

A photograph of a forest path with tall, slender trees and vibrant green foliage. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a bright, glowing effect in the center of the image. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into the distance.

Institute  
of Internal  
Communication

*The power within*

# The path ahead for internal communication

EXPERT VIEWS ON IC TRENDS FOR 2017



# Getting to grips with the bigger picture

This Institute of Internal Communication e-book on IC trends for 2017 identifies some key trends that will be affecting practitioners – both in terms of challenging them, and offering potential solutions.

Some key themes have become apparent across the contributions for this publication:

**Dealing with uncertainty:** from Brexit to the US election results to the constant change that organisations must take in their stride today for all kinds of economic, societal and regulatory reasons, just how do you go about communication when you don't know how the story is going to end?

**Embracing external communication:** IC may be your specialism but it's very important to understand the interrelationship with external communication, and this may include much closer liaison with your colleagues working, as Kate Jones says (page 8), 'across the office'. There are areas in which the lines are increasingly blurring (e.g. employer brand, crisis communication, product launches) and these must be embraced for organisations to be truly successful.

**And the even bigger picture:** marketing, HR, neuroscience and even Pokémon Go, there are so many important lessons out there about how the human mind works and what is engaging and inspiring people today. It's not a time to remain in an IC ivory tower.

**Measurement:** as all our e-books, have illustrated, systematically effective measurement and evaluation remain the holy grail and bugbear of IC. On the one hand, evolving technology and approaches are providing new solutions, on the other practitioners are still finding this one of the most challenging areas of their work.

**Structure and segmentation:** new workplace structures and ways of working, including more networked and collaborative approaches, are impacting on the responsibilities of IC practitioners and how they can make a difference. The issue of segmentation is also coming to the fore, as a way of cutting down on the noise and enabling more efficient and effective communication.

Now take a tour of all these topics with the following thought-provoking contributions from industry experts and thought leaders. This year, for the first time, we include an 'In brief' section providing some additional food for thought.

**Catherine Park**  
Editor

## Foreword

The landscape of internal communication continues to change and expand, and in this e-book we contacted an expert panel to share some of their thoughts on key trends and challenges in 2017.

We need to be more agile as disruption becomes the new normal; find new and innovative ways to collaborate and curate across a changing communication landscape; delve deeper to understand people's drivers to ensure we deliver messages that resonate across complex audience groups; measure our impact not only in our communications but also for the business as a whole – all while planning our IC as part of the bigger organisational picture, ensuring it is integrated with our external communications.

These trends resonate with some of the work IoIC has been doing to create a profession map that articulates what we do and how we do it. It has been designed to help internal communicators identify the key knowledge, skills and behaviours required to achieve our core purpose – to 'create an informed, engaged and connected workforce to drive organisational performance'.

*“These trends resonate with some of the work IoIC has been doing to create a profession map that articulates what we do and how we do it.”*



[IoIC's new profession map](#) launched in November 2016, identified six core professional areas:

1. Organisational strategy and planning
2. People and cultural understanding
3. Messaging, storytelling and design
4. Tools, technology and digital
5. Coaching and facilitating
6. Listening and measuring effectiveness

These are supported by eight behaviours from analytical, collaborative, and influencing to creative thinker. Please do take some time to review our map on [ioic.org.uk](http://ioic.org.uk) and let us have your feedback.

Whilst we champion and do our utmost to support our workforces, it has also never been more vital to do this for ourselves, to help keep pace with our profession in what is a challenging role and environment.

Safe to say internal communicators have an immense role to fulfil, one that changes and challenges us on a daily basis. We hope that you find this e-book of use alongside the profession map when looking at your plans and priorities for 2017.

**Jennifer Sproul**

Chief Executive, Institute of Internal Communication

# A reassurance renaissance

Cathy Brown

We all know we live in an uncertain world. We bandy terms like VUCA around, talk about the pace and dynamic of change. Normally however, we can ignore these things on a practical level as they are so nebulous, they aren't real to us. They are too vague and too much in the future to make us change our behaviour, either personally or organisationally.

That world has fundamentally changed in 2016 though. The reality of Brexit is here and now, giving us huge uncertainty and a host of unwelcome side effects. The impact of the US election results and others to come is immediately apparent. The norm of uncertainty that we'd got used to living with has been swept away and we are left vulnerable and shivering.

