

Transcript | How to Communicate with Anyone (Really, Anyone)

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00:00:14.430 --> 00:00:30.499

Derek Alton: Well, Hello! And welcome to this session on how to communicate with anyone. My name is Derek Alton, and I am the community engagement lead here at Apolitical. So it'd be great to hear from all of you. So do post in the chat where you're joining us. From what organization you work for and what you would like to share about yourself.

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00:00:30.530 --> 00:00:53.840

Derek Alton: So today, we're going to be talking about communication. And as a former public servant who worked in communication for many years. This is something that's near and dear to my heart. And I know just how many different types of audiences that we are required to interact with whether it is senior leaders and politicians or elected officials or people in the community. It's a lot of different roles, and each one requires a different sort of flavor of how you engage with them. So

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00:00:53.920 --> 00:01:04.990

Derek Alton: the goal is by the end of this hour. I hope that you'll leave some practical, actionable ways of tailoring the way you speak, and write to these different audiences, and will hopefully feel better and just, more confident about communication

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00:01:05.530 --> 00:01:25.820

Derek Alton: for those of you who will be joining us for the 1st time. Welcome! Apolitical is the world's largest community for government used by over a quarter 1 million public servants and policymakers from 170 different countries. Our mission is to make government smarter. We do this by putting the best knowledge and skills and fingertips at the fingertips of public servants like yourself all over the world.

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00:01:53.880 --> 00:01:55.830

Derek Alton: before we jump into today's session.

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00:01:56.230 --> 00:02:20.300

Derek Alton: I'd like to start off by extending an invitation to all of you to join our government Comms community. That's right. We have an online community specifically for people working in Comms, and we hope that all of you will join it. We've created this space. So it's for peers all over the world to help answer questions, support each other with resources, ideas, and you don't actually need to be working in Comms to be part of this community just to have an interest in it. Figure out. How do you tell your message more clearly.

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00:02:20.640 --> 00:02:26.199

Derek Alton: So if you want, you can navigate to resource section in the zoom, or you can find a link in the chat.

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00:02:28.080 --> 00:02:33.300

Derek Alton: and it'll be there just in a second. There it is. Thanks, Doug, all right.

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00:02:34.080 --> 00:02:55.939

Derek Alton: So now that out of the way now for some technical notes, all right. So this event is being recorded for on demand viewing on the apolitical website. So please don't record it yourself. Don't worry. You'll get a recording afterwards. Contact details for privacy concerns are on the apolitical homepage footer. At the bottom. Closed captions are available and can be toggled on or off in your screen settings.

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00:02:57.480 --> 00:03:05.510

Derek Alton: All right. So before we introduce our speakers, we're going to run a few quick polls to get sort of a sense of where everybody's coming from today. So.

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00:03:06.110 --> 00:03:07.680

Derek Alton: poll number one.

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00:03:08.350 --> 00:03:14.420

Derek Alton: Which audience do you find hardest to communicate with citizens, colleagues.

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00:03:14.680 --> 00:03:20.479

Derek Alton: senior leaders, external partners, or other? And if there's something that's not on the list just put in the chat.

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00:03:21.790 --> 00:03:42.759

Derek Alton: so I'll give people a second to put in their responses, although there is a very, very clear winner here so far in the running tally I have in front of me. It seems that senior leaders seem to be 60% of people are saying senior leaders are the hardest group to communicate with which I can definitely relate to.

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00:03:42.850 --> 00:03:53.230

Derek Alton: So thank you everyone. So it's 60%. Senior leaders with citizens and colleagues and external partners serve as a balance of about 10 to 12%. Aside from that.

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00:03:53.840 --> 00:03:59.549

Derek Alton: All right, no real surprise there. All right. Question number 2. Okay.

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00:04:00.030 --> 00:04:01.540

Derek Alton: In what way

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00:04:01.780 --> 00:04:07.289

Derek Alton: could strong communication help you in your role? Is it about building trust with colleagues or stakeholders.

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00:04:07.820 --> 00:04:13.020

Derek Alton: gaining buy-in for ideas or policies, avoiding misunderstanding

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00:04:13.580 --> 00:04:17.540

Derek Alton: or confusion, making complex ideas easier to understand

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00:04:18.000 --> 00:04:20.840

Derek Alton: or something else. And if it's other, just tell us in the chat.

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00:04:24.400 --> 00:04:25.350

Derek Alton: all right.

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00:04:25.420 --> 00:04:45.329

Derek Alton: Well, this one is much, more, much more evenly spread. It looks like, oh, it is a back and forth battle between gaining buy-in for ideas or policies and making complex ideas easier to understand, each of which averaging about 30%, look at that 1% difference.

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00:04:45.330 --> 00:04:59.909

Derek Alton: And then beyond that, 23% for avoiding misunderstanding or confusion and 13% building trust with colleagues. So again, a fairly diverse spread here. So that gives us lots to work with. All right.

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00:05:00.560 --> 00:05:14.149

Derek Alton: So thank you. Thank you so much for taking time with those polls. Now it's time to introduce our speakers. We're fortunate to have 2 brilliant guests. Avarro Vargas Franzen and Helena Hornby are joining us today. So welcome, Avarro.

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00:05:14.150 --> 00:05:14.580

Helena Hornby: Oh yes!

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00:05:14.580 --> 00:05:41.939

Derek Alton: Yes, welcome, welcome. Alvaro leads a change management team within the Government of Canada's Department of Justice, supporting change initiatives through alignment, communication and collaborative engagement. He has a background in Ux research and applied anthropology, and his team is currently focused on AI awareness and cultural readiness in the Department of justice, which is a very hot topic right now to encourage, and which is about encouraging, safe and sustainable adoption of AI.

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00:05:42.450 --> 00:06:07.510

Derek Alton: Helena is award-winning communication professional with over 20 years of experience in the Uk public sector, including national and local government transportation, digital transformation and community engagement. She's currently the head of marketing and communications at Orlo, a community engagement platform built for the public sector. You can read their full bios by visiting the resource tab at the bottom of your zoom screen and heading to the speaker section.

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00:06:09.730 --> 00:06:30.249

Derek Alton: Okay, well, welcome, both of you. I thought I'd start things off with a quick icebreaker, so we already know you are both passionate about communication. That is why you are here. But I learned just a few minutes ago that you are both keen musicians, so I wanted to

know when I talk about communicating clearly and impactfully which musical artists come to mind.

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00:06:30.650 --> 00:06:46.669

Derek Alton: So I'll give you both a few moments to just think about that. And whilst we're doing this, I want to encourage everyone else to follow the link that my colleague has just posted in the chat there, it is excellent to that will take you to the Government Comms community, where we'd love for you to share your responses. There.

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00:06:49.400 --> 00:07:01.349

Derek Alton: Okay, how about now? I'm going to turn it back over to you. Helena! Alvaro! Alvaro, do you have a musician in mind? You're like this is a clear communicator to me. Is there anyone who comes to mind.

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00:07:02.457 --> 00:07:03.740

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Elena after you.

