers, we need to look at it as a platform that helps us transform mind-sets. This shift is one that's backed by science – neural circuits in different parts of the brain light up depending on whether you are reading, watching or listening to a story. To me, this is a very important insight that all brand communicators must

consider while customising their communications strategy for the right target group.

The potential to give you an edge: If you take a step back and think of all the different ways that brands have communicated over the years, the ones that really stick are those that wove a story in. Take the Vodafone campaign for example. The visual of the adorable pug following the child around made each of us create a story in our own minds about the relationship they may have shared – symbolic of the brand's traits of loyalty, trust, and kinship. Perhaps this is why we remember the ad to this day!

They also have the power to change public perception. Back in the mid-2000s, Idea Cellular was a late entrant in an already busy segment. To help stand out, and also attract customers from competing brands, they released an ad campaign featuring Abhishek Bachchan and the iconic, ‘What an idea, Sirji’ tagline. What helped the campaign's success especially in tier-2 and -3 cities was the stories around social issues that were incorporated into the ad.

Using stories is even more critical now given the pandemic – a situation where it's essential for brands to show their empathetic side. A recent report by PROvoke Media shows how companies used stories to successfully craft narratives for their employees during COVID-19, initially on safety and well-being, and later, on finding moments of relevance in the new normal.

The potential to be impactful: As communications professionals, we need to realise that whether we are writing a brochure, an investor deck, a blog, or a script, the ones that have the most impact will be those that weave in a story. Even if you are writing, a case study for an IT brand, try and bring in a human or emotional angle, and you'll see how your audience connects to it better. Just like a story, always remember to craft your narrative with a relevant theme, a logical flow, and a memorable conclusion.



Tina Mansukhani Garg is the Founder and CEO at Pink Lemonade, an integrated marketing & communications consultancy in Bangalore. She launched the company in 2011, and today, it is known for its award-winning work in creative & business communications, and digital services.

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Connections Build Connections

- Praveen Nagda

Connectivity, interconnectivity, network grid, cascading effect and multi-level web of connections is truly what the world is made of today. Age-old connections often have some common binding factors, interests, hobbies, or professional interests for that matter. In the pre-internet era, the connections were almost privileged and privately-guarded affairs, but the advent of social media has catapulted this restricted connectivity paradigm into an extended, wider, and multi-level connected world.

Concept of connections, where the connections make connections has metamorphosed into a truly networked world, creating opportunities in abundance for many who weren't as connected as others. Covid-19 on a positive side has created opportunities for connecting with varied people, for the reasons beyond traditional ones like shared interests or hobbies. Online interactions, webinars, discussions, research, teaching, job opportunities, etc. in the online space along with a variety of newly-developed elements have given an entirely new meaning to the power of connections.

New connections always bring in new learnings, growth, and help people in finding purpose if they are at crossroads. These are like new energy bundles, recharges that challenge

the existing setup of the mind and provide an impetus towards a novel way of a work, play, and life. Most often, they tend to bring in an element of balance in the disoriented situations and pave a way for future growth.

By sharing wisdom and giving knowledge, the new connections empower people who would feel powerless because of being either insignificant juniors or having limited knowledge, skillsets, and competencies. New connections can simply be motivating forces for many who would see possibilities and opportunities available, which they would not have imagined prior.

It's interesting that when a network grows in size with additions of members into its fold it also brings in immense possibilities of the growth in a multi-folded manner to its members. And that's the power of connections, as almost always they end up in value creation for every constituent along with the entire network.

Moreover, when there are newer concepts, products, services, businesses, etc., the connected networks give a rapid testing opportunity, shortening the time for go-to-market for the corporates. Over the period, as the network grows, the overall value it delivers grows in a multi-fold manner.

Business, trade, new age-businesses, and social systems, etc., all have been impacted by the power of connections, which has created disruptions everywhere. However, the connections survive on some of the most traditional factors that strengthen any relationship such as values, ethics, trust, credibility, honesty, and empathy, etc.

Connections have unimaginable power to extract value out of any business ventures and relationships, that are on the network. It is the power of connection that has made the world flat again and brought everyone on a common page in more than many ways, building connections by connections!

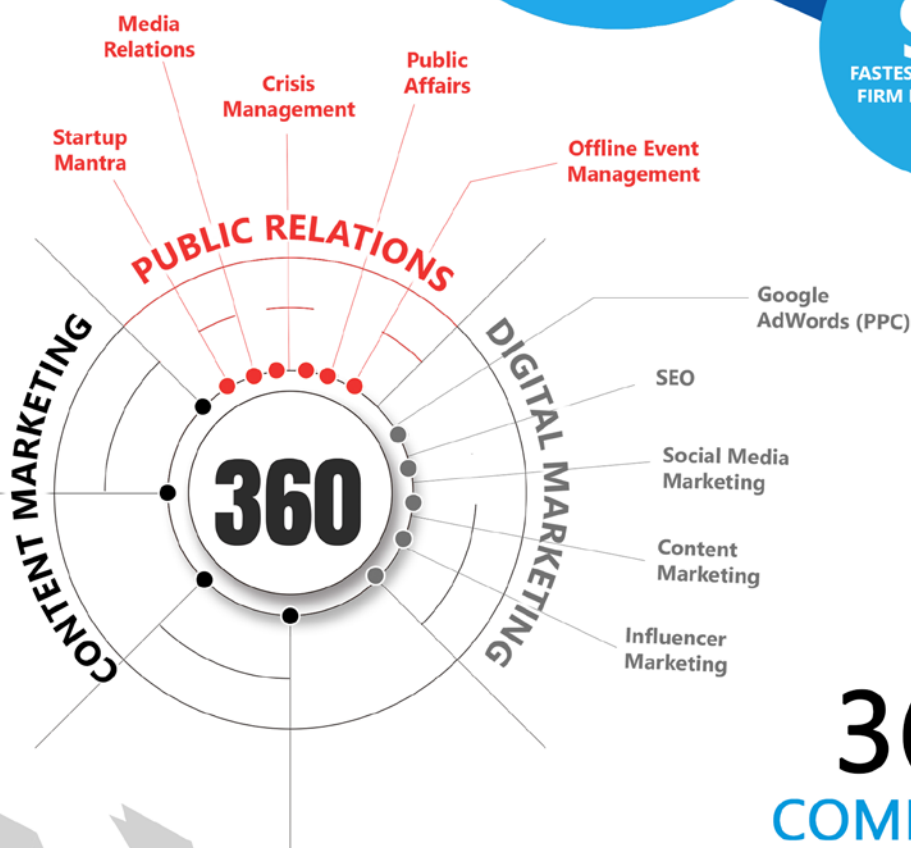


Praveen Nagda is the CEO of Peregrine Public Relations, a full-service corporate communications and public relations consultancy with a pan-India reach. He also heads White Coffee, an independent events & celebrity engagement company.



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Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- Sarita Bahl

Our first association with the phrase 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMD) is often to do with the American invasion of Iraq in the early 2000s. The pandemic replaced the meaning of WMD and changed it to reflect protection and safety. In the COVID-19 world, WMD means – wash, mask, and distance. For humanity to be safe, it can no longer ignore this WMD. With WMD all around and so pervasive, I have taken the liberty to expand this phrase in the world of PR & Communications. WMD here stands for three skills/ attributes that are quintessential for our profession.

Write: Undoubtedly, the most important skill of all – writing. The ability to write clear, concise messages is the cornerstone of a successful communicator. Effective writing and communication have the potential to deliver the information in an ambiguous manner and is easy to grasp and understand by the receiver.

A good communicator is always mindful of the context for which the message has to be written. Once the context is clear, it is time to zero in on the content. It is important to keep the message simple and impactful. And always keep your audience in mind.

I recall preparing a talk that I had to deliver to a group of bright MBA students of the Vinod Gupta School of Management at IIT-Kharagpur. I had it all planned – the opening, the end, the anecdotes, the examples, all of it. But when I asked the group what they wished to hear, out went my prepared talk! The end result was an extremely satisfying free-wheeling conversation on topics that my audience wanted to listen to!

