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Influence magazine is printed on paper sourced from Chain-of-Custody (C-o-C) certified manufacturers to ensure responsible sourcing. Printed by Walstead Roche, Victoria Business Park, Roche, Saint Austell PL26 8LX

ISSN 2397-4494

The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). All information is correct at the time of going to press. The inclusion of adverts in this magazine does not constitute CIPR endorsement of the products and services concerned.

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VIDEO: CHOCOLATE FILMS

THINK

WELCOME

An unexpected change of view

"I write this sitting in the kitchen sink." The opening line of Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle* has long been a favourite of mine, but I never expected it to be quite so close to reality. Thankfully, my feet aren't in the sink, nor "the rest of me on the draining-board", but I'm a lot closer than I ever thought I'd be when writing one of these.

Coronavirus has changed everything, in ways nobody has experienced before. Plans for the future have been turned upside down, and we've all had reason to worry about the wellbeing of ourselves and our loved ones, as well as our financial security.

And while a pandemic might seem like a leveller in the sense that anyone can get sick, it's worth remembering that its consequences are not distributed equally. It's all well and good to sit contemplating the kitchen sink, but I'm aware of how lucky I am to have enough room for me and my partner to work from home comfortably.



> "Public relations practitioners now face anxious times over cash flow, new business prospects and a range of other problems

Of course, public relations is an adaptable business, but many practitioners now face anxious times over cash flow, new business prospects, cancelled contracts and a range of other problems – many on their own, either as sole traders or as part of a small business.

Fortunately, there is a strong public relations community to call upon. CIPR and the PRCA, the industry's trade association, have done some marvellous work in the teeth of this crisis, providing mental health and legal resources for members and non-members alike. I sincerely recommend checking both websites, as there may well be something you didn't even realise you needed.

We've all had to deal with a lot of change lately, and that goes for *Influence* too. This edition has been largely rewritten in a short space of time, and I'd like to thank the team for their amazing work.



ROB SMITH Editor, *Influence*

DIGITAL EDITION

Influence has gone digital this quarter to make sure you still receive your regular magazine, no matter where you are. And to share the love in these difficult times, we've opened up access to the whole PR community.



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MAG IN A MINUTE

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P7

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P15

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P32

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P36

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Let us know how you're adapting to life under lockdown. Share your views with *Influence* at:
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REGENERATIVE CAPITALISM

"Could this miserable virus change our priorities and bring about new ways of viewing the world? Yes, absolutely. The shift we are heading for will move us into a world that is far more in tune with environmental concerns than it has ever been before"

JOHN ELKINGTON, PAGE 29



7

BE QUIET

Our working lives have suddenly got a lot quieter, and for some of our more introverted colleagues, that may be a blessing in disguise



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THE INDEX

The royal family has had a rough time of it lately. A new survey weighs up what the PR nightmare has done to their popularity here and in the US



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SCENARIO PLANNING

Building up different scenarios for what's most likely to happen, as well as the best and worst possible outcomes, can help to steer us through periods of uncertainty



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BBC

Auntie is in the firing line as the government takes potshots at the Beeb's funding model. What does the future hold for the venerable broadcaster?



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ANATOMY OF A CAMPAIGN

What's that phrase? Something about new tricks... Here's how Battersea Dogs and Cats Home put rescue pets on the tip of everyone's tongues



43

FAKE NEWS

It's an epidemic. OK, maybe that was a poor choice of words, but the point is that misinformation spreads like a virus when it plays on our worst fears and hidden biases



15 COVER STORY

The virus is everywhere: on your TV, in your newspapers and even in this magazine. And everyone's spreading it: on social media and in every single endless Zoom meeting. So what can we learn from the deluge of communication?



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NEURODIVERSITY

New ways of thinking will be essential in the new world of work. Are you doing all you can to help neurodivergent members of your team achieve their full potential?



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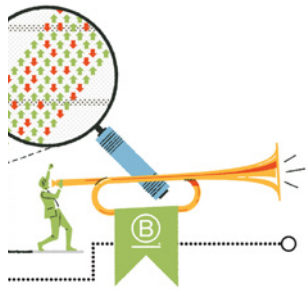
We're all missing the pub right now, so thank goodness Britain's supermarkets had the foresight to teach us to love wine. Here's how some clever PR won us over



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Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Keep calm and carry on. Your country needs you. Is this the moment to bring back a centralised government comms function?



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Gender equality, environmental credentials, local community engagement... is there anything B Corp doesn't cover? Here's how to earn a coveted certificate

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There's more to writing the perfect CV than listing your previous employers. It's time to get creative if you want to land that new role

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RESILIENCE

Stress is a serious problem – and let's face it, we've all got reason to be stressed at the moment. Bouncing back in the right way, though, is key

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BE×QUIET

IKON IMAGES/OIVIND HOVLAND



Adapting to a more introverted world

Welcome to the new world order, where staying in is the new going out and where businesses pivot on a daily basis. But how can you embrace a working life less noisy?

BY MARINA GASK

The introverts shall inherit the Earth. Or at least they're handling our current lockdown pretty well, experiencing something of a golden age as we all retreat into our shells. After all, unlike the out-there extroverts, the air-kissers, the networkers and the salespeople who have ruled the roost for the past 50 years, introverts know that self-isolation is their preferred modus operandi.

The seismic events that have led to the world effectively sending itself to Coventry (well, at least when it comes to face-to-face interactions) have left many of us grappling with how to operate a business that requires contact. So how can those who have always prospered by being "out there" suddenly survive in a world behind closed doors?

Gone are the energising brainstorms, the hectic events programmes and the networking drinks. And with them go many opportunities for social interaction and chance connections. If you're an extrovert, you draw your energy and confidence from being around other people, so today's WFH set-up may well be giving you cabin fever.

That should come as no surprise. "Extroverts love an audience, and their audience has shrunk to the people they live with," says gravitas coach and former PR Antoinette Dale Henderson, author of *Power Up: The smart woman's guide to unleashing her potential*. It's just a case of managing the situation.



SAINTS IN HELL

Of course, this is a welcome break for anyone who prefers their own company. Being at home, seeing fewer people and spending more time on reflective work appeals to introverted people, because they don't have to push themselves out of their comfort zone.

"Telling an introvert to go to a party is like telling a saint to go to hell," says Criss Jami in his book *Killosophy*. And this is their chance to shine, adds Nadia Finer, business coach and shyness expert. "Introverts tend to be good listeners with a strong internal dialogue, mulling things over. When faced with a challenge like how to adapt a business to this new situation, they go within themselves to find the solution, weighing up the options."

The value of this kind of thinking is immeasurable, but the modern world has been built to favour extroverts. "Extroversion is actually one of the 'Big Five', the key factors that many psychologists say contribute to success," says business psychologist Paula Gardner. Extroverts know more people, work their contacts and create those "coincidental" opportunities that lead to career success.

"They are often more comfortable putting themselves forward, which is why society sees them as more valuable 'for the tribe' and why they often get more opportunities than



IKON IMAGES/OIVIND HOVLAND

> **The business world has plenty of successful introverts, including Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and Marissa Mayer... PR is no exception**

introverts, who may be holding themselves back," Gardner explains.

Introverts have always had to adapt in order to be successful, to muster the confidence to speak up in meetings and even to be the life and soul when required – then holing up in their bunker afterwards in order to recover in comfortable isolation.

Nonetheless, the business world is reassuringly peopled with plenty of successful introverts, including Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and Marissa Mayer. The world of PR is no exception. After all, introverts are estimated to make up between 25% and 40% of the population.

QUIET STRENGTH

So is the key to thriving in lockdown channelling our inner introvert? Not exactly. We don't have to run and hide; just be a bit more reflective and work on building relationships.

For self-confessed extrovert Ceri-Jane Hackling, managing director of Cerub PR, "it's been challenging to live without the buzz I get from networking, but ultimately it's a really good chance to consolidate those contacts I make and never usually get the time to follow up".

Extroverts get their energy from other people, so it's important to keep topped up, says Gardner. "Set up daily huddles: calls with the team to talk about what you're working on, to set goals and talk about issues. Your creative well may run dry unless you have someone to bounce ideas around with."

Introverts' dedication to self-care, though, is something extroverts should emulate. "It's a time to look inwards and find what truly makes you happy," says Jane Austin, founder of Persuasion Communications. "You can spend time improving yourself as well as developing a better work/life balance, which has been shown to boost productivity."

And at this challenging time when business models and PR strategies have been thrown into disarray, it has never been more important to listen to more reflective colleagues. "There's a lot of noise and talk, people who like the sound of their own voice, but sometimes it's better to say nothing and to reflect," says Finer. "Consult the deeper thinkers in your team before you offer solutions."

To be truly resilient, introverts and extroverts can use this as an opportunity to learn from one another, says Dale Henderson. "Extroverts are coping by using their voice online: creating more video content, organising virtual meet-ups, setting up WhatsApp groups, proactively sharing how they're feeling and what they're experiencing, being useful. We need their energy to power us forward, but it's important for them to be aware that this level of intensity, from all angles, can be overpowering, so less is more.

"By contrast, introverts' go-to strategy is to hunker down, go underground, protect themselves from too many loud voices. The danger of this is that introverts, who prefer to reflect before they speak, will go unnoticed, especially when our perception of someone is minimised to a small box on a screen."





ROYAL FLUSH

Brand Windsor has taken a beating lately. OnePoll's Mark Hodson and Louise Care find out whether it still has that all-important appeal on both sides of the Atlantic



THE ROYAL FAMILY HAS HAD A ROUGH FEW MONTHS. First there was Prince Andrew's association with the Jeffrey Epstein case and that disastrous *Newsnight* interview. And then that was swiftly followed by Prince Harry's decision to quit front-line royal duties and relocate to North America with Meghan and baby Archie. All told, it has been a comms nightmare.

But what difference have these recent scandals made to the royal reputation? To find out, OnePoll surveyed 2,000 Brits and 2,000 Americans, giving a sense of current attitudes to the royals in the light of their latest escapades.

> "I think everyone in the US has such admiration for the British royal family, and with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, there's a whole new interest in the younger generation
>
> ANNA WINTOUR



1

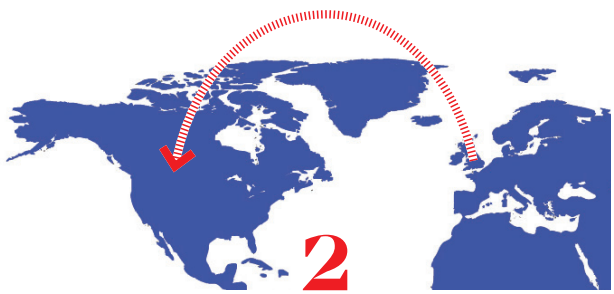
LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED

Despite having kicked George III's butt in 1781, Americans are scarcely behind us Brits in their love of the royals.

A whopping **65%** of Americans are interested in either seeing coverage of or reading stories about the royals.

By comparison, **53%** of Brits are interested in reading or hearing about what the royal family gets up to. On the other hand, **45%** of Brits couldn't give a monkey's.

Just **29%** of Americans say they find their own version of royalty – Hollywood celebs – more interesting.



2

SUSSEX SELLS

In marketing terms, Harry and Meghan's relocation to North America may well be playing to their brand's USP.

While **71%** of Brits say they are unlikely to buy **the merchandise formerly known as Sussex Royal,** **51%** of American adults can't wait to snaffle it up.





3

DUKING IT OUT

It seems any brand-savvy member of the royal family should up stumps and follow Harry and Meghan in crossing the pond.

As many as **60%** of US adults say they would read news stories about Harry and Meghan...

but **32%** of UK adults insist they have more important things to worry about.



4

THE ROYAL WE

There are 145 million self-avowed royalists in the US, just waiting for an abdicator to suckle upon their bank accounts. However, there are even more US adults in the "Don't know" category, who might yet fall into the royalist camp.

48% of UK adults claim to be royalists.

43% of US adults also claim to be royalists.

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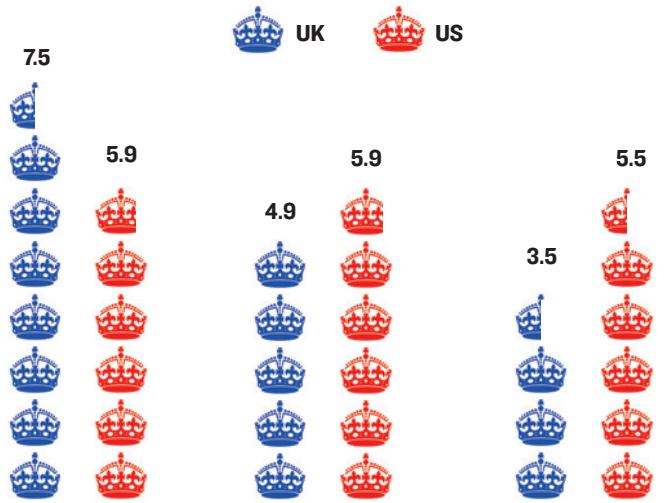
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5

ROYAL RATINGS

There are other advantages to being a royal in the US (providing the FBI don't want to interview you). **Here's how some of them scored out of 10, at home and stateside:**





HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



MEGHAN, DUCHESS OF SUSSEX



PRINCE ANDREW

6

THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY



The Sussexes' behaviour has demonstrably damaged their image in the UK. (This question was not asked in the US.)

↓46%

For example, 46% of Brits agree with the statement:

"By stepping down from their royal duties, Harry and Meghan (the Duke and Duchess of Sussex) **have damaged the reputation of the royal family."**

Conclusion: if you're a royal with image issues, or just looking for more independence (and your testimony isn't wanted in any sexual assault cases), the US must seem like a haven of popularity and potential profit.

Method

OnePoll ran two matched surveys (the US survey was slightly shorter for fieldwork reasons) with representative samples of 2,000 adults in the UK and 2,000 in US. Surveys ran online from 15 - 22 February 2020.

The total sample size was 4,000.

Mark Hodson is head of research and Louise Care is research manager at OnePoll, the UK's most widely cited market research agency

onepoll.

