



The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication

*A Guide to Internal Communication,
Public Relations, Marketing,
and Leadership*

Tamara L. Gillis
Editor

IABC INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

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CONTENTS

Foreword ix

Preface xi

About the Authors xvii

PART ONE: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE EVOLVING CORPORATION 1

1 Characteristics of Excellent Communication 3

James E. Grunig, Larissa A. Grunig

2 The Corporate Communicator: A Senior-Level Strategist 19

Nick Durutta

3 Organizational Culture 31

Paul M. Sanchez

4 The Communication of Trust 44

Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Kathleen Ellis

5 Communication Ethics: Sorting Out What Is Right and Wrong 56

Mark P. McElreath

PART TWO: MANAGING COMMUNICATION 65

- 6 Strategic Approaches to Managing the Communications Function 67**
Diane M. Gayeski
- 7 Strategic Planning: Timeless Wisdom Still Shapes Successful Communication Programs 80**
Lester R. Potter
- 8 Aligning Internal Employee Communication with Business Strategy 93**
Ayelet Baron
- 9 Issues Management: Linking Business and Communication Planning 108**
George McGrath
- 10 Change Communication: Twelve Questions to Ask Before Communicating Change 122**
Carol Kinsey Goman
- 11 Current Realities in Crisis Communication 136**
Elpi O. Cuna Jr.
- 12 Corporate Social Responsibility 146**
Adine Mees
- 13 Communicating for a Merger or an Acquisition 159**
Patricia T. Whalen
- 14 Managing and Communicating Cultural Diversity 178**
Jenifer Armand-Delille
- 15 Communication Counsel in Corporate Communication: The Care and Feeding of Leadership 192**
Mark Schumann

PART THREE: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION 203

- 16 Internal Communication 205**
Brad Whitworth
- 17 Manager-Employee Communication 215**
Hilary Scarlett
- 18 Throwing Rocks at the Corporate Rhinoceros: The Challenges of Employee Engagement 227**
Roger D'Aprix

19 Communicating Major Change Within the Organization 240*Rodney Gray, Gerard Castles***20 Internal Communication Media 257***Tamara L. Gillis***21 Internal Branding: Employer Branding 268***R. Alan Crozier***PART FOUR: PUBLIC RELATIONS 281****22 Public Relations Research and Planning 283***Don W. Stacks***23 The CEO-Leader as Relationship Builder: Convinced But Unengaged 296***J. David Pincus, Stephen C. Wood***24 Successful Media Relations 310***Brenda Siler***25 Investor Relations and Financial Communication 320***Karen Vahouny***26 Government Relations 343***Bill Carney***27 Taking a Leadership Position in the Community: It Is About More Than Writing a Check 352***Mary Ann McCauley***28 Public Relations and Ethical Conduct 362***Meryl David, Todd T. Hattori***29 Measuring Public Relations Programming 371***Mark Weiner***PART FIVE: MARKETING COMMUNICATION 389****30 Marketing Communication Today 391***Lorenzo Sierra***31 Branding and Brand Management: Integration and Innovation 400***Paul Mlodzik***32 Building and Sustaining a Dynamic Corporate Reputation 414***Alison Rankin Frost*

33 Communication for Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty 425

Jeff Schmidt

34 Measuring Marketing Communication 436

Merry Elrick

PART SIX: THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION 451

35 The Future of Measurement in Corporate Communication 453

Vicci Rodgers

36 Navigating the Infinite Nature of Knowledge 462

Kellie Garrett

37 New Values for a New Workplace 471

Christopher Nevill

38 The Future of Integrated Communication 479

Jane Sparrow

39 International Communication 491

Sylvie Testard-Ramírez

40 The Impact of Technology on Corporate Communication 504

Shel Holtz

41 The Future of Business Communication 514

Katherine Woodall

Index 531



FOREWORD

Although *business communication* is a relatively new term, finding its way into the common business lexicon about 2000, its roots go back much further than that, to the very beginning of commercial interactions, to the very beginning of recorded history as we know it. Along the way, communication has undergone dramatic change as humans discovered new and innovative ways to communicate.