Organisations with sense and feeling will start to use their internal communications operations to tackle this uncertainty. Not in a traditional, parental, 'pat you on the head and tell you it will all be ok' way, but in an adult to adult conversation with employees. We deal better with uncertainty as people if we can feel any grounding to hold on to, even if we have no control over events. We take that behaviour into the workplace.

A startling percentage of organisations have no plans around Brexit and no communications strategy around it either. The few that are communicating regularly with their people about it and creating a dialogue around the possibilities are seeing growing engagement, even though nothing yet is clear. This is the trend that we at Engage for Success would like to encourage – tackling nebulous issues like Brexit head on, with honesty, acknowledging that management don't have all the answers and grounding organisations back to their values in order to get through tough times.



*“We feel better with uncertainty as people if we can feel any grounding to hold on to.”*

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## ABOUT CATHY

Cathy Brown is Exec Director for [Engage for Success](#) – a voluntary movement promoting employee engagement as a better way of working that benefits individual employees, teams and entire organisations. Her work with EFS started back in 2011 when she was one of the first secondees.

# Developing cross-boundary capability

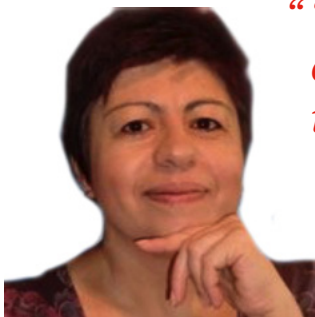
Dr Domna Lazidou

According to one of the leading communication recruiters in the UK<sup>1</sup>, there is a real debate in the industry about whether the future of communication belongs to specialists, those who develop deep expertise in one area, or to generalists, those who demonstrate the ability to deliver across the broad range of communication portfolios. Increasingly, organisations appear to prefer the latter: communicators who while able to demonstrate a solid base in at least one discipline, can nevertheless comfortably navigate disciplinary boundaries. Such ‘generalists’ can deploy the organisational narrative effectively in different business domains and connect with different organisational audiences. For internal communicators, this ability to navigate across boundaries with conviction is becoming increasingly important.

As the global business and political landscape is shaped and reshaped by waves of crises, upheavals and uncertainty, organisations will need to communicate and maintain a clear core identity, even as they adapt and change to respond to the environment. The communicators who will be best placed to help with this key strategic need will not be those who are seen to

focus solely on internal (or external) channels and messages, however well they do this. Instead it will be those who understand how organisational identity is constructed inside and outside the organisation, how brand advocacy is built, how market research works and how to use communication to affect culture change. It will be those who understand the relationship between engagement, communication and performance outcomes and can advise leaders how to communicate to build trust.

If that looks scary, it does not have to be. My argument is not that internal communicators need to become HR, marketing or PR specialists. But they can learn from these fields and, more importantly, by developing relevant knowledge and skills they can make their own output more valuable and more influential. Not ‘Jacks-of-all-trades’, but effective boundary-spanners.



*“‘generalists’ can deploy the organisational narrative effectively in different business domains.”*

## ABOUT DOMNA

Domna Lazidou is director of OmiliaHirst, a communication consultancy specialising in leadership communication and culture and in improving line manager communication capability through intensive, focused training and coaching. She has a PhD in values communication in multinational organisations and runs workshops on Intercultural Communication for Business at Warwick University as well as several

multinational clients. Domna has developed courses for IoIC on culture and [engagement](#). Contact her at [domna@omiliahirst.com](mailto:domna@omiliahirst.com)

<sup>1</sup>R. Tarry, Comms Leaders, Warwick University Talk, November 2016

# 2017: the year we achieve the impossible

Corin Ashby FIIC

Ten years ago, I wrote a short book that looked at how we can measure the value of internal communications.

*The Five Step Value Framework* argued that communication is the single most important operation in any organisation or business. And by applying tried and tested operations management theory, the book sought to give IC professionals a valid, credible approach to measuring and demonstrating the value of what they do.

More than a decade on and internal communicators are still struggling with this same old chestnut.

## It's about time...

If 2016 was the year of Brexit, President Trump and Leicester City Premier League Champions [choose which one surprised you most] then surely anything must be possible in 2017?

Perhaps internal communicators finally discover their holy grail.



*“One of the big issues in 2017 will be the correct use of big (and small) data.”*

## ABOUT CORIN

Corin Ashby is client partner and founder of [44 Communications](#) – an award-winning IC agency based in the UK. Corin is a Fellow of the IoIC and holds an MBA (dist) from Warwick Business School. Working agency-side he has managed complex communication projects for a broad range of organisations – large and small. He is also author of *The Five Step Value Framework*.