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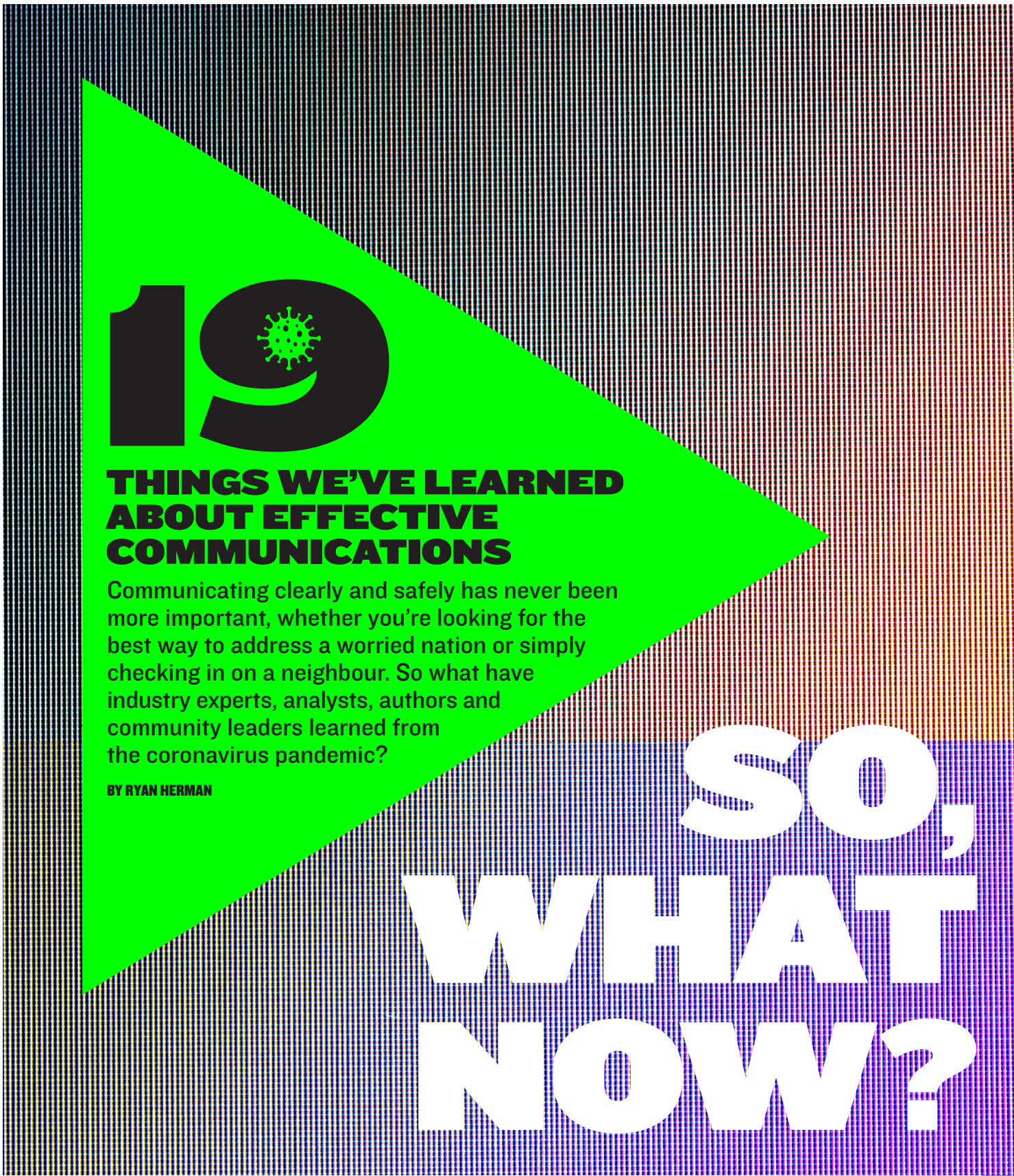
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19 THINGS WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating clearly and safely has never been more important, whether you're looking for the best way to address a worried nation or simply checking in on a neighbour. So what have industry experts, analysts, authors and community leaders learned from the coronavirus pandemic?

BY RYAN HERMAN

SO, WHAT NOW?



1

“THE DISEASE IS NOT A GREAT LEVELLER”

Emily Maitlis gave us one of the TV moments of this crisis when she delivered this *Newsnight* monologue:

“The language around COVID-19 has sometimes felt trite and misleading. You do not survive the illness through fortitude and strength of character, whatever the prime minister’s colleagues will tell us. And the disease is not a great leveller, the consequence of which being that everyone – rich or poor – will suffer the same.

“This is a myth which needs debunking. Those on the front line right now – bus drivers and shelf stackers, nurses, care-home workers, hospital staff and shopkeepers – are disproportionately the lowest-paid members of our workforce. They are more likely to catch the disease because they are more exposed.

“Those who live in tower blocks and small flats will find the lockdown a lot tougher. Those who work in manual jobs will be unable to work from home.”

EMILY MAITLIS





2 STAYING IN IS THE NEW PRESENTEEISM

Despite concerns about security, Zoom has rapidly become ubiquitous. One side effect of the Zoom Boom, though, is a worrying form of presenteeism, according to Bruce Daisley, the former VP for EMEA at Twitter and author of *The Joy of Work*.

"Many people I've spoken to are now doing around 20 hours of Zoom conferences a week. That amount of forced concentration is a form of presenteeism," he says.

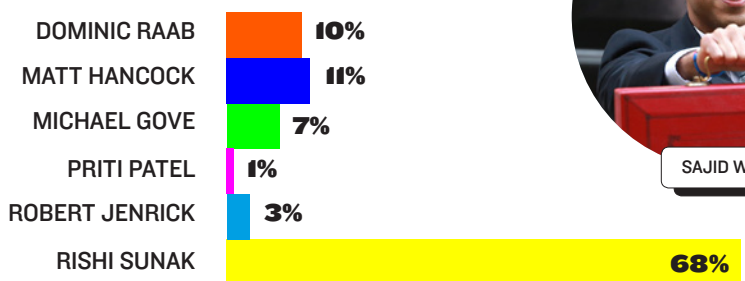
"It's so difficult to measure somebody's productivity or output now, so we often take their presence as a substitute. We're seeing a lot 'Zoom productivity' where you get a group of people saying, 'Let's do a call'. Because I can see everyone in front of me, that shows they're in some way committed and dedicated to their job."

3 IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A "GOOD CRISIS"

A crisis is an opportunity for politicians and business leaders alike to roll up their sleeves and set to work... often in pursuit of a bit of good publicity for themselves and a decent write-up in the press.

For example, in April, a (thoroughly unscientific) survey of subscribers to the Red Box email newsletter from *The Times* deemed chancellor Rishi Sunak to have been the most impressive cabinet minister when it came to deputising for the prime minister during his absence.





Who has been the best minister in Boris Johnson's absence? (Source: *The Times*)

4 OFFICES AREN'T INEVITABLE

We're all working from home these days, and don't expect to get back to office life as normal any time soon... especially as a major recession looms.

"The things that will change about the way we work will be driven by financial imperatives," Bruce Daisley argues. "Most firms' biggest overhead, other than labour, is property. It's 10% of a firm's costs, and if they can get that down to 5%, then it will free up some funds."

However, life outside the office presents a new set of challenges for some employees. "If you're in your 20s, you haven't got a home office and you've got little or no prospect of ever having one," Daisley explains. "Your home office is a kitchen that you might be sharing with two or three other people."

On a more positive note, Daisley points out that "we're also hearing how much people miss each other. People talking about the bonds they have with their team is a sign of a good working culture."



"The things that will change about the way we work will be driven by financial imperatives. Offices are 10% of a firm's costs, so if they can get that down it will free up some funds"

5 THERE IS SUCH A THING AS TMI

A survey of 2,000 Brits carried out by Unhooked Communications at the end of March revealed that nearly a third felt they had received either "too much" or "far too much" content and information from businesses relating to coronavirus; 23% said they felt "overwhelmed" by the volume of communications; and more than one in 10 people felt compelled to boycott a business.

As Unhooked MD Claire Gamble explained: "All too often brands tend to wade into trending conversations and breaking news to share their thoughts. It can come across as opportunistic if it's not approached in the right way."





MATT HANCOCK OFFERED TO SEND A POSTER TO ONE MP WHO ARGUED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMS STRATEGY HAD FALLEN SHORT

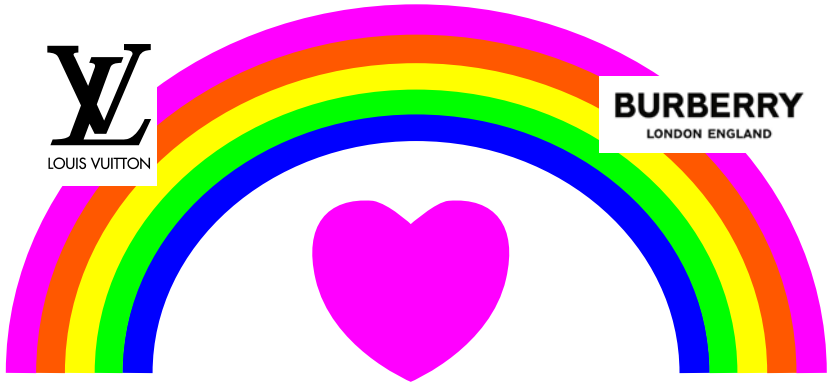
6 MANAGING THE MESSAGE MATTERS

At a time like this, clear messaging around the essentials is, well, essential. Sven Hughes of Enigma Strategic Communications is a former a British Army reservist who specialised in 'psy-ops'. He recalls his time working for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and being given just 24 hours to evacuate a village.

"ISAF prepared good messages that we thought the people wanted to hear, but really all they wanted to know was 'Where can I get clean running water and medical help?'

"It always comes down to listening to what your audience wants and using that as your starting point," he explains. "Some companies and politicians went into broadcast mode from the start of this crisis. They had a comms plan and they used it. But the most successful ones paused and considered what the audience really wanted to hear."

The British government switched from a muddled message on herd immunity at the outset – "a bit too academic and not real-world enough", Hughes says – to something focused on the practical reality of the situation. "The government has had two key messages to ram home: the required behaviour ('stay at home') and the rationale behind that ('protect the NHS' and 'save lives'). It was a bit confusing to start with, but I don't think we should be too critical. The world is learning on the run."



7 KINDNESS IS KING

"Whenever you're writing a plan, you're going to think strategically and act tactically. But maybe now there is a third strand where you also act spiritually," says Dominic McCarthy, a senior partner at ANM.

"Some of that was coming through before the crisis, particularly in the thinking around sustainability," he explains. "The companies that have generated negative headlines lately are not known as 'caring' brands. What Britannia Hotels did [sacking and evicting staff with no notice] was shocking."

High-end brands have been able to respond in a more meaningful way because "they have far greater control over their supply chains," McCarthy says. "Burberry is making masks and PPE. Louis Vuitton is making hand sanitiser. They're not like Topshop, where the goods are being made in a warehouse somewhere in Asia."

"Burberry is making masks and PPE. Louis Vuitton is making hand sanitiser. They're not like Topshop, where the goods are being made in a warehouse somewhere in Asia"

But whichever markets you're operating in, McCarthy warns that "brands that fail to prepare for when we come out of this will fail. You need to keep your finger on the pulse for what the mood is and how brand values may have changed."



8 COMMUNITY SPIRIT HAS BEEN REBORN

Mark Mitchell is a community worker in Brinnington, Greater Manchester. A week before the lockdown came into effect, he and other volunteers at the Brinnington Community Hub went out, bought five pay-as-you-go mobile phones and posted leaflets featuring those phone numbers through letterboxes so anyone could call them if they needed help

The Hub has quickly become a focal point for food donations. "We had people coming in who had been to the local B&M, filled a trolley, wheeled it to our office, handed it over and said, 'We hope you know what to do with this'," Mitchell explains. "And this is happening in one of the most depressed part of Britain."



WHAT WE WOULDN'T GIVE FOR A FANCY BREAKFAST ON THE GO RIGHT NOW...



MAYBE ALDI'S MIDDLE AISLE WAS ABOUT PREPARING FOR A PANDEMIC ALL ALONG



FORTNUM & MASON HAS BEEN SENDING THANK-YOU HAMPERS TO NHS STAFF

9 LOCKDOWN PRODUCES LEADERS AND LOSERS

LEADERS

- LEON Restaurants became LEON Supermarkets (no guarantees on toilet paper though). It also put its food suppliers in touch with distributors to deliver free hot meals to NHS critical care staff on the front line.
- RON DENNIS, the former boss of the McLaren F1 team, created a scheme to provide 1 million meals for NHS workers.
- CLARIDGE'S offered up its beds to 40 NHS workers from St Mary's Hospital, near Paddington.
- ALDI not only gave its staff a 10% bonus but also promised to pay all of its suppliers with a turnover of less than £1m more quickly than usual.
- Bournemouth-based CONKER SPIRIT turned surplus gin into hand sanitiser.



HOW'S THAT FOR MEALS ON WHEELS, RON?



ANYONE FOR SOME ROASTED BOBBY?

LOSERS

- TAMARA ECCLESTONE went on *This Morning* asking viewers to help raise £1m for the NHS through a charity art auction. She was promptly eviscerated online, as her jewellery collection alone has been valued at £50m.
- **US celebrity chef BOBBY FLAY set up a GoFundMe page to help pay his staff's wages. Flay is said to be worth $30m. He blocked everyone on Twitter who told him to GoFundHimself.**

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10 GOOD AND BAD LEADERSHIP SOUND VERY DIFFERENT

For Sven Hughes, this crisis has revealed two very different kinds of communicators. "In Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro has been nothing short of cretinous, whereas in New Zealand Jacinda Ardern treats the audience with respect, and if you do that from the start they will come with you on that journey.

"Bolsonaro's ego has got in the way," Hughes adds. "He's letting himself broadcast what he thinks will be self-aggrandising messages, rather than starting with what the audience needs to hear. Ardern has been much more elegant, empathetic and effective."

Likewise, Andrew Cuomo, governor of New York, has won plaudits for his clear and serious comms strategy.



"Bolsonaro's ego has got in the way"



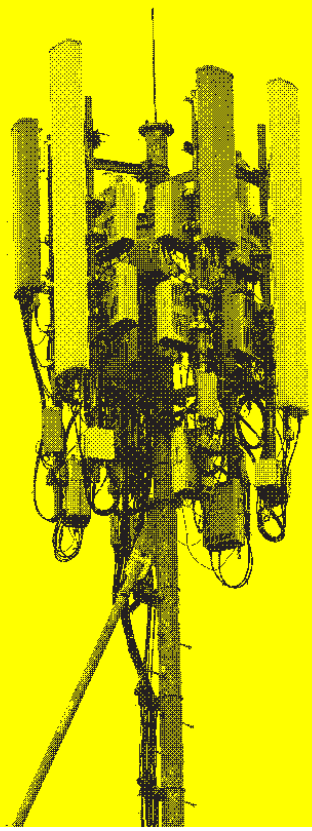
"Jacinda Ardern treats the audience with respect"

11 FAKE NEWS STILL REIGNS SUPREME

"Holding your breath for 10 seconds is not a test for coronavirus, and gargling water for 15 seconds is not a cure – this is the kind of false advice we have seen coming from sources claiming to be medical experts," said cabinet minister Penny Mordaunt, announcing a new counter-disinformation campaign from the government's Rapid Response Unit. Up to 70 incidents of fake news are currently being identified each week.