We often fall into the trap of wanting to say what we wish to convey without realising that the audience is seeking some other information. Consultancies can prep communicators here by gauging the mood and interests of the audience and media.

Meet: The Thesaurus throws up interesting synonyms for the verb 'meet.' Among the many, there is 'get together' and 'make acquaintances' that are vital to our profession. Networking within our community is a great way to understand the current environment and issues. But more enriching is the meeting of diverse minds and thoughts outside the industry with different groups and people.

Do not limit your rendezvous. Go all out and meet new people. Talk to your critics! Take in different perspectives. The digital revolution that the pandemic has helped catalyse is here to stay. The power of virtual interactions can help sharpen your skills and lead to interesting divergent conversations; the outcome of which may be beneficial to your organisation and you.

Declare: The declaration of self-intent and the promise of authenticity are two powerful tools to convey your point across. Your overall message has to be aligned with the business and the activities of the organisation. It cannot be self-contradicting! Stay committed and consistent to the values of your organisation and ensure your communication is factual, credible, and to the point.

In the end, irrespective of whether you are affiliated with a consultancy or are an in-house communications professional, if your message is tailored as per your audience and if it can start, engage, and sustain a conversation/debate, you have nailed it.



Sarita Bahl leads the Corporate Social Responsibility function for Bayer South Asia and is also the Director – Bayer Prayas Association. Prior to this, she successfully oversaw the communications and public affairs function for Bayer South Asia.

SMILE 101:

Social Media Influencer Listing Engine

Influence has been a key point of discussion in 2020. And yet, what it means to different stakeholders varies with context. Today, social media allows for creating, sharing, receiving, and consuming copious amounts of content, along with metrics associated with every word we speak online; our visibility, persuasiveness, relevance and credibility are all measured. The nature of this has given new dimensions to how we approach influence, from both an individual and organizational perspective.

Influence is a function of an individual's **power** to affect opinions and the **interest** shown by the community in them. This year's report has attempted to showcase the relative social media influencing power held by professionals from the PR and Corporate Communications industry through a detailed objective and statistical exercise.

We believe that influence cannot be viewed as a linear metric; rather a two-dimensional approach was taken to develop the SMILE101 Report. The PRACTICE has used its proprietary

stakeholder engagement tool - the CUBE™, to account for quantified and softer aspects of influence. Thereafter, 132 individuals were mapped and plotted into different cohorts- Social Media Expert, Social Media Generalist and Social Media Specialist. It is important to note that the list is in no way exhaustive and must not be treated as ranking of these individuals on social media. The data for the exercise has been taken from April 2019 to March 2020 and the platforms under consideration were restricted to Twitter and LinkedIn. Images for all participants have been provided by Reputation Today and the data scraping was done by The PRACTICE.

We congratulate every voice that helps build awareness, on numerous topics, by engaging in credible, authentic conversations in the digital space.

To read the detailed report please refer to the following link: bit.ly/RTSMILE101.



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The corporate voice to build unity

- Nilofer D'Souza

Politics and religion are never discussed, on paper, at the workplace, and yet, we all learn to work together in spite of or despite our differences.

Why, because the organisation culture will not tolerate hate, violence, or division. How can any two people work together if they are divided, right?

In these hate-filled times, I can't tell you how pleased I am to be in the corporate sector. It is here, within the boundaries of an organisation, we live in a Utopian world, and it provides some respite from the hatred you see when you step out of office. There's a world of a difference between politicians and the corporate world. Off late, more and more politicians seem to be dividing the world all over again with hate speeches, but the truth is, it's in our differences/diversity, we find our strengths.

I always wonder about the story on how the Parsis came to India. The ruler of the kingdom in Gujarat, King Jadhav Rana, showed the Parsi priest, who requested shelter, a bowl, letting the priest know that they were full. How could they find place for themselves? The priest's response was historic. He took a spoon full of sugar and mixed it into the milk. He assured the king they would sweeten the place without unsettling it. The story is called Kissa-i-Sanjan.

When I reflect on the rich corporate history we have now, thanks to one of the largest groups, the Tata Group, and the number of jobs it has created, it always reminds me what good conscious capitalism can do.

Conscious capitalism is a term I was well-acquainted with in my stint as a business journalist, where our editor, Indrajit Gupta, specialised in building a newsroom with really different people. I cannot tell you how different our own team was in their ideologies at times, but what held us together was certainly a set of values we all believed in. So, in spite of massive differences of opinion, ways of living, eating, etc., we came together, and we came together, stronger. He celebrated differences and honestly, I think he's one of the rare folks who can manage such a diverse team.

If you look at the corporate sector today, there's so much built around the Diversity and Inclusion piece. Some joke and say it's just to show numbers, and then there are some who really live out their culture. But the corporate world, in the current socio-economic scenario, is one breath of fresh air because they are holding on to values that perhaps governments should have held close.

It's so ironic because having been a journalist, I remember attending my first-ever Nasscom summit in 2008, and the air was brimming with hope for the future. Discussions were all about how the next five years were crucial for India to get ahead of China, and it seemed possible, if really a long climb. The newsroom was filled with so much hope because the media industry was booming, big time.

And yet, now, everything has reversed.

Not all of it is gloom and doom. I finally see a good fight coming back from journalists who are starting their own YouTube/social media channels to combat the aggressive reporting we see on our televisions daily. I also see a lot more communications professionals, who may be ex-journalists or not, taking stands on issues regarding humanity, raising concerns on good journalism, and most of all, standing for good values like respect, integrity, honesty, diversity, etc. More and more CEOs are taking stands even if it lands them in the middle of hate-filled ecosystems. For some, whether in the US, China, or India, it has cost them, but they have either chosen to fight or stay neutral.

In an ironical way, I can honestly say, I've never been happier to be in the corporate sector. At least I get to fight for respect and decency, which any self-respecting corporate would deem as great values.



Nilofer D'Souza was a former business journalist with Forbes India and has over the years, worked with leaders across IT, healthcare, and retail in the corporate sector. For over a decade, having won various awards, she's learned to deep dive into an organisation's culture and drive effective communications.

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Content is Queen

- Shreya Krishnan

Content is potent! Content is queen! Content is everything! We hear so much about content, but have we leveraged its power to tell compelling stories?

Content is steeped in identity. When you look at brands and the content they curate to put out there, you realise how much connection there is to what the brand stands for, its identity and its vision and purpose. That sounds like a string of big words put together but clubbed together make a lot of sense.

Content is also not unidimensional, it is a true multiverse which embodies the ethos, logos, and pathos of the brand. When we limit content to the purview of just social media posts or organisational marketing collateral, we are not leveraging the full power that content can generate, when used right.

As communicators, we must remember that great content can be across the board, from the speeches of leadership, to newsletters, marketing collaterals all the way to social media posts. Content strategies take into account every touch point of the customer and stakeholder experience journey. Even the smallest nuances need to be focussed on in this context.

Content is aesthetic, it is body language, it is grammar and articulation and more.

Building a content-based strategy starts with the end in mind and what one wants to achieve at the end of the campaign. This helps identify and align the scope and mechanism of measurement. Once the outline is defined, then comes in the timeline and deadlines for delivery. An

umbrella strategy is great to start with, with specific time limited campaigns stitched into it for the course or duration that is planned. Today, when we have direct access to audiences across platforms, a lot can be done by simply tweaking content to tell the stories that want to be told.

Think of brands that have cracked the code when it comes to content and the ones you have liked personally. I have so many that come to mind when you think of the way they leverage platforms and keep the magic of content as the thread that ties it all together. Netflix does a great job and not just with the primary account, but also the many show-based promotions that leverage content to stay ahead. I can name so many – Bangalore Traffic Police use humour to their advantage. Pepsi and Coke across their brands have also showcased interesting content marketing segments.

What can a great content strategy do?

- Build and impress upon the brand identity
- Become a channel for lead generation
- Drive more traffic to social handles and website and search engine optimisation
- Build a strong reputation and brand value
- Increase engagement and drive valuable conversations in context of brand.

