



Brain storm

How neuroscience can
help engagement

InsideOut

FOR MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION | ISSUE TWENTY FOUR | DECEMBER 2013

Institute
of Internal
Communication

The power within



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Brain training

Use your brain. It sounds like an obvious thing to tell anyone, especially a communicator, but it turns out we should be using everyone's brains.

Neuroscience shows that the way we react to perceived threats and our need to belong to an in-group has not changed in thousands of years – and there are some valuable lessons for anyone trying to engage a workforce.

In this issue we speak to specialist in neuroscience and engagement, Hilary Scarlett, and find out what communicators at John Lewis and Diageo think about it.

We also talk to someone who is officially at the top of the comms game. The Financial Times' Emily Gibbs was named IoIC's Internal Communicator of the Year 2013 and we find out what makes her tick. Mind you, it was tough trying to keep up – as Emily is a marathon runner, cyclist and triathlete in her 'spare' time.

A large reason for her scooping this year's title was her understanding and promotion of digital comms at the *FT*. For anyone who thinks they'd like to know more about how to make the best use of social media in IC (probably most of us!), the best person to ask is Stuart Bruce. He's running an IoIC seminar on the subject in January, but in the meantime we pick up a few pointers.

Seasonal greetings and a happy New Year to you all.

Barry Rutter, editor

InsideOut

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FEIEA honour for Tim

IoIC Board Director Tim Buckley has been awarded a Diploma of Honour by FEIEA, the Federation of European business communicators associations. Each year FEIEA awards a restricted number of Diplomas of Honour, in recognition of outstanding services in the promotion of better business communications in Europe. Tim was nominated by IoIC and the full citation is [here](#).



Accelerate into 2014

Two new sets of 2014 dates are now available for Accelerate – the high performance learning programme for internal communicators. Run jointly by the Institute of Internal Communication and engagement specialist Gatehouse Group, they will be hosted in Manchester on March 17/18 and 26/27 and in London on May 13/14 and 20/21. More details [here](#).



Northern winners

The winners of IoIC's North Awards 2013 have been announced following a new-style presentation event. The very best of internal communicators from across the region gathered at the White Cloth Gallery in Leeds as the

event took on a very different style. Gone was the traditional black tie dinner and formal glitz and glamour - and in their place sharing of best practice and knowledge and recognition of the very best in the region. Full story and winners' details [here](#).

Busy Scots

IoIC Scotland has a busy few weeks coming up with Christmas drinks in Edinburgh on Wednesday December 18, a Perth networking event on Wednesday January 22, and a seminar on 'human attraction' on Thursday February 13. Full details in 'Events' [here](#).

Brush up your skills

Whether you want to know more about planning your comms, communicating change, maximising the value of your channels, or unleashing your creativity, IoIC has a course lined up for you in 2014.

The new year training sessions kick off with 'Social Media for Internal Communicators' in London on January 22 (more details on Pages 13-14), but full details on all IoIC courses are available [here](#).

Public sector alert

The first dedicated cross public sector internal comms conference - delivered by the public sector – is set to take place early in 2014. Jointly organised by new IoIC Board Director Andy Rushton, head of change communication at the Department of Work & Pensions, it will take place

twice - once in London on Wednesday February 12 and once in Manchester on Tuesday February 18. Speakers from the public and private sector will discuss the state of the IC nation and lead discussions on leading trends and issues in the industry. "We expect delegates from right

across the public service - not just central government - who will have a golden opportunity to make contacts and create networks," says Andy. More details soon on www.ioic.org.uk

FEIEA hat-trick for ConnectMag

FremantleMedia's ConnectMag has become the first publication to win the same category three times in the FEIEA Grand Prix Awards. *ConnectMag*, created by Sequel Group for FremantleMedia, won in the FEIEA Grand Prix Awards 2013 – which aim to recognise the best internal comms in Europe - in the Internal Electronic Newsletter category, achieving a unique hat-trick. The digital magazine is a combination of the efforts of FremantleMedia, who produce

the content for the magazine, and London-based internal comms agency Sequel Group (a platinum sponsor of IoIC). More details [here](#).