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00:07:06.540 --> 00:07:19.909

Helena Hornby: The difference between the kind of music that I listen to. And this is who, I think, is a really great clear communicator. There's a range of people who, I think, really get their message across powerfully

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00:07:20.170 --> 00:07:46.649

Helena Hornby: lover or hate her. Taylor Swift. She is phenomenal in really being really clear through her messaging through her music what she's trying to convey they really, you know, she really sings to a generation who relate closely to her her lyrics and her storytelling through her music, and not to mention the incredible performances that she puts on, and the way that she manages to connect with

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00:07:46.650 --> 00:08:09.979

Helena Hornby: thousands and thousands of people in massive stadiums all across the world, so really powerful communicator, I think. But I also really love the way that Stevie wonder communicates to his music, so he would be my other great communicator. He's got such a passion and drive, and I've got a love for soul and motown music and that genre.

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00:08:09.980 --> 00:08:28.560

Helena Hornby: That's the kind of stuff that I play. I'm a sax player when I'm not communicating, so I just love the way that he articulates the expression in his music the sentiment that comes across, and so 2 quite different performers there. But they're my 1st 2 that sprung to mind for me.

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00:08:29.000 --> 00:08:45.540

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Right. Oh, that's great. I think for me. So I'd like to go a slightly different way with it. Because when I you know. I think of this. I think of types of musicians. So I'm thinking, jazz musicians. I think they are great communicators.

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00:08:45.600 --> 00:09:11.590

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: What I love about them is essentially, you know, when you start playing a jazz song, everybody understands what the melody is, which is kind of like the underlying kind of thread for all of it, and they're very good at kind of taking turns kind of coming to the forefront, and, you know, saying their piece with their instrument, and then kind of coming back. There's a lot of that. Also, you know, call and response that they do. So I think from that perspective, I think it's a great.

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00:09:11.590 --> 00:09:16.709

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: it's it's a great kind of communication environment that they set up.

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00:09:16.710 --> 00:09:45.310

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: And also, I think, on the other side, you know, looking at it more from a perspective of genres. I feel a lot of rap. Music is very good at communicating, as well, you know, really great storytelling, you know. Really great ways of kind of foregrounding some of the issues or some of the lived experiences that the artists have had, or, you know, people that they know have had, which I think is also very impactful.

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00:09:46.330 --> 00:09:50.059

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: That's fantastic. It makes me want to get more involved in music now.

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00:09:50.060 --> 00:09:50.540

Helena Hornby: Okay.

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00:09:50.540 --> 00:09:53.720

Derek Alton: Management play with us sounds good. We'll have a jam session

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00:09:53.720 --> 00:10:18.689

Derek Alton: afterwards. The old drum kit. I haven't touched that in a long time. All right. So how it's going to work is we're going to give each of you a chance about 1015 min to present some of your thinking on communications and how to do it. Well, and then we'll jump into a Q&A with the audience. So just encouraging everybody to start thinking about what questions you have. We have a Q&A. At the bottom here. So really encouraging people to use that Q&A. As opposed to the chat to use the Q. And A. It just makes it easier for us to organize

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00:10:18.690 --> 00:10:24.920

Derek Alton: and start thinking about your questions now. So, Alvaro, I'll hand it over to you.

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00:10:25.430 --> 00:10:27.819

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Alright. I will share my screen.

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00:10:31.240 --> 00:10:35.889

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Could I just get a quick thumbs up to make sure that you all can see it? Yeah.

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00:10:35.890 --> 00:10:36.370

Derek Alton: Looks great.

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00:10:36.370 --> 00:10:38.072

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Great. Thank you.

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00:10:38.860 --> 00:11:01.629

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Okay. So I'd like to start. As we gather in this virtual space. I want to begin by acknowledging that I'm joining you from Ottawa, Canada, on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin. Anishinabe nation. I recognize and honour their enduring relationship with this land as a Canadian acknowledging the land is one way I participate in ongoing conversations about history, presence, and respect.

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00:11:01.740 --> 00:11:08.359

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Since we're connecting from many places, I invite you to take a moment to consider the histories and peoples connected to the lands that you're on.

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00:11:08.700 --> 00:11:16.389

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Also, I'm a middle-aged male, with shoulder length, black hair, short beard, and light brown complexion, wearing a gray button-up shirt.

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00:11:17.210 --> 00:11:28.840

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So to start in a public service context, we often talk about breaking down silos and improving communication. But what if I told you that the way to address this isn't demolition, but instead reframing.

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00:11:29.070 --> 00:11:36.950

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So today, I'd like to talk to you about communication as collaboration infrastructure, not

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00:11:37.837 --> 00:11:50.950

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: in the interest of shared understanding. This is what I mean by infrastructure. Today. It's what holds complex work together, the tools we use, the habits we build and the shared understandings that help us coordinate, collaborate, and move forward.

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00:11:53.230 --> 00:11:58.760

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So have you ever walked out of a meeting and realized everybody agreed on the words, but not on what they meant.

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00:11:59.120 --> 00:12:09.939

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: We often treat communication as a delivery problem, like if we just use clearer words or shorter emails, we'd be fine. But I think this is more about more than just style.

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00:12:10.970 --> 00:12:32.270

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: These are 2 ideas that really changed my understanding and thinking around communications in our public sector context, and also most organizations of a certain size, permeable silos and trading languages. They are important elements of a stable and effective infrastructure for collaboration, especially for the types of complex environments that we'll typically find ourselves in working in the public service

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00:12:34.110 --> 00:12:58.270

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: beyond a certain size. Organizations require administrative infrastructure to be able to handle the added complexity that comes with more people and components, such as teams and departments. This tends to show up as a separation of

functions that are necessary for an organization to run so that they can work more efficiently within their own areas. So these are functions like Hr. Finance, it policy communications, etcetera.

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00:12:58.430 --> 00:13:14.279

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: This separation is useful in allowing for more focus within those areas for the people working in them. But as soon as you need these areas or silos to start behaving like part of a greater whole. We start to see problems, especially with communication between them.

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00:13:15.670 --> 00:13:34.189

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So because of the closed walls that silos create, it also makes it hard for people with Demmon to see how they're contributing to the success of the organization as a whole. There's a lot of interdependency between silos, and where, when there is little collaboration, there's little coordination in meaning and alignment to goals and mandates.

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00:13:34.410 --> 00:13:39.500

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: At this point we may begin to question their usefulness and ask that they may be torn down.

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00:13:40.470 --> 00:14:05.259

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: You may recognize some of these symptoms of silos things, such as duplicated work, mismatched definitions and timelines, strategic misalignment. However, it is important to remember that it is unlikely that these symptoms show up because people are not willing to work with each other. Instead, it is more likely because the silo infrastructure doesn't allow for them to have the transparency that is needed to collaborate efficiently.

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00:14:05.410 --> 00:14:09.330

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: We may find ourselves working at each other instead of with each other.

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00:14:09.600 --> 00:14:23.349

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So I'm just gonna take a quick pause. Is there? Just because I'm the screen that I'm sharing. I see the the pictures of yourself, Derek and Elena is, is that like? Are you seeing just the the presentation on your view?

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00:14:23.585 --> 00:14:29.229

Derek Alton: So how? How we can see it is that the presentation is the big screen. And then we're little tiny pictures at the top.

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00:14:29.230 --> 00:14:33.049

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Okay, so let me just get rid of that.

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00:14:34.330 --> 00:14:37.740

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Sorry everybody just wanna make sure that you're all are having to.

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00:14:39.460 --> 00:14:42.369

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: There is that just showing the presentation. Now.

