

Transcript for S9E1 The Future of Internal Communication Podcast with Steve Wells

Cat Barnard:

Hello and welcome to 2024 and a brand new series of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. I am Cat Barnard, as ever joined by Jen Sproul and Dominic Walters. And it's quite interesting to record this at the brand new January start of a new year. As ever, we're curious to discover what lies in store for us. And as such, we thought. Who better than to invite onto the podcast this episode than a futurist. So I would like to introduce all of you to Steve Wells, who I've been in conversation with for coming on three years now, Steve is a global futurist and founder of Informing Choices Limited, which is a foresight business based here in the UK, focused on helping organisations improve their future change readiness through delivering thought provoking speeches and presentations and executive education, workshops, horizons, scanning studies, etc. He has co edited and written or contributed to a number of books on the topic of the future and I'm absolutely certain that you, our listeners, are going to gain quite a bit of inspiration from the conversation we have today. So, Steve, welcome. Thank you so much for joining us.

Steve Wells:

Thank you, Cat. Great to be here.

Cat Barnard:

And as huge as this question is, I would like to kick off by asking you what trends you are going to be keeping most of an eye on as we head into 2024.

Steve Wells:

That's a great question and it's a little bit like how long is a piece of string? I think there are so many trends in train at the moment. Many of them have their origins many years ago. Others have their origins much closer to where we are now. This is a question that drives out different answers, depending upon how far into the future we look. So given our focus is on 2024, then we should be a little bit more confident that these trends will prove to be important in 2024. The interesting thing though is I think we always need to keep in context our views around certainty and or particularly uncertainty because I think if the last few years has taught as anything, it's that even our near-term future can be incredibly uncertain, from pandemics to war in Europe to increasing geopolitical pressures on a much more global scale. When I was thinking about these questions that you posed, I was thinking, well, let's not just go down the technology route for all of the trends that I think I see, because actually we probably could do. But why don't we think about social, technological, environmental, economic and political, geopolitical trends? And I'll just pick one key trend from each of those categories.

Steve Wells:

So one of the things that I think we've already started to see having a big impact, and I'm absolutely convinced the impact that it will continue to have will actually grow. That impact, I think, will be

different types of impact, but it's around hybrid and remote working. Because the rise of hybrid and remote working arrangements, they're continuing to bed down. It's one of these things that we think was the result of COVID, but actually the trend of remote and hybrid working was already in train. All the pandemic did was, like many other trends, give it a bit of a kick up the backside. I think it's quite interesting when we start to think about the different strategies that we might want to develop to both support a dispersed workforce, but also potentially to encourage people back to the office. I think that notion of encouraging people back to the office is really, really important because actually I see an emerging trend here whereby good talent will actually demand hybrid or remote working. And there's a big choice then for employers to make. Do we want to actually stick to our guns and say, no, everyone in the office, or do we actually want to be much more flexible about how and who we bring into the organisation? From a technological perspective, I'm going to cheat a little bit here because I'm going to talk about artificial intelligence and automation which, as we know, is a great big massive bucket of all sorts of different technologies. But it's hard to ignore what's happened over the last 12 months. It's even hard to think back that it is only 12 months that generative AI has kind of been a thing that everyone's been able to talk about. The reality that ChatGPT is only just over a year old. When you think about how far it's come, when you think about the penetration of it and other models into the market, when you think that it started as just a text model, it's extended into images, into forms of art, into something that we might almost think is genuine creativity. There's a whole podcast just on that, I guess. But I think artificial intelligence and automation on the back of generative AI, is going to really kick up this year, and I think we'll see some new developments that continue to keep that very focused in our viewfinders. Thirdly, economic trends and economic uncertainty, which feels a little bit like a cop-out, doesn't it? But on the one hand, we might be expecting, having gone through Brexit, having gone through the COVID pandemic that we might see a little bit of a settling down of the economic outlook. But uncertainty is driven by many more things than that. So the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the relationship between the west and China, the potential for during 2024, the emergence of the China-Russia block to rival the rest. It is economical, technological and political influence around the world. These things all have a profound impact on our ability to do business, internationally but also nationally. And part of that I think is predicated on the almost mycelium light supply chains we now have in our businesses. And because of the pandemic and UK industry can't get some of the components, the materials it needs in order to continue to run. So the kind of international globalised nature is something that's really at risk and part of that manifestation of that risk is something ongoing economic uncertainty. It's hard I think when we think about these trends into 2024 to not include something around the environment and particularly around sustainability. And I think particularly a broader prospective of sustainability so environmental, social government. And for me, what I'm imagining in 2024 is that businesses and people beyond businesses will become increasingly more aware of the UN sustainable development goals. And what I think is brilliant about the goals is that they do give us the opportunity to look at a very broad prospective on sustainability. So you know sustainability according to the goals isn't just about the external environment, the natural world about climate change. It's also about social sustainability, economic sustainability, infrastructure sustainability as well as social sustainability. So all these things come together I think under the UN sustainability development goals. And then finally, picking up on political and geopolitical trends. I think a political turbulence and the risk of social unrest is something that kind of seems to be bubbling just below the surface at the moment. Over the next year or so we're going to see a number of elections where the increasing political polarisation could drive some of that. In addition to picking up some of those global international events, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the conflict in the middle east, international pressures and tensions around China. China's encroachment to the South China sea. The prospect of the conflicts in Taiwan as well as those other conflicts, those smaller conflicts that we continue to see around the

