Transcript for S10 E3 with Ian MacArthur

Cat Barnard (00:42)

Hello and welcome to a brand new episode of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. I'm Cat Barnard. I'm joined as ever by Dominic Walters and Jen Sproul. And today I want us to have a conversation about the role of good work in society. And so to that end, I have invited a brilliant guest for us to hear from today. I'm pleased to welcome Ian MacArthur, and Ian is the director of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, which, and I know he will correct me if I'm wrong. If I'm not wrong, it is the first good employment charter in the United Kingdom, or I can see him. We'll talk about it. But Ian's background, he started his career in environmental health for a city council, has worked for various city councils and has always kind of worked in, I guess, sort of the field of public health. So I'm really looking forward to what he's going to share with us about how work plays into good health, wellbeing, et cetera. So without further ado, Ian, welcome today.

Ian MacArthur (01:58)

Thanks Cat, it's great to be here.

Cat Barnard (02:00)

Thank you so much for coming on. I know that I will not do justice to the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. So I'm just going to load the mic and hand it to you. If you can tell our listeners about it, how it came into being, what the purpose, the reasoning behind it was, that'd be amazing.

Ian MacArthur (02:18)

No, thanks very much, Cat. And thanks for the invitation to come onto the podcast. It's really important to talk to your members, I think. So there's a debate whether we were the very first, I don't know. London's good work standard was formed around similar times as Manchester good employment charter. But the idea sprung from Andy Burnham's first manifesto in 2017 when he was first standing as mayoral candidate. Andy's vision, I think at that time, if you look back to the manifesto, it talked about an employer's charter. And I think in the mayor's head at that time was a notion of something broader than just an employment, looking at environment, looking at social giving, looking at something perhaps akin to an ESG agenda or CSR agenda. I think it was pretty sharpish once he became elected that the policy team said that's probably too broad for a charter and will be difficult to engage employers on meaningfully. So the focus was very much about employment and the relationship between the employer and the employee. And I think if we cast our minds back to 2017, I'm going to say some things that are probably.

as true today as they were in 2017, but wages weren't meeting the cost of living pretty much as we are. Flexible work wasn't a thing back in 2017, just really wasn't. But it was something that we thought was important, particularly to increase diversity in the workplace, to increase the opportunities for diversity in the workplace. The way jobs were designed back in 2017, or the way they were dealt with last century, frankly, lots of them haven't probably been redesigned since. The rise of unstable and precarious insecure work was on going up 2017. The whole grey economy, the whole gig economy was leaving to kind of vulnerability, particularly at the lower end of pay scales. And Manchester, despite how it looks, probably isn't as productive as it should be. We've got a long tail of low productive work, despite high end and high value jobs within the economy. They need serviced. They need serviced by logistics, by baristas, by retail, by hospitality staff, by cleaners. All those people are vulnerable in the precarious type of work that we were wanting to address. And more generally, it led to increases and puts a focus on inequality across the city region. And we know that inequalities and the inequities that lie beneath them hold back an economy, hold back a society. So for all those reasons, it was important that we started to develop a good employment charter. The policy team took 18 months to develop the framework of the charter. And they came up with seven characteristics around pay, around recruitment, around employee voice and engagement, around good management, around flexibility, around security, and around health and wellbeing. And those characteristics were the triangulation of what we thought good work should look like. Get those right, you've pretty much got a good job. And those were agreed and we moved forward with the basis that we would engage employers on a tiered approach where we would work with them as supporters of the charter and then move them through to what we would ultimately call members of the charter, where we would assess their performance, their policies and the way in which they employed people against the seven characteristics. And that's where the membership tier came from. So that's what that's the origins of it. We launched it in the supporters tier in July 2019 and we launched the full charter in January 2020. And of course, everybody's face when you say that two months later, two months later, we all know where we were.

