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# Reputation

## TODAY

A magazine for Public Relations and Corporate Communications Professionals



### INTERVIEWS

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Communications,  
Dell

**Peter Brun**

Chief Communications  
Officer,  
VFS Global

**Tina McCorkindale**

President,  
Institute for  
Public Relations

**Roland Buerk**

Senior Director Communications,  
Africa, Middle East & India,  
Nissan Motor Corporation

# Reputation TODAY

PRESENTS

## MSL

## SUPER NIGHT

Thursday, 20th December, 2018  
MUMBAI

Thursday, 7th March, 2019  
NEW DELHI

For more details, please visit: [bit.ly/RTSN2018](https://bit.ly/RTSN2018)

## PRINT LINE

### PUBLISHER



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## FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM



We present the twelfth edition of the print magazine. This issue features the third class of the 40 under Forty in Indian reputation management. It also has a recap of the just concluded PRAXIS. The seventh edition of the public relations and corporate communications summit held in Hyderabad witnessed close to 700 delegates attending from across India.

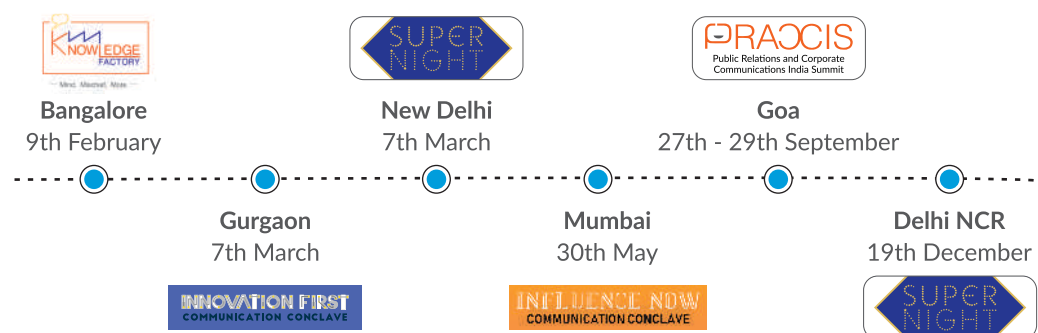
As we come to the end of the year, we are now focussing on celebrating the profession through the annual Super Night which will take place in Mumbai and another in early 2019 in New Delhi. Soon after that, we have the Innovation First Communication Conclave in Gurgaon on March 7th and the Influence Now Communication Conclave in Mumbai at the end of May.

Side by side the magazine supports the Fulcrum Awards, the Manifest Retreat and the Knowledge Factory about which you may read more in the Taking Pride column. In the last three years we have come a long way by engaging over a thousand professionals and building a platform that is liked by many. We have been able to do this because of a great coming together of partners, well-wishers, experts and certainly you, the reader.

The planning for the next edition of PRAXIS has begun and it will be held in Goa between 27th and 29th September, 2019. The eighth edition will focus on Trust as the core of Public Relations. We are always looking forward to your feedback on the annual summit and everything else we do. So, please write to [anubhuti@promisefoundation.com](mailto:anubhuti@promisefoundation.com) with your thoughts and help us to do better.

While you turn the pages of this labour of passion you will see 40 young women and men profiled. These are rising stars, emerging leaders and people to watch out for. They have all submitted their nomination or were nominated by a fellow professional. The editorial team then collects details from the individuals and based on ensuring a balance between men and women as well as corporate organisation and consulting firm prunes the list of over 50 names to 40. This list helps in two ways: It recognises the achievers and also offers younger professionals role models and mentors to reach out to for guidance. Some of those who feature in the list are low profile but are busy building brands and inspiring along the way. Happy reading!

## SAVE THE DATES FOR 2019



## FULCRUM AWARDS 2018 WINNERS



The organisers of Fulcrum Awards - The Promise Foundation and PR Moment India announced the winners for 2018 on Saturday, 29th September at the Fulcrum Awards Night in Hyderabad. The awards night saw over 600 communications professionals in attendance - the largest such gathering of communicators in India. A jury of 18 eminent Public Relations leaders selected the winners after a rigorous online and offline judging process. The judging process was reviewed by PwC.

The awards night commenced by honouring veteran communications professional **Roger C B Pereira** with the Fulcrum Lifetime Achievement Award. The evening saw compelling campaigns compete for Gold, Silver and Bronze in the 12 sub-categories for Technique Awards and 11 sub-categories of Sector Awards. Individual achievement awards in in-house and consultancy categories and the special awards categories for teams and consultancies were also announced.

## TECHNIQUE CATEGORY

BEST USE OF CONTENT			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Channelizing Conversations to Shape The Narrative Of Gender Pay Gap	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Monster.com
Silver	Just Laugh, SING, and Be Secure	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Godrej Security Solutions
Bronze	Unboxing the All-New Ford EcoSport	Ford India Pvt Ltd	—
BEST USE OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Mumbai Khadde Mein	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	RED FM
Silver	When Jailbirds Sang	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Godrej Locking Solutions and System
Bronze	Kentucky Flying Object (KFO)	Edelman India	KFC India
BEST USE OF EVENT CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Victims no longer, cheer for the Heroines	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Viviana Mall
Silver	Pharrell Williams' India visit to launch Hu Holi with Adidas	PR Pundit Public Relations Pvt Ltd	Adidas India
Bronze	Resonating Indira in today's India!	Value 360 Communications	Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust
BEST USE OF DIGITAL CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Unhide Psoriasis Digital Campaign	D Yellow Elephant	Novartis India
Silver	Launch of India's Platelet Donor Community	Godrej Communications Team	Godrej
Bronze	When Jailbirds Sang	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Godrej Locking Solutions
BEST USE OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Not Every Super Hero Wears A Cape	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson- Marsteller)	Cartoon Network (Turner India)
Silver	FIFA U-17	SPAG Asia	FIFA - U17, AIFF
Bronze	Keep It Pumping India - Heart Failure Awareness	SPAG Asia	Novartis Pharmaceuticals
BEST USE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	A government awakening on GST	Value 360 Communications	Urban Clap
Silver	Correcting Vision, Improving Lives	Edelman India	Essilor India
Bronze	Every Life is Precious	SPAG	Sanofi Genzyme
BEST MANAGEMENT OF CRISIS			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Nayi Umeed (A New Hope) - #ChangelsNear	MSL India	SBUT
Silver	#MumbaiLifeLine3	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation
Bronze	Managing Reputational Risk Arising out of Regulatory Issues	Biocon Limited	—
BEST USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Do the right thing	Vodafone India	—
Silver	Frequency: Where Music Inspires Participation	Adfactors PR PvtLtd	—
Bronze	Orchestrating a Choral Symphony: Driving sales impact through employee advocacy & social selling	Text100 India	NetApp

## FULCRUM AWARDS 2018 WINNERS

BEST NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Connect to Care!	Ideosphere Consulting Pvt Ltd	Balco Medical Centre
Silver	Successful Launch of India's first Madame Tussauds in Delhi	Perfect Relations Pvt Ltd	Madame Tussauds
Bronze	PEDLing towards New India	Fuzion PR Pvt Ltd	Zoomcar
BEST USE OF MEDIA RELATIONS			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Paytm – On a mission to bring half a billion Indians to mainstream economy	Value 360 Communications	Paytm
Silver	#MumbaiLifeLine3	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation
Bronze	Kentucky Flying Object (KFO)	Edelman India	KFC India
BEST CSR CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Saluting Women Power in Rugby	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Societe Generale
Silver	Carton Le Aao, Classroom Banao	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Tetra Pak
Bronze	Launch of India' first Platelet Donor Community	Godrej Communications Team	Godrej
BEST REGIONAL CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Punjab Di Beauty No 1	Godrej Communications Team	Godrej
Silver	Thomas Cook goes Desi	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Thomas Cook India
Bronze	Special-edition Colgate Active Salt Pack Campaign in Tamil Nadu	Fuzion PR Pvt Ltd	Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd

## SECTOR CATEGORY

BEST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Riding the Honda Navi under the Goan Sun	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Goa Tourism Development Corporation and Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India
Silver	India's love affair with Singapore	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Singapore Tourism Board
Bronze	Live Like a Local	20:20MSL India	Airbnb
BEST AUTOMOBILE CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Inspiring Aspiration with TVS Apache	TVS Motor Company	—
Silver	Roads That Honk	MSL India	Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, India
Bronze	The Orange Day	Ketchum Sampark Pvt Ltd	Bajaj Auto Ltd
BEST LIFESTYLE, LUXURY AND SPORTS CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	All the kids go Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi!	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Star Sports
Silver	Launch of Jo Malone London in India	PR Pundit Public Relations Pvt Ltd	Jo Malone London
Bronze	Thomas Cook goes Desi	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Thomas Cook India
BEST TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOM CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Powering Indian Police with Artificial Intelligence	Value 360 Communications	Staqu Technologies
Silver	Capture Different	FleishmanHillard	GoPro
Bronze	On a mission to bring half a billion Indians to mainstream economy	Value 360 Communications	Paytm
BEST HEALTHCARE AND PHARMA CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	P&G Vicks- Touch of Care	20:20 MSL India	Procter & Gamble Hygiene & Health Care
Silver	Launching India's First Free Condom Store	AvianWE	AHF India Cares
Bronze	Hearing Matters: Increasing awareness of newborn hearing screening in India	Edelman India	Cochlear
BEST CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND RETAIL SECTOR CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	McDonald's 'Flavours Without Borders' campaign launch	AvianWE	McDonald's India (West and South)
Silver	Classmate: Much more than a Notebook!	First Partners	ITC Limited
Bronze	Kentucky Flying Object (KFO)	Edelman India	KFC India