Consider an innovation dating back to around 8,500 B.C., when early merchants discovered the wonderful portability of clay tokens with pictographs to record quantities of materials shipped and traded. What a dramatic shift from having to restrict such recordkeeping to the inside of a cave. Can you imagine the excitement over *that* discovery? Think of the time saved and increase in accuracy. It was no longer necessary to gather everyone in one location to review records or rely solely on verbal communication and possibly faulty memories. It was a communication explosion to be sure, and one that later led to the development of a series of alphabets and an evolution of written communication.

Massive communication shifts have been part of the business landscape since the beginning of economics and this change has continued for every generation since then. We are now in the middle of grappling with a global technology revolution that is continuing to unfold, the outcome of which is still being discovered. Though not always formally recognized as such, it is likely there has always been someone (or a group of someones) tasked with ensuring that these

communication shifts were understood and accepted by the major stakeholders of the enterprise. These are the people described in this book as *business communicators*.

As business communication follows the path of innovation, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) has attempted to interpret, educate, and arm communicators with the information and tools needed to use communication to propel business forward. In 1970 a group of senior communication professionals formed an organization that addressed the needs of people who held the responsibility of ensuring effective organizational communication. The International Association of Business Communicators was then formed.

IABC's global network of thirteen thousand members in sixty-seven countries, representing ten thousand organizations, practice the disciplines of corporate communication, public relations, employee communication, marketing communication, media relations, community relations, public affairs, investor relations, and government relations. Its purpose is to ensure that members have the skills and resources to progress in their careers, develop and share best practices, set standards of excellence, build credibility and respect for the profession, and unite as a community.

In 2004, IABC joined forces with Jossey-Bass Publishers to develop a series of books that would enable all business professionals to take advantage of the lessons learned from business communication. The books draw on research from the IABC Research Foundation, including the groundbreaking "Excellence Study," and best practices from its programs, including an annual international conference, seminars, the Gold Quill Awards program, accreditation, Knowledge Centre reports, manuals, communication templates, the award-winning magazine, *Communication World*, and the monthly online supplement, *CW Bulletin*.

Since its inception, IABC has moved business communication forward, both as a profession and as a driving force that is critical to any organization's success. We are proud to be able to provide you with this information and hope that you will apply it to making your organization's communication more effective for the benefit of your customers, employees, and overall organizational excellence.

Learn more about the International Association of Business Communicators at www.iabc.com.

Natasha Spring
Vice President Publishing and Research
Executive Editor, *Communication World*



PREFACE

For more than thirty-five years, the International Association of Business Communicators (2005) and the IABC Research Foundation have endeavored to provide professional development programs and groundbreaking research that shares “best global communication practices, ideas and experiences that will enable communicators to develop highly ethical and effective performance standards.” This book, as evidence of that mission, provides a substantial base of practical knowledge and insights about effective corporate communication and its impact on organizational success.

This handbook is the fourth edition of a project that began in 1981 as *Inside Organizational Communication*. It was published three times under that title (Reuss & Silvis, 1981, 1985; Wann, 1999). Each successive edition increased in content to reflect the changing concerns of organizational communication and its impact on organizations—large and small, public and private, for profit and not for profit. Here in 2006, the exhaustive collection of articles warranted a new title: *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication*.

The goal of this book is simple: to provide both conceptual understanding and practical applications of the elements of organizational communication. It presents a broad understanding of corporate communication, business communication, and organizational communication. Based on a survey of scholarly literature, we use these three terms—*organizational communication*, *corporate communication*, and *business communication*—interchangeably to describe these internal and external communication functions of an organization or company.

