

Setting the bar for the future of communication



By [Daniel Munslow](#)

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CHICAGO, USA: The IABC 2012 World Conference kicked off on the morning of Sunday, 24 June in Chicago, Illinois, USA. This year's conference, which is attended by more than 1 400 top business communicators from around the globe, is themed "Vision of 20/15". The theme and the talks being presented are designed with the view of looking at the future of strategic communications. The conference aims to equip delegates with the approach to tackle the global business environment during the next three years and beyond.

The World Conference sessions provide state-of-the art research and discussion-based workshops, including a presentation by Talk2Us, focussed on internal communication and strategically shaping such a capability. Talk2Us presented on Monday, 25 June. In 2011, Talk2Us presented a paper on leadership communication, which can be viewed [here](#).

Speak the language of business

The key underlying theme at the World Conference is on equipping communicators with business skills to ensure they can speak the language required to obtain a voice at the table and be viewed as strategic business partners.

Angela Sinickas from ABC, presented an interaction session which highlighted just how easy it can be to think more strategically so that leaders will seek communicators' expert advice more regularly-and earlier in the decision-making process.

Globally, internal communicators said they felt they are included too late in the business decision process and needed more time to plan more strategically, anticipate and prepare for emerging issues, present solutions proactively to leadership in ways that make business sense to them, and use consulting techniques that give them a stronger voice in management decision-making.

Key to this, is the ability to run effective measurement that demonstrates true return on investment, from a pence and cents perspective, as well as an intangible engagement assessment.

Know what you you are trying to achieve

In another presentation, Nick Durutta from ABC - a California-based communication consultant specialising in strategic communications, reiterated how many communication campaigns and activations fail because no goals are set and the focus on bottom-line results is diluted by unnecessary 'activations'.

The secret is to ensure that communicators really know what they are trying to achieve and measurable criteria are put in place that are disclosed and agreed to upfront in the business.

Strategic audit communication programmes

Finally, a topic hot on the lips of South African communicators, according to research conducted earlier this year by Talk2Us, is managing strategic audit communication programmes. Business communicators can drive far greater impact in the business and obtain senior-level buy-in through great research.

Ryan Williams from ABC, president of Canadian-based TWI Surveys, highlighted that communicators simply cannot plan effective communication interventions without an empirically sound baseline that determines the current state of communication and channel consumption. It's like shooting in the dark and hoping to hit your chosen target without even knowing which direction to aim at.

Audits are about establishing whether the employee newsletter is even relevant before asking for more budget; what do employees think of executives' communication; what type of intranet best drives daily performance; what do frontline managers need to serve customers; and so on.

Easy to guess, but much more difficult to prove! Speaking to a number of communicators after the session, it was noted how difficult it was to ensure business took them seriously without evidence of the impact they are having.

The conference challenges the norm and is a must for any business communicator looking at ways to remain relevant in these ever-changing times.

ABOUT DANIEL MUNSLOW

Daniel Munslow is the owner and founder of MOC Consulting and former director on the International Association of Business Communicators' International Executive Board. He has 16 years' experience in business communication consulting. He has worked across Africa, as well as in the Middle East, the US, Europe, and AsiaPac.

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