world. I suggest that actually there's a lot of disturbance in the political and geopolitical field. On the face of it much of that might not seem to have a significant bearing on our UK based businesses or businesses in any particular country for that matter. I think one of the things that we have seen over the last few years is where these international events have a very significant impact on local, regional and national events in themselves. And I think it kind of reinforces in my mind that actually, it's really incumbent on organisations to make sure they retain an agility and a resilience around responding to these things. Because they might be incredibly unlikely in some respects. They might feel very uncertain but they do have the potential to really impact our businesses. So those are the kind of five trends that I'd pick across those domains and social and technological environment, economical and political domains.

00:11:04 Cat Barnard:

I think what you've outlined there, what is so interesting, and I think what our listeners should bear in mind is the interconnections between those topics that you've identified. So what was going through my mind as you were talking about geopolitical frictions and tensions was the reality that of course, although the hostilities aren't overt, there is a covert undercurrent which is manifesting in cyber attacks. And you talking about the 2024 elections, of course, we're due one in the UK and the United States will be voting on a new president at the back end of 2024. And various pundits have already said, that these elections, these two elections, because we now know of the extent to which there was interference in the social media realm, in terms of influencing undecided voters, let's say, in both the US and the UK, I've heard various pundits talk about the fact that I can't remember what they said, something like we will never ever have another election in the way that we have expected elections to take place in the past because of the cyber risk, the risk that is posed by meddling in either digital influence or actually the way in which votes are counted and so on. So there's a whole raft of things going on there. And I've just narrowed in literally on the thing that was at front of mind. But I think there's something really sage in what you say, Steve, about business leaders, managers, decision makers, anybody with a responsibility in business for the profitability of that business and the people that contribute towards those outcomes, needs... to be across these trends, whether they like it or not, whether they would prefer to have a reduced cerebral load or not, you have to be across these trends, don't you?