My sincere thanks to the chapter authors; their expertise and wisdom made this book possible. Special thanks go to the IABC Accreditation Council for their insights into the process of developing this collection. It is my hope that communication practitioners at all levels, educators, and those outside the communications field will find insights and understanding from this book that contribute to organizational success.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

Organizational communications is a vast, dynamic discipline, its practice affected by society and technology. To address every facet of organizational communication would fill many books of this size. Many periodicals and books are published every year giving new insights and highlighting research concerning its many facets. For these reasons, this book could not cover every facet. We instead address the most universal and pressing concerns in this edition of *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication*, as defined by an expert panel of professional communicators.

All sound communications projects begin with research. After reviewing the contents of the previous three editions of *Inside Organizational Communication* and the findings of a brief content analysis of current communication periodicals, I developed a list of potential topics for inclusion in this book. This list of topics was categorized, and an online survey addressing the topics was sent to an expert panel of communication professionals for review. The panel consisted of the members of the IABC Accreditation Council and a random selection of accredited business communicators from around the world. The results of the survey provided support for the framework and organization of the book. The respondents also asked that this edition reflect the international nature of business communication, new and traditional practical applications, and case studies and compelling research.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE READER

This book is designed and organized with a number of different readers in mind. If you are new to the world of corporate communication, the chapters in this book bring to the fore issues that are critical to understand and master in any organization. If you are a professional communicator, this book provides new insights on traditional and emerging issues in organizational communication. If you are a corporate executive outside the communication discipline, this book will help you understand the importance and reach of communication within your organization and with external stakeholders.

Understanding occurs when people ask questions and share information. This book follows suit. Like any other handbook, it may be read in a number of ways. First, it may be read from cover to cover. If you are interested in all facets of organizational communication, you will enjoy starting at the beginning of this book and reading through to the end. The book's organization builds from general topics to specialty interests. Predictions for the future conclude the collection.

Second, readers may choose to skim the book for topics of interest or topics related to a current challenge. This book touches on issues of interest to those new to the field of organizational communications as well as seasoned professionals.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

When addressing the 2005 IABC International Conference, renowned political consultant James Carville used three adjectives to describe successful communication: *simple*, *relevant*, and *repetitive*. I use those same three adjectives to describe the content of this book. Much of the insight and advice about communication that is shared in these chapters seems *simple*. And complex concepts are outlined here in simple models to make them readily accessible. The topics addressed in this book represent what our panel of experts agreed was most *relevant* for communicators and other organization associates to understand about the process of organizational communication. Finally, many communication concepts overlap, and thus these elements are discussed directly and tangentially in a number of chapters. This *repetition* is necessary to fully appreciate the context of corporate communication.

This book is organized into six major parts. Part One serves as an introduction to business communication and addresses some universal premises concerning corporate communication. The chapters in this part introduce readers to the complexities and structures of corporate communication. The universal concepts of excellence, trust, culture, ethics, and measurement are reviewed to set the foundation for the role of corporate communicators today. These chapters provide fundamental axioms as well as testimonials.

Part Two, by far the largest part of this book, focuses on the current challenges of managing corporate communications and organizational communication. Cultivating a culture of communication is critical within any organization. The authors share insights into successful planning, implementation, and management of corporate communication. The strategies they review are fundamental to successful communication management.

Part Three contains six chapters that explore the common threads and evolving issues in the practice of employee communication and internal communication networks. At the heart of each excellent organization or corporation is a trusted

and honored internal communication program. Integral issues of relationship building, employee engagement, change communication, and internal branding are highlighted here as key to developing that trusted internal program.

Part Four apprises readers of the role of public relations in the corporate communication program. A host of external publics await business communicators. These stakeholders will have an impact on the reputation and success of our organizations in reaching their goals. The chapters demonstrate the need for a strategic approach to managing external relationships.

Part Five addresses key concepts of marketing and brand management and its place in the corporate communication program. The chapters in this part, punctuated by testimonials and case studies, bring to life the internal impact and external challenges of marketing communications. Here, professionals share their insights and expertise for developing excellence in corporate performance through marketing communication programming.