The problem became more acute when baseless theories linking the virus to the 5G network resulted in more than 20 phone masts being destroyed across the UK. According to a survey of 2,032 adults conducted by Focaldata in mid-April, 8% of people believe there is a link between coronavirus and 5G, while 19% are unsure.

Conspiracy theories, it seems, are spreading like a virus. "Everyone thought the big story about social media this year would be the mistruths in the US election, but this just goes to show that things are always far more complex than that," says Bruce Daisley. "When you've got pop stars sharing untruths and politicians endorsing untested drugs, it shows how difficult it is to manage what is effectively a microphone in everyone's hand."



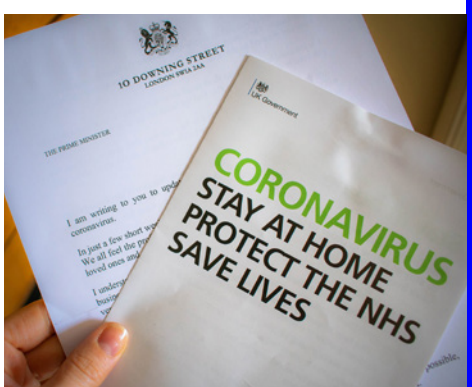


According to a survey of 2,032 adults conducted by Focaldata in mid-April, 8% of people believe there is a link between coronavirus and 5G, while 19% are unsure



12 THIS IS A CRISIS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In Brereton, Staffordshire, local volunteer Sue Merriman is co-ordinating door-to-door food deliveries. "We've been finding people living on their own, who have been in isolation and who are anything from 83 to 95 years old. They received their letter from the government saying that they needed to stay indoors for 12 weeks. In some cases, they've gone three or four days without food. They are literally sitting in their houses, watching the news, seeing that doctors have died, a 13-year-old has died, and they are petrified."



Scare tactics may have been part of the comms strategy at the outset, but that message will have to change. As one Conservative MP told the *Financial Times*: "Our comms have been the best in Europe. We scared everyone sh*tless, but now we have to undo some of that." Sir David Spiegelhalter, a statistician at the University of Cambridge, has already argued for "some sort of campaign" to tackle the "very worrying" level of fear among the public.

And when such a campaign comes, it'll need to use some pretty low-tech approaches again. According to the Office for National Statistics, 5.3 million Brits have either never been online or haven't used the internet in three months. For many people, TV and radio are their only sources of information, particularly for the elderly, the poor and the disabled.

"Some elderly people are literally sitting in their houses, watching the news, and they are petrified"



13 LOCAL PEOPLE STILL WANT LOCAL NEWS

Coronavirus will be the last straw for many print media titles, right? Well, perhaps not. As Society of Editors executive director Ian Murray notes: "What is being reported back to us is that the number of people going to local newspaper websites, if they don't have a paper delivered, has increased. They see them as trusted sources.

"I hope that when we come out the other side of this, we'll all have seen the value of the media, particularly the regional media. I'm always an optimist."



14 WE'RE NOT IN A POLICE STATE (YET)

"A lot of journalists have been furloughed and many are working from home. But what we can't see is any downgrading of the ways journalists are assisted, where possible, in doing their job," says Ian Murray from the Society of Editors.

"Freedoms are taken away from you little by little, and they're usually taken at times of crisis. You're told 'It's in the public's interest', 'It's for the common good' or 'This is no time for the individual'. So the challenge for the media and for society is to resist any temptation to go down the route of Hungary, where journalists fear it could become a jailable offence to question the government's actions on the crisis. Our system is proving robust and resilient.

"On the whole, the government at all levels seems to recognise that communicating through the mainstream media – and that includes local newspapers and local radio, as well as the national media – is essential."



"The challenge is to resist any temptation to go down the route of Hungary, where journalists fear it could become a jailable offence to question the government's actions on the crisis"

"It's about understanding the psyche of the end consumer... Stay focused and apply yourself to your planning"



15 CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS NEED CRISIS THINKING

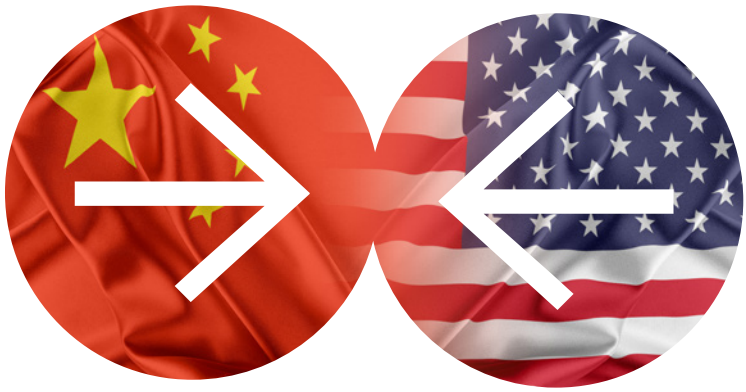
It goes without saying that PR campaigns and communications planning have been thrown into chaos by coronavirus.

"I spent two days calling every one of my clients," says Jayne Alexander, CEO of The Dovetail Agency, which specialises in luxury travel and retail PR. "I explained that we'd be doing what we did after 9/11: reducing our client fees but doing it in such a way that would give us enough hours each week to maintain communications for them.

"We're giving clients some 'crisis comms' training. We're also offering a three-month relaunch, a bounce-back campaign for hoteliers who wouldn't normally be able to afford a PR agency for 12 months. We'll base this on a three-month project fee.

"Every week, we send an email to our current and prospective clients that provides a round-up of research and statistics from across the tourism industry. While we don't have control over the pressures they're facing, we do have control over how we react and what we choose to focus on.

"It's about understanding the psyche of the end consumer. After 9/11, everyone was thinking about terrorism and security. And after coronavirus, it'll be health and hygiene. If you stay focused and apply yourself to your planning, then you're back in control."



16 THE NEW WORLD ORDER IS COMING

What is the world going look like after coronavirus? We know that the economy is going to suffer, but we don't how much this will all cost or how long the inevitable recession will last.

On the global stage, the relationship between China and the US is already shaping up to be the dominant issue, at least in terms of trade and politics.

One problem for China is that it has an awful record on the one thing that matters right now: transparency. Meanwhile, Trump simply makes things up as he goes along. And you know what they say about the first casualty of war...

Broadly speaking, this could seriously shake up the balance of power and change who controls the world's wealth.

17 INFLUENCERS ARE INFINITELY ADAPTABLE

Influencers get a bad press at the best of times, and some have rightly come under fire for peddling dubious health solutions. Others, however, have found new ways to work with brands and get key messages across on issues such as social distancing.

Mark Wright, co-founder of influencer marketing platform xInfluence, explains that "influencers are a great way to get important messages out to the public".

He continues: "We've all seen the latest awareness ads from the government on TV. Frankly, unless you're an avid *Daily Mail* reader, they offer very little incentive to 21st-century audiences in terms of 'influencing' decisions.

"The government's dour medical expert may know his stuff, but for me he's the wrong choice if the government really wants to influence the public. This is where we can utilise the positive messages coming from influencers, who can really inform.

"Of course, there are some people still producing content in groups and flouting the guidelines. We have seen some of this, but in small quantities to be honest, and with younger creators who we wouldn't deal with anyway.

"For example, we have been running activity for Graze. Our influencer created content around staying indoors. This is how influencers can be a great sounding board during a crisis. They keep the isolation message and the guidelines front-of-mind in their content in an authentic, creative way.

"The government's dour medical expert may know his stuff, but for me he's the wrong choice if the government really wants to influence the public"

18 THE CREATIVES ARE ALRIGHT



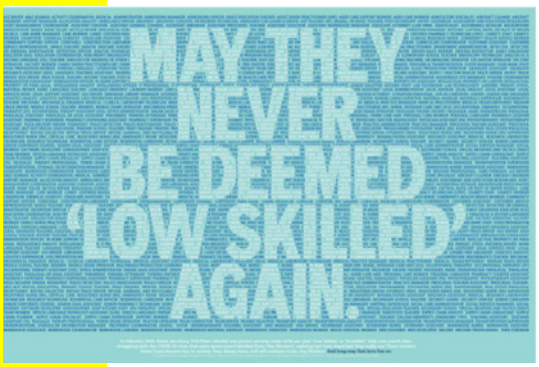




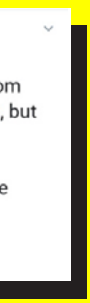


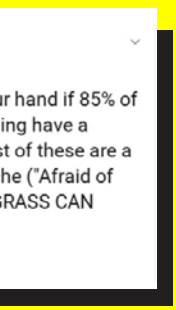


Plenty of brands and agencies have been letting their creative teams loose on some coronavirus-related messaging. At their best, these efforts have been clever and effective. Others, though, have just jumped on the bandwagon.









“As PRs, now is the time to do what we do best: thinking reactively and strategically about creating engaging ways to talk about our clients within the news”

Katy Powell, digital PR strategist, Rise at Seven



19 RONSEAL MESSAGES GET THE JOB DONE

Contrary to yet another myth perpetuated online, COVID-19 is not an acronym for “Chinese-originated viral infectious disease”. It actually stands for “coronavirus disease 2019”. How’s that for a simple bit of messaging that does what it says on the tin?

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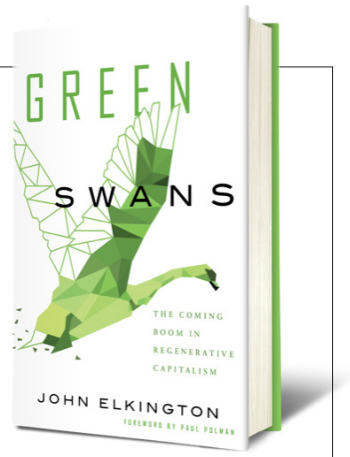
INSIDE STORY

THIS ISSUE

WHY NOW IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS GREENER

+

HOW TO USE SCENARIO PLANNING TO SEE THE FUTURE





GETTY

Nature is healing. We are the virus.

John Elkington, the godfather of corporate sustainability, explains why this pandemic may herald a greener future

→

It's fair to say that over the past few months we've all become very aware of the impact that so-called "black swan" events can have on our workplaces, the global economy and the way we live our lives. Coined by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in 2007 to denote events that can't realistically be foreseen (and the outsize impact they have), it's a term that almost seems to have been designed for the coronavirus pandemic.

The question, however, is what happens next. Could this miserable virus change our priorities and bring about new ways of viewing the world?

Yes, absolutely. We are on the cusp of a number of "green swan" moments. Technologies and corporate objectives that exist only in embryonic form today look set to change the way the global economy works forever. And these swans are green for a reason: the shift we are heading for will move us into a world that is far more in tune with environmental concerns than it has ever been before.

If black swan events make life exponentially worse, then green swans can make life exponentially better. If we get it right, we will enter an era of regenerative capitalism built on reusing, rebuilding and renewing. It should leave firms with their social licence to operate very much in place and an economic model that can deliver material improvements in people's lives.



> If we get it right, we will enter an era of regenerative capitalism that can deliver material improvements in people's lives

TOTAL RECALL

Ever since I proposed the "triple bottom line" more than a quarter of a century ago – encompassing not just the economic but also the social and environmental performance of a firm – I've sat in boardrooms and seen huge progress among big corporations. But it hasn't gone far enough. That's one reason why I issued a "product recall" on the term two years ago.

Whether or not you agree with the idea of a "climate emergency", there's no question that the issue has been put





GRETA THUNBERG DECLARED "THE WORLD IS ON FIRE" DURING A PROTEST IN BRISTOL IN FEBRUARY

at the centre of the global conversation in a way it hasn't been before, and the public is more sceptical than ever. Firms can no longer get away with "greenwashing" – employing the language of environmentalism to hide all manner of sins.

My *Green Consumer Guide,* published more than 30 years ago, has been wilfully, delusionally (and occasionally accidentally) misquoted by thousands of firms around the globe, who have been – and this is a charitable estimation – overenthusiastic about their environmental credentials.

That won't do anymore. The CEO class has finally woken up to the fact that a combination of high-profile environmental disasters and a growing number of environmentally conscious employees – especially at the younger end of the age spectrum – mean that if they don't take this seriously, they are in real trouble.

I think back to Japan in the 1980s, when just about every major firm lost a CEO simply because they couldn't get to grip with new technologies and innovations. We are potentially on the cusp of that here, too. CEOs who don't understand the green revolution happening all around them and the impact it will have on consumer trends and government policy must pay attention. We've seen the speed with which private firms have been co-opted into the effort to build ventilators, hand sanitiser and other vital medical items. Could it be that in 10 or 15 years' time we see a similar mobilisation of industry on the back of a climate emergency?

TIME FOR A LITTLE HONESTY

And what does that mean for those on the front line of communications? Well, as I've alluded to, the most important thing is authenticity. Don't claim credit for work you haven't done. Years of greenwashing means that the public knows what to look out for. Firms should only put their head above the parapet once they've got their house in order.

> Communicators need to carefully scrutinise their trade bodies and the associations they belong to

Just as vital is accepting that "going green" is a journey. Some firms are further along that road than others, and even I, a sustainability warrior, accept that no business is perfect. Being honest about where you need to do more, the steps you as a company will take to get there and your overall progress will win you friends in both the investor class and among a public that is increasingly clued-up about the need for a transition to a more regenerative economic model.

And on a more concrete level, if people can be judged by their friends, so can firms. Communicators need to carefully scrutinise their trade bodies and the associations they belong to. Do they hold the same values as you? Do they share your desire to move towards a greener economy? If not, you're better off without them.

Coronavirus has been a horrendous wake-up call to how local phenomena can become global catastrophes. With global leadership weaker than ever, companies and business leaders have an outsize role to play in building the green swans of the future.

John Elkington is a leading authority on corporate sustainability. His 20th book, Green Swans: The coming boom in regenerative capitalism, *is out now (Fast Company Press, £20.29)*

DESPERATE MEASURES

In difficult circumstances, planning for different scenarios can provide some much-needed clarity. And PRs have a vital role to play...

BY DR JON WHITE





IKON/ROBIN HEIGHWAY-BURY

Everyone's personal and professional lives have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in ways that were unimaginable even six months ago. For leaders (whether political, business or religious), as well as for the rest of us, the big questions that need to be confronted are:

> **How will we come out of this pandemic and deal with its consequences?**

> **What sort of world will we emerge into, and what kind of new rules will govern our daily and working lives?**

When looking into the future in this way, scenario-based thinking and planning is invaluable. Drawn from military practice and used with great success by companies such as Shell, developed scenarios – plausible pictures of the future – can be used to manage uncertainty, assess risks and plan courses of action that will realise better outcomes and avoid the consequences of the worst-case scenario. So how can the PR profession put scenario planning techniques into practice?

LOST IN UNCERTAINTY?