## FULCRUM AWARDS 2018 WINNERS

BEST NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND ASSOCIATIONS CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	PET Bottles: What is recyclable is not a Waste!	First Partners	PET Packaging Association for Clean Environment
Silver	Launching India's First Free Condom Store	AvianWE	AHF India Cares
Bronze	Saving India's Cinematic Heritage	Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd	—

BEST MANUFACTURING CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	When Jailbirds Sang	Adfactors PR Pvt Ltd	Godrej Locking Solutions and Systems
Silver	The True Value of Sustainable Construction	Ketchum Sampark Pvt Ltd	Ambuja Cement

BEST ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA SECTOR CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Mumbai Khadde mein	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	RED FM
Silver	Toilet – A Love Story	Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd	—
Bronze	UK India Year of Culture	Text100	British Council

BEST BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	"Aviva brings Good Thinking in Insurance – Wins India's trust & create a movement of Good Thinking"	AvianWE	Aviva Life Insurance
Silver	Winning the Trust of 3.7 Million Microfinance Customers	Ketchum Sampark Pvt Ltd	Ujjivan Financial Services
Bronze	Lifeline to MSMEs of India	Value 360 Communications	Aye Finance

BEST SERVICES CAMPAIGN			
	Campaign Title	Entrant name	Partner Organisation
Gold	Getting India ready for #JobsofTomorrow	Value 360 Communications	Udacity
Silver	Channelizing Conversations to Shape The Narrative Of Gender Pay Gap	Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	Monster.com
Bronze	Realizing India's e-commerce dream- Shopmatic	Value 360 Communications	Shopmatic

## INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY

<b>CONSULTANCY PROFESSIONAL - AUTOMOBILE</b> Anand Mahesh Talari, Managing Director Mavcomm Consulting Pvt Ltd	<b>IN-HOUSE TEAM OF THE YEAR – MID-SIZE (2-4 MEMBERS)</b> Vodafone India
<b>CONSULTANCY PROFESSIONAL - TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOM</b> Shivaram Lakshminarayan India Practice Chair- Enterprise Technology Burson Cohn & Wolfe (Genesis Burson-Marsteller)	<b>IN-HOUSE TEAM OF THE YEAR – LARGE (5 TEAM MEMBERS OR MORE)</b> Piramal Group
<b>CONSULTANCY PROFESSIONAL - NOT-FOR-PROFIT &amp; ASSOCIATIONS</b> Girish Balachandran, Founder and Managing Partner ON PURPOSE	<b>PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR – EMERGING (INR 10 CR AND BELOW)</b> ON PURPOSE
<b>CONSULTANCY PROFESSIONAL - MANUFACTURING</b> Suman Das Sarma, Senior Partner Ketchum Sampark Pvt Ltd	<b>PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR – MID-SIZE (INR 10CR TO 20 CR)</b> PR Pundit Public Relations Pvt Ltd
<b>CONSULTANCY PROFESSIONAL - BANKING &amp; FINANCIAL SERVICES</b> Gaurav Patra, Co-Founder & Director Value 360 Communications	<b>PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR – LARGE (INR 20 CR AND 50 CR)</b> Value 360 Communications
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - AUTOMOBILE</b> Varghese M. Thomas, Vice-President and Global Head of Communications TVS Motor Company	<b>SPECIAL AWARDS-PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR – GIANT (INR 50 CR +)</b> Genesis Burson-Marsteller (Burson Cohn & Wolfe)
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOM</b> Sudeep Bhalla, Sr. Vice President Corporate Communications & Sustainability Vodafone India	<p>An Initiative of</p>  <p>Powered By</p>  <p>Associate Partners</p> <p>Process Reviewer</p> <p>Supporting Partners</p> 
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - HEALTHCARE &amp; PHARMA</b> Nitish Thakur, Director – Brand and Communication Max Group	
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - CONSUMER PRODUCTS &amp; RETAIL</b> Ms. Janet Arole, Head – Corporate Communications Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited	
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - MANUFACTURING</b> Bibek Chattopadhyay, Head-Corporate Communications Ambuja Cements Limited	
<b>IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL - SERVICES</b> Dimple Kapur, Group Head – Corporate Communications & PR Piramal Group	

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## FULCRUM AWARDS 2018 REPLAY



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## FULCRUM AWARDS 2018 REPLAY



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**STELLA LOW**

VP, Global Communications, Dell

We have been telling stories for millennia and that will not change.

**RT: At the Dell Technologies World conference in May 2018, the topic was "Realizing 2030". Could you share some highlights with us?**

SL: The theme of the conference in 2018 was 'Make it Real'. Many of our customers and their industries are experiencing disruption from new digital entrants and new digital business models. They know they need to go through an IT or digital transformation to survive and to thrive. Often, they have a vision of where they need to go as a business but are unsure how to go about it or don't have the skills and expertise in-house. We partner with our customers to help make their digital transformation become a reality.

Realize 2030 is an extension of that. In partnership with research firm Vanson Bourne, we surveyed some 3800 business leaders around the world and more than half told us they are unsure what their industry will look like in the next 3 – 5 years and that's a cause for concern for them. Realize 2030 is our view of where the world is going over the next 10 – 12 years, focused on emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Immersive Technologies, Blockchain and more. We used the **Institute For The Future**, the world's leading non-profit strategic futures organization to help us imagine 2030. One of the major insights is that human-machine partnerships are going to be deeper and more profound than ever before. Humans will be digital conductors of a number of AI and other technologies that will come together as part of our lives, which will create capabilities that were previously unknown.

**RT: The storyline of Dell got extended under your guidance. Where do you think the story is leading to?**

SL: We combined Dell and EMC in September 2016 and as the biggest merger in technology history we knew that at that point, we needed to rewrite our story. It was a new story for the new company – Dell Technologies. We needed to be able to tell this story as simply as possible.

We pivoted more to a story around transformation with a message based on research and what our customers are telling us, which is we are in an age of disruption - the fourth industrial revolution - and it's time to disrupt or be disrupted. IT, in many cases has become the business, and this is where Dell can really help customers turn their visions into value. We are seeing customers revolutionize their industries as we help guide them through Digital, IT, Workforce and Security Transformations. So ultimately, our story is about demonstrating the ways in which we're using technology to drive human progress and doing that through the stories and journeys of our customers.

**RT: What will business storytelling look like in 2025?**

SL: We have been telling stories for the millennia and that will not change. The trend now however is towards visual content such as video and infographics, or creating amazing immersive experiences. Podcasts have made a massive resurgence too... and so has the humble newsletter. There are statistics that tell us that visual content is 40 times more likely to be

shared and using a colour image in a story will increase its readership by 80% so it's safe to say that you're losing a lot of attention if you're not incorporating these elements into your storytelling.

And we know people battle a multitude of distractions at any given time, and people have shorter attention spans than ever before too so it's important to keep storytelling alive using amazing creativity to gain that important breakthrough. It's also important not to demand too much of your audience. Be prepared with snack-sized content as well as in-depth content. Choice is critical. The strongest storytelling will use a mix of these elements – digital, video and audio assets as well as the more traditional assets.

**RT: What are the technologies you recommend communication professionals should embrace to ride the change in media relations today?**

SL: In today's converging world, communication professionals need to understand social media, digital communication and visual storytelling, as well as develop or have access to video skills, podcast production and promotion capabilities, and even immersive technology such as virtual and augmented reality. Think more of a marketing skillset... What will that look like 10 years from now? Future-ready skills that prepare communicators for Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and human-machine partnerships will be extremely important. The days of just being the press release writing department are over.



## PETER BRUN

Chief Communications Officer, VFS Global

To get the brand message right and look brilliant is a constant development. It never stops.

**RT: Your career took you through different roles - journalist, TV/radio host and chief-editor. How different were these roles?**

PB: To me these roles are not as different as you might think. No matter if you are in journalism or in corporate communications, you are committed to facts, the truth, reliability and servicing your stakeholders in best possible way. Even as chief editor and managing director of Switzerland's largest private radio station, I continued to be at the journalistic front and hosted news programmes and talk shows.