How do you build a great content strategy?

- Thinking outcome based
- Knowing your audience well
- Leveraging technology, data and analytics
- Connecting it to business and revenue goals
- Aligning to brand and growth strategies
- Telling stories through the content that help connect
- Solving for issues and problems that can bring tangible outcomes using content,
- Personalising and reach out to the audience in an authentic manner
- Connecting content to communications, marketing and more so its overarching in reach
- Keeping It Simple (KISS)

Content does not stop at being important in context of communications and marketing alone, it spills over into all aspects of business and can truly be empowering to brands who want to leverage this as they craft their narratives.



Shreya Krishnan is Senior Vice President - Marketing and Communications at Anviti Insurance Brokers. She is a CSR Specialist and Corporate Grooming Consultant. Her interests lie in activism, dance, theatre, poetry, blogging, modelling and acting. She considers herself an Earth warrior and is an event anchor and trainer. She is a pageant winner and public speaker.

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The Art & Science of Internal Communications

- Pooja Trehan Dhamecha

"When you are telling stories, have a point. It makes it much more interesting for the listener," quoted in the movie *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, 1987. This message from an iconic movie absolutely resonates in any decade, for any generation.

In an organisation, internal communications is largely closer to this thought – always have a captivating narrative. Today, more than ever, leaders are donning hats of incredible marketers for their employees. Its critical that employees should now be looked at as 'brand custodians' and not merely foot-soldiers. This is where the idea of communications within an organisation, showcases communication teams as the enablers in achieving focused business goals.

Internal communications is a combination of Art and Science. The science behind it is to understand the target audience, tools that would create maximum impact and the need for effective messaging. Of course, data analytics for communications within an organisation is fast gaining ground today. Add to this, the art of understanding what is over communicating and how should one break the clutter of too many messages from various leaders.

Whether teams work remotely, from another country or at their respective office locations – internal communication

helps create consistency, build a common language, manage timely output of messages and reinstates the need to be empathetic and culturally sensitive. This is what enables the CEO to be a real communicator. Three per cent of the people invariably drive 90% of the conversation within an organisation (communicators often believe in these statistics). So, map out who they are, set out the demographics and geography and then push out communication to audiences, who could be key influencers. One can then put into perspective how a 'top-down' and 'inside-out' communication approach could yield a better outcome.

A communicator within an organisation, needs to keep an eye on the 'big picture' and then plan the storytelling process. Today companies are beyond boundaries, absolutely global. To understand what works for another market may not work for India or vice versa, is where communicators prove their value in engaging with employees. Being the voice of the organisation, internal communications team can design, broadcast, amplify or narrow down a message to the decibel that is understood and accepted by the organisation, and get feedback as well. Hence, keep the context of the story common and simple, always.

Recently, at one of the PRPOI guest sessions, it was refreshing to hear examples of how Paypal India's team was working cohesively to support their employees (especially during the pandemic). From understanding the importance of time-off, creating ergonomically friendly areas to work from home, continuing celebrations with employees albeit virtually, building campaigns to constantly connect and emphasising the need to focus on a better 'Emotional Quotient'. This is where a communicator played the important role to inform, inspire and entertain employees, irrespective of the location.

For centuries, organisations worked hard to curate favourable stories for external audiences, today the need to impress internal audiences has become a bigger priority. On that note, the last words – "Whoever tells the best story, wins", from the movie *Amistad*, 1997.



Pooja Trehan Dhamecha is a communications professional, with over 15 years of experience in internal & external communications, crisis communication, media relations, digital brand advocacy and building unique brand narratives. She is now busy designing food stories with PRestaurants for brands across the F&B industry.

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”
SUNDAR PICHAI,
Google CEO

B.R.E.A.T.H.E. That's all you need ...

- Anubhuti Mathur

A quote by author Linda Wooten says, 'Being a mother is learning about the strengths you didn't know you had and dealing with the fears you never knew existed.'

As a mother of triplets and I know it as well as most parents out there that parenting is tough and challenging. From physical labour to emotional stress, parenting can take you from one end of the spectrum of emotions to the farthest other end in no time. Of course, parenting is one of the most beautiful experiences one can have and I enjoy every bit of it, but the responsibility that comes with it can sometimes be challenging. The thought of being entirely responsible for how another human being grows up to be can be extremely daunting. Of the many things parenting has taught me, an important lesson is one on being emotionally strong.

We undervalue emotional strength and this reflects directly on how we handle ourselves in extreme and trying situations. I was never trained or taught to be emotionally strong, but the various situations that I have lived through have made me emotionally strong. I am in no way implying that only parenting can lead to someone becoming emotionally strong. Every individual has their own source of emotional strength, and this has been mine.

Emotional strengths may be defined as qualities that help you manage and grow through life's challenges. In simple words, they help you get through a stressful day, week, month or year. Everyone reacts to life's challenges in different ways - some handle crises better than others. No one wants to feel emotionally weak or broken and so it is important to find ways to build your emotional strength. Becoming aware of and building your emotional strength is a long and continuous process.

So how can one improve their emotional strength? I'd say just B.R.E.A.T.H.E.

Be comfortable with yourself - This is one of most important factors of ensuring emotional strength. Anyone who can be happy in their own company, can be happy anywhere. Don't try to do what others do or be what others are. Yes, take inspiration from everyone around you but don't let that inspiration turn into self-mockery or worse, jealousy.

Reach out - Desperate times call for desperate measures. If you're feeling emotionally weak or tired, don't be afraid to reach out - first to yourself, then to family and friends and if needed even to specialists. Reaching out in no way implies that you have given up; it only shows that you want to try. It is the first step towards changing the current situation

Exercise control over your emotions - Control your emotions; Don't let them control you. Emotional breakdowns are fine, but not all the time and not with everyone. Being overly emotional or completely repressing your emotions, both can lead to mental stress. Aim for regulation not repression.

Adopt mental guidelines - Understand your emotions and adopt mental guidelines. Analyse your emotional behaviour and make mental notes of how you react in trying situations. Ask yourself if that was the best way to handle the situation. If not, then what were your options? Try the other options the next time you are faced with a similar situation.

Take care of your body and mind - I cannot stress this point enough. Physical and mental exercises are both equally important for building emotional strength. While physical exercises stimulate the release of endorphins - the body's natural pain killers and mood elevators, meditation has been proven to reduce stress and anxiety.

Hoard positive thoughts & energies - Look for positivity around you and hold on to it - A beautiful flower or the giggling of a baby, a mesmerising sunrise or a pup running around carefree. Everyone may have a different source of positive energy, but the important thing is to find one and make it a memory.

Embrace change - Change is one of the leading causes of emotional stress. It can be a physical change to one's body or environment or a change in relationships or any other kind of change, what is important is to accept, embrace and move on with that change.

So to build emotional strength, remember, to simply B.R.E.A.T.H.E.



Anubhuti Mathur, an experienced editor with over 15 years of diverse experience in instructional designing and newspaper and TV news editing, Anubhuti Mathur is the Content Director at Promise Foundation, the publisher of Reputation Today magazine and organiser of the Public Relations and Corporate Communications India Summit (PRAXIS) and SPECTRA.



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Five ways to ensure your corporate storytelling fails!

- Pradeep Wadhwa

Many of us who have been in the corporate storytelling business can relate to the character of Ben Barry, played by Matthew McConaughey in the movie 'How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days'. Often, we face situations where people, most critical to ensuring the success of storytelling within the organisation, seem to be working at cross-purposes – akin to Kate Hudson's character Andie in the movie. The only difference is that on most occasions, the opposition is not deliberate (as Andie had her reasons; it was a deliberate ploy).

The unwitting obstruction is due to a combination of arrogance and lack of knowledge of how storytelling works. Let's examine the top five reasons which can derail corporate storytelling.