Credible measurement of what we do is still not the norm. I'd argue that we can measure the value of IC to an organisation but the real issue is the varying will/pressure/resource [you choose again] to actually do it.

One of the big issues in 2017 will be the correct use of big (and small) data, something that's increasingly relevant as our ability to gather and show valid metrics opens up a whole new world of opportunity.

## The G in 'Grail'

Let's take a leaf out of Google's book. One billion people (13% of the global population) had a Gmail account in 2016. Between Gmail, maps and search, Google has a pretty good idea of who you are, where you go and what you're interested in.

By tracking the majority of the web through analytics, they also know where you browse too. It's no surprise then that they also have huge advertising networks that allow brands to target you based on all this data. Everything you do is being measured, tracking is ubiquitous and you could be forgiven for thinking the cookie notification banner is just a nuisance.

We all agree that with more data and more analysis comes greater responsibility. But now, more than ever, internal communicators have the tools at their disposal to credibly (and ethically) assess what their audiences want and how well their communication is performing.

If Leicester City can accomplish the seemingly impossible – surely we can too?

# The future of video in IC

Jeremy Stinton

Budgets are tight, but we need to achieve more and more with them as our audiences become increasingly hungry for video content. It's a developing scenario that is potentially impossible to cater for without democratising at least some of the video content creation process – turning end users into video producers.

## User-generated content

Many IC professionals are starting to dabble in user-generated content, but often are not quite getting it right yet. The temptation to mirror video professionals by using fancy cameras or complex cloud-based creation tools in a user-generated context rarely seems to gain high levels of audience engagement. These complex tools seem to get content creators focused on making the technology work, rather than on the much more important elements of authenticity and good, punchy, story-telling.

Everyone now has a video camera in their pockets and most know how to use it. Fusing this with intuitive iMovie-type edit applications with which they may already be familiar, coupled with an easy-to-use enterprise video platform for distribution, appears to be the winning formula.



*“Everyone now has a video camera in their pockets and most know how to use it.”*

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### ABOUT JEREMY

A former award-winning video producer, Jeremy is chief operating officer for video platform [Buto](#), helping enterprise clients like Deloitte, the FCA and England Rugby with their strategy and video hosting technology.

Think about the Facebook video your friend posted the other day, the one that got over 50 likes amongst a relatively small group of friends. I'm guessing s/he didn't use a whole raft of sophisticated technology?

## Sophisticated audiences demand more

Audiences are becoming ever more sophisticated, and internal audiences are no exception – they're the exact same people that external marketers spend a fortune trying to reach with increasingly innovative campaigns. So to meet audience demand, I see interactive video content coming to the fore; the tools required to achieve this are now very simple to use, so IC teams will be able to develop their own campaigns quite easily. While interactive video can take many forms, those most effective and relevant to IC pros include:

- **Quizzes:** To test knowledge in training applications, and gain insight into attitude change
- **Downloadable content:** Offering other content for download, such as PDFs, that is relevant to that specific section of a film
- **Clickable links:** Similar to downloadable content; in-video contextual links that provide more detailed information
- **Chapters:** A simple menu allowing users to skip to a specific, relevant section of content

2017 is going to be an exciting year as internal communicators up their game with video, innovating within restricted budgets.



# Careers in a changing comms world: defining and designing your own path

Kate Jones FIIC

What's been the piece of advice that's stayed with you throughout your career? Mine – although I didn't realise it at the time - is "What's got you here won't get you there."

The conversation happened when I had recently taken on an in-house comms manager role after a decade as an employee magazine editor in an agency. I was preparing to move into a more senior role and was having a minor existential crisis: "If comms people don't do the magazine, what do they do?"

I had to move on from what I'd loved and broaden my definition of the value I brought. So what does this mean for communicators seeking to develop a rewarding career?

1. Professional qualifications are a great way to demonstrate your ability in the early to middle stages. Our colleagues in marketing, HR and legal all have letters after their name. We can now match that with the qualifications available from the IoIC and CIPR.



*"Professional qualifications are a great way to demonstrate your ability in the early to middle stages."*

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## ABOUT KATE

Kate is IoIC's 2016 Internal Communicator of the Year. She has worked in internal communications for 20 years in a range of roles, both in house and agency side, and covering various sectors. She is a Fellow of the IoIC, holds the Advanced Diploma, and has won over 40 awards for her work. Kate is currently head of communications and corporate affairs at Tarmac.