Brain power

Our brains are wired to keep us alive. They give us the instinct to avoid threats and be attracted to the security of the group. So, can neuroscience help communicators engage employees at work? *InsideOut* investigates.

While living on the savannah, prehistoric man needed to react quickly to any kind of threat and those that survived were the ones with the best 'fight or flight' instincts.

The chances of making it to the next day were also vastly improved if you were part of a group that could protect you.

The world of work is not vastly different from those far off days and our brains, according to neuroscientists, are still wired in pretty much the same way. They're programmed to avoid threats and to collect information so we can predict what's going to happen in any situation.

"Any significant change at work represents a threat," explains Hilary Scarlett who has worked in employee communication and

change for over 20 years and who has studied how neuroscience applies to organisations. "Our brain wants to predict what's going to happen – if it can predict, it can protect us.

"Literally what a perceived threat does to us is that energy goes to part of the brain that helps you get ready to run away or hit someone, and away from the prefrontal cortex, the area where we do our considered thinking, planning and decision-making. Our brains panic, are distracted, can't think as clearly, can't remember things as well, and see the world as more hostile than it really is."

On the other hand, certain key factors can send us into a positive state where we are more innovative and collaborative, more 'engaged' and mentally

perform better. "One of those is connectedness and whether we feel part of an 'in-group' and accepted," says Hilary. "As babies we need people around to bring us up, we wouldn't survive if we didn't have someone nurturing us. Within seconds of birth a baby is checking that there is someone to look after it, and we continue to seek that connection throughout life.

"If you think about employee engagement in the workplace, it's a social place and we're constantly thinking 'Am I accepted? Am I one of the in-group or not? Do the managers prefer other people to me?'"

"We've all been there, with managers who respect us and like us and then had those who don't. If you feel people don't accept you, you go to into the threat state." ►

► So far, so logical. Most communicators would accept that when there's unrest in a workplace, productivity is likely to suffer, or that a sense of belonging is likely to boost morale, while clear communication containing the information people want to know will usually improve a situation.

But what has always been a communicator's instinct can be proved by neuroscientists via brain scans which study activity in the brain during various situations.

For instance, the amygdala deals with emotions and is part of the brain's 'fear hub', which activates our natural 'fight or flight' response to a threat situation, whereas the prefrontal cortex is the seat of the brain's executive functions like judgement, decision-making and problem-solving.

"It's still very early days for neuroscience – the study of the nervous system only really got going in the second half of the 20th century. The more widespread use of fMRI scanners over the past two decades means we can look at brain activity and we can

now start to put this knowledge to practical use in organisations," says Hilary. For instance, in IQ tests it's been shown that people score lower if they are upset beforehand.

"It makes sense to us because we've all been there," she adds. "Suddenly someone is rude to you and you get distracted and you aren't at your best. It resonates with people."

More importantly, Hilary, a director at employee comms and change specialists Scarlett Associates, says neuroscience has direct benefits for internal communicators – in two ways.

Firstly, it helps communicators understand how and when to communicate, but also it's useful for convincing sometimes reluctant leaders or managers that good communication and relationships have a direct impact on the brain's ability to work at its best. "If leaders and managers understood the impact of the 'threat state' on the brain and our ability to think, they'd understand why communication and having a relationship

"If leaders and managers understood the impact of the 'threat state' on the brain and our ability to think, they'd understand why communication and having a relationship with someone is so important."

Hilary Scarlett

A personal benefit

Neuroscience has proved that most people's brain simply cannot do two things properly at the same time.

"One thing it's taught me is to turn off email so it's not constantly popping up while I'm trying to write or concentrate," says Hilary. "I've become much more aware of what helps me concentrate or when I'm being distracted by things."

Tweeting from a conference is another example where doing two things at once may not be the best thing.

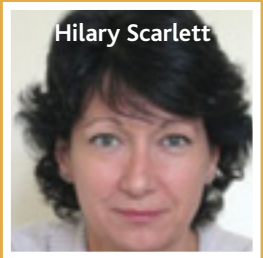
"You simply can't concentrate on what's going on in front of you while thinking what to tweet," she says. "However, the process of thinking about your tweet may help you recall that bit of information better."

