

EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION SUMMIT 29-30 JUNE 2017

ABOUT

Since 2007 the European Communication Summit has acted as the flagship event for the communication landscape. This edition gathered over 700 communication professionals to discuss recent developments in the profession, exchange views and good practices on new ways of communication to learn from one another.

FORMATS

The sessions of the Summit were divided in different formats:

- **Media Round Tables:** The sessions counted with renowned journalists from Europe and worldwide to discuss recent international political developments, the way media might influence politics and how this affects civil society. Journalists from BBC, POLITICO Europe and DER Spiegel, were present among others.
- **Trainings:** Trainings were focused on learning in groups and sharing problems and solutions for a strong sense of community and to improve work performance. Main trainings were on leadership, social media and crisis.
- **Field trips:** Possibility to visit success cases on the ground
- **The Bar Camp:** An open format to exchange with like-minded people and find suitable solutions.

SESSIONS ATTENDED

29th June 2017

Best case: Combining communication and political lobbying

Panelist:

- **Roger Strandahl** Director of Communications at **Uniper Energy**

Roger Strandahl explained how Uniper Energy combined political lobbying and peer cooperation with media pressure to lead a process to tax reliefs for the energy sector in Sweden.

Uniper Energy managed to achieve a political agreement on nuclear energy involving all political parties including the Green Party in Sweden.

"Putting political pressure in the government and get Uniper a seat on the table"

Roger Strandahl

Strandahl shared with the audience Uniper's communication and political strategy:

- Set priorities in order to set an action plan
- Solid communication strategy to put political pressure and have an educational approach
- Appeal the curiosity of people – Why there is a need of nuclear energy in the future?
- Deliver facts – concrete examples
- Setting the problem
- Steer all disciplines

As a result Uniper managed to have stable regulation conditions for both, renewable energy and nuclear energy, and involving all stakeholders in the process.

To carry out Uniper's communication strategy they decided to use social media instead of doing TV. The use of social media is not only cheaper but allows **targeting the audience more precisely**.

"The key to succeed in this campaign was to combine communication work with strong political lobbying" **Roger Strandahl**

Collaboration in times of disruption – main session

Panelists:

- **Rajiv Vaid Basaiawmoit** - Head of Sci-Tech Innovation & Entrepreneurship **Aarhus University**
- **Dr. Virginie Coulloudon** - Group Director for External Relations **Transparency International** (August 2012-March 2017)
- **Heather Knox** - Vice President, External Communications **Groupe Renault**
- **Taavi Kotka** - Former Chief Information Officer **Republic of Estonia**

The session focused on collaboration based in openness and knowledge sharing demanding high level of accountability from within the organisation. Panelists discussed how established organisations could anticipate threats, as well as the political view on collaboration.

The possibility of lack of collaboration within the organization was tackled as well. **Dr. Virginie Coulloudon** from Transparency International stated that as communicators we have to listen first to understand our audience and see what people want to hear.

Heather Knox Vice President of External Communications at Groupe Renault added that it is important to understand your target and put yourself and others shoes to take the right approach. *"The world is changing and as communicators we have the responsibility to change with it and adapt to new trends and technologies"*.

International collaboration – Best case

Panelist:

- **Mark Byatt** - Director of External Affairs **IFRS Foundation**

IFRS Foundation is an organization aiming to bring transparency, accountability and efficiency to financial markets around the world. This was a best-case session to exchange good practices and learn how IFRS successfully **brought together countries, large and small to have their say**. IFRS presented a successful example of collaboration in global financial regulation and international standard setting by sharing their communications strategy with the audience:

1. There is a need of **compelling narrative**, a shared objective: a shared narrative is a common objective to engage stakeholders to collaborate.
2. Follow **open and inclusive process**: most international organizations have a top down approach and most of the negotiations are done close doors. By having a bottom-up approach anyone can participate and share their opinion. Byatt added that all their material and all the discussions taking place are open to everyone. This allows them to hear people who disagree with their proposals and also see if one can point them out in the good direction.

Difficulties: sometimes it takes long to get a conclusion

Because of this transparency that they use everyone is engaged in communication and they take time to build all their staff as good communicators. Byatt emphasized that the communication strategy should reflect this transparency.

3. Manage change with **proactive engagement**:
IFRS Foundation had to collaborate very closely with representatives from many countries. Every project that they run has its own communication strategy and audience. According to Byatt, IFRS Foundation **works hard to simplify the message to make it accessible for all**.

“The key is to simplify without diminish the message”.

One-person team? Collaborating with non-communication professionals on a comms project – Best case

Panelist:

- **Alexandrine Gauvin** Communications Manager at **Council of European National Top Level Domain Registries (CENTR)**

The session showcased the common fact that many international organizations or secretariats count with one person dedicated to communication work and the challenges that might arise.

Alexandrine Gauvin presented a practical case (development of the new website) to show how she built team spirit to successfully deliver the project. The speaker explained how the communication person should try to focus on the communication potential of the members of the organization.

Gauvin stressed the need of a smart distribution of responsibilities and the need of focusing on the best skills of each team member who is going to be part of the project.

Q&A session:

Was in it for the team to get involved?

According to the speaker the team members have to feel included in the project and has to be a focus on their strengths.

Everyone can be a communicator in a team just have to pay attention to the wide range of individual skill set.

How to motivate the team? Some times is difficult to engage other members of the team to share information with those working on communication. How can we make it fun for them?

The team has to feel ownership of the project. Feel engaged. Alexandrine explained that at CENTR she encouraged colleagues to create a twitter account work related each of them e.g @CENTR_Alex.