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00:14:42.810 --> 00:14:46.389

Derek Alton: No, it's it's it's fine. Just keep going that the presentation is coming through.

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00:14:46.760 --> 00:14:48.590

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Oh, perfect. Okay, great. Thank you.

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00:14:49.030 --> 00:14:49.940

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: All right.

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00:14:52.120 --> 00:15:17.129

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So coming back to it. And so this is where the reframing of silos can become a powerful idea to improve collaboration while protecting the separation of functions. So think of silos, not as walls, but as membranes. It's not the walls that are the problem. It's that nothing can flow through them. Permeable silos allow for structure and exchange. So they enable cross-functional collaboration while keeping the administrative efficiency.

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00:15:21.010 --> 00:15:40.389

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So we can encourage permeability with things like using shared tools, such as teams, slack dingtalk to make work more visible through dialogue, support, tool collaboration habits through Demos show and tells and other feedback loops across your organization on a regular basis, and also helping people understand how their work

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00:15:40.390 --> 00:15:52.740

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: fits into the bigger picture and connects with the works of others by creating clear lines of sight to strategic intent. This can be done visually and revisited periodically to ensure accuracy and relevance.

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00:15:52.880 --> 00:16:03.790

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: These practices are especially helpful when teams are spread out across time zones, locations, and cultures. The main thing is to help people connect, feel, connected, and unify them in a common purpose.

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00:16:05.000 --> 00:16:13.310

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So, having set the stage for information to flow more freely across borders, we now need to make sure that we can use that information effectively through communication.

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00:16:13.440 --> 00:16:15.609

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: This is where trading languages come in.

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Álvaro Vargas Franzani: The inspiration for trading or shared languages. For me, came from Swahili. It is an East African coastal language that was influenced by trading with Arab, Portuguese, English, German, and other speakers. In essence the language was influenced from a need to communicate value to and from trading partners as they negotiated for goods. A language shaped by trade may be optimized for communicating value across cultures. So this reminded me of the types of issues we face in meeting rooms with multidisciplinary teams.

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00:16:46.590 --> 00:17:01.500

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: a lot of problems around, communicating in multidisciplinary teams seem to come from disconnects in understanding what we mean when trying to negotiate things like timelines, resources, and budgets. Permeability won't matter if people don't understand each other when they connect

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00:17:01.710 --> 00:17:12.160

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: trading languages allow us to align meaning, not just words. So this is especially important as we work with these multidisciplinary teams and in diverse groups

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00:17:13.369 --> 00:17:25.159

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: in the workplace, everyone has different ways of defining terms. So, for example, policy analysts, and it might both say that they're working on delivery. But one means timelines and the other might mean Apis.

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00:17:25.359 --> 00:17:44.619

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: This misalignment leads to friction and tension, often resulting from expectations not being met. If a purpose of negotiation is to ensure understanding of everyone's interests and needs so that you can identify options and approaches to meet them. Then a shared language can help accelerate that understanding and get you to a solution more effectively.

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00:17:46.290 --> 00:18:02.160

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: A good trading language makes expectations, explicit surfaces, hidden assumptions, and fosters inclusion. It also makes space for healthy challenge functions, because now everybody knows what they are disagreeing on, and can start a dialogue towards creating that shared understanding.

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00:18:02.350 --> 00:18:08.400

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: The outcome is a realization that communication isn't just about clarity. It's about communicating value.

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00:18:09.040 --> 00:18:16.850

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So here are a couple of tips for establishing a shared language at work. You can try this later this week. Choose a term that your team uses a lot.

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00:18:16.880 --> 00:18:42.350

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Now imagine asking 3 other teams what that term means to them. Would they say the same thing? If not, these can be signals of future points of friction as a project onboarding practice. You can also start by looking at the outcomes that you want to achieve with your team and then picking the keywords from it. Ask other project teams to do the same, then meet with the other project members of the project team and spend some time deconflicting your definitions.

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00:18:42.460 --> 00:18:50.189

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: I would also encourage you to document mismatch definitions as ones that people may default to in the future, so that you can realign as necessary.

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00:18:50.390 --> 00:18:58.120

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: With these deconflicted definitions you can now co-create a glossary that can be referred to as a project or initiative evolves over time.

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00:18:59.170 --> 00:19:09.809

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So, when used, effectively, shared language becomes a bridge to overcome the barriers of siloed thinking. The key message is this, shared languages become a bridge to address barriers.

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00:19:10.410 --> 00:19:14.280

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: so I'd like to bring back the definition for infrastructure from earlier.

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00:19:14.400 --> 00:19:20.899

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: This is where we connect silos and trading or shared languages as important parts of communication as infrastructure.

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00:19:23.690 --> 00:19:27.910

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Communication is more than style. It's the infrastructure of collaboration.

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00:19:28.150 --> 00:19:37.579

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: If the system isn't communicating well, the work doesn't integrate, because the messages don't connect at the end of the day. It is more than just getting the message out.

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00:19:38.320 --> 00:19:48.950

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Excuse me. It's to make the work coherent across boundaries, silos give structure, but need permeability to function in a complex system to allow information to flow.

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00:19:49.090 --> 00:19:55.810

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Shared languages, allow people to navigate the complexity together clearly, respectfully, and meaningfully.

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00:19:56.590 --> 00:20:04.330

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: In this way aligned incentives plus visible intent plus shared definitions have an outcome of good communication.

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00:20:05.320 --> 00:20:22.290

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So communication is not just a tool. It's a shared practice from silos to shared meaning isn't just a shift in how we work. It's a shift in how we think about communication itself as we improve conditions for understanding. Communication done well is what stitches the whole thing together.

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00:20:27.480 --> 00:20:32.889

Derek Alton: Thanks so much. Yeah, there's a lot there. I've written a bunch of notes on here.

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00:20:32.890 --> 00:20:33.360

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: All right.

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00:20:33.360 --> 00:20:55.049

Derek Alton: Follow up with you in the Q. And a section about which is a good reminder for people to check out. Put your questions in the Q. And a. Thank you, Patrick. Who's where I put a question in which is actually very similar to the question I had. So, Patrick, you and I are on the same wavelength here, but really encouraging other people. Thank you, David, for posting your questions in the Q. And A, so we can dig into them in the next section, speaking of which, Helena, I'm going to now toss it over to you.

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00:20:55.550 --> 00:21:07.610

Helena Hornby: Thank you very much. Derek. I'm gonna share my screen, too. So I'm gonna do that thing. You know, where everybody pauses and goes. Oh, you're gonna share my screen so hopefully, you can see that coming up on your screens. Now.

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00:21:09.630 --> 00:21:38.060

Helena Hornby: lovely. Thank you very much. All right. Okay, thanks. Everyone. Thanks, Alvaro. Hello, everyone! Pleasure to be here with you today for those that need a description of me. I'm a middle aged woman with chin length, grey hair, wearing glasses and a white shirt. I use the pronouns, she her, if you're going to ask questions in the Q. And a chat. So Alvaro's talk to us really some interesting stuff there about why communication between teams and across silos needs

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00:21:38.060 --> 00:22:04.730

Helena Hornby: structure and shared meaning. What I'm going to do today with you is zoom in on the individual communicator. How do we make sure our messages actually land with the people that we're trying to reach? Whether that's citizens, a colleague or communities of people that you want to engage with. So I'm going to give you some practical ideas to shape how you structure and deliver your communications. So they're more likely to resonate and be acted on.