Ian MacArthur (06:34)

But actually that made us, there's no doubt that what happened as a result of the pandemic and perhaps, you know, the restrictions specifically on workplaces placed us in a position where employees, employers rather, were coming to us going, how do I deal with this? How do I deal, what is flexible work? How do I manage across a screen?

What is emotional intelligence and how can I gauge it when I'm only looking at a 2D picture of someone? What about this mental health epidemic it became creeping into our workplaces? So all those things we could respond to quite quickly because of the pandemic. We could bring experts from across the world to a screen near you. And we did it. And we did that probably twice a month. And that put us in a position where employers were nudging each other going, you should listen to this. You could come along to this. You should ask your question of these people. And it made us in that sense rather than a traditional going out and selling a charter, albeit one that had heavy political endorsement. We provided value of the charter network really, really early. And that gave us a head start.

Cat Barnard (07:45)

And I think to some degree, you know, you are trailblazing in that regard, because where we are now in 2024, you know, I think you'd have to be quite belligerent or naive to think that the social impact of COVID was over, you know, what we're seeing in 2024 in terms of workplace ramifications, your point about mental health, I think, you know, there's heightened risk of stress, anxiety and burnout symptoms. I've seen some research that came out at the back end of last year, specifically in the field of HR. And it's not pretty information and it ditto across the workforce. I mean, I would be curious to know and I'm sure none has been undertaken, but I wonder what the burnout risk profile is of leadership teams with the wider array of complexity and market disruption that is playing out, fueled by the war in Ukraine, the war in the Middle East now, the escalating climate crisis, etc. But also, underneath that what we've noticed since we started this podcast, some of the guests that we've had on, we've had an Antonia Bance from the TUC come on and talk to us about the rise in trade union disputes. We've had Neil Carberry from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation come on and talk to us about the shifting intergenerational demographics of the workforce. And to your point, the precarious work that Guy Standing has written extensively about is still very much part of the mix of the UK economy and add into the mix what impact will artificial intelligence ultimately have on work stability or access to good work. There's, you know, everything that we have talked about off mic over the last couple of years is still very, very much live, potent, real and molten. And so you continuing to do this work and advocate for good work standards is absolutely apposite. And I know in some of our previous off mic conversations, you've talked about other cities starting to take up the mantle which is grist for the greater mill, right? But it's really, really important. It's really important the role that access to work plays in society.

Ian MacArthur (10:24)

It's incredibly challenging at the moment for all the reasons that you spell out. And yes, we're still living with the impacts of COVID, but those impacts are changing too over time. The less acute, some of them are stubbornly persistent. How we deal with flexible work, we're asking the question now, not that flexible work is a good thing, but what does good flexible work look like? There's a question. No one's really got an answer. You know, the other as well as the five generations that you'll find in your workplace now, we've done some work with some partners and there's potentially five generations in your workforce and they all need to be stroked in different ways and communicated to in different ways to get the best out of those people. There's also a comfort that's been started to grow around where we all are. We like working at home. We like not having to commute. And part of what that's doing to sections of the workforce demographic is that the churn isn't there. The passion, the drive, the determination to go right. That's a really good job. That'll give me another X amount of money. But actually, do I need it? Do I want it? It means I'm going to have to go into work four days a week instead of two or three. Therefore, no, I'll not bother. I'm comfortable where I am. So there's a dynamic that's growing, different dynamics are growing right across the labour market. And, you know, I talked about inequality. And I think inequality has only got worse since 2020 across most domains. And, you know, we're shining lights on places now that we didn't think inequalities would, you know, we've seen the back of it, but no, actually, it's growing and it's it's raw. You think about gender inequality and particularly the number of women that stayed at home during Covid

not returned meaningful work. They're in that bracket of non economic activists, you know, they're not doing anything. And we're going back to my point about job design, we're not designing jobs for people. You know, you go to most large corporates, and you say, can you give me a role specification or a job description for X? And you'll look at the date on it, and it will be potentially, it might have one or two updates, but the bones of it were written in the last century. And the world of work has changed dramatically. Now, talking about precariousness, we could end up with professional precariousness here too as well, not just the low end. Because some employers will go, well, we only need someone to do a job, to do the task. So we'll just pay them for the task.