1. Inability to identify the protagonist: A story always revolves around a protagonist or hero. Large companies and leaders with big egos fail to understand that storytelling is neither about the company nor about the leader. The story has to revolve around the key target audience – the consumers, the investors, or the employees. The recipients decide if the story resonates

with them or not. They do not care about how large the company is or how great the leader is. They care about how your actions or products/services impact their lives.

2. Peddling an inauthentic/unbelievable story: Most organisations do not want to project an image of vulnerability or lack of control. To project an optimistic picture, authenticity and believability are compromised. When that happens, the audience stops believing in the narrative as they can easily see that it's fake or untrue.
3. Not taking emotions into account: I am sure you would have heard this line, "Let's keep the emotions aside and look at facts." Sounds very logical, but people do not make decisions based purely on logic. Is buying a four bedroom apartment for a family of three logical? Is taking a huge loan to finance a fancy car, which is a depreciating asset, logical? When was the last time you made a decision based on logic? So, when we are looking at influencing people to take some action, how can emotions be kept aside?
4. Talking down: This is the modern equivalent of the 'white man's burden'. When people in power feel that they know what is right for the consumer or the employees, they tend to talk down to them. No audience likes it. If you become too preachy, the defences go up, and the storytelling fails as the message does not get through.
5. No active listening: Consider a company that is undergoing a restructuring exercise – there is widespread anxiety as several people will become redundant, and many others will need to reskill. In this scenario, the best storytelling technique is to let the employees talk about their fears and help them adjust to the new reality. However, if instead of spending more time listening, the focus is on trying to force the corporate spin down their throats, it is not going to work.

Matthew McConaughey was successful as Kate Hudson changed her mind and aligned her goal with his (she made an emotional decision!). We may not be as lucky as him! If we have to succeed as corporate storytellers, we have to persevere and use storytelling techniques to get others to align with our goal.



Pradeep Wadhwa is co-founder & Principal at Kritical Edge Consulting. A seasoned communications professional, he has witnessed both the client side as well as the consultancy side of life in equal measures for close to two decades.

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A Little Preparation goes a Long Way

- Nikhil Dey

"Hi, I got your number from Priyanka (name changed). I know it's the weekend but if possible, let me know a good time to speak" the message popped up on my phone on a Saturday morning...

I had the context thanks to the common friend Priyanka, who had spoken with me earlier. I had done my homework.

"Now is good" I replied. We had a really productive 10-minute conversation. I had my questions prepared. I was not winging it. It made the world of difference.

A little bit of preparation goes a long way.

There was a time when this same conversation would have happened face-to-face for sure. It would have been on a week day, not a weekend. It would have been a scheduled meeting, post a written brief being sent across and then a few weeks of preparation and many power point slides later, we would have got to this point.

We live in a world of 280 Twitter characters and Instagram moments. Brevity is no longer a choice, it's a necessity. Rushing from one online 'MS Teams' meeting to the next; From one 'Zoom' party to the next; From one online webinar or event to the next; Squeezing in a parent teacher meeting in the middle and an unplanned visit to the dentist, this is where we are expected to deliver our best.

In the midst of this game of pinball, while being pushed, pulled, rolled and pinged from pillar to post, we come into contact with others. The quality of that contact, however brief is all we have to contribute. Pushed and pulled by mysterious forces, always in motion. The brief pause we get

before we are shot back into the game, is what we must use to prepare. To study. To think. To ask the questions. To do the reading. To listen.

We are expected to deliver without a brief and deliver fast and without fail. So think long and hard about who you are, what is your life's purpose and who you want to serve. After that keep it brief and don't expect any detailed briefs. If you are tuned in, you will have the pulse of the situation and you will be able to add value.

What is your trade craft? What's your speciality? What are you really good at, that you deeply care about? What energises you? These are the questions that help navigate through the maze. Finding your 'true north' and committing to something you deeply care about, is the first step. When you know the answers to these, then the body of work you have devoted your life and time to, is the preparation that holds you in good stead.

If you don't know what to do next. If you feel frazzled with unclear briefs. If you feel there are unrealistic expectations from others that you cannot deal with. If you wish you had more time to prepare. If you get irritated with people who don't seem to know what they want. Don't worry, you just need to find with clarity what it is that you want - the sweet spot that is your speciality, and that will help you help them. After that let the pinball machine take you wherever it wants, whoever and whatever you touch in those brief encounters will be magically transformed by you.

Sometimes we need a little help to find these answers. Finding someone who you trust, who can ask you the right questions, is a wonderful way to get centred. I have had the pleasure and privilege of working with some wonderful professional coaches that helped me find my way through the maze. It's amazing how asking the right questions, often leads to the right answers.

And if I am lucky. If I time it right. If I put in the effort. If I get enough positive energy built up, I do get to engage with the right people. I do get to make a difference, and I do get to enjoy the pinball game called life.

A little bit of preparation goes a long way - when you know where you are going.



Nikhil Dey is Vice Chair of Weber Shandwick India. Nurturing talent and helping clients achieve their goals is what makes him happy. He loves learning from students of communication, teaching courses and guest lecturing at various educational institutions.



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Mindful Networking

- Ira Pradhan

I surprised myself as I chose this topic. A year ago, I didn't fully understand the meaning of 'mindful' and two years ago, didn't believe in 'networking.' So what changed?

Being an introvert means being intimidated by crowds and as a communications professional, expectations from people are, as they say in French, 'au contraire' (on the contrary). You've got to find your own unique way to continue doing what you love. To suit my personality and still be successful, I adapted to 'Mindful Networking', about a year ago. Simply the knowledge and understanding of these words, and I, is what changed.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'mindful' – most people understand it as being 'present in the moment'. In networking, this means a focused, deliberate effort at connecting with people to fulfill your purpose – going after the knowledge you seek and sharing what you know well, with your network. It's not about knowing everyone, or vice-versa, as the popular meaning of 'network' usually goes.

Having a Purpose: Consider this quote by rapper Nipsey Hussle: "If you look at the people in your circle and you don't get inspired, you don't have a circle. You have a cage." That circle, to me, is the network. Each one of us is different, which is why different things inspire us. The first step to finding the right network is to narrow down on topics that

inspire you, then look for people and groups associated with them. Last year, with this deliberate approach, I connected with people that benefit our business and topics I work on – internally in the organisation as well as with external experts. Personally, I connected with three people on topics that I am passionate about – a Harvard professor, a renowned global public speaker, and a historian. I realised that with the right intent and adding value to the conversations helps make these connections, and people are generally ready to show up and help you in your quest.

Power of Authentic Connections: We are all familiar with this. Connections help you grow, you become more knowledgeable, doors open to new opportunities, and if you are lucky, you end up making life-long friends too. Making authentic connections takes it a step further and makes your life more fulfilling. However, in the quest, we must understand that sometimes the connections just won't happen. As the saying goes, 'You are not everyone's cup of tea. And that is OKAY.'

Pay it Forward: Networking is not like seeking unconditional love or making friends. It is an exchange of sorts. Therefore, when you know something well, as a result of someone who helped you, consider paying it forward and enhance someone's knowledge. With this you not only help someone but also grow your network overtime making it stronger. Understanding this helps you in your daily leadership too, it has helped me change my leadership style from a 'taskmaster' to 'a coach'.

Conclusion: Today, we are all in a way isolated from the usual buzz of life that existed before the pandemic. For working professionals, household spills into work and work into life. Due to the deluge of calls and online meetings, we are facing different kinds of fatigue. Which is why 'mindful networking' works well. Be deliberate and purposefully go after what is important to you and your work. Making the right connections has never been so meaningful.



Ira Pradhan is a corporate communications leader at Mercedes-Benz, R & D. She is a communications expert with experience in sectors like healthcare, consumer electronics, IT, retail and the automotive industry where she has championed and led programmes on several sustainable business practices and diversity & inclusion.

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What's your excuse?



Communicating like a Pro in Corporate Organisations

- Asif Upadhye

Despite technological advancements that were designed to bring people closer, the pandemic has left them feeling isolated and disconnected from their organisations, more than ever before. With nearly 60% of employees feeling less-than-enthusiastic about internal communications, it is high time that internal and external communications in corporate organisations are given their due diligence. Because without investing in solid conversation channels, it is challenging to provide relevant business updates across the floor, enhance productivity, and drive innovation digitally.