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00:22:07.050 --> 00:22:28.160

Helena Hornby: When we want to do some communicating, it's usually because we've got something that we want or need to share. We're imparting information. And it's our job to tell people. And so that's often where we start with the message and what we want to say, but for me, that's a surefire route to missing your target.

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00:22:28.210 --> 00:22:56.589

Helena Hornby: Who you're communicating with should be your starting point. And this is audience led communications, and it's much more effective. You need to start with who they are. What do you know about them? The demographics, the geography, the context of the communications. All this adds up to give you an audience insight that shapes what you say and how you say it, so that your messages will be received and importantly understood.

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00:22:56.790 --> 00:23:04.449

Helena Hornby: and when it comes to your message, the way to make it land is to put the audience 1st and make it about them.

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00:23:04.780 --> 00:23:14.589

Helena Hornby: Don't say we need you to listen to this information instead. Say, you need to know this information because you will be affected by it.

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00:23:14.720 --> 00:23:18.680

Helena Hornby: Put yourself in their shoes and ask so what

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00:23:19.100 --> 00:23:28.160

Helena Hornby: you might be super excited about a new campaign you're running, or an internal change that staff need to know about. But why should they care

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00:23:28.610 --> 00:23:35.339

Helena Hornby: so what? It's an important question. You can keep asking yourself as you plan your campaign or messaging.

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00:23:35.940 --> 00:23:43.839

Helena Hornby: Now, how does this look in real life? Well could it look in real life? I've given you a couple of extreme examples here

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00:23:44.830 --> 00:23:55.030

Helena Hornby: when it's about you. This one's about you. The Council's waste collection strategy has been revised in line with our updated sustainability framework.

115

00:23:55.880 --> 00:24:06.269

Helena Hornby: Yep, does that make sense might do to you? But about them putting them first? st Your bin collection days are changing. Here's what you need to know. And when it starts

116

00:24:08.890 --> 00:24:21.340

Helena Hornby: about you, stakeholder consultations are ongoing across multiple sectors with varying response levels. And we are approaching. Resolution again makes sense to you. Some great great corporate messaging in there.

117

00:24:21.650 --> 00:24:28.620

Helena Hornby: But about them here's what's happened so far, what we are missing and progress towards the decision.

118

00:24:28.990 --> 00:24:30.259

Helena Hornby: Do you see what I mean

119

00:24:30.970 --> 00:24:37.989

Helena Hornby: about you? We're implementing a new Crm solution to optimize cross departmental workflow efficiencies

120

00:24:38.350 --> 00:24:46.440

Helena Hornby: about them? You'll start using a new system next month which will help make sharing updates and information with other teams quicker and easier

121

00:24:46.910 --> 00:24:53.759

Helena Hornby: from the thumbs up and things that I can see coming up on the screen. I think you can tell. There's a huge difference between these messages.

122

00:24:56.100 --> 00:25:02.770

Helena Hornby: So there's something else you'll notice about those examples. Yes, they're audience first, st but not just that.

123

00:25:02.860 --> 00:25:07.649

Helena Hornby: The language is a lot more simple and direct, and that's my next tip.

124

00:25:07.660 --> 00:25:28.870

Helena Hornby: Drop the jargon and keep it simple. It's really common. It's a common problem in the corporate life. We are immersed in the processes that get abbreviated to acronyms, and people get used to speaking in this corporate language, but that isn't how citizens speak and let's face it, not how corporate people speak in non work lives.

125

00:25:28.870 --> 00:25:44.169

Helena Hornby: And if you've got kids. Imagine saying to them, you are preparing for your educational establishment at a suboptimal place to improve your projected outcomes and meet the pre-agreed deadline. You must deliver a footwear solution immediately.

126

00:25:44.890 --> 00:25:48.690

Helena Hornby: What you really mean is, get your shoes on, or you're going to be late for school.

127

00:25:49.563 --> 00:25:53.126

Helena Hornby: I said that to my kids this morning and every morning

128

00:25:53.900 --> 00:26:00.450

Helena Hornby: it's worth noting that the average reading age of adults in the Uk is about 9 to 11 years old.

129

00:26:00.560 --> 00:26:18.099

Helena Hornby: Over half of American adults read below a 6th grade level and almost one in 5 adults read below a 3rd grade level. So it's super important to keep it simple and easy, so that people can actually understand what it is you're saying to them.

130

00:26:18.470 --> 00:26:41.290

Helena Hornby: It's really easy for us as communicators to fall into the trap, too, or at least get blind to it when we read it day in, day out. You know I'm ahead of marketing and Comms. I use acronyms like Mqls and all sorts of things, but easy to fall into. You can't do that when you're doing your communications. It just doesn't always make sense like Alvaro said earlier across those silos.

131

00:26:41.630 --> 00:27:06.759

Helena Hornby: There are plenty of tools out there to help you. AI can be your friend here. You can run things through Gemini, chat Gpt, whatever tools you've got available to you as long as they're compliant with your AI policy at your organization and the security around that I also recommend the Hemingway app. It's a brilliant free tool Microsoft has got built in readability checker. There are loads of things that you can use out there

132

00:27:07.240 --> 00:27:19.470

Helena Hornby: ultimately. The thing about it is to be human. Speak like a human use natural, clear language that will help your audience, trust you more, and then listen to what you're saying.

133

00:27:22.290 --> 00:27:47.349

Helena Hornby: I'd like to introduce you to the east framework. It's a really simple, memorable, and it's perfect for you to apply to your communications. It comes from the UK behavioural insights team, and it was specifically designed for civil servants to help make messages and actions more effective by making them easy, attractive, social and timely.

134

00:27:47.520 --> 00:27:50.390

Helena Hornby: So let's just break these down a little bit more

135

00:27:50.610 --> 00:28:08.480

Helena Hornby: so easy. This means like we just said, making it jargon free and easy to read. It also means making it easy to act on the thing that you're asking people to do so. How can they do what you're asking to do in as simple a way as possible.

136

00:28:08.520 --> 00:28:21.740

Helena Hornby: So you could say, access your entitlement via the online eligibility assessment tool. I mean, that ticks the box of putting the people person first, st the audience first, st but it's not necessarily easy.

137

00:28:21.800 --> 00:28:35.049

Helena Hornby: If you say check if you can get help. It only takes 2 min online. Here's the link. You've put the person first.st You've said how quick and easy it is to do, and you've provided them the link, the way that they can do it

138

00:28:35.930 --> 00:28:53.310

Helena Hornby: a attractive, make it stand out, use engaging human centered visuals with a clear layout and emotive language. Make your call to action really clear. So, for example, don't miss out register now for free school meals.

139

00:28:53.450 --> 00:29:06.400

Helena Hornby: Think back to the so what? What's in it for them? You know. What would what would they do? What would they get from taking the action? Why is it attractive for them to do what you would want them to do?

140

00:29:07.310 --> 00:29:25.179

Helena Hornby: Social? This is about making it shareable, shareable content that they'll want to pass on to others in their communities, either via social media media networks or even verbally getting people to share it extends your reach. So you're getting further into the communities.