First, it's worth remembering that, in some sense, this pandemic was predictable. Commentators and political leaders often refer to "uncharted territory" and "unprecedented situations" to try to explain away failures in preparation. But previous outbreaks of infection provided crucial warnings, including SARS in 2003 and Ebola in 2014. Specialists such as the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge have been stressing our vulnerability to pandemics for a number of years.

Right now, there is an urgent need to understand the current threats to life, health and future wellbeing, and what can be done to deal with them. Think tanks, university research groups, consultancies looking to guide their clients beyond the pandemic, and commentators on social media and in more traditional outlets all have roles to play in helping to make the key decisions about our possible futures.

In this, many are making use of scenario planning. McKinsey, for example, has developed scenarios relating to the economic impact of the pandemic, trying to understand how different interventions to safeguard public health will affect economic recovery. →

"One of the starkest trade-offs relates to how great a risk of infection we are willing to tolerate in order to get the economy moving again"

Meanwhile, Chatham House has considered what the exit route from the pandemic will look like in different countries. This will necessarily depend on a complex mix of location-specific medical, technical, behavioural and economic questions, and it's important, Chatham House notes, that "these are modelled together, rather than independently, and the key trade-offs brought out". One of the starkest of these relates to how great a risk of infection we are willing to tolerate in order to get the economy moving again.

These questions – fed by data, the analysis of trends, modelling and the assumptions on which these models are based, as well as the opinions of experts and policymakers – will produce a number of scenarios for the road ahead, as you can see on the right:

WHERE DOES PR FIT IN?

Scenarios like these are intended as an aid to decision-making. However, they have another value too, in terms of developing confidence. For example, they tell you that the possibilities have been thought through and the underlying assumptions examined. And they also open to door to the following question: What steps can be taken to get us closer to the best-case scenario, and what needs to be done to avoid some of the possibilities identified in the worst-case scenario?

Working through these scenarios, there are two main opportunities for public relations professionals to help the decision-makers. First, PR expertise can help to mitigate uncertainty and improve decision-making by providing an understanding of the complexities of managing relationships during periods of crisis, particularly when working in support of clear public policy, public health and commercial objectives.

Second, PRs can add an appreciation of how some of the difficult demands made of important groups will be received and acted upon. These demands have to be made clearly and explained in ways which go beyond slogans, drawing on all the expertise that PRs can offer in terms of message development and the choice of appropriate channels.

There is also a role for PRs in developing clear messaging about the economic consequences of the pandemic. After all, as the pandemic and its immediate effects recede, there will be new opportunities in a changed social and economic environment. The forced adoption of the benefits of online communication will have established these and will lead to a questioning of previous working arrangements. More people will be able to work remotely, travel will not be so necessary, and meetings will be kept to a minimum but used to greater benefit.

Managing remote workers will create new challenges for senior management teams, particularly relating to their communication skills and their ability to handle relationships within dispersed groups. Expertise in internal communications (which has become so important in public relations practice in recent years) will undoubtedly come into play here.

MOST LIKELY SCENARIO

The modelling work of the Abdul Latif Jameel Institute for Disease and Emergency Analytics at Imperial College, London has been incredibly influential among Western governments. From that work came the recommendation to "flatten the curve" to enable national health systems to cope with the numbers of people needing intensive care.

This modelling suggests that key turning points in the rise and fall of the infection rate will allow for us to return to some normal activities and to restart the economy. It also suggests that controls will need to be in place – as and where required – until late 2021. Controls will have to be relaxed and reinstated as required if further waves of infection occur.

Realistic assessments of how long it will take to develop a vaccine put us back as far as the middle of 2021. In the meantime, as more people get infected and recover, greater immunity will be established in the wider community.

Ongoing restrictions will test the patience of confined populations and will disrupt personal, social and economic life. Relaxing the controls may involve monitoring people's movement, to detect where it is possible to prevent the infection spreading to larger groups of people.

In this scenario, there will be a return to a new normality by the end of 2021 or the beginning of 2022, although the roll-out of a vaccine might extend into mid-2022. There will be a faltering return to economic activity at levels below those seen before the pandemic,

BEST-CASE SCENARIO

In this scenario, the early moves to relax controls will be successful. Infection levels will be held down through testing, monitoring the emergence of new infections and controlling movement in a more precise way than through a general lockdown. There will be no serious second wave of infection.

The search for a vaccine will produce results earlier than expected. The University of Oxford's Vaccine Group recently took a vaccine to trial, and this or another similar effort will bear fruit.

As controls are successfully lifted and further infection managed, economic activity will resume, slowly, sector by sector, as groups are allowed back to their activities. Younger people, who seem to face a lower risk of serious infection, will be allowed back first.

Reduced but steadily increasing economic activity will be possible in the second half of 2020, but restrictions will probably still be in place for larger gatherings of people, at sporting or cultural events or in pubs or restaurants.

WORST-CASE SCENARIO

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Seattle has predicted a worst-case scenario of 66,000 UK deaths from COVID-19 by August. Although this prediction has been disputed by the team at Imperial College, it suggests that the UK would be the country worst hit by the pandemic.

In this scenario, the NHS would be overwhelmed, its staff faced with choosing who can and can't be treated against a background of anxiety about a lack of PPE and breakdowns in essential supplies of oxygen and other equipment.

Public unrest about the continuing restrictions would result in a failure to continue to observe the necessary precautions, and control over the spread of infection would be lost. Returning to work, and to a normal way of life, would prove impractical.



IKON/ROBIN HEIGHWAY-BURY

What next for Auntie?

Coronavirus has given the BBC a fresh *raison d'être*. But with its funding model under threat, its director general on the way out and competition from the streaming giants mounting, its future is still uncertain

BY HANNAH STODELL ILLUSTRATION BY GRANT PEARCE

It seems like a lifetime ago now, but back in February, the freshly (re-)elected Conservative government launched a public consultation on whether non-payment of the TV licence fee should remain a criminal offence. Priorities may have changed since then, but if such a move does go ahead, the BBC stands to lose an estimated £200m per year from its £2.3bn budget for programmes and services.

Of course, that was before the virus hit. Since then, the BBC has had a chance to remind its critics just what it's there for: providing essential public broadcasting and, according to its old Reithian motto, informing, educating and entertaining the nation.

Nevertheless, despite a virus-related delay, the government-funded licence fee concession for millions of over-75s is still set to come to an end this summer, creating yet another financial headache for the BBC.

So, with funding looking uncertain, political scrutiny getting more and more intense and speculation mounting fast, just how might the BBC's funding model change, what would that mean for its output, and what kind of role should the BBC have in an increasingly competitive media landscape?

THE BEEB ON THE RACK

As the BBC approaches its centenary, it's worth noting that there are now very few people who can remember a Britain before the BBC. The corporation was born on 18 October 1922, when the government licensed a consortium of radio manufacturers to establish a single public broadcaster. It was an effort to prevent the kind of chaotic proliferation of radio networks that had been seen in the US.

Initially financed by a Post Office licence fee of 10 shillings, payable by anyone who owned a radio set, the BBC is now funded by the compulsory TV licence fee, worth £3.7bn per year and enforced with criminal sanctions. The consultation on replacing those criminal sanctions with an alternative civil enforcement scheme comes despite the Perry Review in 2015 having found the current system to be "a broadly fair and proportionate response to the problem of licence fee evasion". Five years on from that, the government now argues that "the broadcasting landscape has changed" and cites "ongoing concerns that the criminal sanction is unfair and disproportionate".

However, according to David Elstein, the founding chief executive of Channel 5 and a former BBC editor, replacing the licence fee with a "civil debt" would not only starve the BBC of funding but also significantly increase the penalties for the poorest evaders. "It's hard to see the decriminalisation review as anything other than a shot across the BBC's bows, a reminder that despite the 2015 licence fee settlement, there are still unpleasant things governments can do to the BBC," he says. Even so, Elstein is "quite certain" that no significant changes will come to pass.

A THREAT TO IMPARTIALITY?

So what's the government's game here? Upset by the BBC's general election coverage and emboldened by a landslide victory, "there's a





"IT'S HARD TO SEE THE DECRIMINALISATION REVIEW AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN A SHOT ACROSS THE BBC'S BOWS... A REMINDER THAT THERE ARE STILL UNPLEASANT THINGS GOVERNMENTS CAN DO TO THE BBC"

sense of revenge in the air" within government, explains Charlie Beckett, professor of media and communications at the London School of Economics and previously an adviser to the House of Commons' BBC Charter Review in 2015.

The government's resolve may not last, though. "This is a long-term process," Beckett cautions. "Once it gets into the swamp of broadcasting policy, things will become much stickier."

In December, in an escalation of the war of words, Sarah Sands, the outgoing editor of BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, accused Boris Johnson of "Trumpian tactics" and attempting to "delegitimise the BBC" after he reportedly banned ministers from appearing on the show. The decriminalisation review is seen in some camps as a similar threat to the BBC's model of impartiality, but experts pour cold water on the suggestion that this is part of a media crackdown akin to those in Hungary and Poland.

"Although it's an imperfect concept and quite difficult to execute, impartiality is the law of the land," says Elstein. "Funding at the BBC is not in any way going to affect this."

A bigger challenge for the BBC, he says, will come in the summer when the over-75s' →

concession is axed. In 2015, George Osborne ruled that the BBC should shoulder the burden for these free TV licences in a deal costing the corporation £750m and threatening a number of its TV channels. As a compromise, the BBC agreed to offer free licences only to those over-75s who receive Pension Credit, passing the rest of the cost on to viewers.

"This is capable of inflicting severe damage on the BBC if any significant proportion of the 3 million over-75s who simultaneously get license fee demands fail to or are slow to pay," warns Elstein. "It will play havoc with the BBC's finances, in terms of absolute money and cash flow."

SKINNING THE PUBLIC FUNDING CAT

Despite the sabre-rattling from the government, the BBC's current charter is actually guaranteed through to 2027. So how might the public funding model change by the end of the decade? Well, there are any number of ways to "skin the public funding cat," says Elstein.

One approach would be to fund the BBC through general taxation rather than a separate licence fee – a model already used in Finland and Germany.

Supplementing its income through a subscription for entertainment is another option. The BBC already owns and operates a number of channels under its UKTV brand, funded by a mixture of subscriptions and advertising. It also rolled out Britbox, its streaming service for British TV classics (a joint venture with ITV), late last year.

According to Elstein, an entertainment-led channel package from the BBC would empower the corporation and leave it less vulnerable to the changing winds of government. However, Sally Quick, former head of commercial partnerships at UKTV and a partner at talent consultancy Mission Bay, questions viewers' appetite for another streaming service. "Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, HBO Max – there's a plethora of streamers, and as a viewer, I'm thinking 'How many can I sustain?'"

There's also the question of whether a subscription model is at odds with the BBC's claim of universality. "I'm not against subscription, but you have to ask what it would fund and what you would lose," says Beckett. "Diversity in the media landscape is brilliant, but what about the substantial group of people who simply can't afford it?"



"'BORING BUT BALANCED' IS NOT A SEXY SLOGAN, BUT YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK AT A STORY LIKE CORONAVIRUS TO REALISE WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO HAVE AN ORGANISATION LIKE THE BBC"

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

While the licence fee as a funding model is safe until 2027, the BBC is still expected to streamline its content and overhaul its operations as budget cuts loom.

In January, it announced 450 job cuts within its BBC News division as part of plans to save £80m by 2022. (Those cuts have since been paused in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.) And in response to accusations of a London-centric bias, it plans to move two-thirds of jobs outside the capital by 2027. Writing in the *Financial Times*, the BBC's outgoing director general, Lord Tony Hall, said that the licence fee "obliges us to serve everyone" and "secures our responsibility to reflect every part of the UK".

Several names have already been mooted as a possible successor to Lord Hall, who is due to step down this summer. Those include the BBC's own director of radio and education, James Purnell – although the consensus is that an external hire is required to turn the Beeb's fortunes around. Other potential candidates include Dame Sharon White, the former chief executive of media regulator Ofcom, Channel 4 boss Alex Mahon, and CBI director general Dame Carolyn Fairbairn.

"Bearing in mind the political climate that the new director general is going to be entering, someone like Carolyn Fairbairn could be really interesting," says Quick, pointing to Fairbairn's experience in both Whitehall and the TV industry. "You don't need a creative leader – you need someone to battle for the BBC." Without it there as a standard-bearer for the wider broadcasting industry, "it would be a race to the bottom," she warns.

With coronavirus set to dominate the agenda for months ahead, and Brexit, climate change and financial turmoil continuing to rage in the background, it's unlikely that the government will have the bandwidth or appetite to overhaul the BBC radically in the short term. However, change is clearly on the cards.

In an increasingly partisan media landscape, though, the BBC must resist calls for it to abandon its "boring but balanced" stance, says Beckett. "It's not a sexy slogan, but you only have to look at a story like coronavirus to realise why it's so important to have an organisation like the BBC at the centre of our media life," he says. "We are living in more febrile times, and the BBC has to hold its nerve."

ANATOMY OF A CAMPAIGN



Rescue mission

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home needed a pawsitively purrfect campaign to change attitudes about rehoming rescue animals

BY ALI CATTERALL

It's often said that we Brits are a nation of animal lovers, and the numbers certainly bear that out. Nationwide, we happily cohabit with 9 million dogs and 8 million cats.

However, life can still be tough for some of our furry friends – particularly rescue animals. Each year, around 250,000 unwanted or neglected pets arrive at rescue centres around the UK, including that national treasure, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.

Over its 160-year history, the charity has rescued and rehomed more than 3.1 million cats and dogs, lovingly pairing them up with carefully vetted humans. But that's not before they're given the full service: a thorough veterinary check (and surgery if needed), vaccinations, neutering and microchipping.

These animals come "in all shapes and sizes," Battersea notes, and "refuse to be defined by their past". After all, "rescues aren't broken, or damaged... and while they may not look perfect, they have so much to give".

FORGOTTEN FAVOURITES

Sadly, rescues aren't always people's default choice of pet. Plenty of people now take to the internet to search for designer and fashionable breeds such as French bulldogs – in 2019, there were 165,000 monthly online searches for the

breed – and Battersea has been quick to spot a reduction in rehoming. Rescue animals are being left behind.

"Even though one in four dogs and cats are rescues, you're still more likely to hear about French bulldogs or labradors being the nation's favourite pets," says Battersea's chief executive Claire Horton. "Our preoccupation with breed is fuelling a ruthless pet trade based on looks alone – one that can sadly put profit before animal welfare."

Research by Battersea shows that a whopping 92% of people believe that getting a rescue cat or dog is the right thing to do. And yet just 25% of people have actually put their money where their mouth is. Excuses include that they "can't get the type of breed they want from a rescue centre", that they think rescue animals have health or behavioural problems, and that "you don't know their full history".