**RT: You had said, "I love crisis". How do brands travel through this crisis phase in their brand story?**

PB: Crisis, you only can prepare for, but you can't plan. And once a crisis happens, it is always different from what you had prepared for. Handling crisis is the Champions League in communications. Managing a crisis really bad can destroy your brand within days. To build it up will take much longer again. Handling a crisis well will strengthen your brand and you can even leverage successful crisis management into your storytelling and marketing efforts. But don't overexaggerate. Do it well-balanced.

**RT: Media in Switzerland awarded you the tag of 'Best Spokesperson'. What led to this title being bestowed on you?**

PB: I don't see the media as 'the enemy of the people'. Free media in

democracies are the partners of communication professionals. I have always treated journalists fair, honest, with respect and serviced them like customers. Nevertheless, one must give clear boundaries, say 'No' at the right time but never 'No comment'.

**RT: "The message shouldn't only sound right, it should look brilliant", you had said. How did you develop your brand messages to make them look brilliant?**

PB: To get the brand message right and look brilliant is a constant development. It probably never stops. It is not only what you talk about but how your brand presents itself to all stakeholders. Consistency is key. Don't do anything that could dilute your brand and message. Especially for brands with a global presence, a strong governance needs to be in place to control quality, engagement, consistency and to stick to your overall brand strategy.

**RT. What are the challenges you face in telling the VFS global story in different markets?**

PB: For applicants all over the world the visa application process is not everyone's most favourite part of their travel preparations. But once they have seen how easy and convenient it is through our online and offline services they are less anxious about their next trip, and even better prepared. To explain what is behind an application process and where we can add value in everybody's travel cycle is challenging. Less travel-experienced millennials often don't understand a

process and want all and everything now and for free. An honest and transparent process explanation fuels your brand perspective in a positive way.

**RT. As a news anchor, early in your career, how did you present news and how different is it presenting the brand news in Public Relations?**

PB: I don't see a big difference in the two. Be authentic, stick to facts, condemn 'fake news' and put your audience in the centre. By doing that you win credibility, empathy and grow, as a personality and as a reputed company.

**RT. You had stated: "Strategic communications and top management media consulting are the core elements of a successful strategy". Please elaborate.**

PB: Top management in many companies don't put a focus on strategic communications. Managers don't understand the mechanisms of media. Often communication issues don't get the attention they deserve unless it is a crisis situation. But at this point it is too late to explain to the management 'the heart and soul' of a journalist's work. Communicators must win top management's constant attention and managers must learn from us communicators how and why media act the way they do. Media consulting to management will lead into a more effective partnership between media, journalists, a company and its management. So, have your media strategy ready and have your management not just approve it but live it.



## TINA McCORKINDALE

President, Institute for Public Relations

Primary research and secondary research help organisations think smarter, and save money.

**RT: Your current role, as you put it, is - to help establish the Institute as the principal global organisation devoted to building, documenting and sharing research-based knowledge relevant to public relations practice. How far have you gotten in this endeavour?**

TM: The Institute for Public Relations has been around for more than 60 years. While we have made some great strides in promoting and building research in the profession, there's still work to be done, especially on a global scale. Some organisations still neglect research, and sometimes, it can be the first line item eliminated when a company wants to save money on a campaign. This, of course, is the wrong thing to do so IPR works hard to combat this by offering research bootcamps and professional development workshops to showcase the importance of research.

**RT: How was the transition from being a university professor to your current role?**

TM: It wasn't very difficult. As an academic and a researcher, I was well-connected to the research and was quite active in the industry. Also, I felt I had a strong tie to the academy and students. Previously, I had also worked at a consultancy so my client management skills come in handy every day as well. The first thing I did was to embark on a listening tour where I connected with all my trustees, partners, and some academicians. I would recommend that for anyone starting a leadership position in any organisation.

**RT: What are the plans of the Institute for Public Relations for an emerging market like India?**

TM: Asia is a top priority region for IPR. We've partnered with Singapore Management University and opened an IPR Southeast Asia Alliance to help build awareness of our research in the region and we are committed to increasing studies focused on the region (and more global as well). All our research is available for free so we have free webinars and a weekly IPR Research Letter. We come to Asia one or two times a year and would love to offer our Research Forum or a bootcamp to our colleagues in India.

**RT: How important is research in business of storytelling?**

TM: Research is absolutely critical! With the wealth of information we have about our stakeholders and with the plethora of research and data being conducted and collected every day, there's no reason why public relations professionals should fail to incorporate research (and it shouldn't be limited to just Google searches). Both primary research and secondary research help organisations think smarter, and save money. Why waste money and time on a campaign that will be unsuccessful because you haven't done your due diligence?

**RT: Can you tell us about a recent storytelling communications/media campaign you really enjoyed?**

TM: I really love the Aflac "My Special Duck" campaign—the goal is to give a robotic "comfort" duck to each of the

16,000 children diagnosed with cancer in the U.S. Using extensive research, the smart duck, developed by Sproutel, helps children with their care routines, incorporates augmented reality, and uses shared experiences (such as port access and mimicking emotions) to connect with the children. Aflac created a powerful, moving video of the development and launch of the ducks with the children and their families. Catherine Hernandez-Blades, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, and her team at AFLAC have done an amazing job promoting this campaign that truly makes a difference. It is extremely moving and powerful.



FOUNDED 1956

*The Institute for Public Relations is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to research in, on and for Public Relations. They investigate the science beneath the art of Public Relations™.*



## ROLAND BUERK

Senior Director Communications, Africa, Middle East & India, Nissan Motor Corporation

We want to change perceptions by telling great stories.

**RT: You were allowed inside Japan's Fukushima plant when international journalists had been allowed for the first time since the tsunami that had devastated the nuclear plant. How was the experience?**

RB: We international journalists had been pressing the Japanese Government for several days to get inside Fukushima. The attention of the whole world was on the nuclear meltdown. But as I zipped up my radiation suit, and put on a breathing mask, I did wonder if trying so hard to get there had been a good idea. The plant itself was devastated, and we drove in buses along the narrow strip of land between the reactors and the sea. But what really impressed me was the dedication of people working there, many of them temporary contractors. They were living and working in the control centre that was filled with the drone of scrubbers filtering the air, going outside repeatedly to work amid the radiation. One guy pushed a piece of paper into my hand that was a letter addressed to the children of the world. It said they would do anything, at the cost of their lives even, to fix the problem. There has been criticism of how the meltdown was handled, should the plant have been there at all, on the seashore. But in those ordinary working men and their commitment I saw the spirit of Japan.

**RT: What is the transition like – moving from journalism to Public Relations?**

RB: It's a big change moving from being a correspondent, out in the field with one or two other people and working quite independently for day-to-day tasks, to working at the headquarters of

a big international company. But I think at its heart the two jobs are similar. We want to change perceptions by telling great stories. For top journalists, and I don't claim to have been one, a single story can, very occasionally, make people see things differently and change the world. In PR also, we are in the game of building and changing perspectives.

**RT: How do you carry the Nissan story forward, enhancing the brand attributes?**

RB: The Nissan brand story in India will be based on two brand pillars of future technology, with Nissan Intelligent Mobility, and our prowess in SUVs. Nissan is leading the way globally with electrification, as well as connectivity and autonomous driving. We were the first to mass-market an EV with the Nissan LEAF. Here in India we launched Nissan Connect last year. All our cars in India are connected and we were the first to do that. The soon to be launched Nissan Kicks in India combines our global SUV heritage with Nissan Intelligent Mobility so increasing numbers of Indian customers will have these experiences with our cars.

For Datsun we are focusing on progressive mobility. To speak to the brand we are aligning our content towards people who take bold choices to upturn the status quo, such as with #MorePower2You – a campaign that was led entirely by PR professionals in the Communications team.

Understanding customer needs, is key to our work in India. We are working hard on tailoring our content to be far more meaningful and relevant.

**RT: How did your experience in BBC help in create interesting narratives for the corporate?**

RB: My time at the BBC taught me that a narrative mattered. Without it you can't get attention. The BBC works like any big news organisation. When something big is happening on your patch they can't get enough of you, and you can be working 24 hours a day. But when it's quiet you have to fight to get on air. I think corporates have to do the same thing. We need to create an interesting and compelling narrative, that actually means something to people, and then keep telling the different chapters of that story again and again. If we don't have a narrative we are just popping up from time to time with unrelated stories, and not surprisingly people won't take much notice.

**RT: Nissan Global Media Center was developed as a channel that aimed to tell a brand story, as well as offer something useful and interesting to consumers, journalists, and analysts. Where has it reached today?**

RB: The original idea behind the Nissan Global Media Center was that more and more international media were reducing their tally of foreign correspondents, including in Japan. If we were going to have fewer journalists to tell our story, we should start telling it ourselves. What has happened now is the idea of content, campaigning and storytelling has become more embedded in the whole way Nissan approaches communications across the organisation. So, the Media Center has helped to change how we see the job of communicators.