141

00:29:25.220 --> 00:29:40.190

Helena Hornby: And also when other people share it from communities, people within the community that they know it's much more likely to be a trusted message, and that's a whole other webinar about advocacy and things, but that it's much more trusted if it comes from people they know.

142

00:29:40.610 --> 00:30:06.149

Helena Hornby: It's also about social proof. So if you can show that other people are doing it too, it's more likely to have the action done. So you could say, be like the 85% of people who've already bought their new parking permit online or join the thousands of families in Manchester. That's where I live already getting support. So this makes it more normal, normalising it. And the desirable thing to do. So that's social proof.

143

00:30:06.890 --> 00:30:17.729

Helena Hornby: And T. Is for timely. Now for this. It's about reaching people at the moment that they can act, or when they're most likely to take action or care about something.

144

00:30:17.950 --> 00:30:46.040

Helena Hornby: So thinking about parking permits talking to people about new parking rules on their street in 6 months. Time isn't likely to hit. Sure you can warn them in advance that that's coming. But only a small percentage of people will actually take notice of that. When will they act? A couple of weeks, maybe a few days before it comes into force. So your message needs to be new parking rules start on Monday. Here's what's changing and what you need to do.

145

00:30:46.240 --> 00:30:54.699

Helena Hornby: or you could say, Check your new bin collection. Day changes start this week. So you've got to make sure it's timely so that people can act on it.

146

00:30:55.370 --> 00:31:16.240

Helena Hornby: So, as you can see when we craft audience first, st messaging, apply behavior change principles that helps to drive action. So I use this all the time, particularly when planning campaigns. It's just a really handy, really simple behavior change tool that you can think about. And it's easy to remember. East is easy.

147

00:31:16.240 --> 00:31:27.010

Helena Hornby: There were plenty of other behavior change principles. You can apply to communications that are much more complicated than this. But if we're talking on a really simple level. This is one that's really quick and easy to remember.

148

00:31:29.210 --> 00:31:50.420

Helena Hornby: One of the biggest mistakes that we make in public Sector Comms, especially when we're busy. Which aren't we all busy all the time, is forgetting why we're communicating. In the 1st place, sometimes it feels like a bit of a tick box exercise or a senior leaders ask you to get some comms out. And you forget why we're communicating.

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00:31:50.420 --> 00:32:00.720

Helena Hornby: But every message we send, whether it's a Facebook post, an update about a policy, a briefing for a senior minister. It should have a purpose, a point.

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00:32:00.720 --> 00:32:09.019

Helena Hornby: something we want to change in the mind or behavior of the person receiving it. And so that's where this simple question comes in.

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00:32:09.240 --> 00:32:11.370

Helena Hornby: what do I want them to think.

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00:32:11.450 --> 00:32:34.470

Helena Hornby: feel, or do? It doesn't have to be all 3. It could be just one or a combination of them all. But if we're not clear on that ourselves, then the audience definitely won't be either. So when you're thinking about your response to the poll earlier, if a senior leader is asking you to do something, it's okay to always challenge with a why, why do we need to do this?

153

00:32:34.470 --> 00:32:42.479

Helena Hornby: Where's the evidence that we need to send this communication and reach this? It's quite a tough thing to sometimes challenge, but it's an important things to do.

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00:32:43.280 --> 00:32:46.309

Helena Hornby: But here's a quick breakdown. So think

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00:32:46.440 --> 00:32:51.780

Helena Hornby: what idea or understanding do you want them to take away from your message

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00:32:52.040 --> 00:33:00.960

Helena Hornby: feel is about an emotional response. So what emotional response will help move them to action? Could it be trust, urgency, hope.

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00:33:01.380 --> 00:33:14.739

Helena Hornby: and do? What specific action do you want them to take? It? Could be a click, share something, attend something, change or approve. If it's like, you know, trying to get a senior leader to approve something

158

00:33:15.340 --> 00:33:26.159

Helena Hornby: before you write a word, ask yourself what should they think, feel, or do after this? Use that as your anchor? Everything else can build from that.

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00:33:28.840 --> 00:33:42.059

Helena Hornby: So just to summarize. Here are my 4 top tips for communicating with anyone. Number one. Audience. 1st gather your insight and make the messaging about them, and not you.

160

00:33:42.260 --> 00:33:48.830

Helena Hornby: Number 2. Drop the jargon, keep your language plain and simple and easy to understand.

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00:33:49.310 --> 00:33:58.980

Helena Hornby: Number 3. Remember East EAST. Easy, attractive, social, and timely, and use that to plan your campaigns

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00:33:59.360 --> 00:34:11.269

Helena Hornby: and number 4 have purpose. Why are you communicating? Always ask, why, what do you want the audience to think, feel, and or do as a result of your message.

163

00:34:11.570 --> 00:34:23.380

Helena Hornby: So there are a lot more things I could share with you about communications. But we've not got all day, and we've got to have time for Q. And a. But hopefully, I'll be invited back for another webinar to talk about those another time. So thank you very much. Back to Derek.

164

00:34:24.199 --> 00:34:45.319

Derek Alton: Thanks so much, Helena. That's fantastic. Think, feel, do! That's the only thing I'm going to take away from this morning. I think it just captured my imagination. So we're going to jump into Q&A in just a second. So just a reminder to please keep having your question posting your questions in the Q. And a. We've already got a whole bunch and so keep them coming. So then make sure. Yeah, they're in the Q&A

165

00:34:45.479 --> 00:35:13.039

Derek Alton: while. We're doing that, you know. They always say in communications, repetition, repetition, repetition. We have a Comms community for government. You should totally join it. Please join the Comms community. We're going to do our best to get through as many questions as we can, but we only have so much time. So this is a great place to post your questions. If you don't get your question answered in the time we have today, please post it in the community. There's hundreds of people, your peers around the world who can help jump in and answer these questions.

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00:35:13.469 --> 00:35:14.709

Derek Alton: Okay.

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00:35:14.929 --> 00:35:35.249

Derek Alton: so let's jump into it. All right. So I'm going to try to bucket a bunch of questions together. There's a bunch of people who talked about this idea of speed. So each of you, I think, laid out fantastic, you know, tips and tricks for how to do communications. One of the biggest challenges that we have to do communications at speed. And so

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00:35:35.249 --> 00:35:52.529

Derek Alton: how do you navigate that speed aspect of it, particularly when you're dealing with stuff that might be culturally sensitive where you're trying to find that common language, that trader language that you talked about. And so, Alvara, I'm coming to you first. But how do you try to do that in a context where you have to move quickly.

169

00:35:54.895 --> 00:36:02.899

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yeah, I think for this, I usually default, or I've started to default to one of my new favorite questions, which is, what are we optimizing for?

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00:36:03.384 --> 00:36:19.710

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So and that that kind of relates to? The the question, I think that was around authenticity and adaptability as well. Is, you know, if if what we're optimizing for in terms of like what what is the true outcome that we're looking for.

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00:36:19.710 --> 00:36:46.270

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: then when you essentially identify that. Go with that. Then you can start to get at what are the main points that we need to get to. And then from there you just start, you know, building your messaging or your communication around that. It also serves as a good way to, you know. If you start going off track to say, Hey, can we put a PIN in this one and just get back to you know what it is that we're trying to address right now, so that that way kind of keeps things efficient and on point.