Battersea decided to do something about this. Launching a campaign, it hoped to change the way people think about rescue animals, celebrating their inimitable characters and quirky personalities rather than focusing on potential issues. Ultimately, the aim was to put the idea into the public's minds that these animals could be owned by "people like me", while encouraging potential owners to think "rescue" first and "breed" second when it comes to finding their new pet – even if that means waiting a little longer to find the perfect match. Potential owners would be told to look beyond pedigree and "instead see character". And Battersea wanted to do all this in a long-lasting way that would cause a generational shift in perception and a measurable change in behaviour.

Apart from the bias towards buying designer breeds, research showed that the biggest obstacle to rehoming rescue animals was a fear of the unknown. Battersea's long-term campaign hoped to break down these fears and dispel the myths, encouraging potential owners to see "rescue" as a badge of honour.

"People think rescue dogs or cats will be harder to train than a new puppy or kitten, or that it's just not as prestigious to own a pet that hasn't come from a breeder," says Rob Young, Battersea's head of operations. "Nothing could be further from the truth. Ask any proud rescue owner and they will tell you that rescue pets are the best pets. They may not be perfect, but they're worth it."



LIGHTS, CAMERA, AFGHAN

No one had ever attempted a campaign of this kind before within the rescue sector. But there were precedents to be found: Mind's 2017 ReThink Mental Illness campaign and Sport England's 2014 This Girl Can campaign had tackled similar long-term goals, for example.

So, in October 2019, the Rescue Is My Favourite Breed campaign was launched, led by creative agency FCB Inferno. The firm already had a good pedigree, having won awards for its campaigns for Barnardo's and the Home Office. The year before, it had been named Agency of the Year at the inaugural Campaigns for Good Awards.

Battersea needed to find the perfect director to shoot the campaign ad too, someone skilled in bringing out the quirky side of animals onscreen. Step forward BAFTA- and Emmy-winning director Mateo Willis, whose CV features shows such as *Blue Planet II*, *Planet Earth II* and *Frozen Planet*. Having started his career as a cameraman, filming documentaries and commercials, he eventually trained his lens on the world of

> Authenticity was key: wherever possible, ex-Battersea dogs were used in the campaign, and all the animals were former rescues

BATTERSEA'S KEY MESSAGING FOCUSED ON CHALLENGING SOME OF THE REASONS WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE NOT TO REHOME

wildlife. The animal-loving filmmaker was a natural fit. Not least because he once had a dog from Battersea. "I already had great respect for their work, and I think the service they provide is frankly amazing," he says.

As with all wildlife filming, Willis' approach was to capture the energy and character of each animal. To do this, he explains, the viewer's perspective has to be aligned with that of the animal in question – at their eye level, moving at their speed, creating a natural connection between subject and audience. "I wanted the dogs and cats to take centre stage," he says.

Authenticity was key: wherever possible, ex-Battersea dogs were used in the campaign, and all the animals were former rescues. "To capture their characters, we needed to be reading their moods and predicting what they would most likely do, just as I do with wild animals," says Willis. "And in both scenarios, it's often the unscripted moments that are pure gold."

The campaign kicked off with a concentrated, three-week burst of cross-channel activity, including TV, outdoor marketing, social, digital and PR. Most media activity (90%) focused on driving awareness to potential rehomers. Key indicators included a hashtag, #RescueIsMyFavouriteBreed, which generated scores of positive tweets. "Why spend silly money on a designer pet when there are so many wonderful cats and dogs in need of a good home in shelters," tweeted writer Katherine Price. Model and Battersea ambassador David Gandy helped to get the word out on Instagram, and TV shows such as *The X Factor* and *Gogglebox* were roped in. High-visibility outdoor sites such as Waterloo Station in London carried eye-catching posters.

A HOWLING SUCCESS

Elsewhere, the campaign targeted those already in the market for a pet via sites such as Gumtree. A PR launch took place in October for the media, celebrities, influencers and friends of Battersea, resulting in 19 pieces of coverage, including an interview on BBC Radio London's *Barking Hour* (with an audience of around 89,000) and placements in *Coast* magazine, *The Sun* and Channel 4's *Sunday Brunch*.

Early reports indicated successful visibility, with one in five people recalling the campaign when prompted.





TAZZIE LOST HIS LEG AFTER BEING THROWN FROM A TOP-FLOOR WINDOW BY HIS PREVIOUS OWNERS

It generated an overwhelmingly positive social media reaction too, including a 1,112% month-on-month increase in the use of the #RescueIsMyFavouriteBreed hashtag during launch month. Visits to Battersea's website also increased by 29% year-on-year during the campaign.

"It has been fantastic seeing the reception we've had to the campaign from animal lovers up and down the country," says Deborah Chapman, Battersea's head of media & PR. "The hashtag has given proud rescue owners a great opportunity to shout about their wonderful rescue dogs and cats, helping us to increase the visibility of rescue and show off their unique quirks. Now more than ever, we're seeing the great bond that exists between people and their pets, both in terms of the companionship they provide and also the joy they bring us."

While there was no direct fundraising aspect to the campaign, Battersea hopes it will increase the charity's visibility and strengthen its brand. It will also continue to share more stories of owners and their rescue pets, and by 2021 it hopes to have mobilised the existing rescue community, working with other rescue centres across the UK to grow and unite the movement.

> The campaign targeted those already in the market for a pet... Visits to Battersea's website increased 29% year-on-year

Importantly, the charity has since removed breed filters from its own online animal galleries, in order to encourage potential owners to be more open to rescue pets and to look beyond specific breeds. Trials showed that when the option to filter by breed was removed, a higher percentage of website visitors went on to apply to rehome a pet.

"We know that misconceptions and preconceived notions about the traits and behaviours of certain dog and cat breeds can heavily influence people's rehoming choices," says Young. "By removing the option to search by breed, we're hoping that visitors to our website will be more open-minded to finding the right match. If someone is looking for an affectionate lap dog, or an energetic, playful pet, then they will find a perfect match regardless of breed. When you go to Battersea, you won't just get a ragdoll or a labrador or even a mongrel. Most importantly, you'll be getting a rescue."

The last woof goes to Belle, a three-year-old rescue lurcher from Tonbridge, Kent, who featured in the campaign. As owner Giovanna Trani-Brown explains: "People may have reservations about visiting a rescue centre, thinking that all of the animals would have been given up for serious medical or behavioural problems, but dogs like Belle show that this couldn't be further from the truth. Sure, she can be a bit cheeky sometimes, but she also has a unique personality that makes me and my family love her even more. I'm proud to be a rescue owner."

Vatican confirms Pope Francis has contracted novel coronavirus

FAKE

> ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY FAKE NEWS SITE 'MAKE COMMENTS MEANINGFUL'

FAKE

Sharia law to be adopted into UK legal system

> MISLEADING PIECE FROM RUSSIA TODAY IN 2014, RECIRCULATED ONLINE

1.2 billion people will live in places hotter than the Sahara in 50 years

TRUE

> THE LATEST STUDY ON CLIMATE CHANGE, VIA *THE GUARDIAN*

FAKE

Gargling warm, salty water kills COVID-19 in your throat

> A CLAIM WIDELY SHARED ON WHATSAPP AND FACEBOOK

THE TRUTH WILL OUT

Fake news is nothing new, and it's not going away any time soon. But we can learn to beat it...

BY KITTY FINSTAD

Good, bad, fact-checked or fake, these days the news inhabits every part of our daily routines. We skim headlines, absorb long reads and retweet breaking stories. We comment, criticise, share and form opinions. And, frequently, we fall for information that turns out to be untrue. Why?

Rob Brotherton is a New York-based psychologist whose work explores why we believe what we believe – even when it defies logic and flies in the face of credible evidence. In 2015, he wrote *Suspicious Minds: Why we believe conspiracy theories* and recalls that shortly afterwards, conspiracy theories suddenly "became a lot more prominent, especially in American politics".

They were particularly prevalent on the Republican side of the aisle in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election, including widely repeated claims that Hillary Clinton was seriously ill, that the Mexican government was conspiring to send murderers and rapists to the US, that election fraud was rife and that the whole "system" was in some way "rigged". "I started wondering why people fall for all this fake news," Brotherton says. "What's the psychology behind that?"

It was around that time that related buzzwords such as 'post-truth', 'deep fake' and 'echo chambers' started to emerge. "The more I started reading the psychological and scientific research and delving into the history of some of these ideas, the common pattern was that the media coverage of these things was outpacing our natural scientific understanding of them," Brotherton explains.

"What I kept finding was that all the coverage presenting [fake news and the culture surrounding it] as though they're unprecedented new challenges and potentially the 'downfall of democracy' is just not supported by the research," he adds.

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

But where to start? How is "fake news" – fiction, lies or whatever you want to call it – even defined?

"That's part of the trouble. It's such a loaded term and so broadly used that it refers to different things depending on who's speaking," says Brotherton. "Before around 2015 or 2016, the term 'fake news' was in circulation, but at that time it was applied to satirical news: comedy programmes like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, plus *The Onion*." British equivalents include *Charlie Brooker's Screenwipe*, *The Daily Mash* and its BBC Two spin-off, *The Mash Report*.

"However, in 2016 and 2017, it started to take on these new connotations of something intentionally false or deceptive. Then, of course, it took on another dimension again, not least because Donald Trump used it to refer to unflattering or unpalatable news stories. But however you want to define fake news, it's just the tip of the iceberg – one small niche within a much larger news ecosystem."

That niche is sustaining itself too, even in the face of stricter controls. Take coronavirus, for example. Despite information on the virus being strictly vetted – social media platforms have been policing user content and urging the public to seek updates from official sources – some wildly misleading stories have been circulating. Research by the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute, which examined 225 false or misleading claims about coronavirus, found that 88% had been transmitted via social media. It seems we can't help ourselves.

"The news generally portrays itself as being all about facts, and conveying facts neutrally is part of what it does, but another function of it is social," Brotherton explains. "We consume it socially. We want to share news for various reasons, including for the sake of passing on information and increasing our knowledge. But there's also an element of social identity to it. We share particular stories in order to convey that we're a member of a particular group, that we hold the same ideas and that we believe something different from other groups."

HIDDEN BIASES

That social instinct perhaps explains why fake news and conspiracy theories spread, but what makes people buy into them? Brotherton's new book, *Bad News: Why we fall for fake news*, delves into this problem through the lens of something called

> **"Consumers are psychologically inclined to pay more attention to stuff that's bad**



> **There's a tension between the short-term goal of getting attention and the longer-term goal of maintaining your institution's or your brand's credibility**

the "third-person effect". In short, it's the idea that we always think other people are more likely to be influenced by persuasive communications than we are, whether it's news, advertising or conspiracy theories.

"This is particularly relevant to fake news and deep fakes," says Brotherton, "Whenever people talk about these things being problematic, it's never a problem for *them*. It's only a problem because *somebody else* is falling for it." The reality, though, is that we're all vulnerable.

We are also prone to confirmation bias, whereby we're more likely to believe information that confirms our existing beliefs. So how can we learn to be smarter about the way we take in and share information, especially when something challenges our preconceptions?

"In the context of the news, it's about understanding some of these psychological biases that influence us as consumers," Brotherton says. "For example, there's the negativity bias, which is the reason why so much of the news is bad. Certain kinds of stories are more likely to make the news, because they're the stories we're more inclined to read or watch. It's usually things that are shocking and provocative. Consumers are psychologically inclined to pay more attention to stuff that's bad. Negative stories get our attention, they're more memorable and then we're more inclined to repeat them and share them."

And it's not just about something being bad in and of itself either. "Bad things tend to be surprising, and we're more inclined to pay attention to surprising things, whether they're good or bad. It just so happens that a lot of bad things are also surprising," Brotherton adds. "It's not unreasonable to pay attention to those things either, because surprising things are often informative. We can learn from them, perhaps more so than from things that are more mundane.

"Another bias leans towards recency, so we produce and consume more and more news about things like murders, fires, earthquakes and catastrophes that have happened in the past day or hour or week. Again, we're psychologically disposed to pay attention to these things that have just happened, which are important to know about because we may need to act on them quickly."

THINK BIG

These biases determine much of the way we interact with the news, and it's worth remembering that they might be making us miss the bigger picture. "News that focuses on things that have just happened and things that are bad will tend to miss out on the more mundane things that are happening all the time," Brotherton says. "Catastrophes that unfold over longer periods of time – years or decades – receive less coverage than catastrophes that happen overnight, even though that slower-unfolding catastrophe can potentially be much more consequential." After all, coronavirus is getting quite a lot more coverage than climate change.

These underlying trends are an important bit of context to consider when every story is fighting for eyes, ears, hearts and minds. "You can certainly get attention and clicks by playing to those psychological tendencies, but in the longer term, that's not good for the credibility of the industry," Brotherton adds.

"When you ask people what they're concerned about, they'll say 'fake news', but they'll also say they're concerned about sensationalism, hype, clickbait and misrepresentation... There's this tension between the short-term goal of getting attention and the longer-term goal of maintaining your institution's or your brand's credibility. That's where some long-term thinking could be beneficial."

Bad News: Why we fall for fake news *is published by Bloomsbury (£16.99)*

A DIFFERENT



Neurodiversity has long sat in the shadows of the diversity debate, but there is now a growing recognition that those who think **"outside of the box"** all of the time may be full of untapped potential

BY ANNA MELVILLE-JAMES

IKON/GRUNDINI

PERSPECTIVE

What do Albert Einstein, Emily Dickinson and Greta Thunberg have in common? Ironically, it's the thing that makes them so different from each other. All three – plus many of the world's top thinkers, artists, scientists and 15% of people in the UK – have been identified at one time or another as "neurodivergent", meaning that they learn and process information differently than the average person.

"Neurodiversity" and "neurodivergent" generally refer to spectrum conditions such as autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit disorders – all of which share some common features in terms of how information is processed.

This might sound pretty straightforward, but our understanding of neurodivergence has changed significantly in recent years. It was once thought that most people could be classed as "neurotypical", meaning that their brain functions and processes information in the way society expects, but research has shown that the idea of one "normal" type of mind is outdated.

Neurodivergence has therefore undergone significant reframing. We now talk about the "neurodiversity paradigm" to highlight strengths as well as challenges, while also noting the huge degree of variation present within demographics such as dyspraxia and autism. Where the language around neurodiversity was once that of deficit and disability, it is now seen as just a series of natural variations in the ways brains work and interpret information.