Part Six reminds readers of the need to look to the future. The seven chapters that end the book challenge corporate communicators and their organizational colleagues to be prepared for new trends and issues that will continue to make an impact on successful organizational communication. The chapters here echo back to the issues presented in Part One. The issues of measurement, knowledge management, integration, technology, and emerging trends will continue to affect our organizations. Most notably, new values for the new workplace will ground new and seasoned communicators in the values that matter in our daily lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of compiling a volume of knowledge like *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication* is an arduous one with many twists and turns along the way. I am grateful for the assistance and friendship that I received from Carol Gima, Ashley N. Miller, Natasha Spring, and Heather Turbeville. I will miss our virtual meetings and exchanges. I especially thank all the chapter authors who contributed their time and wisdom. Their expertise will help countless professionals make the right choices for their organizations. A special thank-you to the accredited business communicators who helped in the preliminary stages. And one big thank-you to Jeffrey for all his patience during this process.

February 2006

Tamara L. Gillis
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

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has written six books on employee communication, the latest of which is *Communicating for Change: Connecting the Workplace with the Marketplace* (Jossey-Bass). He writes a monthly column for the *Ragan Report* on employee communication and is a regular contributor to the *Journal of Employee Communication Management*. He is a member of the advisory board of the U.K. publication *Strategic Communication Management* and serves on the board of ROI Communications.

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Christopher Nevill is a native South African who founded and continues to spearhead Foundation in Johannesburg, South Africa. His no-nonsense, practical, and often controversial outlook on issues has been forged in the crucible of South Africa, a country universally recognized as “the world in one nation.” He has recently started a Ph.D., and his thesis is titled “Companies on the Couch.” His sources of inspiration include the wisdom of writers and philosophers, both ancient and modern, and the great holy books of the world’s religions.

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Vicci Rodgers established her firm, the Rodgers Group, in Chicago in 1987, after almost ten years in corporate communication positions with the Mead Corporation and Borg-Warner. The company provides clients with communication strategy, tactical support, research, and evaluation services. She served as on-site communication counsel for companies such as Borg-Warner, General Dynamics, Hallmark, Hobart Corporation, Asea Brown Boveri, and Whirlpool. She started her communication career as a journalist in the Washington, D.C., area. Rodgers served as a member of the international board of directors for

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Paul M. Sanchez, ABC, APR, is practice leader for communication consulting with Mercer in the United Kingdom. He sits on the board of directors for Mercer's U.K. company and has been appointed a Mercer Worldwide Partner. Previously he was executive vice president and general manager for Stoorza Communications. His prior experience also includes fifteen years with Watson Wyatt Worldwide. He is the chair (2005–2006) of the IABC's Research Foundation. His past IABC activities include executive board member, executive committee finance director, Ethics Committee chairman, and board member of IABC's U.K. chapter. He has a B.Sc. in psychology and an M.Sc. in organizational communications. He has contributed to professional journals and publications and authored *Transformation Communications* published by IABC.

Hilary Scarlett is director of Scarlett Associates, a London-based communication and change management consultancy. Her work has spanned Europe, the United States, and Asia and concentrates on internal communication and the development of people-focused change management programs. She is accredited in the use of Organizational Culture Inventory, Organizational Effectiveness Inventory, and Leadership Impact. Her work also includes helping organizations to assess their current culture and the drivers of that culture, and helping managers to understand their leadership style and how it causes others to behave. She has an M.A. from King's College, Cambridge University, and is a member of the London IABC chapter.

Jeff Schmidt is responsible for leading sales programs and initiatives in the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region of Hewlett Packard, including an initiative to build better customer relationships: HP's Customer First Initiative. This pioneering work has helped focus the company on its most critical customer relationships, align all parts of the organization, and is fundamentally changing the way HP works with customers in all parts of the world. He was previously head of internal communications for HP EMEA and has more than twelve years' experience in various aspects of corporate communications, human resources, and marketing in both the United States and EMEA.