'The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams', wrote Eleanor Roosevelt. Here is a list of 40 dynamic women and men who have made an impact to the business of Public Relations and Corporate Communications. In an attempt to recognise the good work and provide inspiration to the upcoming professionals, Reputation Today is delighted to present the Class of 2018 of 40 Under Forty, powered by Impact Research and Measurement. All names are listed here in alphabetical order.



**AAKRITI BHARGAVA**

Co-founder and CEO  
BoringBrands

Very early in her career Aakriti was intrigued by the way the world of media & communication worked. She questioned the regular and wondered if there were ways to improve the speed of information and assist in-depth research for stories. Deciding to take the first step in bringing about a change in the business was a high point in Aakriti's career. Today, after having launched BoringBrands and Wizikey - the only PR Tech software which in its pilot stage got 100 logins in 48 hours, she believes this is just the beginning of the change she has envisaged.

In the coming decade, she sees herself standing up for Journalists and valuing them instead of the publication. She reckons that it is imperative to create an ecosystem that empowers researching content as against simply verifying it.

The communicator who inspires her the most? **Edward Bernays** - The Father of Modern PR

[@Aakriti](https://twitter.com/Aakriti)  
[bit.ly/AakritiBhargava](https://bit.ly/AakritiBhargava)



**ABHILASHA PADHY**

Co-Founder & Jt. Managing Director  
80 dB Communications

A Masters in Communication Management, Abhilasha believes that communication is what makes humans special, and effective communication is what makes certain humans and organisations stand apart and get disproportionate ears, eyeballs and mind space. The message, medium and messenger come together to create the desired impact, she asserts. Taking inspiration from **Sheryl Sandberg**, COO, Facebook, Abhilasha aspires to take 80 dB to higher decibels, explore new markets, platforms, and mediums.

Being at the highest point of her career so far, Abhilasha is excited about having successfully established a sustainable and growing business together with her friend and former boss Kiran Ray Chaudhury. Over the last three years, 80 dB has grown into a firm recognised for its select and nimble team, senior counsel, and involvement of its founders. A positive word-of-mouth and strong reference pipeline is testament to the value they create for both, clients and team members.

[@abhilashapadhy](https://twitter.com/abhilashapadhy)  
[bit.ly/AbhilashaPadhy](https://bit.ly/AbhilashaPadhy)



38

### AJIT PAI

Senior Account Director  
Adfactors PR

Having grown his business portfolio by 100% in the span of his two years at Adfactors PR, Ajit believes that his experience of working with three global PR/PA firms in India has been a high in his career. Prior to joining Adfactors PR, Ajit was instrumental in managing large, complex Tata mandates at Edelman and before that was the only Indian to win the global scholarship program at APCO Worldwide in 2011 for award winning work on the Vibrant Gujarat Campaign.

By age 45, he hopes to see himself in strategic roles helping clients learn, understand and cope with the evolving PR landscape, mentoring young PR champions in the Indian PR fraternity. According to Ajit, communication is a vehicle that has the power to inform, interact and influence with larger audiences in a VUCA world. In its absence or poor presence, business operates in a vacuum and one can't build reputation in a vacuum. Ajit names **Madan Bahal**, MD, Adfactors PR an inspiring communicator and finds his logical and practical thinking very stirring.

[@ajit\\_pai\\_pr](#)  
[bit.ly/PaiAjit](#)



32

### ANIRUDDHA ATUL BHAGWAT

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder  
Ideosphere

Digging deeper into the business of communications to connect it to the way we live, our culture and our everyday interaction is what Aniruddha loves the most about being in the business of communications. He looks up to author and motivational speaker **Simon Sinek** as he tries to bring simplicity in the ocean of complexity of their lives.

Although Aniruddha has been adjudged the Young PR Professional of the Year across a couple of platforms, included in the Top 30/30 Marketing & PR List (Impact & PRMoment) and other recognitions, the biggest high of his career was when his firm Ideosphere was recognised as the Boutique Agency of the Year in 2016 at Fulcrum Awards. This title, he believes, was the biggest validation of our approach and entrepreneurial journey.

In the coming years he wants to continue to be known as a honest, performance-driven and impactful communicator, whom any brand team would love to partner with, and be a influencer of change in the communication profession.

[@IdeoAndy](#)  
[bit.ly/AniruddhaBhagwat](#)



37

### ATIPRIYA SARAWAT

Director - Branding & Communication  
Fiserv

Communications, for Atipriya, is about influencing behaviour, culture and perceptions. She believes that all forms of communication should be simple, transparent and effective for them to be heard and acted upon. While she is yet to witness the highest point of her career, Atipriya proudly recalls some of her achievements, including being the youngest member at 29 to be inducted into the management team at Mercer, as the India Marketing Leader and leading communications for a diverse portfolio including retail, tech, tax and audit at EY.

Despite being a woman-dominated profession, there are only a handful of women who have created world class PR firms, she asserts. Atipriya is inspired by leaders like **Prema Sagar**, CEO & Founder Genesis Burson-Marsteller and **Archana Jain**, Managing Director, PR Pundit who broke the glass ceiling early on.

[@atipriya](#)  
[bit.ly/AtipriyaSarawat](#)



39

### BIPASHA CHAKRABARTI

Head - Corporate Communications  
CISCO - India & SAARC

Bipasha was recognised for the Cisco Chairman's Choice Award by CEO John Chambers, one of the longest-tenured CEOs in the Silicon Valley for her communication counsel and advisory during his tenure as chairman & CEO of Cisco and his subsequent transition to the chairman of The US - India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF). This, she recalls, has been the highest point of her career till date. By age 45, she aspires to take the experiences and learning of her career as a communications professional and write a book on why progress over perfection is the essence of effective communication.

Bipasha believes that getting to the essence of what makes something memorable, relatable and relevant is what communications is all about. She finds **Rajiv Bajaj**, Managing Director - Bajaj Auto an inspiring communicator who has debunked the myth that communication is about fluency of a language. His ability to infuse life, humor, and creativity in essaying the Bajaj turnaround story so succinctly is very inspiring.

[@bipchakr](#)  
[bit.ly/BipashaChakrabarti](#)

## COVER FEATURE



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### DEEPTI DAYAL

Director & Head - Corporate Communications & PR, APAC, Cognizant

With an Executive MBA in General Management from IIM, Bangalore, Deepti has previously worked with Ernst & Young, Capgemini and ING (Exide Life Insurance). Striving for excellence through her journey, she believes that there have been several highlights in her professional journey till date. She affirms that each stage of her career has been a learning experience and a stepping stone to greater responsibilities. Helping clients and employees of the organisation understand the business/employee value propositions that the company offers and helping all stakeholders become brand ambassadors has been her biggest successes.

At age 45, she sees herself creating and managing a company, where art meets science. Communication for Deepti is the bridge to connect with an audience and create a resonance between the intended and the intention. She admires American talk show host and producer, **Oprah Winfrey**, for her storytelling skills and natural talent to engage with people by creating an emotional bond.



@deeptidayal



bit.ly/DeeptiDayal



40 Under FORTY

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### HARSH MEHTA

Head - Communications & Public Affairs, India & Regional Coordination, APAC  
Bombardier Transportation

A Masters in Marketing Management, Harsh has had a long stint with Weber Shandwick, Mumbai prior to joining Bombardier Transportation. During his time at the previous job, he has participated and led various PR campaigns that won more than 25 marketing, advertising, media and PR awards. In 2007 he also won the Weber Shandwick Asia Pacific Leadership Award.

By age 45, he sees himself leading communications and public affairs for an MNC at a global level.

Harsh is inspired by veteran communications leader **Shiv Reddy**, Ex-CEO Corporate Voice Weber Shandwick. Quoting Shiv Reddy, he writes, "In a PR firm, the most critical asset (employees) leaves the office every day and it is the responsibility of firm's leadership team to inspire the asset to return to the office next day."



@harsh2910



bit.ly/HarshMehta



39

### INDRRANIL ROY CHOUDHURI

AVP - Marketing Communications  
Kreate Energy (I)

Indrranil was instrumental in envisaging and rolling out the brand .Kreate and this he says has been the highest point of his career till date. This entailed development of all the facets of brand architecture, in tandem to the vision of the top management of the company. Additionally, he overcame the challenge of establishing the .Kreate brand name in an industry that recognised the brand in its previous avatar.

Communication for Indrranil is primarily about storytelling. The art of telling a story well, in every role of our lives, is what evokes the interest of our target audience to invest their time. He finds **Barack Obama**, former President of the United States as an inspiring communicator. By age 45, Indrranil aspires to utilise the heft of his experience for mentorship in the startup space.