"When we're thinking about what

to share we're processing it in a different part of the brain than normal learning – the medial prefrontal cortex – whereas the hippocampus is the bit which we mainly associate with learning."

Also, once you're aware of your brain sending you into 'threat mode', you can learn to control it.

"I was with a potential client having a meeting and it was going really well," recalls Hilary. "Then she mentioned she had just had a meeting with someone I knew as a competitor and I felt myself going into threat mode. But I knew why so that helped me focus back on the meeting."



Hilary Scarlett

with someone is so important"

"Our brain craves information," she stresses. "Our brains need to predict and protect us. If we're going through change and we don't have information our brains are looking for it and trying to make sense without information."

"We start overthinking things and going into threat mode – 'Why is everyone else in that meeting and I'm not?' – whereas if we have information, it helps put us in a more positive, focused mindset and makes us more resilient and more innovative."

Dr David Rock has worked with neuroscientists to develop a brain-based

model for collaborating and influencing others – it carries the acronym SCARF, which covers Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness.

Hilary says each of them applies to employee engagement.

STATUS

Status is in part about our relative importance in the pecking order and also about self-esteem, learning and developing. If we feel there is any chance of a reduction in our status, we feel threatened and get distracted. On the other hand, if we feel we are improving at something or getting deserved ►



► recognition, our brains can focus and perform better.

CERTAINTY

When there's a lot of uncertainty, our brains find it difficult to focus. Comms can offer certainty in an uncertain world. That's where it becomes vital – "If there's uncertainty, for example about jobs, make sure when and how you communicate is something employees can be certain about. If you give people certainty, it helps the brain to focus more. You can say we will communicate every Friday and make sure you give an update even if it's to say there's no news."

AUTONOMY AND THE NEED FOR CONTROL

When there are a lot of things that are out of people's control, they feel threatened. They may not be able to affect the restructure or closure of a factory, so where are the things you can give them control over? Neuroscience

has shown that having some control greatly reduces the hormone cortisol and stress. This is important as cortisol over a prolonged period is physically damaging and kills brain cells, especially in the hippocampus which is important for memory.

"One organisation I worked with was closing down a site but we worked with managers to find out what employees could control," explains Hilary. "They gave people the chance to help decide how the site was closed, what was thrown away and how they all got to say goodbye to people. It might not seem like much but it gives some control back to the people and has a major impact on reducing stress."

"If you're moving to a new office, let people choose where they're going to sit, how they will arrange the office – where it's possible to pass back some control, it's worth doing."

RELATEDNESS

This goes back to the earlier point about our need to be part

of an in-group. Stay close to your team, listen to them, respect them, make them feel they're part of that in-group. That helps to get them in a positive place.

FAIRNESS

A sense of fairness is particularly important when going through change, it becomes really important that we feel the process will be fair. "If things are changing you want to feel you have a fair chance," says Hilary. "For instance 'Will I have a fair crack at reapplying for my job? What's the process?' and so on.

Hilary sums up: "Neuroscience provides insight on the fundamental organising principle of the brain, which is avoiding threat and seeking reward. Keeping this in mind can be extremely useful to communicators, leaders and managers. It helps us to plan change and communication, and it also helps us to understand why people might react in a certain way." ►

"If there's uncertainty, for example about jobs, make sure when and how you communicate is something employees can be certain about."

Hilary Scarlett

Neuroscience in the workplace...

Claire Grundy, director of employee engagement and communication at UK drinks giant Diageo, says: "Neuroscience can help communicators keep it real.

"It's refreshing because it takes communication right back to fundamentals. It informs you about human responses, human brain wiring at the most basic level.

"It's also a way of challenging yourself. Is the time we're spending on our approach to engagement well spent? Are we fighting people's basic physiology, the basic set-up we all have? Or are we working in sympathy

with that? It's appealing and interesting to people in the business who aren't necessarily as wildly enthusiastic about engagement as we are. You need to be purposeful in conversation with leaders and managers and neuroscience provides actual evidence that if we do this the wrong way we shall turn people off but if we do it right we can engage them. It's very useful for us, as communicators, but it's also useful for leaders.

"At Diageo we've used neuroscience to be more challenging with ourselves. Thankfully, a lot of what we were doing was validated by it."