TIME FOR A RETHINK

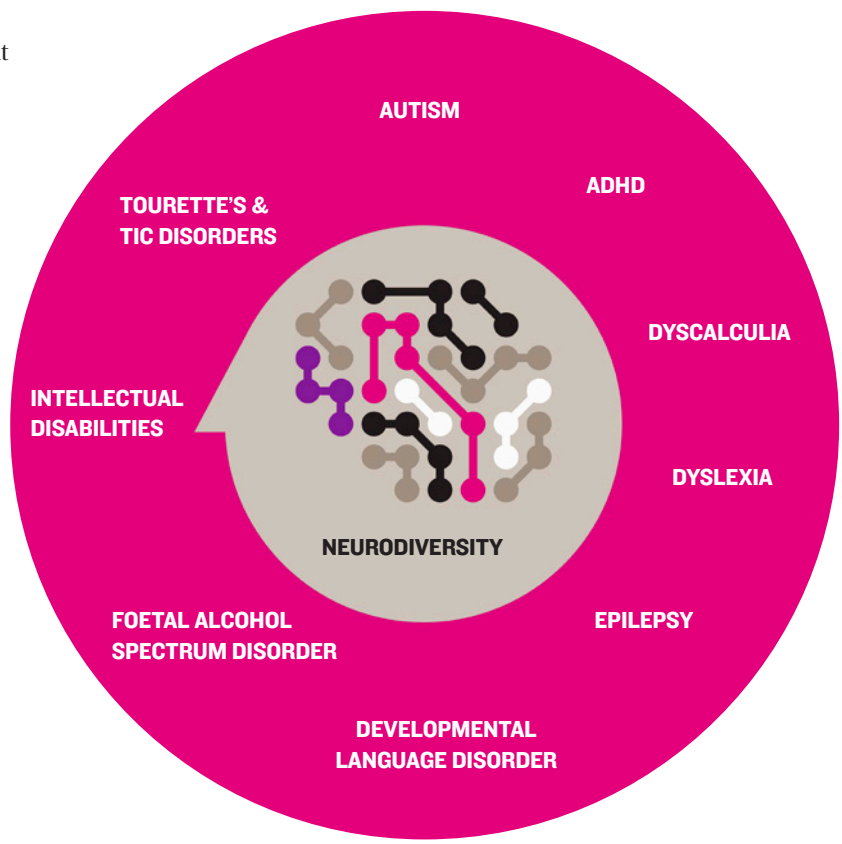
Tap into this, the evidence suggests, and you can leverage neurodiverse ways of thinking as a real strength. Thunberg, for example, has been diagnosed with Asperger's and calls her difference a "superpower" that has enabled her to successfully communicate the message of climate change to a global audience, where more typical messaging campaigns had failed.

In 1998, American journalist Harvey Blume wrote that "neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will be best at any given moment?" It was the first time that the term "neurodiversity" had been used beyond academia, and while embracing neurodiversity may be about inclusivity, it is also about fostering a very real competitive advantage. The role of diversity in innovation and creativity is well-established, and emerging evidence suggests that the inclusion of neurodivergent thinkers in the workforce can be a further driver of innovation.

A 2016 report on neurodiversity in the workplace by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research suggested that neurodivergent employees could offer creativity, lateral thinking, specialised skills and consistency in tasks, as well as different perspectives resulting in original solutions. This organic challenge to groupthink can be invaluable, particularly when it comes to cutting through the kind of complacency that can lead to messaging full of unconscious bias or microaggressions.

HOW TO OFFER THE RIGHT SUPPORT

"All individuals have their own strengths and challenges," says Ed Thompson, CEO of Uptimize, which delivers training on recruiting and managing neurodivergent staff for the likes of Microsoft and Google. "A lot of the



THE TERM "NEURODIVERSITY" REFERS TO A RANGE OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES

SOURCE: AUTISMTOOLBOX.CO.UK

challenges that neurodivergent people face at work are situational and can be avoided.

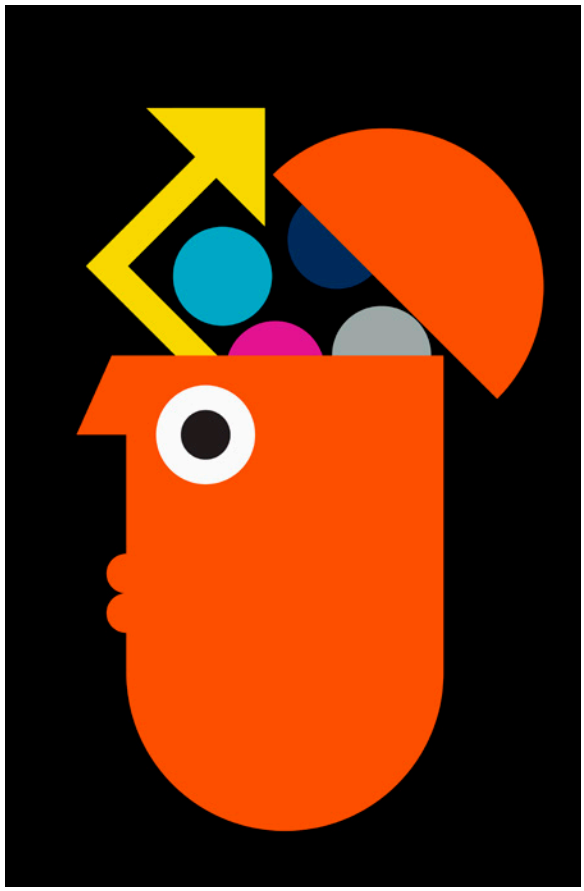
"Often, the issue is that managers and HR teams are subconsciously optimising for neurotypical people, such as in the way managers give feedback or instructions. Starting instead with the understanding that every individual thinks differently and has their own preferences around things like social interaction and communication is a platform for much more effective management, hiring and customer interactions."

For communications professionals, then, supporting neurodiversity is not so very far from the industry's core competencies: learning to tailor the message in a way that means it can be heard and will have the right impact. As such, a sensitivity toward the way interactions are framed and communicated is vital.

Indeed, a 2015 McKinsey report found that good communication is one of the main predictors of success when managing a neurodiverse team. This included practices such as being clear around expectations and having a supportive dialogue with neurodivergent colleagues, particularly when discussing performance issues. For example, you can't expect neurodivergent employees to be able to prepare for a meeting in five minutes, and communicating everything over email may not be the best approach.

Even small practical changes can play a big part in creating a more inclusive environment. Try adjusting lighting for those with ADHD or autism who might find it stressful, or allow employees who find it difficult to concentrate in an open-plan office to wear earphones.

But just as one brain doesn't fit all, the answers are not fixed either. Each case is individual, and adjustments may need to be made when discussing work with someone who is hypersensitive to auditory stimuli, for example.



IKON/GRUNDINI

> **Starting with the understanding that every individual thinks differently is a platform for much more effective management, hiring and customer interactions**

A commitment to embracing difference extends to building team relationships. The more leaders understand about individuals' strengths, weaknesses and different communication styles, the more they can match and balance these effectively.

Whatever the adjustment, it is clear that supporting those who are neurodivergent requires a conscious and continuous effort on the part of leaders and colleagues in a world that has largely been built for the neurotypical.

ADAPTING FOR CLIENTS

When it comes to building a strong relationship with neurodivergent clients, clear, nuanced communication and greater awareness are key.

"All relationships, including those with neurodiverse clients, start with the simple skill of listening," says Jason Cobbold, CEO of BMB Agency. "Agencies need to resist the urge to 'present' and spend more time in anticipation mode. Think not just about the product you are selling, but your audience, their experience of you and the reactions you will elicit."

That might include adapting any high-sensory-input environments, providing documents in multiple formats, or even acknowledging that a client is not necessarily stalling on your idea for campaign messaging but might simply need additional time to process it in order to respond effectively.

"This industry prides itself on applying creativity to solving business problems for clients. But brilliant problem-solving is absolutely not about having the same types of people around the table," says Cobbold. "Originality rarely comes from sameness but is born from different ways of grappling with a question, different ways of thinking and ultimately different life experiences." So, are you making the most of that potential?

Do you represent your audience?

Media success relies on communicating with diverse voices.

Learn from industry experts – ***download*** the Diversity in Journalism white paper.

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How Britain learned to love wine

We Brits long turned our noses up at wine, preferring a pint to a glass of pinot. Well, that was until some major brands, supermarkets and influencers got in on the act

BY HUW PRYCE

The PR world has always been quick to embrace the new, the different and the unusual. And what could be more unusual than the combination of "English" and "wine"? It even sounds like a bit of an oxymoron, given our famously rainy climate and the enormous potential for mouldy grapes.

But English wines – and organic ones to boot – have been enjoying a huge surge in popularity in recent years. After all, with good farming practices, British vineyards can now produce high-quality, sustainable wines, the kind of stuff that wins prestigious awards. As Nick Mason from organic wine specialist Bancroft Wines puts it: "You're amazing if you're growing organic grapes anywhere in the world. You're incredible if you're doing it in England."

The rise of English wine comes on the back of some particularly clever comms in recent years, flagging up the virtues and overall quality of some of England's finest vegan, organic and locally sourced wines, catering to a new, eco-savvy market. Thanks to the backlash against pesticides and a growing understanding among consumers of the perils of cheap, mass-produced wine, Britain's organic producers are enjoying their moment in the sun, with UK sales up by 8% since 2018 and natural wines featuring heavily on wine lists at the likes of Raymond Blanc's two-Michelin-starred Le Manoir restaurant in Oxfordshire.



> With pubs and bars closed amid the global pandemic, some wine merchants that are able to deliver door-to-door are reporting sales up by 1,000%

And right now there's another, more pressing reason for the surge in wine sales across the board. With pubs, bars, restaurants and theatres closed amid the global coronavirus pandemic, wine is flying off the supermarket and off-licence shelves. Some wine merchants that are able to deliver door-to-door are reporting sales up by an astonishing 1,000%.

So how did we Brits learn to love wine? And how has the all-important messaging changed?

LOVE AT FIRST SIP?

Looking at a modern British supermarket, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the sizeable wine aisle has always been there. These days, wine outdoes shampoo and conditioner for sheer variety, and that's before you even start to consider countries of origin. But that wasn't always the case. In the dark days of the 1950s, the British public drank almost exclusively beer, cider, sherry and spirits. Expensive imported wine was the preserve of the privileged few.

For the rest of us, there was "British wine" – a sweetened, adulterated drink made from grape juice. Its remnants can now be found in the backwaters of supermarket shelves, rebranded as health drinks or languishing as legacy brands. But as the middle classes grew in the second half of the 20th century, the potential market for wine grew too. It was a market the supermarkets would eventually wrest from the off-licences, with the help of some clever marketing. →



GETTY









CLEVER MARKETING PAVED THE WAY FOR THE LIKES OF BABYCHAM, BUT BRITISH DRINKERS CAN NOW SAMPLE HOME-GROWN WINES SUCH AS THOSE FROM THE RIDGEVIEW ESTATE (LEFT)



One key early brand was Babycham. Intended as a means of stimulating demand for perry (pear cider), Babycham was marketed as a small-measure drink for women. It was given a cute label and attractive bottles, and it was meant to be consumed from branded goblets. Its popularity – building on Queen Victoria's love of German white wine, which she called "hock" – created an opening for Liebfraumilch, giving rise to brands such as Black Tower and Blue Nun, both of which were marketed in non-standard bottles. The sweet, light taste and low acidity were easy on the "uneducated" British palate.

RIESLINGS TO BE CHEERFUL

Other European producers soon started to make their presence felt, partly as a result of the expansion of tourism into Europe in the 1960s and the influence of the Common Market in the '70s. Mateus Rosé, a simple blended wine, and Il Ruffino Chianti sought to identify themselves through novelty packaging; the Chianti, for example, came wrapped in a half jacket of papyrus, which would be soaked in water to cool the wine.

> "Supermarkets were well-placed to build on these influencers and changes in lifestyle, making the world of wine more approachable



JILLY GOOLDEN AND OZ CLARKE WERE THE FAMILIAR FACES OF WINE IN THE '80S AND '90S

French wine finally broke into the UK market when importers started trialling soft, sweet whites and rosés. Tasting panels revealed that the British public's preferred flavour – for both red and white – was a safe, fruity and low-acidity "medium". The resulting blended wine, Le Piat d'Or, was the final key to unlocking the UK. The red and white tasted remarkably similar, but they gave an impression of sophistication that satisfied the British dinner-party market.

Of course, if you're a modern, British wine-drinker, Le Piat d'Or is loathsome, lacking character, complexity, aftertaste... all the things French wine is notable for. It was marketed as quintessentially French and a way to win the approval of cultured guests: *"Les Français adorent Le Piat d'Or"*. Untrue, of course, but after a few years the market was ready for more variety.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Early influencers such as Elizabeth David and Robert Carrier, not to mention Fanny Craddock, stimulated a growing trend for dinner parties – and wine was part of the experience. The Galloping Gourmet, Graham Kerr, made a point of drinking wine on camera, using the catchphrase "a short slurp" as he prepared a meal.

One of the first Brits to write seriously about wine for the mass market was Pamela Vandyke Price. A fixture of the 1960s media industry, she edited *Wine and Food* magazine for Condé Nast and was a wine correspondent for *The Times*. She paved the way for others too, notably the BBC's *Food & Drink* programme, which would later feature the likes of Jilly Goolden and Oz Clarke.

Ultimately, though, it was the supermarkets that drove the biggest shift. "British supermarkets were well-placed to build on these influencers and changes in British lifestyle, making the world of wine more approachable for the British public," says marketing and research expert Denis Robb of The Research Practice. "Influencers and supermarkets helped to bring about a wine-drinking boom in the UK, based largely on changes in lifestyle and in the way people perceived themselves." The rest, as they say, was history.

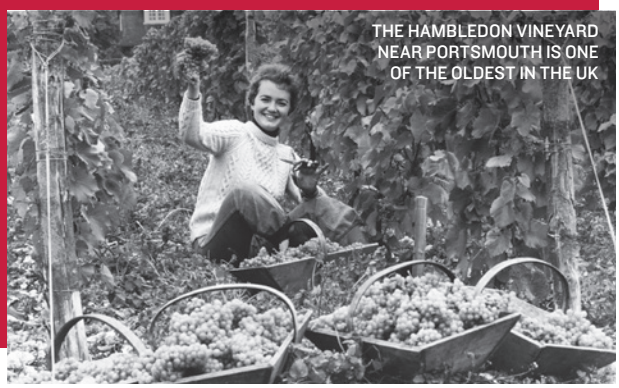
How English wine got its fizz back

The English wine industry started to make a comeback as part of the self-sufficiency movement of the 1960s and '70s. Between 1914 and 1936, there had been no commercial vineyards operating in the UK, and it fell to these plucky pioneers to restart the industry from scratch by planting their own vines. Initially favouring cold-weather and German hybrid varieties that produced Germanic-tasting wines, they soon realised that commercial success was still a long way off.

Restricted by the climate, a lack of infrastructure and a hostile tax environment, the new vintners of Britain had to branch out into doing their own PR too. But even turning up at a village fête with trestle tables and home-made leaflets was fraught with legal difficulties. And the economies of scale that allowed established wine producers and importers to overcome the hostile British marketplace were simply not available to the embryonic domestic industry.

