



Skills and Talents that Drive Internal Communication

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Chapter 2 of the IC Kollektif book *Disrupting the Function of IC: A Global Perspective*, examines what will drive internal communication going forward. The Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence is honoured to provide excerpts from four senior communication professionals and their point of view. Download [Disrupting the Function of IC: A Global Perspective](#) to read the full articles and the other seven wisdom-filled chapters.

Liam Fitzpatrick Managing Partner, Working

Increasingly, the mark of success in our field is the ability to get business results. Once, IC was the domain of the harmless creative. No one had high expectations of what we did as long as it looked great or was fun! Now, we support leaders who know exactly what they want from internal communications and where it fits into business planning. Sure, our work has to be well produced and attractive, but it has to deliver results in the form of outcomes, not just outputs.

If we can't make the link between the needs of the business and the communications we produce it becomes hard to justify budgets, resources or management attention. IC managers who enjoy access to senior colleagues get two things right. They make the connection between activity and impact and they bring data. And it all starts by constantly asking "why?"

The only safe prediction that can be made about IC is that our tools and techniques are not going to stay the same. The speed of change in our practice is getting faster.

Confronted by so many different ways to communicate and so many different pressures, communicators need to keep dragging plans back to the fundamental question of what are we trying to achieve. Tomorrow's professionals, like their colleagues of the past, will not start with the tool. We'll start with the end in mind.

Deborah Hinton Senior Strategic Communication Consultant, Phil Communications

Internal communicators know a lot about the craft of communication. You can't get past the gate without knowing how to write key messages, create FAQs, develop competent communication plans and design eye-catching campaigns. But we all know that craft alone isn't cutting it. And, growing expectations for seamless, transparent communication combined with new technologies is increasing the pressure.

Employees are crying out for mercy: "Stop the information overload." It's time to start working on our super power. "... in an era of rapid technological change, says Krznaric, social philosopher and author of *Empathy*, ... mastering empathy is the key business survival skill because it underpins successful teamwork and leadership." Edwin Rutcsch, Founding Director of the Centre for Building a Culture of Empathy, asserts "Empathy competence is a predictor of excellent performance ... and essential ... in the complex

globally-focused communications profession.

Internal communications professionals that have, and continue to develop, empathy have a distinct advantage over anyone else in the profession and beyond.

Alejandro Formanchuk Director, Formanchuk & Asociados

We are going towards a redistribution of internal communication power; someone's power to raise an issue, set an agenda, send messages and make them circulate and last.

This may be seen as a threat, however, I consider it an opportunity for organizations to own internal communication and for their members to help to feed and improve that communication. I have always thought that the best thing that could ever happen to internal communication is to be removed from the Internal Communication business unit so as to be significantly owned by all the company.

The evolution of internal communication as a key business driver presents opportunity and challenge for communication professionals. Beyond the ability to write, the menu of knowledge and skills needed to deliver solid business results has grown exponentially, rivaling the degree-laden marketing profession.

Ninety percent of internal communication received by an employee is neither delivered by the IC area nor circulated through IC media. It is produced by leaders, employees, directors and others. Within this ecosystem of internal communicators, leaders are the most important players . . .

Claire Watson MC, ABC, VP Strategic Communication Management, Cropley Communication

The framework for success among internal communication professionals includes basic skills common across all communication work, and some that are specific to the internal audience.

The ability to manage communication strategically is a mainstay for all communication professionals, but in particular for those working in the internal communication space. The lines that once separated internal and external communication are converging, and within organizations communication functions are increasingly integrated.

Convergence and integration demand collaboration to develop common strategy aligned with business needs. Research and audience analysis is shared, key messages are consistent and the binding ingredients, a strategic approach and jointly delivered implementation plan, means that internal, corporate and marketing communication focus their resources on the same objectives to drive results.

Competent strategic communication management stretches beyond communication planning, although a solid plan is still the backbone of success. The all-encompassing management function embraces creativity, stakeholder and change management, alignment of vision, mission and values with business needs, mentoring leaders and influencers and inspiring audiences to take action.



Claire Watson MC, ABC, APR

Vice-president, Strategic Communication Management
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Claire Watson consults to global, provincial and national companies on their communication needs. Her expertise encompasses research and measurement, internal and change communication, branding, marketing, public and community relations, advocacy and corporate social responsibility. She has taught extension classes for the University of Regina and developed unique training courses for the Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence. She holds 33 international and 150+ national and provincial Awards of Excellence. In addition, she has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from IABC Regina, Master Communicator designation from IABC Canada and the IABC Chairman's Award for leadership in the profession.