We don't actually need them to hang about the water cooler and do all the other corporate nonsense. We just need them to do that particular piece of work. And if that takes hold, then you'll find a whole bunch of professional freelancers in what used to be steady jobs. And that's not even talking about AI and what that might do to us. So we are in a very challenging position as a charter. And we are constantly examining our navel about what good is. We think we need to do something pretty dramatic in the next year or so, not least because, you know, if we do get a change of government, then the political landscape's changed. One of the reasons that we needed a charter is that we haven't had legislative change on an employment bill for, you know, 15 years.

So this is substantial employment legal base hasn't changed in this country in that time. And so, regional voluntary initiatives like the charters kind of fill that gap and stretch what good could look like. Now, if the legislative book draws close to where our charter is, blimey, we're going to have to move ahead again.

Ian MacArthur (14:39)

Because charters are flags in the ground that you rally towards. Charters, if they are effective, are movements, and goodness, if we don't know that in Manchester, then no one does. The history of charterism in Manchester is something that we're proud of, and we know about it. And so that's what we want this charter to become. And in many regards, it has become a movement.

I use this analogy too much probably but you know when you introduce two friends to one another and then all of a sudden you find out that they've gone to the pub without you. You go oh and then you go actually that's what I wanted to happen and that's what started to happen over the last two three years with the good employment charter. That employers are talking to one another they're doing business with one another because good people want to do business with good people and they're starting to support one another in the challenges that they face. And that's when it becomes a movement around the good employment agenda.

Dom (15:32)

Well Ian, can I pick up on that because it'd be good to talk a little bit about how you influence organisations because I'm conscious as we've been talking, we all probably vehemently agree what you've been talking about and about the importance of employee listening, the importance of engagement, the importance of wellbeing and mental health at work.

My guess is though there are people listening to this who think, well, my organisation doesn't really value this stuff or doesn't seem to value this stuff. And people who are thinking, well, how do I make the case? So I'm not based in Manchester. I don't have that radical base that that history to draw upon. I have to make a case. I have to influence. So first of all, it'd be good to know, how you found the profile of organisations that have been most involved and engaged in the charter? Is there a particular type of organisation, first of all, that is more likely to be involved and what characteristics you're looking for?

Ian MacArthur (16:21)

Actually no in terms of the type of organisation we've got all sectors and all sizes involved in the charter and you know we are an economy that's probably 85 percent SMEs and probably 85 percent of that 85 percent are micros but that said we have the largest NHS trust in the country that's become a member and down to digital agencies of 10 staff that are members. And we find good practice and innovation all over the place. Most innovation comes from the small organisations, of course. That's no surprise because necessity breeds that innovation. But as I've alluded to, the charter is a badge, but it's more than a badge.

People will of course get a plaque and they'll put something on their job adverts and they'll put something on their letterheads. But increasingly we're getting feedback from employees that employees who are discerning are starting to vote with a feat about actually, well, I've just seen that you're a good employer. That's important. We've developed a movement as well by not just limiting our communications and our messaging to the supply side. So we've worked with employers from day one to create good jobs. But we've also got messaging that goes directly to employees, prospective employees, and through our colleagues in the trade union into their members. And we want to empower employees to understand what good is and what it should look like. Last year, we held Good Employment Week for the first time and we had trams running through the city that were wrapped in good work is good for you messages. We had a QR code that took you to a quiz that in 21 questions it told you how good your job was. Well, it didn't, it gave you a percentage and then it left it up to you to decide whether it was good or not. But when you said no or I don't know, we pointed in the direction of resources to try and help employees understand what good should look like. And we want employees and young people in Manchester, particularly we've created some young people specific resources that when they go to interview, they ask the right questions. And it might be a question about, okay, I'm getting the real living wage, but do you pay your cleaner the real living wage? Because those sort of things start to become important, particularly for the younger generations. I think nearly always people join an organisation because of its value set.