A turning point came in the late '80s when producers like Denbies, near Dorking, began to replace their stock of hybrids with traditional French grapes. The Home Counties share the same climate and soil as the Champagne region, enabling production to shift from table wine to sparkling. Other vineyards soon followed suit.

The UK now produces high-quality sparkling wines to rival Champagne. In 2017, the industry consolidated its PR arm when English Wine Producers and the UK Vineyards Association voted to merge, becoming UK Wine Producers Ltd (UKWP).



THE HAMBLEDON VINEYARD NEAR PORTSMOUTH IS ONE OF THE OLDEST IN THE UK

GETTY

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DO IT BETTER

THIS ISSUE

UP YOUR ETHICAL CREDENTIALS BY BECOMING A B CORP

OVERHAUL AND UPDATE YOUR CV

IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL RESILIENCE FOR STRESSFUL TIMES

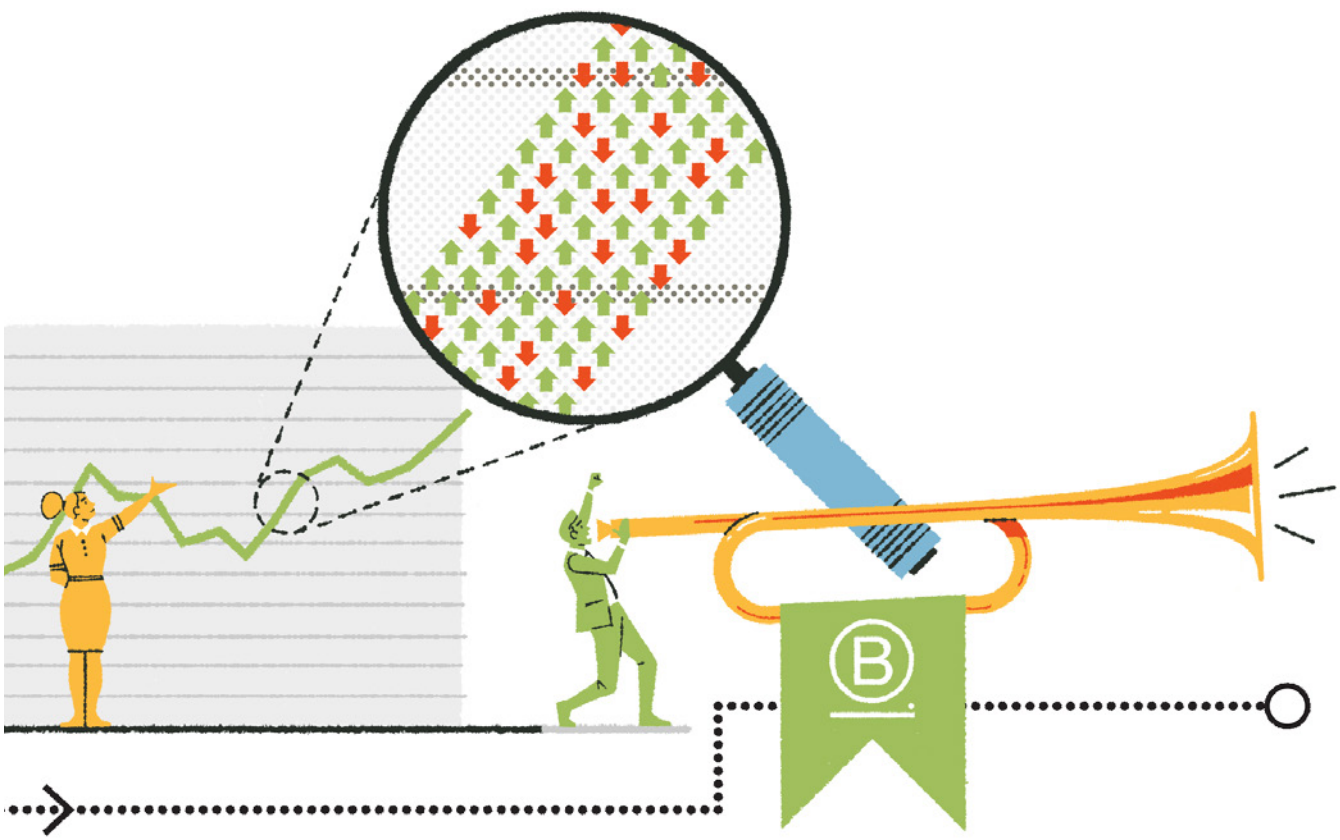


IKON/NEIL WEBB

How to be a B Corp

As concern over the climate crisis grows and debate rages around workplace inequality, some businesses are taking the leap and placing purpose ahead of profit by joining the B Corp movement. How can PR firms join in?

BY CHRISTIAN KOCH ILLUSTRATION BY MATT CLOUGH



Public relations professionals can usually sniff out spin a mile away. But when big multinationals make pledges on being carbon-neutral or eliminating the gender pay gap, it can be easy to forget that these firms might be "greenwashing" in an effort to obscure the fact that they invest in fossil fuel companies or have no women among their highest earners. Stumble upon a B Corp-certified company, though, and you can be confident that you've found a sustainable firm using business as a force for good.

B Corp certification is the business version of having a Fairtrade sticker. It sends a message to customers and clients that the company focuses as much on "purpose" as it does on "profit". The rigorous B Corp assessment measures a company's performance across five areas: governance, workers, community, the environment and customers. This spans everything from how sustainable the products are to whether the company employs a diverse workforce and supports local communities. The certification has gained serious traction in recent years as the climate crisis ramps up and debates around diversity in the business world become more widespread and well-rounded.

Today, there are around 3,000 B Corp-certified companies globally, including The Body Shop, Ella's Kitchen and Etsy. Last year, Jamie Oliver even announced plans to turn his struggling restaurant chain into a B Corp.

> "It's not as simple as ticking a box. B Corp looks at every single aspect of your business. There's nowhere to hide

But what does it mean for a PR firm to become a B Corp? London-based Gong Communications was certified in 2017. Founder and MD Narda Shirley (who's also a B Corp ambassador) tells us more...

QUICK MATHS

To start your journey towards becoming a B Corp-certified firm, the first thing to do is complete a quick online assessment by going to bimpactassessment.net. Companies need to score at least 80 out of 200 to proceed to the next stage.

"The beauty is that anybody can do this, and it's free," says Shirley. "Even if you have no interest in becoming B Corp-certified and just want to see how you compare to other companies, you can do that. It's a great benchmarking tool, as it highlights areas you need to work on."

JUDGEMENT TIME

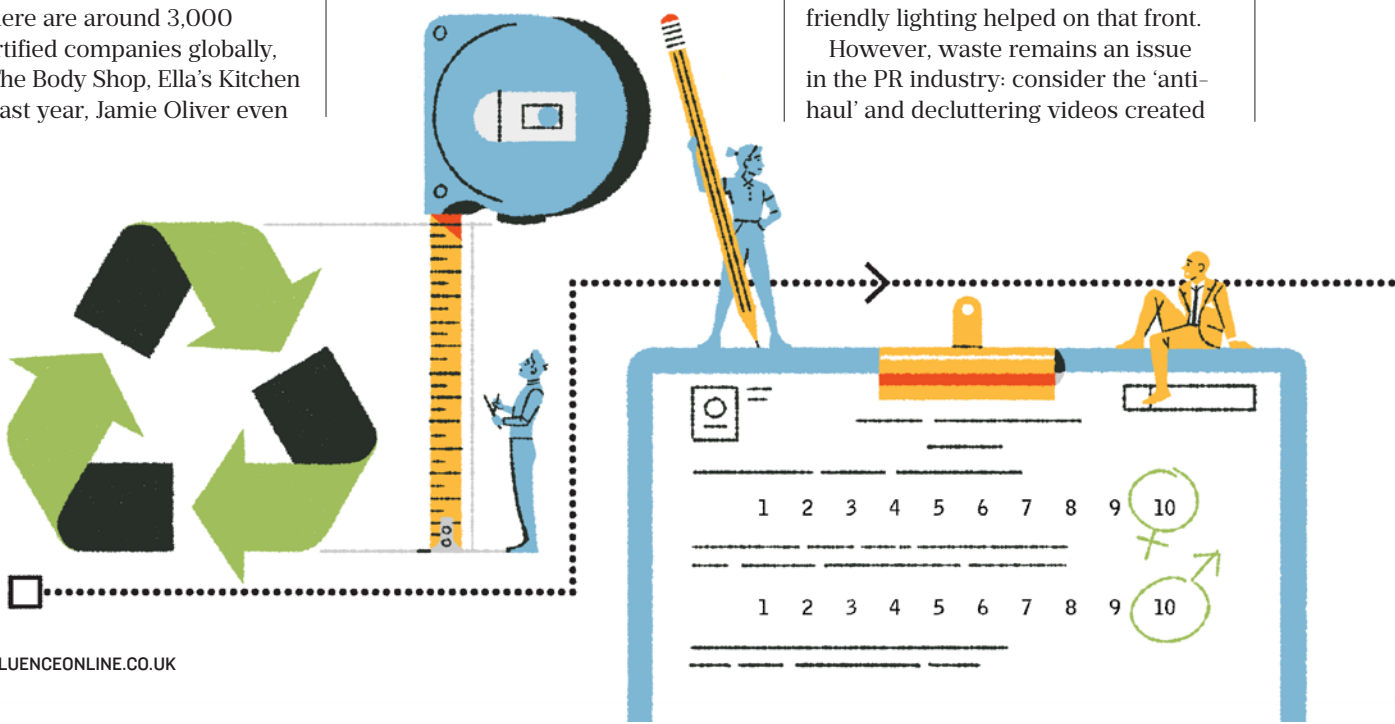
To become B Corp-certified, a company must go through the gruelling independent assessment, which puts the company's full environmental and social impact under the microscope. The process can take anything from a few weeks to years: French food giant Danone is currently certifying its subsidiaries, with the aim of becoming fully certified in 2030. There's an annual fee, and companies must recertify every three years.

"It's not as simple as ticking a box and then you get a badge," says Shirley. "B Corp looks at every single aspect of your business and really goes into the nuts and bolts of the company and how it's run. There's nowhere to hide."

WASTE NOT

For many companies, the B Corp process is an opportunity to review their environmental impact. Gong Communications was ahead of the trend on that front, having reduced air travel by using Zoom for meetings (the company has an office in Nairobi). It also took steps to ensure that its Georgian-era office building in London met modern standards. Installing eco-friendly lighting helped on that front.

However, waste remains an issue in the PR industry: consider the 'anti-haul' and decluttering videos created



by beauty vloggers, where they bemoan the lavish packages they receive from cosmetics companies' PR teams. "Corporate gifting could soon be erased, as companies find more sustainable solutions," says Shirley. "We recently met one B Corp company that makes notebooks from stones, and you can also get gifts made from old coffee grounds or mushroom roots."

SKY-HIGH D&I

The B Corp assessment isn't just about the environment – it also assesses gender equality and staff diversity. As Shirley notes, "companies can score extra points if they use suppliers with greater diversity in the ownership".

OPEN UP

What's more, "rather than just protecting shareholders' interests, B Corp status requires you to look out for all your stakeholders – employees, suppliers and so on," Shirley explains. "That means more transparency. You have to be open with your team about how you're doing financially, enshrining it into your articles of association."

TAKE 'EM ON

"PRs have an important role as consultants to their clients," Shirley adds. "We've got to be brave in challenging them and the way they conduct their business. If your clients aren't already thinking about how environmentally and socially sound their business practices are, they need to get on with it. As their advisers, we need to do that. It's part of our reputation."

WIN NEW CLIENTS...

There are plenty of benefits for you, too. Businesses certified by B Corp grew 28 times faster than UK GDP in 2017. "Because we're part of a global community of like-minded businesses, there's a tendency for people to buy from other B Corps," says Shirley. "Gong has definitely won business from companies that we wouldn't have thought about approaching."

... AND ATTRACT FRESH TALENT TOO

According to a survey by PR firm Global Tolerance, 62% of millennials want to work for a company that has a positive impact on the world. "We've had people join Gong because we're a B Corp now," Shirley explains.

THE TIME IS RIGHT

"This decade will be crucial for the climate crisis," says Shirley. "It'll separate progressive companies that understand it from head-in-the-sand businesses that think they can ignore it and that it'll be business as usual. The latter will get tripped up very quickly."

Find out more at bcorporation.net

Born to be B Corp

So which marketing and comms companies have landed that coveted B Corp- certification?

2015

April Innate Motion
August Forster Communications
September Futerra, MullenLoweSalt

2017

January Kin&Co
February Greenhouse PR
April The House
June Gong Communications

2018

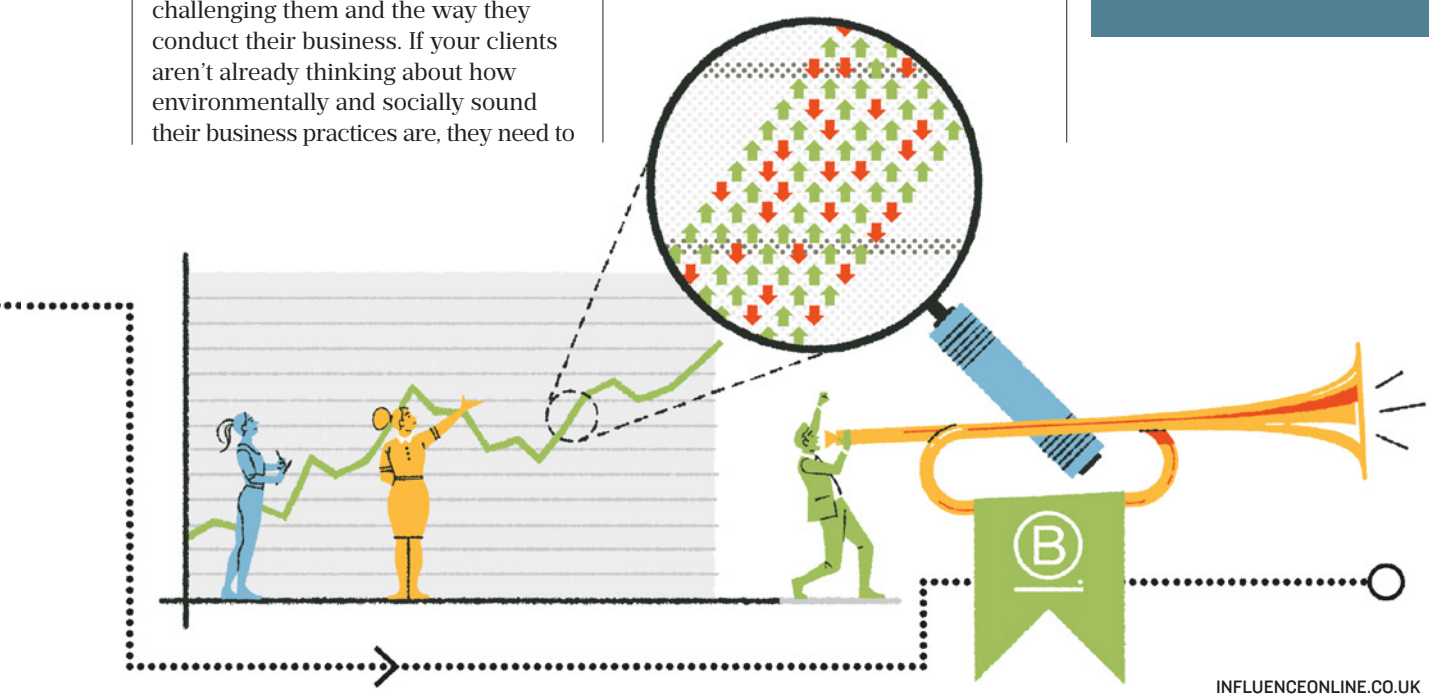
August Havas
October Articulate Marketing