13:23 Steve Wells:

I think you really do. There's an interesting piece of work done about a year ago I think it was now talking about the kind of time horizon within which we can effectively forecast and the work came to the conclusion that if we monitored these trends really closely. If we paid attention to them and respond to them in the appropriate way that our effective forecast envelope could be about 400 days. Now if you put that in the context of what most big organisations tries to around strategic planning which is produced plans around 3-5 years into the future, we already get a sense that actually some of those exercises are optimistic at best because one of the things we try to do with those exercises is to create one point into the future around we can demonstrate some success and one profit number, one number per share, one number to represent market share. You know whatever it might be. But I think the other side of the coin is that if you don't have an effective process and structure within the organisation to monitor those trends then your effective forecast envelope is less than a 100 days. And that's really interesting isn't it? What that is really saying is

that there is so much uncertainty and complexity in the world that it is even harder than it's ever before to forecast effectively. I know it's different for different types of enterprises but what's interesting is Ikea have recently canned strategic planning and what they do is they manage their different business segments based on different scenarios. Scenarios of multiple views of the future. They're not fixed projections of the future. So that's providing those different business segments in Ikea with the opportunity to be more agile and resilient within the evolving market place rather than sticking to a plan.

15:16 Cat Barnard:

And that's something that we've definitely seeded within our membership community, haven't we Jen? The idea that as storytellers, internal communicators are adeptly equipped to help with the process of scenario planning and ideation of how trends might intersect and interconnect with one another to create different... futures to the one, you know, to the BAU ones that we might be hoping for. So I think that's quite a key thread of this conversation for sure, isn't it?

15:57 Jen Sproul:

I would agree as well, say Cat, just what you're saying, yes, we have and trying to use that. And I think that what we're talking about here is where internal comms comes in is it's about narrative and story and scenario and discussion. And rather than as you described Steve, that fixed point or that fixed outcome and how can we enable that, that scenario and we have introduced that much more so, so that we can sort of go, well, what's the narrative around those stories and how can we have that sense of agility and how can we communicate with agility? And it's kind of how do you present certainty and uncertainty when that's what your employees want and how do we balance that narrative, I think, which is really tricky. And Dom, you wanted to ask some questions as well. Sorry, I'll let you take the mic.

16:38 Dom Walters:

I was just reflecting on how appropriate it is that IKEA, rather than giving people a fully formed strategy, gives their departments the component parts to build their own. It sounds like applying their business model across everything they do. But it's an interesting point, because I think what you're saying there, Steve, is rather than anticipating particular issues, that what we need to do is communicate is to equip our organisations to respond quickly to different situations, to different circumstances. And so I guess you've described five, very clearly, five different areas that we need to be thinking about in the future, but from your experience, what do you think are the most important ones that are gonna have the biggest impact on business in the coming 12 months?

17:18 Steve Wells

So let's drill down a little bit into the 5 factors that I have identified earlier on. There are two key things that I'm often drawn to. One is how do we continue to attract the best talent, where that talent may be requiring particular ways of working. And that could be, I'm going to generalise massively here, if it's a baby bloomer, I want to be in the office all the time, if I'm a much younger