You often leave it because of a bad manager, but you join it because you're attracted to the organisation's values and the place it holds. So I think we're finding that is increasingly important. Retention and recruitment in this labour market are issues at the forefront of many employers' minds. And any kind of marginal gain is looked upon as favourable. And certainly the charter fills that.

The sense of place that I don't want to be too Manchester exceptional on this, but the sense of place does matter. The fact that we are a Greater Manchester Charter brings Greater Manchester employers to us. They want to be part of something bigger. They want to understand that they're laying the foundations for a better place. And that does matter.

We struggle to engage multinationals and sometimes national organisations, largely because local management don't have the authority to sign up to something that might vary terms and conditions at a local level, despite understanding what it would do for the staff. Of course, we can show that, you know, a more diverse workforce is a more productive workforce. We can show the McKinsey reports, et cetera, et cetera. But, that word of mouthpiece and the fact that they want to belong to something and that they do get something tangible out of it being part of the network seems to be working. We don't have a big marketing campaign. We don't recruit. People come to us. The mayor and other political leaders are also very keen to tie some of the public spend to good employment.

Ian MacArthur (20:33)

There's no secret that the transport infrastructure in Manchester is going through a bit of a revolution, really, taking buses back under public control. The B network is developing daily. Now, all the bus companies that have won contracts to deliver the bus services across Manchester are now required to become full members of the Good Employment Charter within 12 months of signing the contract. So that means that bus drivers are now getting sick pay from day one, which is probably an exception in the country. So that leverage as well being part of a larger mission, if you like, helps drive people to us and people see the benefit for it.

Dom (21:16)

Just one further question on that, then I'll pass over to Jen. You've mentioned some great outcomes for a number of different stakeholders there. So obviously the employees themselves, often the organisation. Just out of interest, have there been any surprise benefits that you've noticed as a result of organisations signing up to the charter that you didn't anticipate or at least happened more than you thought might?

Ian MacArthur (21:37)

I think it's the doing business with each other. We are an economic programme in that we know good work creates productivity. But we didn't anticipate that level of let's do business together. Let's actually what do you sell? I could buy that from you. And if you know, we've got a construction company and a removals company working together now. Things that I didn't anticipate and it certainly wasn't in the mission statement of what the charter was going to deliver but it's an added benefit.

Jen Sproul (22.06)

Gosh, there's so much in there, Ian. And as you're talking as well, there's so many things that sort of strike in my mind as well. I mean, you know, we've talked about, the charter and what is good work and the things that we're facing and actually your comments around how legislation hasn't changed, how inequality is worse than ever. I think sort of feels kind of like where did that go wrong? But also, I think the piece around yes, there's more generational working, but also the comfort factor. I haven't said that to me before. That was a really interesting point. And I just wonder, do we as society even know, like our passions are dulling or our passions are going in and out, do we know what we want good work for ourselves to look like as a healthy society? Or is it so, is it the rise of the individual or the rise of the preference in terms of now? We don't see that as our passion and how are we shifting as a society to think about what good work means to us? And I guess no one has that answer because it's so varied. But is that something? And I think that piece is around as well. I think that we're not redesigning jobs. We're not redesigning organisations. We're just still trying to move pieces around in a jigsaw or work through an evolutionary cycle, but not really re -engineer something. And I think that sometimes it's trying to make that work. But I just wonder what you think is kind of if we gave the people their voice and we used employee voice and listening and all those tools and I know you build that a lot into your work at the Charter as well. How can we understand actually what does good work mean for us as society today to make it feel like a healthy and well functioning place.