Clare Barclay, senior manager, internal communications at John Lewis, says: "We brought our IC team together to discuss neuroscience. It acted as a bit of a prompt to our thinking as advisers. It was also a really good thing to do together as a team.

"We looked at David Rock's SCARF model and talked about our preferences, and I think it made us look at who we are as people.

"Neuroscience is definitely complementary to what we do anyway and learning about it gives you confidence in your instinct. It also gives real rigour



Clare Barclay

to your conversations when talking to people at board level who might see engagement as something fluffy because you have real evidence to back up the theory." ■



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Claire Grundy, Diageo

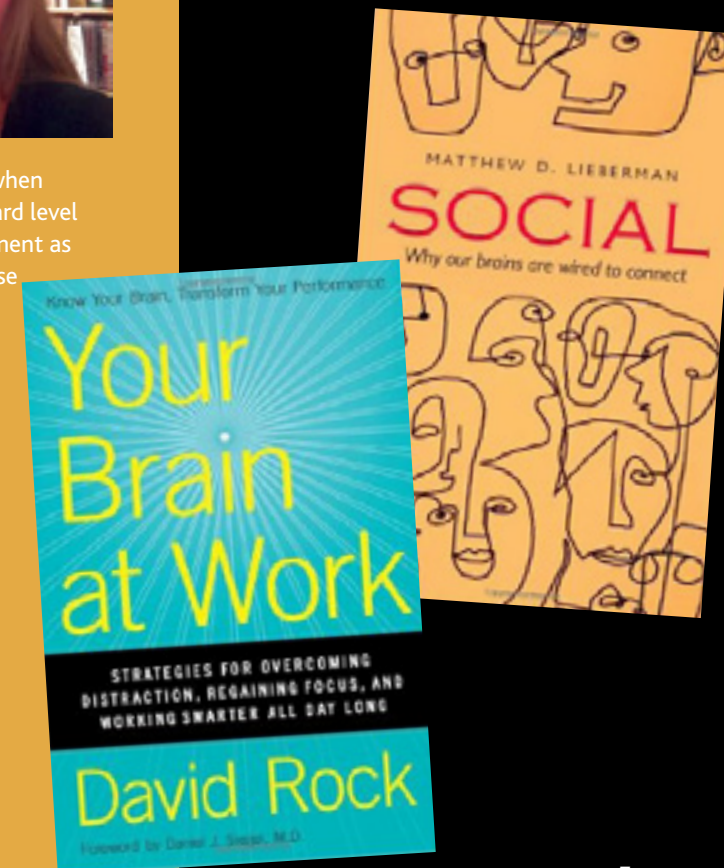
MORE ABOUT NEUROSCIENCE

www.neuroleadership.org



LinkedIn
Neuroscience of Change
and Communication group
(managed by Hilary Scarlett)

GOOD BOOKS



The Times machine

The meteoric rise of Internal Communicator of the Year Emily

She's a New Zealander who moved to London just six years ago and switched from journalism to corporate comms at the same time. It's been a meteoric rise because The *Financial Times*' Emily Gibbs is IoIC's Internal Communicator of the Year. She tells *InsideOut* about everything from deciphering jargon to carrying the Olympic torch.

When Emily Gibbs is writing any comms message for the 2,000 staff at *The Financial Times*, she always applies a simple test – the Lucy Kellaway test.

Lucy is a *FT* journalist who writes a management column for the paper and website and Emily says:



IoIC chief executive presents Emily's award

"She'll often take a message from inside a company and rip it to shreds. That's always in the back of my mind and it's a really useful test.

"I often rewrite with that in mind – I ask does it make sense? Have we deciphered the jargon here?"

It's just one aspect of being head of internal communications at a media organisation where around a third of employees are journalists at the top of their game.

"I did initially feel pressure from that," admits Emily, who started work as a comms executive at the *FT* in 2006. "I'm very aware of who our audience is whenever I draft anything."

It also helps that she started her

working career as a radio journalist – including a stint at Radio New Zealand, the Kiwi equivalent of the BBC – following a broadcast journalism degree.