@iroychoudhuri



bit.ly/IndrrnilRoyChoudhuri



34

### KAUSHAL MAHAN

Lead - Technology Practice  
Chase India

Kaushal joined Chase India as the founding member in 2011. Since then, he has been instrumental in expanding the firm's client and employee base. He has led the technology practice for the company making it the most profitable practice at Chase India today.

Kaushal has previously worked with The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). Looking ahead, he would like to continue playing a significant role in building Chase India to make it the most trusted and preferred knowledge partner for government and an advocacy partner for industry, civil society, academia.

He is inspired by **Chetan Krishnaswamy**, Director - Public Policy, Google India



@kaushalmahan



bit.ly/KaushalMahan

## COVER FEATURE



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**KOMAL LATH**

Founder  
Tute Consult

As Founder of Tute Consult, Komal aspires to have branched out and opened Tute offices in five major global cities, in the next decade. She hopes to actively contribute towards skill development of the new workforce coming into the PR profession.

Remembering the highest point of her career, she narrates that being part of the team that laid the founding stones of Brand Priyanka Chopra at Vaishnavi - right from meticulously planning where she's seen to how she's seen, was an exhilarating experience. The high point was to pen down the vision to make her a global icon and then take steady, small steps towards bringing the vision to life. Komal is inspired by Celebrity & Image Management Consultant **Natasha Pal** who she says is the embodiment of grace, agility, tact, writing and strategy. Komal stresses that communication is the ability and skill to have all of these skills along with being succinct, pragmatic and possessing a strong IQ and EQ.



@komall



bit.ly/KomalLath



40 Under FORTY

35

**MANAS MRINAL**

Co-founder  
Skateboard Media

Prior to co-founding Skateboard Media, Manas has worked with MSL India and Edelman. While he received many opportunities of working with marquee brands during his time at the PR firms, taking the decision of starting his own venture in 2012 clearly remains the most challenging yet most satisfying high point of his professional career. It required a completely new approach, belief and mindset to curate a firm of our own which pushed me to unlearn, learn again, adapt and innovate as we started our new journey, he recalls.

Manas has always been inspired by **Ratan Tata**, Chairman of the Tata Group and never forgets a statement he once made, 'Ups and Downs are an integral part of one's life. To keep going as a straight line even on an ECG means we are not alive.'

At age 45, Manas would like to be known as an enabler who created Skateboard Media, a path many enjoyed being part of and got an opportunity to make their mistakes, have fun, learn lots and take something they will carry forward, forever.



@manasmrinal



bit.ly/ManasMrinal



33

**MICHELLE FRANCIS**

Deputy General Manager - Brand and  
Corporate Communication  
Godrej

Michelle strongly believes in the quote by American Executive, Lee Lacocca, 'Communication works for those who work at it. You can have brilliant ideas but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere.'

Working on multiple brands across genres of communication and delivering on the business objectives gives Michelle a high! Her work involves managing communications for a large portfolio of Godrej brands ranging from Soaps to Locks and she feels excited for the simple reason that over the past few years the team has been able to command a significant share of the marketing budgets for brand building and reputation management through PR. She stays ever inspired by her team leader, **Sujit Patil**, Vice President & Head of Corporate Brand & Communications Godrej Industries & Associate Companies.

At 45, Michelle aspires to become a complete personality and see herself contributing significantly towards career, family, self, and giving back to the society and nation.



@MichelleJan1985



bit.ly/MichelleFrancis



38

**MINOL AJEKAR**

Head - Corporate Communication, CSR,  
Audit & Business Process  
Purvankara Limited

A Masters in Business Systems from Monash University, Melbourne, Minol entered the world of Corporate Communication & Public Relations just a couple of years ago. Having worked previously with Astik Dyestuffs as Senior Market Manager, she had no prior experience in corporate communications. However, today her organisation's Share of Voice ranks in the top five, nationally, among peers.

She draws her inspiration from her father **Ram Ajeekar** who, though educated in Kannada till age 16, self taught himself English & Hindi and now edits a quarterly newsletter for the Dyestuff Manufacturers of India and is the go to MC for all events big & small and can give talks in five languages.

Communication, according to Minol, is equal parts giving and receiving, the medium of interaction being immaterial but the viable exchange and interpretation of true meaning of message/emotion/action. She believes that we all have stories - and they must be told and heard.



@MinolAjeekar



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## COVER FEATURE



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**MUKESH KHARBANDA**

Managing Director  
Fuzion PR

In 2017, Mukesh Kharbanda was awarded PR Professional of the year by IPRCCA awards and his firm Fuzion PR was awarded Mid-size consultancy of the year by Fulcrum Awards - these, he mentions have been the high points of his career till date.

After completing an internship at Genesis Burson-Marsteller, Mukesh went on to founding his own firm in 2007, which is today synonymous with regional PR in India. While at Genesis BM, Mukesh interned under **Kapil Sharma**, Head, Corporate Communications, Ford India and has since then been inspired by him. Kapil has been a true mentor and guide and has played a huge role in my professional journey, he asserts.

At 45, Mukesh sees himself leading the Regional PR revolution and taking his firm to the top three firms in the country, irrespective of geographies they operate in.



@Mkharbanda15



bit.ly/MukeshKharbanda

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38



**NEELAYAM SORTE**

Head - Corporate Communications & Branding  
Wartsila India

A master in management studies from JBIMS, Neelayam has previously worked at senior managerial roles with L&T Technology Services, Subodh Technologists and Accelya Kale Solutions. The highest point of his career, he remembers, was during his stint at Kale Solutions, where within a short span of nine months, he was given the additional responsibility to lead a small team for a new business line.

At age 45, he sees himself in senior corporate communications roles taking strategic decisions which contribute to bottom line of the organisation. Communication, Neelayam believes, is imparting or exchanging of relevant information through verbal or nonverbal means, including speech, or oral communication, writing and graphical representations and signs and behaviour. For inspiration he looks up to **Dr Pragnya Ram**, Group Executive President, Corporate Communications and CSR, Aditya Birla Group.



bit.ly/NeelayamSorte



36

**NIKHIL LODAYA**

Vice President  
MSL India

Nikhil hold a Diploma in Communications from XIC, Mumbai and believes that communication is the art of honest influencing. He looks at every success of his, his team's and his firm's as a high in his career. Every time his firm wins a new mandate or a client renews their engagement, Nikhil gets a new high with pride for either leading the team or being part of the team.

At age 45, he aspires to be co-leading the communication campaign for the 2029 general elections in India.

Nikhil holds two legends as strong pillars of communication - South African revolutionary **Nelson Mandela** and American actor and comedian **Robin Williams** who once said, 'words and ideas can change the world'.



@nikhillodaya



bit.ly/NikhilLodaya



32

**NIKITA NANDA**

Vice President - Client Development  
Value360 Communications

Nikita lists several highs of her professional journey right from growing from the Business Development Manager to Vice President in five years, to bagging a 320+ client base in a span of seven years, including marquee clients like Saavn, Cleartrip, Cinopolis and Paytm.

In the coming decade, she would like to hone her skills to become a Public Affairs specialist for a Fortune 500 company.

Nikita has always felt that **Sir Richard Branson**, Founder, The Virgin Group is one of the most consummate communicators alive. He is not afraid of PR and has admitted that public relations save him millions in advertising. He is happy to get involved in communications, whether it's good or bad news.

Communication, Nikita believes, has to be authentic and seamless. Despite the technological advances taking centre stage, if the core idea doesn't work, the technology used to deliver it won't matter.



@nikkulo



bit.ly/NikitaNanda

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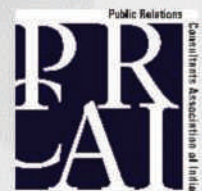
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## PARUL SURI

SVP - Consumer Practice  
Weber Shandwick

While Parul believes that the highest point of her career is yet to come, she remembers winning the Cannes for ITC Savlon Healthy Hand Chalk Sticks Campaign as an unforgettable moment of her professional life. Every new win propels her to do better and aspires for greater achievements.

At 45, she wants to have even higher energy levels, continue to be excited, sit up proudly in her chair and make an impact wherever she is!

Communication, according to Parul, is a very powerful tool that informs and educates a set of audience to make a move or take a decision. It is a combination of Conversations + Conviction that leads to a Conversion. She finds **Steve Jobs**, co-founder, Apple Inc. as inspiring communicator.

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[bit.ly/ParulSuri](#)



33

## PRASHANT SUBRAMANIAN

Director - Client Servicing  
Kaizzen

Communication, according to Prashant, is an art of conveying what we want to say in a manner that people on the other end receive it, understand it and connect with it in the way we want them to. At 45, he aspires to still be running after challenging assignments as that is what gives him the dope to continue further in this profession.