2019

April Milk & Honey PR, Pulse Brands
August Social Misfits Media
December Revolt London

2020

January Freud Communications, Raw London
February Hitch Marketing Library, Tulchan Communications
April Nice and Serious



7 ways to create a modern CV

Whether you're looking for a non-exec position, a promotion or just a new challenge, a long, generic CV is about as effective as sending the same press release to a bunch of editors and expecting your story to go viral. CV queen Victoria McLean has some tips for strengthening your personal brand story

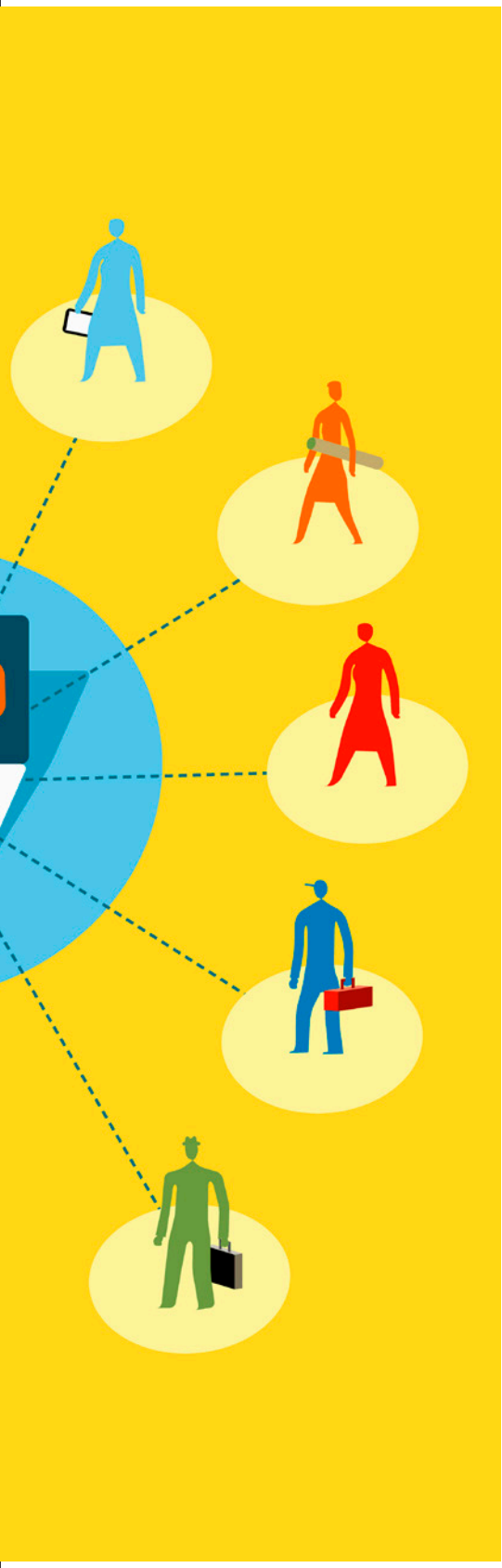


1 UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

You wouldn't dream of ploughing your PR or corporate comms budget into a campaign without understanding the needs of your target audience. Approach your CV in the same way. If you're looking to work in a corporate team or at an agency, you might focus on your expertise in reputation management. But if you want to be seen as the go-to person for working with the latest bloggers, podcasters and influencers, you'll need a different approach.

2 OPTIMISE THE TOP LINE

Every PR knows the value of a strong, engaging headline. In CV terms, this is more about search-engine optimisation than creativity. Recruiters might search for "PR manager" or "head of corporate communications", but they're unlikely to search for "PR maven" or "creative diva".



IKON/OTTO STEININGER

When it comes to your executive summary, think like a journalist. You need to grab your audience's interest and entice them to read on. Don't be dry and boring; zero in on your most impressive and relevant achievements in a compelling way.

3 IT'S ALL ABOUT TAILORING YOUR MESSAGING

Sending the optimal messages for your target audience is crucial. Your CV needs to be concise and highlight your USP. But you also need to use the right language; the closer you can match your titles, skills and achievements to what the recruiter wants, the greater your chances of success.

4 PLAY BY THE SEO RULES

Your CV will probably need to get past a recruiter's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) before it reaches a human. These systems work like search engines, scanning documents for keywords. Once you've identified the most important phrases in the job description, fit them into your CV story. Mirror the language as precisely as you can: perhaps "crisis management" or "influencer marketing compliance".

5 STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

You're an expert when it comes to helping your clients stand out. Now it's time to use the same skills on your own CV. Unless you're applying for a highly specialised role, you'll need to demonstrate:

- **Numeracy and data analysis, for campaign performance and analytics;**
- **Organisational skills, for ensuring cross-channel integration;**
- **Communications expertise, for written and video content, podcasts and social media; and**
- **Networking and empathy, for selling your ideas.**

A strong CV will have achievement-focused bullet points. This is where the insights provided by digital tools such as Google Analytics will be your best friend, providing evidence of your skills with real-world examples and measurable outcomes.

"You're an expert when it comes to helping your clients stand out. Now it's time to use the same skills on your own CV

6 DEMONSTRATE YOUR CREATIVE GENIUS

It can be a challenge to distil a varied career into two pages of A4. Instead, try to highlight exceptional projects, skills and experiences that align with your target role. (Exceptions to the two-page rule can be made for those with a freelance or consultancy-based career.)

Inject some style, but don't go over the top. It's tempting to use quirky designs and infographics to show how creative you are. However, an ATS may reject CVs with text boxes, images or unusual fonts and colours, so keep it clean and simple. A personal website, blog or social media profile may be a better way to show off your creativity.

7 BRAND REPUTATION MATTERS

You know how easily typos and inconsistencies can damage a corporate brand. It's the same with your personal brand. There's no forgiveness when it comes to spelling, grammar or formatting mistakes, so check, check and check again. Print it, read it aloud, and ask a friend to check it too. As a general rule, write in the third-person singular and ditch the pronouns where possible.

Victoria McLean, one of the UK's leading career consultants, is the founder and CEO of CityCV



The stress test

In a relentlessly changeable world, personal resilience is an essential attribute. Here's how to stay healthy and happy in difficult times

BY LEONA DEAKIN

Death and taxes aside, change is one of the few certainties in life. Right now, the pace of change within organisations is particularly rapid – and relentless. Gone are last century's familiar waves of innovation followed by periods of stability in which a company or industry could relax and assimilate. Instead, in a world of fast, unlimited and often unanticipated technological potential, flexibility amid change is now the key to success. And if you're not keeping up, you've already lost.

For leaders and employees alike, this onslaught of disruption presents a challenge. Human beings bounce back from stress most effectively when it's acute and followed by a period of rest. Stress that is chronic and ongoing can have profound and long-term effects on wellbeing, motivation and productivity. And increasingly, today's workforces are showing higher levels of stress-related conditions – with businesses taking a hit in terms of sickness, absences and lower productivity.

According to psychologists, resilience – the ability to bounce back quickly from an adverse

> Our emotional triggers are biased towards the negative because that keeps us safe. It takes a concerted effort to put things in perspective

experience – is a key factor in why some people cope with stress better than others. But what does it mean to be resilient, and can it be learned?

BODY TALK

Resilience requires a two-pronged approach, combining physiological and psychological wellbeing for optimum effectiveness.

On the first front, it's worth understanding how stress affects the body. When faced with stress or anxiety, our bodies release cortisol, a 'fight or flight' hormone which heightens our attention and enables us to survive. It's a primitive system that proves highly effective when we face a physical threat, but workplace stress is rarely something we can fight off or flee from. It has to be endured. And so the cortisol remains and builds as more stress comes our way. Cortisol is one of the key reasons why stress is so harmful, as elevated levels are a leading cause of high blood pressure, heart conditions and depression.



The good news is that cortisol is fairly easy to remove. All it wants you to do is move ('fight or flight'). Doing 20 to 30 minutes of aerobic **exercise** such as walking, jogging or cycling on a regular basis can significantly reduce levels of this hormone in your system.

In turn, physical activity will help in relation to another important factor in stress management: sleep. Quality, restorative **sleep** is critical for our resilience, and as anyone who has ever been sleep-deprived knows, debilitating tiredness can profoundly affect your emotional state and cognitive ability.

Excessive cortisol in the system interrupts sleep because the body thinks a threat is coming and cannot then unwind and allow itself to rest. By contrast, reducing cortisol helps the brain to relax. **Diet** should be taken into account too, as excessive caffeine, alcohol and sugar also disrupt our sleep patterns.

Taking simple steps to reduce the cortisol in your system, nourish and hydrate your body properly, and provide conditions in which you can rest properly will lay strong foundations for the second piece of the puzzle: mental resilience.

PEACE OF MIND

Research over the past few decades has outlined what has been called the **resilient mindset** – ways of thinking routinely used by those who bounce back from adversity quickly, with interesting results.

Our emotional triggers are biased towards the negative because that keeps us safe. Of our six primary emotions, four are negative (fear, anger, sadness and disgust), one is neutral (surprise) and one is positive (joy). This means that in challenging times our mindset tends to drift towards how awful things are and how difficult the situation is. It takes a concerted effort to put things in perspective, take control and adopt a positive slant, but this is exactly what we should be doing to improve our resilience.

How we think affects how we feel, and our thoughts are not random.



Rather, they are a habitual muscle strengthened by years of experience and practice. Changing the way we think can be challenging and takes time, effort and the support of others, as well as a certain amount of self-awareness. However, the benefits are proven: peace of mind, improved mental health, increased life satisfaction and enhanced motivation.

Seeing changes, challenges and setbacks as a normal part of life and something we can learn from can also help, as well as focusing on the things we can control and taking action, rather than simply railing against external forces. Practising **mindfulness** and surrounding ourselves with people and experiences that make us feel good are other powerful resilience-building tactics.

Employers can have a big impact on the wellbeing of their employees here, because adapting to change requires an understanding of why that change is happening. Having some control over how that change takes place will also help. Businesses that explain their decisions fully and allay any fears will earn the trust of their employees. Engaging staff in a two-way conversation about how those changes occur can provide transparency and raise everyone's confidence and motivation.

LEARNING FROM STRESS

Stress is now an integral part of modern life, and resilience is an essential part of the balancing act. Learning to support ourselves mentally and physically is as crucial to our career success as any other skill, enabling us to meet the demands of a restless world – without sacrificing the quality of our own life.

IKON /NEIL WEBB

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THE BACK STORY

A return to centralised government comms?

In February 1917, in the depths of World War I, John Buchan was appointed director of information at the newly formed Ministry of Information.

Buchan was apparently rather dour, but his CV was certainly impressive: journalist, diplomat and, most famously, author of the 1915 spy novel *The 39 Steps*. His memo proposing "a department of information" is itself a gem, headed with red underlined type: "This document is the property of His Britannic Majesty's Government".

Such a department would, Buchan wrote, "get rid of the defects which have hitherto been conspicuous in our publicity and propaganda work". It would co-ordinate the work already being done across the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, the War Office and the Home Office, but it wouldn't "spoon-feed" the British press. Newspapers would still be free, Buchan insisted, to approach individual government departments directly.



COURTESY OF THE SWANN GALLERIES

EFFECTIVE COMMS SAVE LIVES

Buchan's memo is reproduced in AZ McKenna's book *100 Years of Government Communication*, which I read recently because it feels so relevant to where we are now. Again and again, it made me wonder whether Britain needs to reintroduce a central office or even a ministry for government communication. The last one, the Central Office of Information (COI), was disbanded in 2011 during the austerity-driven "bonfire of the Quangos".

It's easy to imagine it happening. This crisis has already forced the government to centralise more of its communications. The daily coronavirus briefing, with cabinet ministers appearing alongside medical and scientific advisers, is now a familiar part of life. And as we saw when Sajid Javid resigned in January, the current inhabitants of Number 10 are willing to do whatever it takes to impose iron-clad "message discipline" and centralise the provision of ministerial advice.

The other reason why the government might consider a more joined-up comms function is that the coronavirus crisis cuts across government disciplines and departments. It has become brutally apparent that health, social care, the economy, transport and education – to name but five – can't be seen in isolation. Try and unpick one, and the whole fragile edifice of pandemic protection could fall apart. The last thing we need as we move beyond the peak of the crisis is to inadvertently create a set of excuses along the lines of "Oh, but the guidance from that department suggested..."

Oliver Hickson started working at the COI in 1995 and left a year before it closed. He now runs his own consultancy, Hickson Communications, which mainly advises not-for-profits. He says that a central government comms function could offer "a joined-up strategic approach, research across departments, knowledge of previous campaigns (in this instance, epidemics such as AIDS and bird flu), communications with a less political manner, more creativity, and – through a revived Government News Network – a nuanced message across the regions". It'd also be cheaper, he insists, and would prevent a small cabal of big PR agencies dominating the government roster.

> "A central government comms function could offer a joined-up strategic approach... with a less political manner

THE NEXT STEPS

Will it happen? Who knows. But former prime minister Tony Blair (himself no mean communicator) says that clear government comms will be an important part of easing the lockdown, as "the very fact of setting out a plan and explaining it helps people plan their own lives and restores confidence".

Indeed, after World War I, although the Ministry of Information itself was abolished, some significant parts of the wartime communication infrastructure endured. Winston Churchill even took his press officer with him from the War Office to his new role at the Colonial Office. Twenty-five years later, though, at the height of World War II, Churchill would declare that "the truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies". Perhaps it pays to be careful with the wartime analogies...



Matthew Rock highly recommends 100 Years of Government Communications *by AZ McKenna. Do you think we need centralised government comms? Tweet us @InfluencePRmag*

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