Ian MacArthur (23:45)

That's a big question. Look, from my public health background, I know that in terms of the social determinants of health, work plays a huge role. It plays a huge role in how we feel about ourselves, not just our awareness, our self -awareness but our physical health too, it plays a big, big role. And a third of our lives are going to be spent at the moment in a workplace. So, you know, it's important that we get it right. Now, have we got the balance right? Have we in the past got the balance right? Probably not. If you really look back, particularly for sedentary work right. During the industrial revolution, everyone was working in factories. Okay. And production was really important. Keep the wheels turning. Right. Keep that all turning. When they got to a size that, blimey, we need an administration around this. We need people to administer this. They were pretty lazy in their thinking. And they went. Okay, so we've got a shift from nine to five. Let's get the admin people in from nine to five. Cos that will work. So they just went, yeah, that'll do. And I tell you what, we'll just work with them and manage them in the same way. And we'll get production out of the administration in the same way. So they didn't, we didn't really think about how work could be designed around what the function actually is. We just took the industrial model and put it into offices.

And if you look at offices in the 60s, 70s and 80s, that's what they looked like. They looked like people factories. And we had the same kind of management techniques as well, the command and control management techniques over administrative functions. So that whole kind of sector of work probably was just imposed and not probably thought through. And we had imbalances.

Ian MacArthur (25:52)

So if you think about what's the balance that we would like to strike, you know, Salford invented the weekend, by the way, just to let you know that that's where the weekend came from. Trade Unionists and Salford developed a weekend and stopped the philanthropists or the industrialists of those days working seven days a week. And we've seen the rise of the four day a week. We've seen the experimentation of the four day a week. We've seen how that works. In my career, I was lucky enough to work for the WHO out of an office in Copenhagen. Thank goodness, the Danish know work -life balance. So it was an international community in WHO, of course it was, but most of the administrative and logistics were Danish locals working. If you wanted something done administratively after four o 'clock in that office, forget it. Because the Danes had gone home, they started at eight, they got in early, but they knew that they weren't going to work overtime. They weren't going to work hard. They had a work -life balance mentality that said, enough's enough. I've got family to look after. I've got other things to do, other priorities. And sometimes I think we lost that, you know, I feel sorry for people who work in London because that's a treadmill. I know I worked in London for 10 years, but when you come out of London and you work elsewhere, you realise that there's a different mindset, a different pace, a different clock, which definitely helps quality of life. So, you know, it's a key determinant of health. I think. Work needs to be meaningful and it needs to recognise the inequalities that can actually keep people down. If you're in a bad job and you've passed over for opportunities through discrimination, which is rife, then you ain't going to move. If we look at lots of larger organisations and we challenge them about diversity. And I'm talking about all sectors here. They can show me diversity in the lower tiers of the organisation, maybe even middle management. You show me at higher levels or in the boardroom and it's very, very, very stark. So if you're starting in an organisation, you're looking at the top thinking, well, I can't see myself here. I can't see anybody that looks like me here. This organisation doesn't talk to me in that way, then that's where the inequality has just become stark and, you know, intractable.

Jen Sproul (28:24)

Absolutely. I guess one thing that we're noticing in the work that we're doing at IoIC and some of the stuff that we've got coming out in a few weeks as well. It's a topic as well which many of my members are talking more about and sort of organisations are dealing with it. And I wonder if we've got a long way to go from what you're describing, we've got an awful long way to go. But it does feel like there's a lot more concern about employee activism and that kind of now because the employment contract of the past where that command and control, I'm not bound to you, you know, what are you going to give me, what's the loyalty factor here for me staying and giving you my heart and my soul and actually if you're doing things wrong, is that, I guess, are we seeing the rise of activism from employees to kind of call out organisations or call out places? Do you think that's something that we're going to see more of or is a way of the employee market potentially pushing more and employers then having to respond?