"Having a background in journalism means working for a media organisation is the dream job for me," says Emily. "It means I'm still involved with the media, which is great because I'm a bit of a news junky, and we work very closely with our editorial colleagues."

It has also put her at the forefront of the digital revolution of the comms world.

The *Financial Times* now has more digital subscribers than readers of its printed edition, so ▶



“We set out to help our staff to adapt and get equipped for the digital age. Now other organisations are facing a similar challenge.”

Emily Gibbs



▶ the company’s internal comms had to keep pace.

Emily and her team organised the *Financial Times* Digital Learning Week – which included over 40 presentations, interactive workshops and online courses in seven *FT* offices around the world - and that was the project which saw her shortlisted for the Internal Communicator of the Year Award.

“Working for a media organisation like *The Financial Times* at a time when every business is going more and more digital and communication is changing hugely through social media and multi-channel means I’ve been at the forefront of some of the changes in the industry,” she says.

“We set out to help our staff to adapt and get equipped for the digital age. Now other organisations are facing a similar challenge.

“We’ve really had to rethink our internal comms and make sure they are multi-channel. We speak all the time about how the *FT* is a multi-channel, digital organisation, so we have to be like that internally too.

“We’re constantly finding

more creative ways of doing things – for example, we recently had the head of communities hosting a meeting for staff and rather than just circulate an email we got her to do a six-second video as an invite.

“Communication is all about people, so the more people you can get to share and be social and engage with each other, the more efficient it will be.”

The rise of social media has also blurred the lines between internal and external comms, but Emily’s team find it easier to cope than most as they all work across all comms disciplines.

“At the *FT* nothing internal is ever really just internal,” she explains. “We’re working with journalists and media people, so I have to think in an external fashion too.

“Social media has really empowered staff whether they like it or not - or even whether they realise it or not - to be brand ambassadors and have an impact on how a brand is perceived.

“Traditionally the *FT* has been shrouded in a bit of mystique but social media is really changing that. It’s changing



Emily with business COTY Karren Brady

Communication is all about people, so the more people you can get to share and be social and engage with each other, the more efficient it will be.”

Emily Gibbs

the way we interact with our audience. It makes us more human, and that applies in internal comms too.”

Emily received her Internal Communicator of the Year Award at a ceremony in London in November, just five months after being named European Young Communicator of the Year by the European Association of Communication ▶

“You have to think creatively to find ways of communicating with your audience.” Emily Gibbs

► Directors. “Once I got shortlisted I had to make a presentation to between 600 and 700 comms directors at the annual conference in Brussels,” she says. “They then voted on the three of us on the shortlist.

“It was a bit of a bizarre experience. You were meeting people and networking and hoping they’d vote for you but trying not to be in their face as if you were on the campaign trail.”

After picking up the IoC accolade too, she adds: “The initial emotion is to feel very proud. Being recognised in that way by your peers, people who work with you and know you, is hugely rewarding.

“It’s also fantastic visibility for me and I’m now even more excited about how my career could progress.”

Looking to the future, she says all internal communicators have to think multi-channel.

“You have to think creatively to find ways of communicating with your audience - and

you must know your audience, so you know you’re communicating with them in the right way,” she says. “That means also giving them the right channels to have the chance to reflect back.

“Another important thing is communication training for

directors and senior managers. It’s absolutely vital. Not everyone gets it right and that’s where you can add value and advise, support and give guidance.”

Emily also believes internal comms has to be truly strategic.

“How do you support the business objectives?” she asks. “Internal comms needs to step up on this. It isn’t a revenue-generating part of a company but it can support business objectives.

“The closer you can get to it the more respected you will be and the more influence you will have.”

But before we all get swept up in a multitude of social media channels, she stresses: “In a digital age face-to-face communication has never been more important. Your network can be big enough or strong enough.”

As for her own future, Emily says: “Eventually I’d like to become a comms director

and take the skills I have from internal comms and corporate comms and lead a team. I have a team in New York and London in internal comms, but I’d like to build that and in years to come move to a more senior role.”

And a return to New Zealand? “I’ve been in London for six and a half years and I’m loving it. Plus my other half is here and my mother now lives in London, but I always think I’ll return one day.” 🇳🇿

Runner, cyclist, baker and... Olympic torchbearer



Emily puts is equally busy in her life away from the *Financial Times* – and equally successful.