Recalling the high points of his career, he believes that he has had a great time as a brand & marketing head at Sanspareils Greenlands Pvt. Ltd. (SG Cricket). A challenging, yet exciting and fun time, Prashant was responsible for the entire revamping of their brand identity, undertaking new brand and marketing initiatives, which included PR, advertising, movie associations etc. To spearhead the entire marketing, brand initiatives and to bring about new changes in a traditionally deep-rooted family-run business was the most exciting part of what he did.

Prashant is inspired by **Kunal Banerji**, Founder & Chief Mentor, Brand Chakra.

[@maverick\\_1985](#)  
[bit.ly/PrashantSubramanian](#)



38

## RAHUL MATHUR

Senior Manager - Corporate Communications  
Nissan Group of India

A Masters in Mass Communication from Hisar University, Rahul has previously worked with Moser Baer and Perfect Relations. During his seven-year stint at the previous firm, Rahul worked for some major auto brands like Mercedes, Skoda, Fiat, Honda, Nissan, Honda Motorcycles, SIAM which gave him great exposure to the auto industry. At Nissan, he was selected for a global talent program and got a chance to work at the global headquarters in Japan for four months. This, he says has been the highest point of his career, so far.

For Rahul, communication means interacting, engaging and convincing or influencing your target audience in a language s/he understands or perceives. It is the art of conveying your thoughts and messages effectively considering the atmosphere around you and by adapting to the changing dynamics.

Rahul considers **Dilip Cherian**, Co-founder and Consulting Partner, Perfect Relations an inspiring communicator.

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[bit.ly/MathurRahul](#)



37

## RAKESH KUMAR JHA

Associate Director  
Perfect Relations

According to Rakesh, communication is the transfer of message from sender to receiver with zero or minimal loss of intent and content. We communicate even when we don't, he says. He is inspired by veteran public relations leaders like **Dilip Cherian** and **Madan Bahal** who, he says, transcend all boundaries of communication and treat junior and peers like equals.

The highest point of his career till date, he remembers, has been the Dettol campaign where one of Dettol's major competitor started a campaign directed against Dettol and in no time, Dettol's over 90% market dwindled noticeably. Leading the team, they recommended a four-pronged approach which helped Dettol regain its lost market share. The team was adjudged best servicing team and the campaign got two diamonds and two golds at first ever India SABRE Awards.

At 45, Rakesh aspires to see himself in global leadership roles and actively contributing toward training and mentoring the new generation of professionals.

[@rahulrakesh](#)  
[bit.ly/RahulRakesh](#)



37

## RIKHIL SETH

Business Leader - Corporate & Financial Practice  
Genesis Burson-Marsteller

An MBA in International Business from the Western International University, Phoenix, Arizona, Rikhil aspires to keep learning with the evolving communications landscape, up-skill, while at the same time, lead the function and a team.

Rikhil has spent over a decade at GBM and he sees this as one of his high points, in a profession which otherwise sees a lot of attrition. Rikhil was promoted as one of the youngest Managing Partners and this, he says, was a great feeling as that demonstrated his capabilities to effectively manage the business and build a star team.

He is always inspired by **Prema Sagar**, CEO & Founder of Genesis Burson Marsteller for the way she has led the business of communications with utmost integrity and her vision to see things way before anyone else could.



@RikhilSeth

bit.ly/RikhilSeth



34

## RITIKA JAUHARI

Senior Director  
SPAG - India & Singapore

Communication, according to Ritika, is the art of using content in different forms and through different channels to inspire action and bring a favourable change in people's behaviour in order to meet one's business goals. Applying this belief, Ritika recalls, the challenges they faced while trying to draw policy and people's attention to lifestyle related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). It was an overwhelming experience, when through consistent efforts, their campaign was credited for bringing a radical change in the way healthcare is perceived in India. The campaign was instrumental in transforming a critical policy narrative, from a government with "NO NCD agenda" to one that initiated a focused policy on NCDs.

For Ritika age 45 would be the age of contentment in every aspect. She says that, while still being motivated to achieve more, she will be at ease with herself, aspiring to do meaningful work that reflects the real her.

She finds former US President, **Bill Clinton** as inspiring communicator for his abilities to connect with his audience.



@RitikaJauhari

bit.ly/RitikaJauhari



38

## ROHAN VYAVAHARKAR

Director - Marketing and Communications  
Omidyar Network, India

An MS in Broadcast Journalism from Syracuse University, Rohan has previously worked with Stepthalon and Twitter India and is a visiting faculty for some of India's top media schools.

According to Rohan, the point of communication is to reduce information asymmetry. He admires American astrophysicist and science communicator **Neil DeGrasse Tyson** who helps break down complex scientific issues in simple, everyday terms while increasing our hunger to learn.

When he turns 45, Rohan aspires to continue to push boundaries of content, delivery platforms, and technology to tell better stories. He also looks forward to signing copies of his second book in a bookstore.



@vyavaharkar

bit.ly/RohanVyavaharkar



37

## RUCHIKA MEHTA

Corporate Director - Communications and PR  
Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited

Ruchika has previously worked with Shangri-La Eros Hotels, Hyatt Regency and ITC Maurya Sheraton. Talking about the high points of her career, she feels that the gold post is constantly changing. Currently, she is extremely proud of working on the campaign to celebrate 50 years of The Park Hotels.

At 45, she sees herself leading communications for a conglomerate as well as being on the Board of few companies giving strategic direction towards their communication needs. She also looks forward to mentoring the younger generation of PR professionals.

Communications, says Ruchika, is an act of conveying coherent messages through various mediums to an individual or a group of individuals and she admires senior PR and communications leaders **Prema Sagar** and **Roma Balwani** for impact they have had in the field of communications.



@ruchikamehta\_

bit.ly/RuchikaMehta

## COVER FEATURE



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**SAHIL  
CHOPRA**

Vice President - Marketing, Communications  
& Consumer Engagement  
Stanza Living

An MBA in Communications Management from Symbiosis, Pune, Sahil recalls being selected as a member of the elite, Publicis Groupe's global Leaders Studio programme as the highest point of his career till date. The programme is aimed at building the next level of leadership team for the Group.

Sahil has previously worked with MSL and Ford India and aspires to be the founder of a successful business that fosters healthy living practices by age 45.

He is inspired by Apple Co-founder **Steve Jobs** and believes that communication is a means to educate, engage, excite and more importantly build lasting relationships that matter.



@sahilchopra1987

bit.ly/SahilChopra



40 Under FORTY

36

**SANDEEP  
FERNANDES**

Senior Manager - Public Affairs,  
Communications & CSR  
Renault India

Sandeep was one of four employees representing Renault India at the President Awards in Paris, the highest honour in Groupe Renault. The awards felicitate employees who have made a significant contribution to Renault's business worldwide, and the Indian team won it for the successful global launch of Kwid in India. This he recalls as the highest point of his career till date.

Over the next 10 years, he sees himself working on several award-winning PR campaigns that stand apart for their creativity and impact on business. Sandeep aspires to push the envelope by introducing innovative and pioneering practices that are relevant to the Indian market and context.

He is inspired by PR and Advertising guru **Roger Pereira** who, he says, is 'storytelling' in motion! Defining communications in a corporate context, he says that it is pivotal in establishing a company's identity as it humanises business and is imperative in building lasting relations with stakeholders.



@sandeepferns

bit.ly/SandeepFernandes



38

**SANTANU  
BHATTACHARYA**

Senior Manager - PR & Global Affairs  
Dassault Systemes India

Santanu received the Rising Star Award & MD's recognition award in Dassault Systemes for contribution in PR and this, he recalls, as the highest point of his career till date. An MBA in International Business from IIFS, Santanu has previously worked as a Senior Consultant with Text100.

At 45, Santanu sees himself managing a brand marketing or an industry marketing vertical at a corporate level in Dassault Systemes and based in Velizy, Paris.

He is inspired by his peers **Bodhisatya Basuthakur** and **Shrey Khetrpal** for managing global PR mandates and **Amith Prabhu** for his contribution to the PR fraternity in India.



@getsanta

bit.ly/SantanuBhattacharya



37

**SHAHNAZ  
JAIN**

National Digital Lead  
Text 100 India

A Graduate in Economics from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, Shahnaz has been with Text 100 for over 16 years now. She says that she has just never found a reason good enough to go anywhere else!

Wanting to remain a lifelong intern in the communications space, she believes that communication is two-way street, a fact that communicators often forget in an attempt to influence.

She finds American political analyst **Prof Robert Kelly** an inspiring communicator.



@shahnazb

bit.ly/ShahnazJain



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## SHUBHRA SINHA

AVP - Marketing Communications  
& Digital Strategy  
Denave

Establishing a B2B brand in the industry fifteen years post its foundation was the challenge Shubhra undertook when she joined Denave. She set up the marketing function with small marketing budgets and was recognised with Denave's North Star award, the company's most coveted recognition, within a year of initiating the function. This, she recalls, has been the highest point of her career till date.