worker then I want this opportunity to not only work remotely but potentially work anywhere in the world and I think that's going to be an increasing challenge for organisations and businesses to get their head round in the future. I know there's lots of debate about how long the idea of remote hybrid working will continue but I looked into some of the research and the research and trends associated with that research look pretty clear cut to me for 2024 into 2025 at least, which is the desires to working those ways is only going to increase. So I think there are a number of challenges for enterprises and organisations to get their head round two of which I have eluded to just now. I think the third one is how do we develop a truly hybrid or remote working culture? Again, I'm going to generalise, but I think most organisations have been trying to apply a more traditional working models culture into a hybrid working situation. And that old culture probably doesn't suit remote and hybrid working. So I think that's a big challenge for organisations in 2024. From a technological prospective it's how on earth do I harness generative AI because that is what my competitors are going to be doing. What does generative AI mean? How do I use it, how do I make sure I use it and avoid the accusation of if you like cheating in order to get the answer. And I'll share something that I've done later on in using generative AI. Because the thing it is about these technologies, they're not getting worse, they're getting better and I think they will get better exponentially. So the idea that at the moment we don't have something we can trust 100% I think it will almost disappear in 12 months' time. If we think about the economic trends, I think those economic uncertainties and depending upon industry sector we're in, the potential impact on supply chain is going to be really critical. And I suppose the real challenge here is how much do we invest in developing alternative supply chains or invest in building in resilience into those supply chains. Cos in order to do that is likely to put costs up. So where abouts will we going to recoup that cost from? Are we willing to take a hit even through the dividends we declare, to the profits that we make or are we going to put our prices up? Environmentally, I guess that's really about what are our sustainability credentials across all those different types of sustainability from the environment to social, to economic. How are we viewed? What's the value tied up in our brand that says we are good, responsible, corporate citizens because we're paying attention to these environmental tactics. And that's not always as straightforward as it may seem. There are a lot of organisations we see reported on quite regularly who are accused of greenwashing. So greenwashing, or the going green just for the sake of it is probably not going to wash into the future so we've really got to get underneath what it means to be more sustainable. And I really like what you said earlier Cat about organisations needing to be more aware about how political and geopolitical tensions can impact their business. And the fact that some of those actually then tie back into some of the other things I've been talking about, about how politics and geopolitics impact economic trends. How it makes it harder potentially to be sustainable because we have to shift our supply chains. The way we might use new technologies to help us ensure that what we're learning about shifting supply chains means that we can rely on a new supply chain. So all these things kind of intertwine. And perhaps ultimately that's the biggest challenge of all is how do we make sense of all these things? When actually what we know I that it's not just one thing, they interact with all these other drivers as well. And that's a real big challenge because within our organisations, for really good reasons, we like simplicity. We like things to be straightforward, we like things to be predictable. And part of that is because actually within our organisations we have a bunch of humans. And I think naturally humans want familiarity, they want confidence that we can predict what's going on. And our reality is really different to that.

22:24 Cat Barnard:

We've gone from complicated to complex, haven't we? And one is figure outable and the other one isn't. It's a very poor, very poor definition of that.

22:38 Dom:

I was just thinking that as you and Cat were talking there, when we talk about internal communication, it's almost as if we have to put more focus on the process as opposed to content. Content is going to change a lot. Whereas the process, the skills that people have, how they deal with conversations, how they give people reassurance, how they help them through the complexity, how they make sure they're equipped to ask different questions and to be flexible. That sounds to me like an area that communicators should be focusing on even more. In the coming 12 months and beyond so that people are better equipped to deal with those changes. How does that fit with your experience?

23.14 Steve:

Internal communications is one of these areas I guess that could be identified as a new leadership area and I realise the audience that I'm in front of here. But I guess it's being an enabler rather than a leadership capability in itself. Do you know what I mean by the difference there? So I think that internal communications not only have to get used to understanding what the message is and the content the message is based on. Internal comms probably also need to be sure about the difference between communicating and engagement. Because sometimes to help people understand what the message is, engagement is really important. So for me, I kind of differentiate those two things. Internal communications predominately historically has been about broadcast, not really about engagement. I think increasingly we have to engage because these things are more complex. We have to actually within our organisations encourage people to come with us in the face of uncertainty, in the face of something that is both complicated and also increasingly something that is full of complexity. And we have to find a way to give people confidence that we're helping them through that journey. And I think part of that is increasingly leaders having a slightly different skillset including and understanding why humans find it difficult in the face of uncertainty. And thinking about new ways in which we can think about an uncertain future and convert that into story lines to explain to people within our organisation. Explain why we've actually got a range of different plausible futures. Because actually we don't know what the future is going to be like and that's all part of our agility and our resilience. I think we have to all join those pieces up and internal communications face a critical role of that inside the organisation. I think the other thing internal comms has to get really good at is understanding how the outside world comes into the organisation because actually that's what should be driving the actions we take, not just our internal view of the world.