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00:36:49.680 --> 00:37:09.659

Derek Alton: Forgot that I muted myself. Helena, I want to build on that question a little bit. One of the other angles. We got some questions around on top of the speed piece is the fact that language is dynamic. It's fluid, it's ever changing. It's also really political. And you know, as

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00:37:09.660 --> 00:37:27.249

Derek Alton: we're trying to be apolitical. But we're dealing with something that's political. And we're dealing with people who are political. So how do you navigate? Given the fact that we're again being asked to move fast. How do you navigate the politics of language? How do you navigate the fluidity of language to still communicate your ideas effectively?

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00:37:27.780 --> 00:37:48.579

Helena Hornby: Yeah, for me. This is about understanding your audience again and connecting with them in the language and the style that they're using, because if you try and project a different style, a different political language onto them, it won't land, and they're just going to ignore it, or it's going to annoy or irritate or aggravate them as a community or as individuals.

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00:37:48.580 --> 00:38:13.329

Helena Hornby: So I find social listening really valuable here, although, have a social listening tool, and I'm not here to plug that there are lots of other tools out there that are available, but really understanding the community listening to landscape digging into the way that they talk about the issues and the matters of the concerns will help you use that kind of language that they're using, so that you can resonate with them and make it

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00:38:13.330 --> 00:38:29.929

Helena Hornby: accessible to them. Now I totally understand that there will be people who say, but that then, won't get across. Maybe the nuances and the complexities of the political angle. You know the states of certain political party who want to express something about an opinion. But that's where

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00:38:30.060 --> 00:38:41.169

Helena Hornby: data and evidence comes into play. You know these politicians, for example, they they're not necessarily close to the communities that they want to connect with. So Comms acts as that

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00:38:41.300 --> 00:39:07.119

Helena Hornby: barrier, not barrier a conduit, perhaps, you know, like, between the permeable silos comes at the permeable membrane, between the senior politicians and the people, and it's our responsibility to filter that, to make it understood, and to also filter up that information to the more senior people so that they can understand what's happening on the ground level, say, for example, rather than the political sphere.

179

00:39:07.120 --> 00:39:32.099

Helena Hornby: and there's also no harm in tweaking and changing that language as it adapts and grows and evolves, it should change, and it should be fluid and dynamic. And Comms. We try and we test things if we try and land a message, and it doesn't quite land and fail. Then you can tweak and adjust that terminology to find what does work. And that's where I think tools like A B testing come into into play that should

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00:39:32.100 --> 00:39:38.809

Helena Hornby: really useful to try and see what gets the most engagement. So it's a bit of a long, winded answer. There, Derek.

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00:39:39.360 --> 00:39:56.060

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Sorry, Derek, and just to Riff on that, too, I think, you know, picking up on what you were saying, I think that the power of the reframe is is important, you know. So when we're dealing with just more kind of interpersonal communications, I just saw a couple of questions there in the chat on, you know. How do we talk to?

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00:39:56.060 --> 00:40:17.639

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: How do we talk to senior leaders and things like that? So is reframing things in the sense of you know. What are they optimizing for? Like what is important to them? So you might have a certain topic, but within that, what are the things that they might perceive as risks, or the things that they might be trying to get ahead of.

183

00:40:17.640 --> 00:40:36.929

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: And as a result of that, then, in understanding that you can reframe the thing and do it in such ways, so that these are the things that are going to resonate with that audience so that they can really understand. Okay, this is what you're getting at. Okay. So you know, I have the context. I understand the impact. This is now the action that I need to take.

184

00:40:37.480 --> 00:41:02.080

Derek Alton: I actually want to follow up on that and sort of dig a bit deeper, because when we did the 1st poll, the one thing that came out loud and clear is that people really struggle with communicating up, communicating to senior leaders for a whole bunch of different reasons. But I think one of them is the fact that when you're on the ground, your reality and what you're working with is so different than what senior leaders are working with. So how are there things that you have found effective at

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00:41:02.140 --> 00:41:20.289

Derek Alton: communicating up, particularly when you're trying to balance that communicating up with also language that works communicating out, because sometimes there's a i know I've experienced personally, when those are 2 very different worlds that want to talk about things in very different ways, and there's a clash there. So how do you find? I guess, that the language, like the trader language that enables you to go both up and out.

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00:41:22.740 --> 00:41:24.859

Derek Alton: I'll pass it back to you, Avarro, and then.

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00:41:24.860 --> 00:41:25.500

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yeah.

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00:41:25.867 --> 00:41:35.030

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: so like the the acronym that I that, I use a lot is CIA, which is again, context impact action. Right? So if I'm talking to a senior leader and say, Hey.

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00:41:35.030 --> 00:42:00.009

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: this is what I feel you need to know about the situation. This is the impact that could come as a result of the situation, and then the action in terms of like this is what I need you to do, or this is what I would like to you to do, or this is what I would like to engage you in to either create more context or come to a decision with that. And the other question that I will typically ask them is in terms of not

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00:42:00.010 --> 00:42:07.010

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: just asking, what are your priorities, but what are your ambitions around this, because sometimes we also forget the

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00:42:07.020 --> 00:42:24.780

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: the fact that senior leaders, they are a role. But they are also people. So if we can try and understand the psychology behind their actions, the psychology behind their decision making. Then we can also kind of use that to reframe some of these things and say, hey?

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00:42:24.790 --> 00:42:48.480

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: I know that you are. You know your your role is like a you know, director, General you know, with this portfolio, these files. But at the same time, I know that you

are personally like, you know, preoccupied about these things. So let me just kind of merge these 2 and put that in that context, to help them kind of better situate their decision making or their approach. With what it is that you're you're trying to tell them, or what it is that you're asking them for.

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00:42:49.150 --> 00:43:12.279

Helena Hornby: Yeah, I totally second, that I think that really asking them, why? Why do you want to communicate? What do you want to happen as a result of this, what is your intended outcome? And I also think, having a really good relationship with them and building on that on a working relationship so that you become trusted, and that they trust you, that you will then deliver the outcomes for them.

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00:43:12.280 --> 00:43:22.450

Helena Hornby: And that's really important to do, and it doesn't have to be, you know, going down to the pub for a drinks kind of level of of relationship. It can be that you know that even if people you don't have that

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00:43:22.867 --> 00:43:27.880

Helena Hornby: close relationship within an office, it can be a distant relationship. But

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00:43:27.880 --> 00:43:57.529

Helena Hornby: for what always works, I found is proof with them, you know. Often senior leaders are busy. They want concise information. They want something to happen really immediately, or they want to conflate it with what they think. Have you ever met a senior leader who doesn't think that they're a great communicator themselves? They're few and far between. But you know, if you can say, look to get you your desired outcome here. I know that I can do XYZ. And these will be the outcomes for you, and this is what will happen if we do it my way.

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00:43:57.710 --> 00:44:27.560

Helena Hornby: if they insist, and they and you end up having to do it that way. Sometimes we know as communicators. There are some battles that we won't win. Remember, when you used to just say, just tweet it out, and the the leader just used to go. Oh, I'll just send out a tweet for us, and it got no engagement whatsoever, and the Comms team went back and go. I told you so. I told you so, but sometimes you just have to do it, and there isn't a battle that you can win. But then you show them the data and the engagement on the Comms messaging versus what you wanted them to put out. And you go.