A keen runner, she has completed the Paris, London and Richmond Park marathons, while as a triathlete she competed in the Cowman half ironman triathlon last year and the London triathlon this year.

Cycling is such a passion Emily has also set up a blog called Lady Cycle

encouraging more women to take up the sport – you can read it [here](#).

“To balance this exercise I spend plenty of time in the kitchen baking - and even won a charity competition for the best baked biscuit, a rosemary shortbread recipe,” she says.

Emily was also a torchbearer at the Olympics last year. “My boss nominated me,” she explains. “I was lucky enough

to receive a place based on the charity work I’ve done raising funds through the marathons and triathlons, volunteering with my local running club and also helping children learn to read in local schools.”

It’s definitely an action-packed life and Emily says: “Well, I wouldn’t want people to think I was all work and no play!”

The BIG comms challenge

What's the biggest challenge facing internal communicators? Who better to answer than those at the top of their game?

InsideOut asked the shortlisted finalists in this year's Internal Communicator of the Year and here are their answers...



JUSTINE STEVENSON
DEUTSCHE BANK

"There are lots of challenges – measuring the value and impact of what we do; coping with ever complex organizations and environments; ensuring that we engage employees as well as communicate to them... But for me, the greatest challenge we face and shall face ever more, is that of working out how we shall engage with new generations who come into the workplace within the confines of 'traditional' organisations."

PRIYANKA RAJKUMAR
THE FIFTH BUSINESS

"The communications function is usually the first to be hit by cost pressure and yet it is such a crucial part of employee engagement. We need to be able to demonstrate our tangible value to the business even more, with fewer resources. So it's not just about doing more with less, its about narrowing in on the items that are truly high value both for the business and communications, and then doing them really well."



DAVID ORFORD
UK TRADE &
INVESTMENT

"I think the biggest challenge is cutting back on noise, both for ourselves as internal communicators and for our audiences - the two are linked. So don't be swayed by the latest fashionable theory or channel, and don't over-intellectualise internal communications. Listen to what your audience and your business needs and deliver a core number of things and messages consistently and well."



LESLEY ALLMAN
ALLMAN
COMMUNICATION

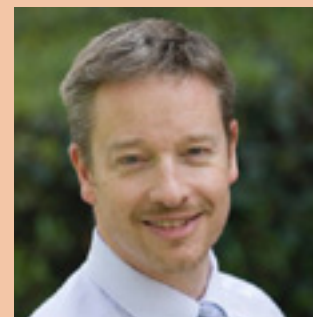
"It is over 100 years since George Bernard Shaw coined the famous phrase - the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place – and yet, his words have never been more true. Today, although every decent leader acknowledges that communication is important, many don't really know what it is or how to do it. They rely on professional communicators like us to help them to

understand what effective communication really is and how to deliver it. If we're doing our jobs properly we'll be talking to them not just about communication channels and about communication content but most importantly, about building their communication capability. Without this, there is real danger that they believe 'telling people stuff' is the same as communicating it and that success can be measured on outputs, rather than impacts. Our greatest challenge (and our greatest opportunity) is convincing them otherwise.



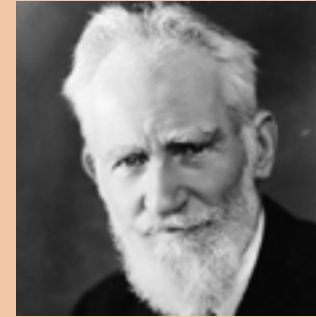
EMILY GIBBS
THE FINANCIAL TIMES

"The biggest challenge facing internal communications professionals is keeping up with the pace of change. We need to make the most of new technology, channels and a more connected world while ensuring the right kind of clear, open and frequent communications."