25:28 Jen:

I think you highlight so many good things there, Steve. And I like the fact that you sort of pitch internal comms as the sort of the new leadership function. And I do see that. And I think that we've spoken about it already, those key words that we're talking about, it's complexity, which takes human

endeavour. It is agility. It is we need to have depth and breadth to what our decisions or our processes or how we collaborate to drive understanding. And I think sometimes that what worries me in times like these, when you say, going back to what you were saying earlier about what, 100 days or 400 days, you know, we can't be too certain of the future, which means actually we need to bond together more, we need to be sort of connected more to handle that environment. And I think that what worries me sometimes is when we don't have the answers, we go quiet, when actually we should go louder and we should go more conversational and more sense making, as you say, that scenario planning to add the depth of the how and the depth of the why, rather than just because we can't use some of those old sort of points or data points or those things that we've used historically to drive messaging. So it's a point of dialing up, I think, dialogue, not necessarily dialing up broadcasts, but dialing up dialogue and dialing up that leadership so that we can connect together more. And you talked about quite a number of trends there from the political and the technological and how do we harness those things, the economic uncertainty and culture as well, and how we go from old cultures to new cultures in the fight for talent. If you had to, not that I'm going to, maybe you'll pick one, but if you had to, from all the things that you've talked about, what would be those kind of the top risks to organisations in 2024? With all of that, the one you would be paying the most amount of attention to. And if you say all of them, that's fine. But I just, you know, that prioritisation point is always quite helpful, I think, for listeners.

27:18 Steve:

I don't like to disappoint listeners but there isn't one. What I was thinking about what I was going to say I started writing it and then I had force myself to stop. Because there are risks. There are different types of risks and we've been talking about one quite a lot already which is uncertainty. And our response to uncertainty and one of the things I wanted to pick up that you triggered in my mind at the early stages of what you were saying there, it's about authenticity because does saying I don't know indicate weakness in leadership because it shouldn't do. We can't know everything, what we should be able to say is I don't know. But here's a way we're going to find out about it. Forget whether it's appropriate? Do you know what I mean? There's a very strange thing I think in perhaps western culture of leadership, you know it's supposed to be something like rrrr isn't it. I'm a leader, follow me into battle, all those kind of really male metaphors. When actually what we should be talking about here is something that's more authentic, something more real, something that's perhaps arguably more feminine and actually say I don't know. But that's ok. What we're going to do is find out because through that learning process we'll actually learn more than just the thing we don't know right now.

28:41 Jen:

And I also think that if we embrace that mindset or that mentality, then probably you would find a lot more sources of information of how to overcome those challenges. Because, and I guess my fear is quietness and actually being vulnerable, showing that as a leader can actually enable you to have that power to bring people together and help collectively solve challenges.

29:05 Steve:

And I think there is an interesting indicator, I will get to my list I promise, about there is a really interesting indicator about the impact on going quieter can be. McKinsey a couple of years ago