A decade from now Shubhra sees herself creating brand success stories and enabling brands that have a compelling story but lesser resources to find a space and voice in the industry. She asserts that communication is her lifeline and believes that one can gain inspiration from various people, clients, seniors and peers, personalities like **Amitabh Bachchan, Narendra Modi**, and many more - there is something to learn from each one of them.

@ShubhraSinha  
bit.ly/ShubhraSinha



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## SHWETA MUNJAL

Head - Corporate Affairs, Asia Pacific  
Thomson Reuters

A Masters in Mass Communication, Shweta has secured a Values & Culture facilitator certification from Senn Delaney. Having facilitated multiple culture and values sessions globally, including in China has been a very fulfilling experience and a high point of her career, details Shweta.

Shweta believes that communication is the cornerstone of effective leadership and so by age 45, she sees herself as a Leadership Communications Coach helping the most seasoned executives develop greater leadership presence to empower and influence stakeholders.

She finds **Steve Jobs** an inspiring communicator for his communication style which left a powerful and lasting impression on his stakeholders! He understood the importance of connecting with stakeholders on human and personal level thereby creating an impact.

@shwetamunjal  
bit.ly/ShwetaMunjal



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## SOURI SRIRAM

Vice President  
Fleishman Hillard

Communication for Soumi is the practice of developing, cultivating and maintaining the best practices to promote a company's reputation and its thought leadership positioning with the right set of internal & external audience.

Prior to joining Fleishman Hillard, Soumi has worked with General Motors and Lintas PR. During her stint at General Motors, as part of the change in business strategy she steered the stakeholder communication during their restructuring tenure in major markets like India, South Africa & Singapore. This phase, she recalls, was a high point of her career.

At 45, she sees herself as a catalyst for corporate firms to form & execute their communication strategy blueprint while building & safeguarding their brand reputation in markets across the globe.

Soumi is inspired by American business magnate **Richard Branson**, who believes in taking the situation head on and responding to crises immediately.

@soumidutta  
bit.ly/SoumiSriram



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## SREEDHANYA SHANMUGHAN

Head - Corporate Communications  
Lowe's India

Sreedhanya has single-handedly set up a strong communications and branding practice for Lowe's India. Additionally, she took up the role of the CSR head for a year, and established a framework and partnerships for the company. This experience has been a high point of her career.

In the coming decade she sees herself being a strong advocate for integrated communications and reputation practice either in an MNC organisation or a renowned consultancy.

Communication, according to Sreedhanya, is the art of inspiring change and hence she is inspired by Nigerian novelist **Chimamanda Adichie** because of how she stands up for what she believes in to bring about change.

@sreedhanya  
bit.ly/SreedhanyaShanmughan

## COVER FEATURE

40 Under FORTY



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**SREYA  
RAKSHIT**

Head - Hospitality and F&B Practice  
PR Pundit

Sreya holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced Media Studies from XIC, Mumbai and has previously worked with Avian Media. She highlights two high points of her career - Her work for developing the CSR charter for Vertex India to provide education to underprivileged children which won international recognition at the Vertex Global awards in 2007. She was 26 at the time; And recently, growing the Hospitality and F&B vertical at PR Pundit by over 100% in less than a year.

Sreya aspires to lead innovative and global campaigns in the hospitality, travel and F&B industry in years to come.

She is highly inspired by **Archana Jain**, Managing Director, PR Pundit and describes her as a communicator extraordinaire who has been path breaking in setting up a mid-sized PR firm that holds notable reference as the frontrunner in luxury and lifestyle PR.



@Sreya\_

bit.ly/SreyaRakshit



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**SUHAIL  
VADGAONKAR**

VP - Customer Experience, Brand & PR  
UrbanClap

As an ardent lover of nature and animals, Suhail aspires to run an establishment that does agri-tourism where they create their own agri-based products also is a home to abandoned animals. His dream is to create a safe nurturing space to care for abandoned and injured animals.

Talking about his career, he believes that he has not hit his career high yet. For the moment he is thrilled at being a key leader at UrbanClap where leading, mentoring and seeing his team grow gives him a definite high.

Suhail believes that Communication is not just delivering a message but building perspective and he is inspired by **Michelle Obama**, former First Lady of the United States.



@SuhailVadgaonkar

bit.ly/SuhailVadgaonkar



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**SUNIET  
BEZBAROOWA**

Senior Manager - Brand & Communication  
Deloitte

An MBA in International Business from Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Suniet has previously worked with Concept Public Relations and The Times of India Group. He has been instrumental in driving one of the first and the biggest brand-building investment for a brand to change its perception in the marketplace. This, he recalls, was an extremely enriching and challenging process and a high point of his career.

At 45, Suniet would like to pause and reflect on his achievements before setting new goals for himself. Communication, he believes, is speaking to thousands at once, yet speaking to the one. Hence, he is inspired by Indian Prime Minister, **Narendra Modi** for whom, he says, language is never a barrier to relay the most complex issues in simple yet a lucid manner.



@Sunietb

bit.ly/SunietBezbaroowa



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**SYLVIA  
DUTTA**

Head - Corporate Communications  
Jubilant FoodWorks Limited

With over a decade of experience in corporate communications, Sylvia feels a high every time she handles a crisis and ensures her organisation emerges stronger thereafter. When videos of Domino's oregano sachets having insects went viral, along with media management, she made strategic recommendations for recalling current sachets and updating the communication on the packs to caution customers that the packs were for immediate consumption.

**Indra Nooyi**, former CEO - PepsiCo, always inspires Sylvia because she talks empathetically with her audience; never does she come across as intimidating despite being a globally influential person. She openly shares her experiences, learnings, is open about the costs of success without being apologetic about her professional life.



@SylviaTheFlower

bit.ly/SylviaDutta

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## VASUDEVAN RANGARAJAN

Corporate Lead - Delhi  
Edelman India

A MSc from the University of Texas, Dallas, Vasudevan has previously worked as a senior correspondent with The Times Now. He asserts that the high point of his career was when he was leading the team that supported India's position as a key enabler of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change at COP21. This involved an integrated approach including content creation, digital, social and media engagement.

At 45, he sees himself pushing the envelope of marketing communications and engagement that better realises outcomes.

Vasu believes that communications is essentially the art of using the right tools to tell the right story to the right audience to achieve the right outcome. He is inspired by **Dan Edelman**, Founder of the world's top ranked Public Relations firm for his ability to visualise the future of public relations and public engagement, helping define the business the way we know it.



@vxr023000



bit.ly/VasudevanRangarajan

40 Under FORTY

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## VASUNDHARA MUDGIL

Head - Communications, India  
Spotify

Vasundhara has a MBA from IE Business School, Madrid, Spain and has previously worked with Intel and Genesis Burson-Marsteller. The professional journey has been exciting at every stage, she says. From being the youngest Associate Partner at GBM to being one of the youngest corporate communication leads in the country at 30, it's been an immense learning curve.

With technology constantly blurring the boundaries of roles, careers and aspirations, Vasundhara finds it hard to define where she aspires to see herself at 45. However, writing, mentoring and managing crises will always be a part of her life, she says.

American comedian **Jimmy Fallon** is one of her favourite communicators because of the ease and precision with which he delivers every episode with a diverse group of guests. To her, that's what great communication is about - being able to tell a genuine, trustworthy story that your audience wants to hear, based on what you observe and listen.



@Vasundhara\_9



bit.ly/VasundharaMudgil

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## PRAXIS 2018 REPLAY



Co-chairs **Anubhuti Mathur** and **Roshan Alexander** declare PRAXIS 2018 Open



The Host **Kiruba Shankar**



**Angela Chitkara**, PR Track Director, City College of New York delivering a Special Address on Why Diversity and Inclusion is Central to Effective Storytelling



**Sree Sreenivasan**, Digital & Social Media Strategist & Consultant discussing Storytelling in the Age of Digital in his Keynote Address



**Resham Chhabra**, Head - Communications, NestAway Technologies in conversation with **Sree Sreenivasan**



**Nazeeb Arif**, Executive Vice President, ITC Limited sharing Stories of Sustainability in his Keynote Address



**Minal D'Rozario**, Co-founder and Director, Ideosphere Consulting in conversation with **Nazeeb Arif**



**Aseem Sood** and **Nitin Mantri** presenting the PRCAI State of the Industry report



The traditional group photograph at **#PRAXIS7**

## PRAXIS 2018 REPLAY



**Team IKEA** shares their India launch story



**Roland Buerk**, Senior Director & Head of Communications, Africa, Middle East and India, Nissan Motor Corporation discussing How Culture Impacts Storytelling



**Archana Muthappa**, Head - Corporate Communications and CSR, Bangalore International Airport in conversation with **Roland Buerk**



**Stella Low**, SVP, Global Communications, Dell sharing her thoughts on Reinventing Storytelling in a Dynamic World



The Engaged Audience at **PRAXIS 2018**



**Arun Sudhaman**, CEO/Editor-in-Chief at The Holmes Report in conversation with **Stella Low**



SCoRe student **Anjana Venugopal** receiving the Vishwaajeet Ganpat Memorial Scholarship