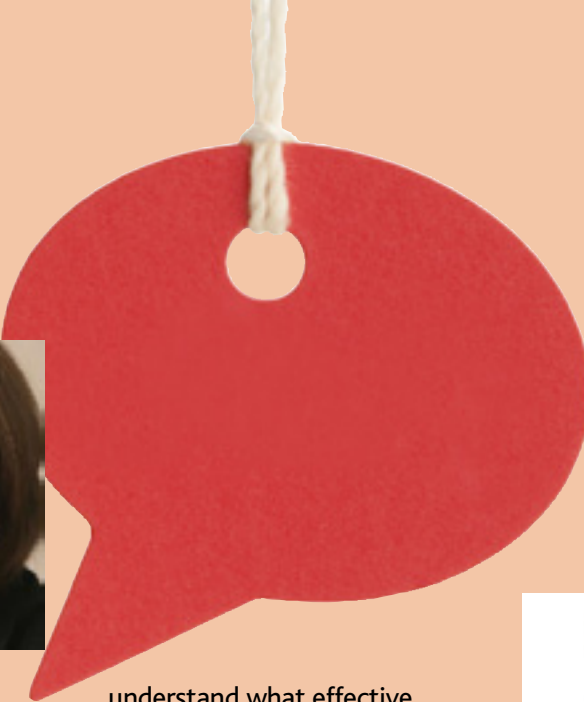
PAUL HEWITT
DEUTSCHE BANK

"I would say the greatest challenge, or at least one of them, is how to embrace and fully leverage internal social media in a way that supports a new, more empowering communications culture for employees, without exposing the organisation to risk."



"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

George Bernard Shaw





All you need to know about #socialmediainIC

Employees everywhere are using social media – with or without their employers’ help and guidance. *InsideOut* gets advice from Stuart Bruce.

The old days of near complete control of what is said about your organisation have long gone, but there are still ways for communicators to influence what is being said.

Firstly, get involved and secondly create a social media policy for your organisation.

These are just two pointers which will emerge when Stuart Bruce leads delegates in the basics of successful social media strategy and implementation at an IoIC workshop in January.

“The easiest way to have any type of control is to be actively involved rather than trying to restrict use,” says Stuart, who has been involved with social media since the mid-1990s. “But it’s

important to have a social media policy in place.”

Although he advocates organisations being open in the digital age, he says employees do need guidance.

“Often people make a mistake,” he explains. “It’s inadvertent because they don’t know what to do, but they’re not sitting out there waiting to abuse your company.

“In a bar or a restaurant they know how to behave but on Facebook and Twitter they’re still learning how to behave.”

So, a social media policy is a must, so employees know what’s expected of them online.

Stuart will explain how to put a policy in place, go

through examples of good ones, bad ones and ways to develop your own during the one-day course in London on Wednesday January 22.

He persists with the ‘be open’ advice.

“Make it bottom up,” he says. “Get employees to write it themselves. That way it becomes self-policing. No-one wants to be stopped from using social media so they watch what each other is doing.

“Also, it should be enabling rather than restrictive. The more enabling you make it, the greater you reduce the risk. If you make it too restrictive, people find loopholes to get round it or they just ignore it and use their own channels.

“You’re far more likely to adhere to something that’s designed with you in mind.”

Stuart points out that the US Army has published its social media policy online (view it [here](#)), so people can see it and it’s fairly open.

“If soldiers in Afghanistan can be encouraged to use social media in a safe way, surely your employees can?” says Stuart, who has carried our corporate comms training in Europe, the Middle East and USA, as well as the UK.

He says his IoIC workshop will not be tech-y

“We’ll cover the business benefits, cultural benefits, organisational benefits and how to use social media for change management,” he says. “It’s about using it. ▶

► It's very practical, we'll also look at how to incorporate social media into IC strategy, backed up with case studies."

Having been a corporate communicator for 25 years, he admits he drifted into the social media field by accident.

"I started in the mid-'90s at Grant Thornton - back then it was different, it was about email lists and online forums but it was effectively social media – and stuck with it.

"But the biggest change has been over the past two or three years where it's moved from nice to have to the much bigger part it plays now, where it's the major channel."

He says that in internal comms, teams are connecting with each other and just getting on with it anyway on channels like Yammer groups. "It starts from the bottom up and it spreads," he says.

"At that point IT and IC people

start to think more people are using this than our official channels, but there's no point then offering a different channel. It's more effective to offer a better version of what people are already using.