Sometimes, due to amount of events happening at the same time in different places of the world, she cannot twit from the main account. By doing this, members of the team can live twit, they feel ownership and so, more engaged and motivated and she could retweet from the main account when necessary.

Building empathy and driving action: the power of a single story

Keynote:

- **Melissa Fleming** Chief Spokesperson/Head of Communications **UNHCR**

The session aimed at showcasing how a concrete example can drive a global communication action and build empathy with the audience. By building empathy with the public one can create engagement and the message is much stronger.

Melissa Fleming is the Head of Communications at UNHCR, she gave a full speech on the case of a young refugee girl, Doaa, who left Syria and how the power of this single story evolved from a web story to a future Hollywood movie and how it mobilized thousands of people to help refugees.

30th June 2017

Using innovative technology to tackle difficult social problems

Panelist:

- **Marcus East** Chief Technology Officer **National Geographic**

In this session Marcus East focused on the power of collaboration as a tool to resolve problems communicators are facing these days.

Marcus stressed how technology and digital transformation might strengthen internal and external communications.

Marcus presented why technology driven companies such as Apple were successful sharing key ideas:

- **Customer focus:** In this companies customer is king or queen
- The product is **delivered very quickly**
- Companies invest in **technology innovation**
- **Collaboration:** companies work together, share work success and fail together, people collaborate together to tackle problems no matter the internal status
- **Transparency** in organizations
- Use **simultaneous communication** (emails sometimes are not replied in days)

Channel based collaboration:

- Real time (use of social media at work and for work)
- No boundaries
- Open knowledge

Using transparency to build trust and understanding

Panelist:

- **Jill Forde**, Head of Communications **Central Bank of Ireland**

Jill Forde spoke about how the communications team of the Central Bank of Ireland is using transparency to build public trust and acceptance. Forde shared practical examples on how communication and accountability are one of the key pillars in the strategy of CBI.

Jorde explained that internal communication was also key to succeed in the external communication strategy of CBI. Making the leadership very accessible to staff, by engaging employees in several projects and dismissing a culture of hierarchical structure, employees became the main communicators of CBI as CBI worked to build trust first with its own employees.

Making big promises and big demands - how the best leaders positively engage other people

Panelist:

- **Sharon Mckoy** Head of Internal Communications at Department for Business, Innovation and Skills **Ministry of Defence UK**

Mckoy put emphasis on why employee engagement matters not only for internal communications performance but also for external communication strategy.

According to Mckoy there are four enablers of engagement:

- Visible and empowering leadership providing strong narrative
- Engaging managers who give their people clarity scope and stretch
- Employee voice: employees have the opportunity to air their vies
- Organizational integrity, values on the wall are reflected in everyday behaviors

"Keeping employees informed drives better team performance" **Sharon Mckoy**

Mastering Social Media-Social media training

Trainer:

- **Steffen Thejll-Moller** - Trainer **Clear Europe**

Clear Europe is a communication company specialised in media training. In this session, the audience explored best and worst-case examples across each and also provided by attendees, to demonstrate how social media can be used sensibly to help solve communications challenges and alternatively, how to mitigate risk, and avoid blunders and time wasting.

The audience was asked to sit in groups and build a case scenario (e.g a campaign to be launched, a new product on the market, an event to promote, a crisis scenario etc.) and build together the strategic options, the messages, the channels and the way of driving attention from the audience.

Also some tips were shared with us:

- **The black hole:**
 - A company/organization doesn't need to be in every channel
 - Every social media post need to have a clear purpose and media needs
- **Experimenting doesn't work**
 - Is not about being in the channel is about providing really added value to your audience
- **Social media vs. online canals**
 - There is no such thing as specific social media strategy as social media are integrated in the whole comms strategy
 - Email/email-marketing: this mean is special because it provides specialized content. An email is directly addressed to the person who feels special, and as result, creates engagement with the company/organisation

- Social media: it creates engagement as it acts as two ways direction communication channel and can drive traffic to the website. Also used as an intelligence-driving tool to listen to different opinions from the audience.
- **Digital and social media development**
- How can we use social media to improve our media relations? Modern relations
- Moving on to organizations as media
- Identify influencer relations and contact them through social media
- Social media also build communities: providing a platform and being the focal point to build discussion
- **Digital & social media as a social tool**
- Reputation building
- Crisis and issues managements
- Brand building
- Internal communication
- Recruitment

Examples to create engagement and build trust:

- Providing high quality technical information
- Transparency
- High quality of visual information

As well, trainers distributed some materials to the audience, especially social media tips and tools for analytics, content creation or free visual sources.

CONCLUSIONS

After two days of intense presentations it was set clear that the key of a good communication strategy is being transparent, both in internal and external communications.

Engaging employees in every project that the organization undertakes and keep them regularly updated and informed helps to boost internal communication flows and it is translated to the external communication strategy. If employees feel empowered they feel keener to share information with the rest of the colleagues, and more important, with the communication team, and get to see the importance and impact of the external communications of the organization.

As well, simplifying the message and focusing on real cases help the general public to make a personal link with the organization. Making the messages more accessible to all allows reaching a wider audience.

Applied to UCLG maybe it would be interesting to try to showcase more practical cases to tell successful stories of SDG implementation, of city-to city cooperation. Try to show the added value of UCLG and what brings to members and cities.

To boost internal communication would be interesting to keep regular meetings with set agenda and to give more visibility to staff so they have a feeling of belonging.