2. The jobs you don't get can be as useful as those you do. I was unsuccessful at least once every time I applied for the next job. Disheartening as every rejection is, push for real feedback that you do something with, and learn from it.

3. Getting on can mean taking the scenic route. Comms pros working in specialist teams are very proud of their specialism. I'm no exception! But I realised that if I wanted to progress as far as possible, I'd need broader experience. You can do that by finding a project to take a lead on – external as well as internal comms – or why not explore a secondment 'across the office'? Comms directors need that dual understanding, so start building yours now.

4. Be a flamingo in a flock of pigeons – how can you differentiate yourself? Serve on a committee (IoIC is active in all regions; get involved!); be an active blogger; speak at an event or two; get a few awards in your trophy cabinet.

IC is a rewarding, strategic career choice in its own right, but it can also be a springboard into external comms, employee engagement roles, or the variety offered by working agency-side. Jump in; see where it can take you.



# A shift towards differentiation in internal comms?

Mike Klein

Ever since ‘employee engagement’ became the focus of much of internal communication around the beginning of the millennium, it carried with it a near-requirement that internal communication focus on all employees equally.

This requirement fell out from stakeholder pressures for universal participation in employee engagement surveys – and desire for unanimously positive results on those surveys. It also reflected a trend in internal comms measurement towards focusing on the numbers of readers and viewers.

But increasingly, the case for ‘engaging everyone equally’ is starting to unravel – creating an opening for a more effective and efficient approach based on selective engagement and targeted messaging.



*“a small number of informal leaders drive most internal conversations.”*

## ABOUT MIKE

Mike Klein is principal of [Changing The Terms](#), a leading internal communication blog and consultancy based in the Netherlands. He has worked extensively in multinationals in the UK, US and Continental Europe with a focus on increasing the impact of internal communication by targeting it towards leaders

Key features of the new approach:

1. **Influencer identification** – recognising that a small number of informal leaders drive most internal conversations; this approach will focus first on finding them and, where feasible, mapping the relationships within the organisation.
2. **Preferential content flows** – currently, organisations come up with one-size-fits-all messaging to cover all employees. But to be credible informal spokespeople, they will need enhanced access to information, with expanded access to the ‘why’ of proposals and decisions.
3. **Complement to management communication** – managers and influencers are two distinct groups. Managers have authority based on their positions on the org chart, influencers have credibility based on their relationships. Effective internal communication will acknowledge and make use of the differences rather than always favouring the role of the manager.
4. **Reduced noise and friction** – as the need for all-employee communication subsides, reduced focus on high-visibility, over-branded initiatives will deliver significant cost savings and potentially avoid excess resistance and cynicism among employees.

This trend will not be automatic – the process of identifying influencers requires the use of specific survey approaches that work. It cannot rely on nominations from managers or HR, and other stakeholders may need to be convinced. But as political trends show, seeking unanimity in our societies on anything is increasingly a losing proposition, and there is increasing appetite for pragmatic, targeted solutions that don’t require universal awareness or participation. And while internal communication could become less visible, this approach would make it far more strategic.

and influencers. Mike is an MBA graduate of London Business School and previously managed political campaigns in the United States.

# IC research trends

Susan Walker FIIC

“The annual employee survey is dead” I wrote as the first line of my book<sup>2</sup>. Obviously, if this had been completely true I would have written no more. However, I was suggesting that the old traditional large-scale annual survey was not the entire answer to listening to employees.

And indeed, looking at what is currently happening – and will increase – in the future, organisations are looking at other ways to hear their people’s voice. So, what trends can we expect in 2017 and beyond? I looked back at five predictions I made at a conference some years ago.

One has become mainstream – speed. With the advent of technology, we have the ability to run almost instant online surveys, often with apps, on a regular basis either to track aspects of engagement or about specific initiatives. This also responds to the increasing rate of change and will be an essential part of the communicators’ toolkit. But a word of warning – it is part of, not the complete answer. A full survey provides data by demographics, feedback for line managers and ability for insights analysis like key drivers.

*“The major trend will be the increasing use of short, sharp surveys to keep in regular touch with employees.”*



## ABOUT SUSAN

Susan Walker’s career started in communications including working as internal communication manager for Thomson Holidays. She subsequently moved into research, becoming partner and head of engagement and communications research at MORI. She now runs [her own evaluation practice](#) where she has worked for clients including the BBC, Inland Revenue, Open University and London Underground.