Your employee is your first customer.

When internal communications are transparent, relevant, and effective, employees carry positive sentiments to external audiences. Inadvertently, becoming the messaging advocates for your brand. The best way to know if your target audience is truly soaking in what is being communicated to them, is to simply ask for their opinion on effective workplace messaging.

According to the results of a Metrus Group survey, a meagre 14% of employees understand their organisation's strategy and direction. Corporate communications today need to reflect the changing business scenario, the impact

of direct messaging on employee engagement and the requirement for leaders to communicate with empathy. Although functionally different, internal communications and corporate communications teams have lots in common and need to work in tandem to deliver key messages to their audiences. Yet despite this, more than half of internal communications professionals do not measure the impact of internal communications.

If there is insufficient data on the impact of internal communications, how are organisations supposed to know what they need to focus on and what they definitely need to change?

The answer is simple: The very idea of communications in corporate organisations has to undergo a radical shift. More specifically, the spotlight needs to be transferred to corporate communications officers (CCOs) who are stepping in to act as high-level strategic advisors to CEO's and keep them updated about relevant business developments.

As the role of CCOs evolve, everything from media relations, CSR and reputation management to internal communications and crisis management now falls under their purview. Top-down communication that previously controlled the narrative will need to adapt to today's 24/7 news cycle so that a crisis can be mitigated quickly. A CCOs skill-set goes beyond just communication. Within today's changing business landscape, stakeholders are placing an increased emphasis on being transparent and trusted. CCOs step in to build unique communication strategies both externally and internally to position organisations as industry leaders and ultimately drive reputation.

Now more than ever, they are also in the rare position of taking a stand on major social issues like diversity and inclusion, sustainability and environmental impact, equality, and more. To put it plainly, CCOs are the business leaders of the future. Their elevated roles give them a line of sight in to holistic aspects across the business, opportunities to shape the brand narrative and exclusive contact across stakeholder groups.



Asif Upadhye is the Director and The Dark Knight at SPRD | Stories.PR.Digital, a new-age Public Relations think tank backed by ideators, wordsmiths and design junkies focussed on delivering bespoke services.

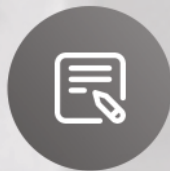
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The Magic of Crisis Management

- Ankush Malhotra

Crisis - /'kraɪsɪs/ - 'a time of intense difficulty or danger.' Or 'a time when a difficult or important decision must be made.' But for me, just one word - Opportunity.

No! I am not opportunistic, believe me, if I were I would be some place else. (guessing in a much better place).

There are several books, articles, courses that are available today on crisis management, what i am going to share is my view or my experience with crisis management.

Just a week ago, my son was running across the house and slipped and gashed himself on the forehead. A wound two inches long that split open his forehead right down to the skull between his eyes. With blood all over his face, right up to the floor.

WIFE: "lets go to the hospital" (with urgency)

ME: "gets some cotton or a towel, we need to stop this bleeding"

So, I hold my sons head on my lap with a towel pressed against, cleaning up the blood across his face

WIFE: "let's move and take him to the hospital"

ME: "it's a very deep cut, have to take him to a plastic surgeon, who will give fine stitches.

It's now over 30 minutes - we are still home, trying to get hold of a doctor friend (not reachable at that time) who could recommend a plastic surgeon

WIFE: "what are your doing, lets get him to the hospital"

ME: "ok, if in the next 10 minutes I do not get a call back, we will go to a hospital"

WIFE: "let's move now"

ME: With my fingers pressed against my sons wound, cleaning up the bleeding (which reduced quite a bit - a call comes through) "lets go, got the number, will call him on the way"

Everyone in the world responds to every situation very differently. Yes! You got it right, SITUATION. And, it is our understanding or rather misunderstanding of the situation that defines it as a 'crisis'.

It's late at night, you are on a lonely mountainous road (ghats), your bike stops, and you do not know why. Now, if you compare the same situation and you were a bike mechanic, the situation would be much calmer - simply because the mechanic would know what is going on.

60% of students treat exams like a crisis, while the fact is - they just did not prepare enough and so it becomes a crisis.

So if you feel that you are in a crisis, it's probably just because you

1. Don't have all the information available about the situation (Stay connected)
2. Are not the expert or possess the adequate knowledge about the subject (It's never too late to learn)
3. Have been just caught by surprise by the entire situation (Learn to anticipate)

Just improvise. The magic is in the preparation and not the situation.



Ankush Malhotra is a communicator by profession and an adventurer by passion. He specialises in Employee Engagement and Gamification techniques to build and drive organisation culture.



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Safe zone for human voices of corporates

- Mitu Samar

I recently started noticing Ankur Warikoo's posts on LinkedIn. It was through this that I discovered about Nearbuy and most importantly believed that the business may have some merit. Similarly, some of my friends noticed Kunal Shah's social media posts and started appreciating the CRED's latest ad despite not being fully convinced about it. This got me thinking about how important it is to have a strong personal voice behind a brand. It makes the brand more human, relatable and credible. Especially in the times of crises, such connections present a cushion too.

**How can one develop a credible presence?
How does one convince a leader or maybe the leadership team to actively give voice to the company publicly?
What defines a credible voice?**

These are some questions that we are often asked as reputation consultants. While there is no one answer, yet there exist a few rules of the game that must be followed across industries.

Digital Discernment: It goes without saying that online channels have gained prominence this year than ever before. Previously, thorough web-scraping, reviewing social media performance and analysing online feedback might have sufficed. Today however, online reputation consists

of several other aspects. It is also necessary to gather data and analyse matters like how organisations have adapted to working across platforms like Zoom and how effective are the corporate website, app and chatbots in resolving customer queries. Digital discernment along with online media comfort both count for the voice to build a credible virtual presence.

Real Reach: Even though life has largely become online, yet one cannot forget the offline or rather real associations that form a strong link to the company. For instance, for an FMCG company, this could be the relationship with distributors and retailers. For a bank, it could mean the competency of the staff that runs the branches. In many ways, these stakeholders form the last mile to our end consumers. It is hence necessary to build bonds and connections with them that percolates further reach the end users. A conscious, well-planned investment of time and meaningful conversations is a must to strengthen the real reach. This will not only enhance business outcomes but will make the stakeholders more forgiving in case there is a mess up.

Risk Readiness: Business models, and market expectations are undergoing a sea-change world over due to changing risk landscape. The year 2020 is one of the most relevant examples of this. It literally changed the way businesses are conducted. Specially, malls, shops, restaurants, travel and tourism all these industries need to rethink business. Failing to adapt to the new normal may even throw a company out of business. Hence a regular evaluation of potential threats enables an organisation not only to risk ready but also act quickly in case of an unforeseen scenario. This readiness is essential in this 'always on' world where the potential of erring is high due to changing risk landscape and probability of its amplification is even higher due to online channels.

Thus, the trio - digital discernment, real reach and risk readiness create a zone, which provides opportunities for brands to promote personal voices, and at the same time ensure a good cushion in cases of an eventuality. Most CEOs and CXOs prefer to operate in this zone and why not, it presents an upside potential with limited downside risks.



Mitu Samar, runs a company called 'Eminence', that works with renowned brands in India to build, establish or protect their reputation. She serves as an Independent Director on the boards of Times group Companies.

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Experiential content; the Elixir for Engagement!

- Sujit Patil

Consumers today prefer to have a direct channel of engagement with brands as sadly, there is a shrinking trust in communication channels due to the fake and paid news. The issue of authenticity and the blurring lines between earned content and paid content has resulted in activating a sense of 'ad-blocking' in the minds of consumers.