looked at the average age of corporation as quoted on the S&P 500 index and the US index. The numbers might not be exactly the same but the same kind of pattern is emerging across on all the major indexes around the world. But what they found was that in 1958, the average age of corporation quoted on the index was 60 years. Now it's 18. They also predict that by 2027, 75% of the companies currently quoted on the index or when they did this study 2 years ago will cease to exist. So the churn happening with companies when they say nothing, when they do nothing when they don't look to the future, when they don't identify what these trends might mean when they don't change. Well they don't do the outside in thinking because most organisations do the what they've always done to make sure what they always got. But actually you risk becoming irrelevant and I think that's what's happening to these corporations. So the risk of doing nothing far outweighs I think the risk of doing something. And some of those risks we need to do something about is I think acknowledging the exponential nature of change that we're seeing in the world which I know is a nebulous thing but if we look at the way technologies evolve, if we look at the way social change evolves, then I think it's clear we're living in a gradually southerly world. We see this kind of gradual change, we sort of get used to the pace of that change and suddenly everything's different. You know we got used to thinking about artificial intelligence, what it can do, years into the future before we would get something that's generally creative. And then we have ChatGPT. So this kind of gradually southerly world is something we need to pay attention to. I've spoken about it a couple of times but this mismatch between potential employees and employers. The practice around remote working. Their sustainability credentials. I've spoken to Cat in the past and I'm wondering that some point in the future we'll see candidates interviewing employers. Perhaps not so much in 2024 but perhaps further into the future. But I think we do see an element of that now. You know people turn down potential employers because of these issues, the way they work, working practice and their sustainability credentials. I think one of the other things that's missing is this evolution from a physical world to a digital world. So the value of what we did in the past was very much tied up in physical things. You know we made products, we sold products that were physical, we could hold them. The value now is in the data and the information. Which is why everything we're getting is a service. The equipment, the physical thing that you want comes along as a freebee along side the service you pay for. Mobile phone contracts. Even cars now. The same is happening in the aviation industry with aircrafts. While some of the other things that I'd point to are we kind of swamped by the emergence of must have tech which is driven by a lack of digital literacy so there's a big risk of not having digital literacy within our organisation. And by that I don't mean so that everyone within the organisation can code. It's about asking the right question. Is the technology right for our business right now? We've touched on cyber risks, both the industrial competitors but increasingly state sponsored actors. We're missing the links as I mentioned before between global events, Russia Ukraine and supplier chains for economic performance. The underline economic uncertainty waiting for it to get better rather than actually taking action now including developing resilient and agile responses, supplier chains for example. And ignoring low probability, high impact wildcards. Things that we think might happen but we think we'll ignore because they risk low. Like war in Europe or a pandemic. Because what we've seen is when they do happen we have to be really agile, really resilient and respond really quickly. And there's already evidence to suggest that we might see a reemergence of covid and there is an increasing conflict between NATO and Russia as well as between NATO countries and China and their expansionism. So all these kind of unlikely but potentially highly impactful events we just got to make sure not to forget them and that perhaps we develop a few plans that help us respond to them in a more agile and resilient way. So I stop my list there because there are a lot of risks around but I think it is important that we start to make sense of whichever of those risks feel closest to the enterprise that we're working in, the objectives that we're trying to achieve.

34:17 Cat Barnard:

Really, really interesting, Steve, because, you know, just opening our eyes and seeing the world in which we operate rather than... assume that because we've written a plan, we operate independently of these systems because the plan tells us so is a form of risk mitigation itself, I think, but flipping the lens quickly because I know we can't go on forever. And that was a mind bending list that you gave us there. Flipping the lens on its head, what about opportunities? What are the immediate opportunities that you foresee in 2024?

35:06 Steve:

I think the immediate opportunity is Generative AI. That's the really big one that stands out for me because we've got this really cool sexy tool right now. I think it is just amazing. But we're expecting to see significant developments in 2024 which will further enhance its potential for internal comms. So a number of things there, the democratisation of Generative AI. These tools and platforms are going to become more accessible, more user friendly. So we're gonna be able to move them across the organisation in a much more effective way. Perhaps we can use Generative AI so that employees within the company can ask questions, that the Generative AI can respond to. So there's an opportunity to use Generative AI in a very interactive way in the internal comms mix. So improved personalisation potentially even making recommendations for actions. We know we can use AI to increase our insight to help us with analytics so we can use it to help us understand how effective our internal comms are. We can use those similar technologies to help us understand how the external world is working. We can even use them to help us make sense of what that external world might mean to the way our organisation is operating. And build that into our practices. I mean I think the other thing is on the back of the new AI Act which is likely to become more in the EU next year, we're going to have some really interesting templates if you like for how AI should be developed and used responsibly and ethically. And if we see a repeat of the way that GDPR was rolled out, not only within the EU but actually forced a roll out of similar practice elsewhere in the world then you can imagine that we might see a really interesting roll out of something similar around artificial intelligence. But I think Generative AI feels to me like its second year of being in the public consciousness which if you ask me that tends to be about the cycle for new technology. They've been around 2 years in the public consciousness before they become oh we've been using that for years. I think 2024 is the second year of Generative AI when it will be firmly embedded itself in the way we work. Probably in ways that at the end of 2024 we can't imagine right now. That's is what I see the really big opportunity for internal comms in 2024. It's really understanding how Generative AI can support internal comms processes, content generation, as well as personalising those messages.