**Akshita Agrawal** and **Suhas Tadas** receiving the Young Pride Challenge Award



**Aarushi Jain** receiving the Ace Business Communicator Prize



Convocation for SCoRe batch of 2017-2018

## PRAXIS 2018 REPLAY



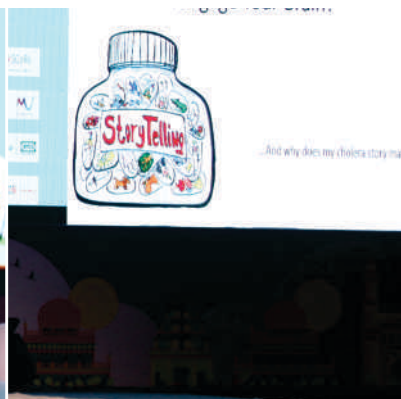
Power Talk by **MC Mary Kom**



Live Concert by **Maati Baani**



**Sam Ruchlewicz**, VP, Digital Strategy & Data Analytics, Warschawski discussing how to Quantify the Contribution of Storytelling to the Bottomline



**Tina McCorkindale**, President, Institute for Public Relations emphasises why Research is at the core of Powerful Storytelling



**Rohan Vyavaharkar**, Director, Marketing and Communications, Omidyar Network in conversation with **Tina McCorkindale**



**Gauri Sawant**, Transgender Activist and Director of Sakshi Char Chowhi enthral the audience with her talk



**IPS Officer Rema Rajeshwari** delivering a special address



**Peter Brun**, Chief Communications Officer, VFS Global discusses Storytelling in the World of Travel and Tourism



**Rashmi Soni**, VP & Head - Corporate Communications, Vistara TATA SIA Airlines in conversation with **Peter Brun**



**Partho Dasgupta**, CEO, BARC India delivering a Special Address on Building Brands and Storytelling: Understanding the Power of TV from BARC Data

## PRAXIS 2018 REPLAY



Understanding the Business of Storytelling in Asia - A Panel Discussion with (L - R) **Arun Sudhaman**, The Holmes Report (moderator), **Rupen Desai**, Vice Chairman, Asia-Pacific, Middle East & Africa - Edelman, **Esty Pujadas**, Partner/President, - Ketchum APAC, MEA and LATAM and **Matt Stafford**, President, Asia-Pacific, Burson Cohn & Wolfe

**Roger Pereira**, Advertising and Public Relations Legend sharing his Stories from Yesteryears of Indian Public Relations



**Arwa Husain**, Director, Adfactors PR in conversation with **Roger Pereira**

How Storytellers are Navigating the Landscape in the Age of Fake News - A Panel Discussion with (L - R) **Nikita Nanda**, Value 360, **Noopur Sharma**, PR Pundit, **Rohan Vyavaharkar**, Omidyar Network, **Sarab Kochhar**, Institute for Public Relations (moderator), **Pranav Kumar**, Allison+Partners and **Alex Malouf**, Procter & Gamble



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## SHREE LAHIRI

Senior Editor - Reputation Today

The way we communicate has completely changed over the past decade. With PR evolving, how is PR leadership today? Rishi Seth, Founder and CEO of Evoc, observed that “the PR profession’s role as protectors and nurturers of its clients’ reputation has grown increasingly complex”. Modern day crises often erupt online and damage a brand’s reputation in a matter of minutes.

The corporate landscape has been caught up in knots of late. The #MeToo trail starting with Harvey Weinstein has led to stories crashing social media. “It has been like a ripple effect, where the voice of one person gave the courage to others to speak up”, says Pratishtha Kaura, Consultant, Text 100.

So, an important question today is: What can companies do to prevent it? “#MeToo is a powerful movement driven by brave women”, says Dr Samir Kapur, Senior Vice-President, Adfactors PR and Chairman North PRCAL. For the PR business, which majorly dominated by women professionals it is important to sensitise people. Additionally, PRCAL has taken stern steps too. Many firms have already constituted internal committees; the industry body and PR firms have organised training modules to create and spread awareness; and HR functions have been realigned to handle such cases with sensitivity.

“It is therefore important for PR firms to come together and handle it together as a community. It is crucial to support the policies with strict action. Mere lip-service and a sexual

harassment cell will not work,” says Pratishtha.

**The focus should be on making communications more agile, responsive and uncomplicated. As a fraternity, we have focused on creating immaculate messages that are often too complex for their audiences to understand. As PR professionals, we inherently understand that a message which does not resonate well with the intended audience, fails to have any impact; and it is now time to change the way we formulate our communications for different channels.**

Should we focus on ethics and work on how to prevent sexual harassment in the office? Strongly believing that we have been sufficiently sensitised, Rishi says that “the onus is clearly on PR leaders to provide a safe working environment to all employees”. The nature of our job is such that PR professionals have to deal extensively with external parties, including journalists and clients; therefore, efforts to prevent sexual harassment must extend to work within and outside the office. In agreement is Ruby Sinha, Managing Director, Kommune Brand Communications and Founder, sheatwork.com who feels “Ethics in the workplace is critical in preventing sexual harassment but for PR firm employees, harassment might not just be in the physical workplace, but can involve external partners like clients or the media. PR firms need to keep all these factors in mind when designing their sexual harassment

policy. It is also about ethics being reflected at the senior most levels in challenging situations”.

What could be some tips? Rishi suggests some steps in this direction can be: regular workshops on educating and training women on identifying and responding to potential sexual harassment including reporting it appropriately; sensitising men about what constitutes harassment and finally, creating appropriate organisational systems and processes for dealing with any reported case.

**There should be a known, 100% safe reporting mechanism. It could be a hotline, the website, HR or whatever mechanism seems appropriate. What matters is that there is a system that is run with fairness and integrity.**

“With time, I am confident that such effective steps would usher in a healthy environment, where everyone will be respected and honoured,” concluded Samir.

**Shree Lahiri has spent over two decades in the field of communication, as a journalist and being involved in reputation management and relations. She can be reached @shree\_la on Twitter.**

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## AMITH PRABHU

Advisor - Reputation Today

This column is the twelfth and it gives me immense joy to look back and see what a tiny team has done for the Indian Public Relations community in a short span of time. In this column, I will write about two things that have completed two years and I want to encourage each of you to support both these in the future because they are really worth it and are built around the quest for learning.

First, I will write about Knowledge Factory – this is a platform that was in the works since 2015 and saw the light of day in 2016. The brainchild of veteran journalist Madhavan Narayanan and co-curated by Meena Vaidyanathan, I have witnessed how this platform which is gearing for the third edition has grown from strength to strength.

The platform offers professionals of all ages, from all walks of life a great way to learn about new topics from a wide variety of subjects. You may learn about this platform online. The next edition takes place on February 9th, 2019 in Bangalore and is a great way for reputation management professionals to enhance their knowledge and meet some new and interesting people at the same time. It is indeed a festival of ideas, with a twist!

Next, I write about a passion project that I have been involved with from its inception. The brain child of Public Relations veteran NS Rajan and co-

nurtured by Hemant Gaule, the School of Communications & Reputation has seen two tiny batches graduate and the third batch is getting ready for their internship as you read this. The very idea of the school was born out of an intent to give back. And we have managed to build the concept from scratch but will need the entire fraternity to rally behind this idea in the years ahead to take it to the next level. So, if you would like to be part of this endeavour, there are three ways you can support:

a) By recommending a graduate to the full-time ten-month programme. If s/he is willing to invest ten months for a solid career in Public Relations starting in Mumbai the school would be happy to connect.

b) By taking time out to either teach an entire course over a trimester or just a masterclass over an afternoon. If you would like to share insights for the next generation of professionals, please get in touch

c) By engaging SCoRe to train you, your team or your leadership on topics as diverse as crisis management, media relations, writing skills, campaign planning and strategic thinking among others. The school will be able to customise this for you.

Please write to me at [amith.prabhu@scoreindia.org](mailto:amith.prabhu@scoreindia.org) if any of the above strikes a chord.

With regard to the first opportunity, there are two ways of looking at it:

1. A ten-month programme to prepare candidates for the amazing world of Public Relations where an internship and job is guaranteed with an investment of a certain fee.
2. A 24-month programme where the fee paid for the first ten months of theory is earned over the next 14 months whereby a two-year programme with a mix of classroom learning and real life works out to be absolutely free.

Well, think about the struggle one goes through to find talent and to nurture it, train it, retain it, sustain it. It takes a village, and this will need the might of the community. Are you ready?

Amith Prabhu is the Founding Dean of School of Communication and Reputation (SCoRe). He is also the founder of the Promise Foundation - the only organisation from India which is a member of Global Alliance. He can be reached @amithpr on Twitter.

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