Ian MacArthur (29:22)

Yeah, I think the employment markets flipped. The shoe is on the other foot in many sectors. And starting to wrestle with that, you know, the whole agile, flexible work debate. We get feedback from employers often that when they talk to young people, they go, well, no, I don't want to come in four days a week.

If you want me, I'm going to come in two days a week. So, you know, they're finding their way through that. And that leads to inequality as well, because some people will come in four days a week. And some people have got jobs where they can drop everything at 3.30 and pick up the kids. And that's just the nature of the work. So, there's definitely a shift. I think I do think trade unions have got a really strong piece to play as we move forward. And I think that collectivism and the power of trade unions will be rediscovered. I think we're seeing some of that already, but it may appear in different sectors. And from our perspective, it's no bad thing. We believe passionately that, you know, that's a really strong indicator of an employer that's open to working with employers that's got a really good mindset. And, you know, trade unions get a bad rep sometimes, but, you know, very often they're pragmatic. They want the organisation to work and survive and prosper so that their members can. So it's getting over that hurdle and understanding that it's a partnership.

Cat Barnard (30:54)

Well that kind of segues a little bit because it's reminded me almost immediately of what Antonia Bance told us when we when she came onto the podcast about, you know, the role of communication in healthy organisations and good communication, good internal communication can literally just defuse, antagonism and tension and conflict and deterioration of employee - employer relations. So Ian, from your perspective, what role do you think communication plays, has to play in an internal, in a healthy organisation, bearing in mind, you know, our listeners will typically be internal communicators, so they will be hungry for your perspective there.

Ian MacArthur (31:41)

Well, it's critical, but it is. And we all know that. That's easy said, though, isn't it? It's important. It's how it's done. And I think, you know, that I've already alluded to the various generation that we've got in our workforce now. And we probably do need to find different ways to communicate to different groups within the workplace.

I think key to all of this, in fact, key to all of the good work agenda is middle management. You know, we've got some fantastic leaders, of course we can, and we can talk about leadership communication all day long. But where that can fall down is at the middle management level. And goodness, they are under so much stress to deal with all the various aspects that are thrown at middle managers.

And, you know, often still managers are promoted beyond the capabilities of the promoted on the technical skills, not necessarily the people skills. We see that regularly. So there's a whole facet there of internal communications that not only talks to direct communications, but emotional intelligence, increasingly cultural intelligence and how you read different cultures in your workplace. And it does tend to fall on the shoulders of the middle managers. So to the internal communications professionals, it's how you upscale and build capacity of your middle management teams in your larger organisations, how you work with them, how you make them better communicators and more sensitive communicators to the different cadres of employees that they've got to talk to.

Cat Barnard (33.24)

So this really does accentuate our point of view, which is that internal communication in its traditional conventional form was more about kind of internal journalism, you know, the transmission and broadcast of key messages from the top of the organisation disseminating through, whereas what we advocate for on this podcast is, and I'm still never entirely sure whether we've nixed it in terms of a language that conveys a shared meaning, but we have talked a lot about embodied communication, the physical acts of communicating and communicating well person to person. And the multi -dimensional facets of that, because it isn't simply a question of, have I used my words well in a way that you, my listener, can understand. You know, it's that feedback loop also of checking in to make sure that the message that I have wished to communicate to you has been communicated in the way that I wish for it to have been communicated. Do you understand? And I think, you know, it is a challenge of the digital age. The kind of the cultural narrative is full, fast, snappy, quick ommunication. Look at the rise of TikTok, look at the rise of Reels and 20 seconds, you know, videos and what have you. And yet how much are we actually missing? How much are we sacrificing and compromising in terms of connectivity in preference for or under the illusion that actually fast and snappy wins the day. And of course, I think we're probably all a bit old and grey. So we can, you know, say, well, that's not necessarily the case. And here's why.