Being heard is one of the most precious values that audiences seek today from brands. Audiences are no longer content being mere spectators, so integrating opportunities for them to express themselves is an absolute. The One Plus Music Festival, which included a star-studded line up of artists such as Katy Perry, Dua Lipa and Amit Trivedi, is a good example. Through this unique experience, the brand catered to its own community as well as youngsters who craved for global music festivals.

Direct engagement represents a complementary approach to traditional communication strategy and is not an alternative. It subverts the cognitive ad-blocker, which has developed in the audience due to rampant exposure to branded content. It is a promise of co-creation of content through experiences.

The key aspect of any communication strategy is to generate awareness and engagement amongst the existing and potential audience of the brand. While earned, paid and social media are mediums to do this, owned media gives brands the opportunity to share stories creatively with their customers, and vice-versa albeit with more control on content and narratives. Though it's a slow burn process, it builds a bridge between customers and brands to engage with each other more experientially, authentically and effectively. Godrej L'Affaire, Vikhroli Cucina, and Design Dekko are classic examples of owned media properties at Godrej. They are completely PR driven and the outcomes have been significant.

Experiential owned media properties with a direct consumer connect are increasingly becoming a powerful tool for building communities and mobilising influencers – celebrities, bloggers and key opinion leaders – who have their own large following and are able to churn out authentic content around your offerings as they have experienced your brand and understood its purpose better. I believe, the best brand stories are weaved along with consumers. If your process of driving your own media experiential content strategy is right, your consumers and influencers will become your advocates. This approach enables consumers (and potential users) the possibility of connecting with the brand, experiencing the product or service, and – in particular – being a part of the brand's story moving forward.

The theory of gate-keepers of journalism is offset in owned media with theory of RECCE (Relevance, Engagement, Content, Community, and Experience). Since the customer experience and brand ethos are the core of owned media platforms, it pushes brands to create Relevancy among its target consumers to drive Engagement using interesting Content which eventually leads to Community building through Experience (RECCE).

It's actually earned media at its best!



Sujit Patil is Vice President & Head of Corporate Brand and Communications for Godrej Industries. He is among the few IABC accredited business communicators in India and a three time winner of the IABC International Gold Quill award, among several other recognitions.

COMMS
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The Three Dimensions of Corporate Reputation

- Amit Nayaran

Through years of working on brand, strategy and crisis issues, I have come to believe in a simple three-dimensional model for defining what impacts corporate reputation. Ultimately, there are just three broad elements – defined across three “management” axes that define Reputation.



On the X axis, there is Time. The trust a company has built with stakeholders in the past, which in turn will build up its cache of goodwill. Trust gets companies repeat customers, loyalty of successful colleagues who grow with the firm, long term investors & shareholders as well as community support. The good folks who gather as the Business Roundtable decided last year that stakeholder management was the new shareholder management – fundamentally driven by the learnings from the first two decades of the 21st century that taught the business world that what you do with people who do business with you impacts you in the long-term.

On the Y axis, there is Business Return. As the old adage goes – high risk leads to high return. Risk is simply the flip side of opportunity. The better a company manages risk, the more return a certain opportunity yields – which, in turn, delivers a better reputation. Risk management may be better understood as Expectation Management – an essential quality for success in life, work and stakeholder management. Knowing what might go wrong, understanding who can help fix the situation, how and what goes into making that happen are critical expectations from management. A significant amount of thought, effort and planning has gone into Enterprise Risk Management the world over. Effective risk mitigation requires companies to do the right thing. Ethics, compliance, governance, purpose and sustainability are critical risk factors that will define returns in the next decade.

On the Z axis, there is Agility. The world is changing too fast for any scenario planning and crisis management plan to cover it all. But for teams across the business to know what needs to be done, to be able to work together and cohesively deal with an incident helps companies address issues faster. The more integrated the business functions are, the faster is a company's ability to take decisions – and the less it gets buffeted by market externalities... leading to a higher reputation.

Concepts like the learning organisation, empathy quotient, preemptive leadership and fast failing organisations – all emerge from this basic ability of an organisation to be flexible to the needs of their stakeholders. Equally, the rise and rise of social media has meant that citizen's ability to influence outcomes continues to grow, and more than ever, a company's ability to act quickly and impactfully to influence opinion is a critical survival skill. Well-oiled organisations rise to such challenges better – and gain in the long-term.

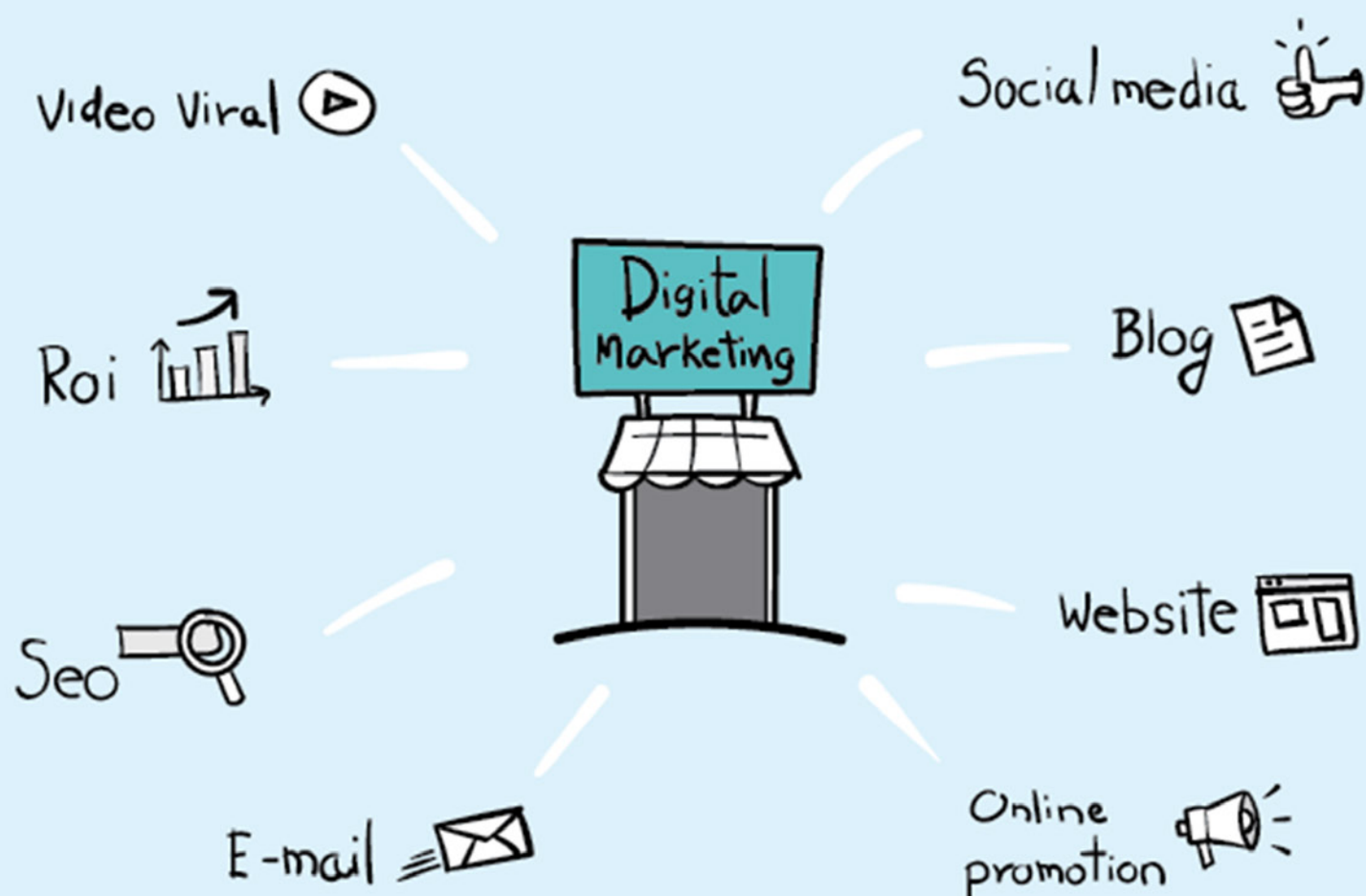
Trust looks back into past behaviors of a company, risk management looks forward and the degree of integration defines the here & now. So, in some ways these three elements are also a continuum.