Mark Schumann, ABC, is a senior consultant and managing principal of the Towers Perrin office in Houston. From 1998 through 2004, he led the firm's

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Lorenzo Sierra, ABC, is an award-winning communicator. He is principal of LoSierra Communication Consulting. Sierra is past president of IABC Phoenix. The chapter was named International Chapter of the Year in 2004 for results achieved during the year he was president.

Brenda Siler, a seasoned communications consultant, has led communications programs at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Council on Competitiveness, AARP, the American Red Cross, and United Way. In 1998–1999, Siler was chair of IABC. In 1999, she was named by *PR Week* magazine as one of the top twelve African Americans in public relations. Siler is on the board of contributors for the *PR News* newsletter where she has been a guest columnist. She wrote the chapter “Research and Evaluation on a Shoestring” for the 2005 *PR News* guidebook, *Lesson Learned in the PR Trenches*. Siler is a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta.

Jane Sparrow is general manager of employee communication and change at Sony Europe. She has been responsible for internal communication and change within Sony Europe since 2001. She travels extensively across Europe, working with local teams to plan and deliver internal and external communication. Prior to her current role, Sparrow was a senior management consultant for MCA Communicates, where she assisted board-level clients with marketing and communication challenges. She has also held marketing and communication management roles with IBM and is an adviser to many small businesses. She was the 2004–2005 region deputy director for IABC Europe.

Don W. Stacks is professor and director of the Advertising and Public Relations Program at the University of Miami's School of Communication. Stacks is the author of numerous articles, chapters, books, and professional papers dealing with public relations. He is a member of the Arthur W. Page Society, Commission on Public Relations Education, and Commission on Public Relations Measurement, and sits on the board of trustees for the Institute for Public Relations. He earned his doctorate from the University of Florida in 1978.

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Mark Weiner is the president of Delahaye, a division of Bacon's Information/Observer AG. Delahaye measures organizational reputation and provides a complete range of marketing, communication, and PR activities in forty countries. He is a regular contributor to IABC's *Communications World*, PRSA's *Tactics*, *PR Week*, and *Ragan's Intelligence Report*. He sits on the editorial advisory boards of the *Strategist*, *PR News*, and Ragan Communications. Weiner is a member of the

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Patricia T. Whalen, APR, is an educator and consultant in the areas of organizational change, corporate crises, and integrated marketing communications. She is a faculty member in the Medill Integrated Marketing Communications graduate program at Northwestern University. In 2001, she authored a top-selling research study for the IABC, "How Communication Drives Merger Success." In 2005 she authored a book titled, *Corporate Communication from A to Z—An Encyclopedia for Public Relations and Marketing Professional*. Most recently she coauthored, with Thomas L. Harris, a new edition of his original book on integrating public relations into the marketing mix, *A Marketer's Guide to Public Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. Whalen holds a doctorate in mass media from Michigan State University, a master's of science degree in business administration from Indiana University at South Bend, and a bachelor's degree in English from the Ohio State University.

Brad Whitworth, ABC, IABC Fellow, is director of enterprise communication for the California State Automobile Association (CSAA), based in San Francisco. His work has earned him recognition as a thought leader in the field of internal communications. Before joining CSAA, he was director of internal communications for software maker PeopleSoft during one of the longest hostile takeovers in U.S. business history. Before that, he led internal and external communication teams in Hewlett-Packard's personal computing, enterprise systems, international sales, and corporate organizations. He developed the merger communications for the \$20 billion HP-Compaq PC business and managed the company's Y2K communications program. He holds bachelor's degrees in both journalism and speech from the University of Missouri and an M.B.A. from Santa Clara University. He served as IABC chairman in 1989–1990 and has won six Gold Quill awards.

Stephen C. Wood is a professor of communication studies at the University of Rhode Island, where he teaches courses in argumentation, public discourse, interpersonal communication, media representations, and film studies. His major research interests include political rhetoric, the cultural intersection of baseball and film, and organizational leadership. He has published several works on communication and leadership, including a chapter (with J. David Pincus) titled "The CEO's Changing Communication Role: Precursor to Effective