



# THE BUSINESS. Communicator

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WHAT'S WORKING IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Will you be ready when the worst happens? . . . 3  
 Five fast ways to corporate governance . . . . . 6  
 Communication evolution at Romec . . . . . 8  
 Creating company culture at Misys . . . . . 10

### BREAKING THE ICE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

How do you help managers to be open with staff and not freeze up during their walk-about on site, was one recent question on the CommsNetwork. "Allay their fear: if managers are sincere, staff will instinctively respond to them," was the advice from Maine Street Marketing's Bob Crawshaw. He suggested the following opening questions to remove initial awkwardness: What are you doing? Why do you do it that way? Any thoughts on how we could improve that function? Rolls-Royce's Sharon Teece says that to get people initially used to seeing managers in the flesh, they try a soap box approach. Fitted with a lapel mike, the manager stands on a small box on the shopfloor/office and talks very informally for 10-15 minutes and then does a walk-around afterwards. "If it's done regularly, people will become less intimidated, especially if an idea that someone has put forward is acted upon promptly and carried forward by the manager. It's worked for me in the past!"

You can join the Communicators' Network listserv as a subscriber to TBC. To enter similar discussions just send an e-mail to: [CommsNetwork-on@melcrum.com](mailto:CommsNetwork-on@melcrum.com)

### FROM THE EDITOR

The theme for this double issue is corporate responsibility. We explore how this covers many different areas and what it means to both employers and employees alike. The lead debate article features the views of two experts in this area and Five Fast Ways has some expert legal advice from the UK's Institute of Directors' David Buckle. As ever, Smart Practice contains hot, practical tips from practitioners in the field and the case studies from Romec and Misys provide excellent guidance if you're thinking of reshaping or improving the communication function. There's good research into internal communication from Working on page six and founder Liam Fitzpatrick, who recently chaired the UK's IPR event on IC, opines on [the role of IC in crisis management in the Opinion piece.](#)  
[anna.clarke@melcrum.com](mailto:anna.clarke@melcrum.com)

## Corporate Responsibility

### How can communicators ensure corporate responsibility is valued?

With companies such as Walmart and McDonalds hitting the headlines in recent weeks about how they treat their staff and customers, the boundaries of corporate responsibility (CR) are widening and it's an increasingly critical element in the identity of organizations. But who should decide an organization's CR policy? To what extent should employees be involved in devising and adhering to it? And what role does internal communication have to play?

"Corporate responsibility should permeate the company, starting at the CEO and percolating down via senior management," says **Dean Williams**, strategic communications counsel at **Williams Savvy & Associates**. "If it doesn't start at the top it can seem like a PR move, especially if it's relative to the communication function. Any perception that it's superficially grafted onto the company culture will be counter-productive."

**Dr Kevin Money**, director at **Henley Management College's** center for organizational reputation and relationships, agrees that CR should be led from the top. "It shouldn't be something that fits into any department, but decided at board level so the company can be governed in a responsible way." He believes companies mistakenly see CR is an after-thought once they've made their money. "CR is essentially about how a company makes its money, not how it spends it."

Both men agree that there is a great deal of pressure on leadership to address many aspects of CR and that there are disparities between employers' definitions of CR and those of their employees. "Employees define it by all the aspects that make up a good relationship," says Money. "They look at how they're treated, how they're communicated with and whether or not they're informed of things that are important to them. Are they listened to? Does the company keep its commitments to them or does it take unfair advantage?"

However, it might be unrealistic for employees'

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Dean Williams  
Williams Savvy & Associates