38:05 Dom:

Steve, we're coming to land now, but you've given us a lot of inspiration as we start the new year, to start for internal communicators and others to start to plan where they want to focus. And you've mentioned the five key areas of risk. You've taken us through the importance of changing the leadership function. You've talked about the importance of scenario planning. You said I think one of the biggest risks is that basically we ignore stuff and we haven't got the antennae to identify these

things that are affecting us. And latterly, you've just told us about the big opportunity around using Gen AI really to help us as communicators address some of the key things and of course as challenges over the last few years, measurement and having impact. So I'm going to ask you a virtually impossible question for which I apologise up front, but that is if there is one area that based on what we've discussed you think internal communicators should be focusing on, what would that be? What is that?

39:00 Steve

If your audience has learnt anything about me for the last half an hour, three quarters of an hour, you will know there isn't going to be one thing. But on the face of things, I get the idea of trying to find one thing for people to hang their hat on but I think that misses the reality. There isn't just one thing, never will be one thing. We do have to consider a range of plausible things. I think for internal comms the focus in 2024. I've got 4 things actually on my list. Customisation and tailoring, human centered story telling, technology integration and aligning with social environmental priorities. All those things I've mentioned there you will have heard me talk about earlier on. And I think that's because internal comms should be focusing on a sense of connection, and of creating a sense of belonging and purpose across employees. It's kind of internal marketing isn't it which is kind of a barely tried phrase but it sort of is and I think this is achievable by looking at how we personalise and how we make the messages and the engagement more human focused. So we already know that different people across particularly big organisations have different preferences about how they receive messages, how they engage and yet predominately we use relatively blunt instruments when actually we should be doing something that's perhaps a little bit more surgical. And the new technologies that we have like Generative AI help us do that. Even just creating a sense that I can ask internal comms a question and the Generative AI will help me answer that. Why don't big organisations have a Generative AI function sat over a database so that everyone can engage that database whenever they want. As well as the normal transmission of information out from internal comms. We can use data to analyse and segment the employees much in the same way that we're already doing across many organisations in marketing and therefore create this marketing messaging. I think the story telling helps us create compelling storylines, compelling narratives. And that's a really important aspect of sharing scenarios. But the scenarios not only need to be compelling but plausible. We need to stretch people's imagination to help them understand that what we're taking them towards is a quite different future. But it needs to be plausibility there. There needs to be a connection with where we are right now. Why it's important to us. Then integrating these different technologies. Are we using social media type platforms? Are we doing something that actually project the messages that we want to make. Are we using the appropriate platform? What we're actually looking for is engagement and making sure that we apply both communication and engagement. And then finally, I think given how important we see the issue of sustainability both for the social and environmental level, really using internal comms to make sure that what we do is highlight those areas that we're doing well. Perhaps be authentic and also talking about those areas that we need to do better in. Why's that's important to the organisation not only right now but the future of the organisation as well. So personalisation and tailoring, human centric, story telling, technology integration then alignment with social and environmental priorities.

42.44 Jen:

Steve, thank you so much. There is plenty in there for us to be going with. If anything, it might feel a lot to our listeners, but doesn't it just highlight the value and the area and the space and the opportunity that you have as a professional community to help organisations through all those amazing and difficult challenges that Steve's talked us through today? Many of which is the IoIC we will be covering and trying to keep you updated on as we go through 2024. But let's stay connected, let's stay talking, let's stay helping each other. And Steve, thank you so much for taking the time to come on the podcast today and share that with our listeners.

Cat Barnard:

Thanks Steve.

Steve:

You're very welcome.