Ian MacArthur (35:20)

Sure, but I don't need to tell you or your audience that, you know, communication is only one way. If we haven't got two ears listening, then we're not communicating properly, are we? So, you know, we place heavy emphasis on that under our engagement and voice criteria. Particularly, you know, sometimes you do a staff survey or a pulse survey or you've got mechanism for whatever and you get feedback. And sometimes you can't do it. Okay. Sometimes you can't do the thing that everybody wants for whatever reason, but you need to communicate that. You need to communicate that back. You've listened. I've heard what you said, but we can't do it because and feeding that back is really important. So I think listening, particularly to the different generations now is really, really important. And that kind of cultural intelligence, it's a big word, isn't it? Culture really, it covers a lot, but, making sure that your message has landed properly. And if it hasn't, then trying to understand what the feedback really means. Yeah. Does that help? I don't know.

Dom (36:27)

Ian, I think, no, look, it does, because I think you talk about middle managers and a lot of the work we do with leaders and line managers around comms. And one of the biggest barriers is many middle managers have this weight of expectation upon them without clarity about what their role actually is. And we train a lot of line managers, middle managers, and they will say, you want me to be a propagandist or you want me to be as articulate as Churchill or something. And of course it can help in certain circumstances if they can do that. But really it is around conversation, being clear in what you want to say, having conversations, listening to what people have to say about it, making sure that people make sense of things. And if they can do that, then that's a major step in the right direction. And I think that's something that tends to get lost.

Dom (37:10)

I was going to say, as we come into land, it would be great if we could, I guess, condense, if we can, what you would like internal communicators to take, because I've got lots of notes to what you said. We've talked about this for many generations. You've talked about different stakeholder benefits and how we can use those to influence organisations to make sure they're focused on good work. We've obviously talked about some of the roles that middle managers have in there. But if it's possible, Ian, what one thing would you like an internal communicator, listening to this to take away from our conversation.

Ian MacArthur (37:41)

It's something different, Dom, actually, but it kind of helps everything else, I think. It's a particular bee in my bonnet. We don't deal with time very well. You know, we account for everything. Everything's got a cost beside it. We can put a pound sign beside most things, but we actually don't manage our time very well.

Now, I've got an old rule of thumb that, and it probably varies from workplace to workplace, but you know, you spend a third of your time in a workplace talking to each other in meetings, at the water cooler, in the kitchen, just doing stuff that a workplace does. A third of your time's gone.

A third of your time is going to be spent on stuff you don't know you're going to do yet but you know it's coming.

Okay, there's always stuff that surprises you that, okay, but I'll prepare for it. And then you've got a third of your time to do your job. So 220 days a year, you've probably got about 10 weeks to do your job a year. Okay, that what's in your job description. Because you know the rest of the times going to be gone elsewhere. Now, if you start with that mindset, you understand that from the outset, and you give yourself space and time to think and communicate with intelligence and clarity, then I think that's a really helpful tool. Because otherwise you run to stand still and you don't feel fulfilled, you don't think you're achieving stuff. But if you plan it in a way where you account for time and we're rubbish at it, then there's an opportunity that we can build a more reflective and productive

workforce if you bring that into not only communicators but your middle managers all the way through.

Cat Barnard (39:44)

What a thought provoking conversation. I think, you know, we've certainly sat here nodding our heads and raising our eyebrows and and kind of just, yeah, cogitating on what you've said. So I don't doubt for one moment, Ian, our listeners will be reflecting similarly. And thank you hugely for sparing us your time today and look forward to, you know, obviously we're in the lead up to what could be quite a change for our country. So no doubt the conversation that we will have between ourselves, you know, could be up for change itself. So it'd be good to stay in contact with you and perhaps revisit some of these topics, you know, perhaps next year or something, we'd love to have you back and chat with us again.

Ian MacArthur (40:33)

It's been a real pleasure to work with you in the past and have our conversations offline. So, glad to contribute today.

Cat Barnard (40:40)

Thank you. Lovely.

Jen Sproul (40:41)

Thank you, Ian.