"The best way is to take those early adopters and enthusiasts with you, rather than trying to impose anything on people. Often they'll have a better idea than you anyway..."

Stuart also aims to dispel a few myths about social media, like it being merely a young person's game.

"Young people know how to use the tools and will adopt them but they're maybe not able to communicate properly or achieve what they really want to," he says.

"It's easier to teach people how to use the channels, it's harder to make them good communicators.

"In any case, there are some surprising statistics out there.

On every single social platform it's people over 40 who are the fastest-growing demographic – that's because it's becoming essential. On Twitter it's the 55-64 age group that's growing fastest." Check [here](#).

The upcoming workshop will cover:

- The seven types of social media and how they work
 - Why people use social media and its application in internal communication
 - The three Cs of social media communication
 - How to write an evidence-based strategy and measure its effectiveness.
 - What makes a successful online community and why people want to participate
 - Blogging - who should do it and what makes a successful blog
 - How to use multimedia in internal communication
 - How to develop a social media policy
- ... and much more

"People will leave with much greater understanding of the opportunities that are available," says Stuart. "They'll have the building blocks to start putting together social media strategy for internal comms.



"They should come out of it with critical ideas, with stuff they can go back and do.

"It's about getting people to understand what the opportunities are and how they can embrace them while reducing risk."

Social Media for Internal Communicators will run from 9.30am until 4pm on Wednesday January 22 in London. Click [here](#) for more details and to book.

Find out how internal communicators use social media [here](#). 📧

There's no point then offering a different channel. It's more effective to offer a better version of what people are already using.

Stuart Bruce



Beat the bullies

We all know senior leaders aim to keep the workforce focused on what is important and internal communications is a critical way of maintaining engagement and keeping people motivated.



And another thing...

Bullying in the workplace is not only bad for the individuals concerned, it affects the whole culture of an organisation – not to mention engagement or productivity. Dr Alan Watkins, CEO of Complete Coherence Ltd and author of *Coherence: The Secret Science of Brilliant Leadership* (more details on www.coherence-book.com) argues that internal communicators can help stamp out bullying – and its negative effects.

If you'd like to write out loud about an IC issue which bugs you, please get in touch...
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The key goal of the internal comms department is to move the workforce to action. This requires communicators to create a positive emotional culture, characterised by states such as optimism, determination and a 'can do' attitude.

Organisations where bullying is commonplace are creating the exact opposite. A bully makes other people feel bad about themselves.

But if you are worried that you may be working in an organisation where aggression, fear and bullying occur, the encouraging news is that how we feel is ultimately down to us, not anyone else – and internal communicators can help people change. They can also help create a culture where bullying is not possible.

The reason people

mistakenly believe how we feel – whether it is fearful or bullied – is down to someone else is that they don't have control of their own emotions.

Once you realise you can control your emotional state, you can choose to feel how you want to feel. Once you accept that nobody can make you feel something you don't want to feel – whether that's feeling humiliated or put upon – then you have protected yourself against anything a bully could say or do.


So, how do you feel good about yourself more often? It's perfectly possible, but it does require practice. You might tell yourself to feel happier or more confident but just because you try does not mean it happens. Instead, you have to really feel the emotion; feel the feeling, not

just think the thought. For example, when you think about something positive in your life it can trigger a positive feeling (or emotion). It is not the thought that matters it is the feeling that the thought triggers. The thought is just a conduit to the active ingredient and that is the emotion.

Whether it's happiness or delight, the more you practise, the easier it will be to conjure up that emotion when you need it – even in the face of someone else trying to make you feel more negative.

With enough people controlling their own emotional state, an organisation's culture can be transformed into one where bullying simply cannot occur. Introducing a bully into that kind of culture has no effect.

They will try all their insults and negativity, but without the response they normally get, they will just stop or go somewhere else.

Internal communicators can help organisations transform the emotional tone of the system. Although emotional control has to come from the individual, communicators can offer support and create an environment that enables people to control their own emotional state, ultimately increasing engagement and motivation. 

What do you think?

Can communicators help create a culture where bullying is not possible? Join the discussion at [IoIC's LinkedIn 'discussion' page](#) or tweet using [#icbully](#)