198

00:44:27.640 --> 00:44:45.989

Helena Hornby: How many people have listened and accepted and understood the message versus what you said, you know, and go to them with data and evidence, and that often tells the story, and is enough to convince them to let you and build that trust to let you be the Comms professional that you are, and deliver the messaging in the way that you know that you should.

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00:44:47.580 --> 00:44:51.099

Derek Alton: So I actually want to follow up on that, Helena, if I can.

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00:44:51.100 --> 00:44:51.530

Derek Alton: Oh.

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00:44:51.530 --> 00:45:04.779

Derek Alton: a couple of questions. I'm just looking at the question, for example, from John here about communicating bad news or difficult news. So, given the context, you just said, How would you use that? Then, if it's something negative that you're gonna have to communicate up to your senior leader.

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00:45:05.760 --> 00:45:07.400

Helena Hornby: Up to a senior leader.

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00:45:08.080 --> 00:45:26.970

Helena Hornby: Yeah, I think it's much like, Alvaro said with his CIA acronym. I think you need to put the context in place and explain the situation. What's happened? What the impact of that was, you know, or will be. If you've got to do this this thing, and I've forgotten what your a was. Sorry, Alvaro.

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00:45:28.720 --> 00:45:29.900

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yeah, it's action.

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00:45:30.490 --> 00:45:55.010

Helena Hornby: Okay, and what the actions are that you're going to take to to remedy this. So it's about going with a plan in place. So, yes, this is this, this bad thing is happening. Or you know, we get this in crisis comes all the time. But here's the context. Here's what the impact could be. If we do, this comes or we don't comes around it. And and here's what the actions that we need to take either to mitigate this.

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00:45:55.030 --> 00:46:04.570

Helena Hornby: So you go with a fully formed plan, not asking them, what do we do in this situation, but with this information, so that you can have that informed discussion, and I think

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00:46:04.640 --> 00:46:24.769

Helena Hornby: being aware of that is important. But also talking about risk in an organization. You know what are the potential bad things that can happen, and being prepared for those, and again with relationships knowing how they might respond to that, so that you can be prepared to know how to broach those conversations.

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00:46:26.450 --> 00:46:46.409

Derek Alton: I might actually follow up with that and serve. Add a twist to it. So that's going up. But what if the bad news is going out, say to the community or to partners, and in particular, when you're dealing with, we've got a couple of questions here about how do you work. How do you communicate with partners that are a bit more abrasive way of saying

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00:46:47.420 --> 00:46:56.280

Derek Alton: so? You have bad news, and you're having to communicate that to an abrasive partner, or a community that that doesn't trust you. For example.

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00:46:56.280 --> 00:47:03.410

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Right? Yeah. And I think this might also go back to the the question around authenticity to some extent as well.

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00:47:03.530 --> 00:47:07.590

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: is that I think. Well, 1st of all.

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00:47:07.980 --> 00:47:21.999

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: as an individual, I'm a big believer in boundaries. So if you know, if somebody's being abrasive or like ornery towards you. I think it's it's it's within your right to say you know what like.

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00:47:22.080 --> 00:47:29.130

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: I I'm willing to accept up to this point in terms of you know this, this how you're speaking to me as a person?

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00:47:29.541 --> 00:47:36.579

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: So I think that that's the 1st part. But then with that, when communicating the bad news. I think it's

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00:47:36.580 --> 00:47:52.399

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: perhaps starting with the factual. So saying, Okay, like, these are the reasons why this, you know, these, these bad news are happening. So, for example, in the Canadian Government right now, there's workforce adjustment going on around.

216

00:47:52.400 --> 00:48:17.290

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Part of that is, you know, we need to communicate the fact that it's not necessarily that it's you or your performance. That was the reason why we decided to do this action. Sometimes they're just looking at what is the organizational focus or the core business that they're getting to. And they focus on that. And anything outside of that becomes essentially negotiable.

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00:48:17.290 --> 00:48:43.610

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Right? So I would say, it's starting with the factual. And then from there, you know, start kind of dealing with some of the more emotional or the more fluid aspects of the communication, to make sure that people can essentially appropriately situate themselves within what is being said, and answer any questions that might be outstanding, or, you know, misconceptions or

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00:48:43.897 --> 00:48:49.930

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: misunderstandings in terms of like, hey? When you say this, this means this to me. What does that mean to you?

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00:48:51.930 --> 00:49:00.820

Derek Alton: Avar a question I have. I've been wanting to ask you actually, since the beginning. So I'm going to use hosting privileges here to ask it. Artificial intelligence.

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00:49:00.820 --> 00:49:01.150

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yes.

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00:49:01.150 --> 00:49:25.319

Derek Alton: This is changing the way we do Comms. And this is also very much in your your wheelhouse of the areas you're playing. What advice would you give? You know we've got, you

know, 350 Comms practitioners who are interested in Comms here on the line, and I know they're being, you know, challenged and asked all the time about AI. What advice would you give them on? How to use AI, or how not to use when, when not to use AI, when it comes to Comms specifically.

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00:49:25.820 --> 00:49:47.840

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yeah, I mean, the 1st thing I would say is, look at the adoption of AI, not as a modernization exercise, but as a transformation exercise. And what I mean by this is when we went from mechanical typewriters to electric typewriters that was modernization, essentially doing the same thing with minimal impact to the environment

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00:49:47.840 --> 00:50:05.249

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: around it. But then, when we went from electrical typewriters to computers, suddenly, there's this whole other infrastructure that needed to be built around the use of the computer. So and what that means in terms of Comms is, you may need to rethink how you think around certain things.

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00:50:05.250 --> 00:50:26.709

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: which means that the old State approaches to Comms, or communicating might have to be rethought, or might have to change in terms of the day-to-day use of AI. Personally, I use AI as like the intern. So I will ask you questions. I will

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00:50:26.710 --> 00:50:40.150

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: interact with it, you know, in by challenging and things like that. I've also put in a set of instructions to my AI in terms of how I wanted to respond, and and you know where you know I wanted to get information from.

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00:50:40.670 --> 00:50:48.410

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: And one of the more important destruct instructions, sorry is to say, whenever you give me something, always provide a source.

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00:50:48.560 --> 00:51:16.559

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: And then from there, basically, it's yeah. It's like, pretend that you're talking with somebody. And again, if you treat it like an intern, it's like, Hey, this is great information. If I don't feel comfortable with, you know, like, is this factual information? I'm going to ask you for sources, and you know, in a journalistic sense, always, you know, go for that second source, because, you know, one source is okay. But you know, 2, 3 sources, you know, you start to triangulate. It's like, okay, this might be an actual thing.

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00:51:18.980 --> 00:51:24.599

Derek Alton: Yeah. And I, I know one of the ways I've also used. It is to sort of test some of my comms as well like when I'm trying to.

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00:51:24.600 --> 00:51:25.050

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Yes.

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00:51:25.050 --> 00:51:46.290

Derek Alton: Like in many ways a lot of the stuff we were talking about earlier, like, how do you brief up and communicate upwards? Well, ask, you know. Ask your chat, Gpt, or whatever AI system you're using, you know. How would my senior leader responses? What questions would they have? How can I change my tone, ask it for feedback on the columns you're doing. And I found it to be surprisingly effective at 3 and 4 things I hadn't thought of with regards to that.