Any which way you look at it, stakeholders play a critical role through all three elements. How they are engaged with, managed and keep faith in the ability of the company to win fundamentally defines the long-term prospects of that company.



Amit Narayan is Partner & Managing Director, South Asia at Control Risks. He manages consultants who design, develop and implement risk-mitigation strategies for companies across South Asia. He has advised clients on political and regulatory risk, pre-investment risk, reputational DD, forensic investigations, public policy and stakeholder mapping.

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Mutatis Mutandis

- Amit Paul

Mutatis mutandis - is from Latin and literally translated means - 'things being changed that have to be changed'. The definition based on the Cambridge dictionary is - used when comparing two or more things to say that although changes will be necessary in order to take account of different situations, the basic point remains the same.

At the conclusion of the Second World War, in 1944, 730 delegates from 44 allied nations met up at the Mount Washington Hotel, situated in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, to regulate the international monetary and financial order. Agreements were signed that, established the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, later part of the World Bank group) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This led to what was called the Bretton Woods system for international commercial and financial relations. The Bretton Woods system was the first example of a fully negotiated monetary order intended to govern monetary relations among independent states. The situational parallel that exists today is similar to that at the end of the war. The world is staring at a crisis and the situation is alarming - in 1944 and 2020 the world we are facing has several new and unfamiliar features. The additional feature in 2020 is that we have a global emergency caused by a virus we still do not fully understand. The unfamiliar feature is that of a seemingly self-inflicted economic catastrophe as a necessary policy response to contain its spread.

And yet, over the past few months, it has become clearer

that much of what is most frightening about this crisis is not new at all. Social indicators have shown the gross mismatch between the social value of what "key workers" do and the economic parity in terms of wages and the failure of the larger economic conditions to value competently what really matters. Compounded to this has been the nonchalant indifference to disinformation and misinformation about the virus and the economy driven by a declining faith in experts. This is the time when the world must come together, much like the Bretton Wood conference and co-ordinate an all-encompassing international response.

We are at a time now when there is a precursor to the many problems we will face in the next decade. They will be more extreme versions of what we already confront today. The world will only look significantly different, when we emerge from this crisis. It is a time for fundamental change. The most drastic driver is the rise of the digital behaviour driven by remote working and learning, telemedicine, and more importantly delivery services. For all practical purposes the future of work has arrived faster, along with its challenges - driven not mainly due to technological advances but also of considerations for health and safety.

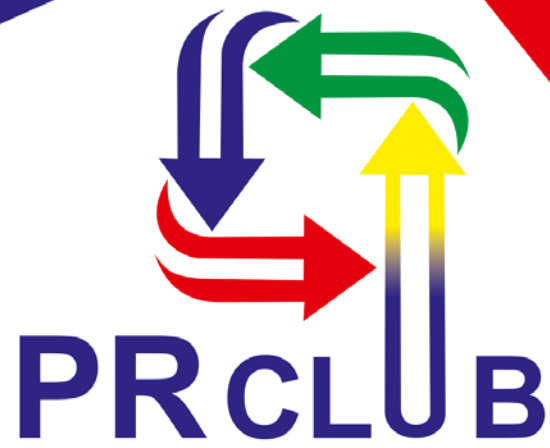
The amplification of this new reality is driven by one main aspect - the change in societal beliefs from attitudes about efficiency as opposed to resilience, the future of capitalism, spreading out of geographic areas of economic activity and living, to the role of government and institutions.

The mutatis mutandis is the shift in responsibility from institutions to individuals. History has been a testimony to the fact that choices made during crises can shape the world for decades to come. It will however remain critical that individuals drive collective action to build economies that focus on inclusive economic growth, safety and prosperity for all. Action must be based on a vision of development that puts human rights, gender equality, and climate at its centre. The vision and need for shared prosperity, enshrined by many of the fundamental principles of secular republics remains the same and is the rightful change that needs to be reinforced, that will never change - ever.



Amit Paul is the Principal Consultant at NAC Singapore, and works on the confluence of technology and safe living focussing on building safe and smart cities. With over two decades of diverse experience, he has worked closely with corporates, industry houses, academies and institutions helping them bridge the learning divide and implementing management solutions, focussing on the geographies of the Middle East and the ASEAN region.

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The Idea of Communications in Corporate Organisations

- Radha Radhakrishnan

No news is good news, and the good news is no news. We have heard this phrase often. We all also know that these days bad news leads the stack to notch up eyeballs. For organisations more often than not, it means dealing with a trust deficit and risk of reputation.

The proliferation of media and social media has made the question of why organisations need to communicate redundant. Today, it is a given that companies and businesses need to communicate consistently and continuously with its stakeholders. It is necessary to shield them from all unnecessary worries.

Changing Environment: The world and the environment around us are changing rapidly. Communication is no longer one dimensional. Gone are the days when communication used to be between two stakeholders, say media and company or company and shareholders. Today, it is reasonable to assume and expect everyone is in the know of everything – necessary and unnecessary.

In this scenario, messaging consistency and transparency are critical. Organisations need to focus on creating a

communication platform that functions in a systematic manner to engage with all stakeholders to communicate meaningfully.

Fake News & Fact Check: Last year in September, Kroll, the business intelligence, and investigations firm published a report on annual frauds and risk. According to the report, companies feeling threatened by the risk of false rumours stands at a whopping 84%. It was the first time the survey queried companies on threats from social media. Data of about 600 large companies globally were studied for this survey. Several companies feel the heat of rumours and fake news online. It has become a regular feature these days. For instance, in 2018, e-commerce company, Infibeam lost 71 per cent of its market value in a single day due to fake news that circulated among traders through WhatsApp.

In June this year, Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL), an entity under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, floated a tender asking companies to come up with methods and solutions for verifying facts and detecting disinformation on social media. This should explain the kind of menace fake news has become. It is worthy to note that fake news impacts organisations and governments alike.

To address this complex and volatile environment, several start-ups today helping companies take complete control of their brand visibility and analyse and mitigate the bane of bots that spreads misinformation. They use technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to mitigate risk.

Companies need to be proactive in singling out fake news about their brand. Communicating with all stakeholders, both internal and external, to ensure clear and authentic information is made available is a necessity and must do.



Radha Radhakrishnan is the global head of corporate communications at Wipro Enterprises. She has over 25 years of experience in corporate communications and marketing across different industries and geographies and has built a reputation as a storyteller and a creative thinker. She has mentored social entrepreneurial start-ups and has been a visiting faculty at premier communications institutes in India.



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Powerful Storytelling Can Make all the Difference

- Akanksha Jain

Storytelling has been around for centuries. From cavemen doodling their stories, to hieroglyphs in ancient Egypt, stories have been a key medium to communicate. Interestingly, while the world has totally changed over centuries, it is the stories that have stayed on.

Even in today's technology driven, digital, automated and fast-paced world, storytelling is seen as an extremely powerful tool. Brands are fast realising that only communicating about their products does not resonate with their audience any more. It is all about building a compelling narrative, creating an intriguing story and striking that emotional chord with the audience.

Storytelling has its benefits: We live in times when customers switch between multiple social media platforms and digital channels. Information overload is for real and brands need to continuously rehash their marketing strategy to break through the clutter and grab eyeballs.

Storytelling can be the big differentiator for brands - not only to connect with customers, but also to grow the brand and improve the bottom line. Brands with impactful storytelling can expect higher customer engagement, better loyalty and recommendations. Storytelling can be that secret sauce for brands, enabling them to connect with their customers in a unique way. There are numerous examples of brands that have been banked on compelling narratives to build a loyal customer base. Take the 'Think Different' campaign by Apple

that did wonders for the brand.

Storytelling for 2020 and beyond: Stories are even more powerful in the times of change or in case of crisis. They help us to realign our focus, better adjust to the shift and get an understanding of how we can be better prepared for the new normal. With COVID-19 totally resetting the world, it is a great opportunity for brands to rehash their story and build their narrative for the times to come.