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00:51:46.290 --> 00:52:15.090

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Well, and especially if if you give it that persona. Right? So say, Hey, I want you to respond. As you know, a senior leader in this, like, you know, in a public service context in this department, you know, with, especially if you have, you know, things like mandate letters, as we have in Canada that are, you know, public or, you know, departmental mandates, just to give it as much context as possible, so that when it comes back with a response. It'll be within that, you know, within that ballpark.

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00:52:16.140 --> 00:52:40.300

Derek Alton: So, Helena, I want to ask, actually, somebody's building upon this conversation on AI. But I want to ask another question. That's, I think, related that someone else asked, which is around the idea of blind spots? Because I think AI opens us up to all sorts of dangers around blind spots. But we don't need AI to have vulnerabilities of blind spots. So what are some of the common blind spots that you see in your work that people who are trying to do comms fall into.

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00:52:41.450 --> 00:53:04.529

Helena Hornby: Yeah, I think. Gosh, there's a few things I could think of. I think lack of diversity within Comms teams comes up quite often, you know, with the best will in the world, you know. I say, I'm a middle aged white woman from England. I can't possibly understand the perspective of every audience that I'm trying to reach within a community and every persona

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00:53:04.530 --> 00:53:23.810

Helena Hornby: so having that diversity of perspective, whether that's within colleagues. Or, again, AI can sometimes be a tool. But we do know that there are biases within AI, because the you know, the models are trained, the way that the models are trained and not diverse in themselves. So their models are sometimes flawed. So I think that that

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00:53:23.880 --> 00:53:41.880

Helena Hornby: having that lack of diversity, and that's where it's sort of testing your messaging, having really valuable trusted focus groups, for example, that you can run your messaging by whether that's different demographics, the age groups and social different social groups can really help.

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00:53:42.636 --> 00:53:43.910

Helena Hornby: I think

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00:53:44.110 --> 00:54:05.400

Helena Hornby: sometimes we can forget about our internal audiences when communicating externally, I've seen it time and time again that you've got these messages that you want to get out there, and you forget to tell your own staff about them first. Which is, it can be a bit of a blind spot, but your employees within your organization can sometimes be your biggest advocates.

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00:54:05.400 --> 00:54:21.830

Helena Hornby: especially say, if you work in local government. You know I used to work at a County Council here in England, and I think 87% of the Council workforce lived in the county that we worked in, you know, and they have their networks and their social works. And so.

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00:54:21.830 --> 00:54:32.779

Helena Hornby: having staff as advocates can be really overlooked sometimes because they can spread your message far and wide and reach into communities that you might not be able to reach into

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00:54:33.231 --> 00:54:36.319

Helena Hornby: so I'd say that I'd also say

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00:54:36.480 --> 00:54:55.460

Helena Hornby: creativity can be a bit of a blind spot, you know, we're often Comms is a very creative industry, but we get bound up in in tasks and time, and don't often find the time and space to make space for creativity. And I think it's really important

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00:54:55.460 --> 00:55:16.859

Helena Hornby: to do that. Whether it's small creative acts, a bit of writing a bit of time away, a bit of drawing, anything. It can be singing. It can be music, but that giving yourself the time and space to be creative and have creative discussions with colleagues, because otherwise you just get wrapped up in the day to day without making space for that.

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00:55:16.960 --> 00:55:25.029

Helena Hornby: And I think that's really important to be able to to do. I'm a big advocate of making time within my team for some creativity.

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00:55:26.910 --> 00:55:50.809

Derek Alton: Amazing. Well, we're basically at time. So I know there's so many. I mean, I got a list here 19 Q. And as that were submitted that were here, plus a whole bunch submitted beforehand. If we didn't get to your question or we didn't fully answer the question, we have a follow up question again. We have a Government Comms community. You might have heard of it, maybe once or twice definitely join that. It's a great place to put your questions and we'll definitely dive in to answer them.

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00:55:50.840 --> 00:56:03.520

Derek Alton: Okay, so we've had some incredible wisdom from each of our speakers, and I'd like to ask you all to join me in giving Helena and Avarro a big virtual round of applause.

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00:56:03.680 --> 00:56:32.740

Derek Alton: Thank you so much for sharing with us today, but also a big. Thank you. To all of you who've prioritized your learning. We know how busy you all are, so thank you so much for making time to sit with us and join us today. The team's going to pull up a quick poll to find out how you felt about today, which will help us continue to improve our content. So we really appreciate your response. So please take a moment to respond and fill out this poll. So thank you for that.

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00:56:32.890 --> 00:56:34.050

Derek Alton: All right.

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00:56:35.230 --> 00:56:38.169

Derek Alton: While doing this, I want to share a bit of bonus content

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00:56:38.860 --> 00:57:02.310

Derek Alton: with you all as a thank you for your contribution today. So we've got a great article written by Pavitra Raja from the World Economic Forum on 6 tips for successful strategic communication. If you'd like us to send you a link to this great resource go to the Government Comms community. That's right. The Government Comms community came up again now and leave a comment on a post pinned at the top page. It's a post from me.

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00:57:02.310 --> 00:57:10.280

Derek Alton: so just look for the post with my name next to it at the top, mentioning this content, and we'll send you a link via email after the session today.

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00:57:12.080 --> 00:57:13.809

Derek Alton: Okay, well.

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00:57:14.030 --> 00:57:36.900

Derek Alton: I think that's it for today. That's all the time we have. So we hope you found it helpful. And we want to say a huge Thank you once again to both Helena and Elvira for joining us today, and again. Thank you to all of you to join it, who really, really make it happen with your questions and with engaging us with us on your busy day, keep an eye out for an email coming your way. I know a bunch of you are asking about the recordings. There will be an email coming your way

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00:57:36.900 --> 00:57:46.909

Derek Alton: with today's recording and for the resources, and we hope to see you at another apolitical event very soon, and other than that. Oh, sorry, Alvaro, you have a point very quickly. Yes.

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00:57:46.910 --> 00:57:49.559

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: No, I just want to thank you, Derek, for being such a great host.

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00:57:49.851 --> 00:57:51.600

Derek Alton: Thank you so much. No, it's.

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00:57:51.600 --> 00:57:54.169

Helena Hornby: Second that. Thank you. Derek, it's hard work.

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00:57:54.170 --> 00:58:00.889

Helena Hornby: Yeah, moderating all those questions. There were loads of them. Yeah, so fantastic. Thank you.

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00:58:00.890 --> 00:58:04.790

Derek Alton: Well, I mean Doug's the real hero. He's 1 who's behind the scenes making all this magic happen.

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00:58:04.790 --> 00:58:05.390

Derek Alton: Yes.

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00:58:05.390 --> 00:58:06.419

Helena Hornby: Yes. Thanks. Doug.

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00:58:06.420 --> 00:58:07.700

Derek Alton: Doug, Thanks, Doug.

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00:58:07.700 --> 00:58:08.390

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Chat.

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00:58:08.630 --> 00:58:13.189

Derek Alton: Everyone have anyways have a great day, everyone, and we hope to see you soon. Take care of y'all.

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00:58:13.550 --> 00:58:14.170

Álvaro Vargas Franzani: Thank you.