The customer behavior and priorities have totally changed from what they were prior to the pandemic. This has compelled brands to revisit their existing narratives. Here are some tips that may come in handy:

Purpose is the key - Brand purpose has become extremely relevant in today's time. It is important for brands to ensure that storytelling echoes the overall 'purpose' of the brand. Purpose will communicate what the brand stands for and what it intends to do, and hence, capture customers' attention and drive customer stickiness.

Know your voice - We tend to read books by a specific author because we enjoy the style of writing and viewpoint. Similarly, brand's story should have consistency in tone, voice and overall messaging. This will help connect with customers on a consistent basis and ensure that they are loyal to the brand.

Be authentic - Real is good. The days of the flowery, perfect world are over. Customers appreciate stories that they can connect with - the ones that are about people like them. Stories that are real are most believable and make maximum impact.

Keep it short and create a series - With customer attention span reducing by the day, it is advisable to create stories that are short. For example, videos that are less than a minute long can be easily shareable across social platforms and will do well. Also, building a series with inter-connected stories can help keep the interest alive.

To sum it up, storytelling cannot be achieved in a day. It requires in-depth analysis and thorough planning to churn out a narrative that is high on customer connect, drives business growth and also enhances brand equity.



Akanksha Jain is a seasoned brand communications professional with over 15 years of experience in working across global/digital public relations, corporate and brand communications, crisis communications, brand and market communications domains.

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Remain grounded while flying high

- Rajesh Chaturvedi

When the team at Reputation Today invited me to write an article for the magazine based on my experiences and perspectives from a lifetime of practice, I tried to dissuade them. I am a humble practitioner and shy of public communications and appearances. This is my first article and I am yet to appear on a public platform. This portfolio at Adfactors PR is the responsibility of my partner Madan Bahal and some other senior colleagues. But they were persistent, so presented below are few thoughts for remaining steadfast in one's beliefs, regardless of the ups and downs of business.

1. Our second name is relationships: The word 'relations' is an integral part of our professional identity as public relations practitioners. This is also true for all the sub-streams – employee relations, investor relations, community relations, government relations etc. There must be a profound reason, because these expressions have survived for a century since the modern practice of public relations started.

Among other things, the public relations professional should be judged by his/her relationship capital. Sound relationships are critical to deliver our mandates, because they are based on trust, dependability and good will. I fear that the idea of relationships is getting lost in a fast-forwarded digital world.

2. Nothing creates more trust than transparency: We must practice what we preach to our clients, and to our teams. The PR profession preaches transparency and authenticity, but within the organisations few people know what's happening. At Adfactors PR, everything is out there in the open. We share everything, with everyone, in real time. These include discussions on our revenues, strategy, new initiatives, strengths, weaknesses, threats, leadership changes etc. Such openness builds trust and imparts a lot of strength to the organisation.

3. People first, before everyone: Committed people build strong organisations. At Adfactors PR, this is the central

idea behind our vision, mission, strategy & growth. In a stressed, post-pandemic world, liberating your people from job and income insecurities is a prime dharma of leaders. Early on, around the beginning of the pandemic we made clear commitments and stuck by them. We continued with our L&D commitments. We remained engaged with 100% of our people. We launched multiple initiatives to address health-related anxieties. Such philosophy and actions create confidence and unleash the collective energy of the organisation. While business survival responses are understandable, they must be done with the least impact on your people.

4. Clients are our purpose: We exist because of our clients. They pay for our sustenance, well-being and growth. We must always be willing to go beyond the call of duty. Protecting a client's reputation is a 24x7 business. I am personally available to any client 24x7 - weekends, Dussehra and Diwali included. You earn the client's trust, and clients generously reward you with their business.

5. Partnerships are for life: When we get into any relationship, we assume that it is for life. Be it a client, or a colleague, or a supplier. Honesty and integrity in relationships are the open secret of long relationships. One of the main reasons behind the modest success of Adfactors PR is this idea in practice. My partnership with Madan Bahal in Adfactors PR will last till one of us cannot work anymore. The same spirit applies to our partnership with all other senior colleagues and the clients as well. We cherish our decade old partnerships with clients like the Mahindra Group, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro & Blue Star.

6. Knowing, what not to do: In life, we must make clear choices, much like the Yamas and Niyamas (the don'ts and dos of life) prescribed in the Yoga philosophy. At Adfactors PR, our Yamas include not working for businesses engaged in tobacco, alcohol, meat processing and gambling. We don't try to save on taxes through 'smart' tax planning. We stay true to all our commitments. In the last 23 years of business, having worked with thousands of clients and other stakeholders, we don't have a single litigation against us.

Remaining steadfast to these principles is the key to remaining grounded, despite the ups and downs of life. Success usually follows and must be dealt with all humility, because the times and fortunes are ever changing.



Rajesh Chaturvedi is the Co-founder and Chairman at Adfactors PR. Widely loved and admired for his charm, he is friends with three generations of media, and remains the 'go-to person' within Adfactors PR for his legendary media connect.

Blazing the trail

- Amith Prabhu

Having seen how all of us in Public Relations and Communications have navigated most of 2020 all I can say is that I take pride in belonging to this profession. I will devote the next few paragraphs to share details of what went into producing a reputation management conference like no other. I say that with pride because when we saw the news coming in of the Olympics being postponed, we knew that there was no way we could go ahead with PRAXIS. We also felt it would be unfair to our partners to invest in an event when they were not sure of how the finances would look like a quarter later. So, we took the bold decision on April 2nd to postpone PRAXIS and we began to ideate on an alternative.

A couple of brainstorming sessions later SPECTRA was born. We knew it would be exactly like PRAXIS from the word go, minus the ambience of an offsite venue. We knew it would still be a first-time venue of people's homes. We knew we would have delegate bags, something we have done in every edition of PRAXIS. We were sure we would organise an opening day lunch and maybe lunches on other days if people wanted to opt in by paying for it. And most of all we were confident of securing confirmations from over two dozen international speakers who are Chief Communication Officers of leading brands as well as global CEOs of some of the leading PR firms. We matched them with Indian communication leaders who would be conversation anchors.

We also added a fourth day called SPECTRA Plus, which includes short talks from a variety of Indian communication

leaders representing diverse sectors. This takes the total number of SPECTRA speakers to over 70 and making it the largest and most robust event of its kind in 2020. We partnered with atthah to create the SPECTRA Adda that would be the online space where delegates would view the content. Founder India helped us in post-production. We curated a three-course menu with the chefs at the Taj Hotels that includes the SPECTRA dessert.

We worked with speakers and partners including their teams to ensure a seamless experience that you will witness in a few days. For those who do not get to be part of SPECTRA in real time you can follow the social media feed with the hashtag #RTSPECTRA, especially on the three Saturdays and on the day of Spectra Plus. We will also have the content available at a later date (sometime in March 2021), on the Reputation Today YouTube channel which has over 12,000 subscribers. This is the highest number of subscribers for any Public Relations focussed channel.

Elsewhere in the magazine you will see the list of speakers and partners. I will not list them here. The Reputation Today team remains grateful to them for believing in this project and making it see the light of day. Kindly give them a shout out online and join us in applauding them for their generosity.

Well, I am eager to see the action unfold and I'm sure you will value the learnings and knowledge greatly. It surely will be time well spent. Share your thoughts on twitter with me or write to our team email id that is mentioned in the editorial on page one.

We have truly come a long way as a community in being able to stand together and move ahead in 2020. We hope the worst is behind us and there are good tidings in store in the future, especially in the year ahead. Wishing you in advance for a 2021 that is filled with peace, prosperity and progress!



Amith Prabhu is the Founding Dean of the School of Communication and Reputation (SCoRe). He is also the Founder of the Promise Foundation - the publisher of Reputation Today magazine and organiser of PRAXIS - Public Relations and Corporate Communications India Summit. He can be reached at @amithpr on Twitter.

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