I also predicted that research would become more business focused – looking at specifics to drive performance. This is happening – not everywhere but certainly in some best practice organisational surveys this is a key aim, moving away from the ‘satisfaction’ to engagement and this is one trend that is certain to increase.

Salience was also on my list – with time pressures meaning that communication measurement would identify priorities and ‘quick wins’. Again, this is happening to a limited extent, but with pressure on IC budgets and staff cuts this should be a focus in the future.

Two others I would like to see but have not happened widely are segmentation – understanding specific internal audiences and social – looking at employees as individuals outside as well as inside work. I still feel that these are aspects that will develop in the future.

In summary, the major trend will be the increasing use of short, sharp surveys to keep in regular touch with employees. This is a valuable additional listening method. However, I hope that this reliance on technology for quick feedback does not become an ‘easy’ answer with instant surface feedback to replace considered thoughtful research as an integral part of a successful business.

<sup>2</sup>[Employee Engagement and Communication Research – measurement, strategy and action](#) published by Kogan Page.

# Finding your place in the networked organisation

Sarah Lay

Organisations are changing and internal communications is not just adapting with them, but often at the heart of catalysing the transformation from traditional hierarchy to networked organisation.

This new structure, increasingly formally adopted but more commonly emerging in pockets or being laid on top of an existing structure, allows for individual contributions and collaborative working toward a shared purpose from all across the organisation. Like any change it's not always easy, linear or pain free but becoming a networked organisation can unlock potential and help solve hidden problems. On the downside, it can show a culture resistant to letting go of command and control structures or a stagnated workforce too embedded in silos to collaborate.

Open or resistant, internal communications is at the heart of the networked organisation. No longer is it about communicating messages down but pulling in and pushing out in all directions, being an advocate and enthusiast and explainer of the shared purpose. Internal communications is now about being the catalyst and connector in the networked organisation, about finding and creating the tools and spaces colleagues need to communicate.



*“Internal communications is now about being the catalyst and connector in the networked organisation.”*

## ABOUT SARAH

Sarah is a freelance digital content designer and strategist, journalist and editor. With more than 15 years' experience of leading and delivering digital transformation projects, she is a multiple-award winning digital leader recognised for her work in user experience and building digital teams, as well as a co-founder of the

Doing this relies on existing skills used in new ways. In the networked organisation you need to infuse your skills in others and support everyone in communicating.

### 1. Listen

Take the time to listen to colleagues up, down and across the organisation. Listen not just to communicate your messages to them in the right way but to understand the fears, frustrations, the satisfaction, and motivations of the work they do within the organisation.

### 2. Share

Communications teams generally sit somewhere near the middle of the organisation but don't fall into just sharing messages from this point outwards. Find and amplify information and stories across the organisation at all levels.

### 3. Be the catalyst

Internal communicators are perfectly placed to be the catalyst for change, both big and small within their organisations, through listening, sharing, advocating and supporting emerging collaborations and by making connections between disparate people and teams.

### 4. Find the new voices

Keep your communication on a personable level, professional but open and friendly. This is about connections, trust and allowing new voices to be amplified.

LocalGov Digital practitioner network. Sarah blogs about digital, leadership and communications at [www.sarahlay.com](http://www.sarahlay.com) and can be found on Twitter [@sarahlay](https://twitter.com/sarahlay).



# IC idioms – not all ring true!

Gordon Dowall-Potter

Undoubtedly there are basic communications fundamentals that will not change in the near future. But I want to review and in some instances, challenge some of these fundamentals, many of which are masked as everyday idioms.

My five IC idioms:

## 1. Too many cooks spoil the broth

Gathering as much input from your audience as possible can make the difference between effective communications and simply creating more noise. This doesn't need to be onerous and can vary from focus groups to simply picking up the phone. Take time to gather input, it will be worthwhile.

## 2. Actions speak louder than words

I have managed various teams, some where it was appropriate to focus on strategy and others where it was all about tactical delivery. For me, you have to strike the right balance for your organisation, but theorising for days on end is rarely a luxury we can afford. Tangible delivery is what turns a plan to reality.



*“Where possible try and connect all your channels, and treat them as one.”*

### ABOUT GORDON

Gordon Dowall-Potter has over a decade of communications experience, holding senior communications roles with KPMG, Levi Strauss & Co, C&A and most recently with Kier Group – a leading property, residential, construction and services company and a member of the FTSE 250.  
Twitter [@GDPscottish](#)

## 3. Best of both worlds

Digital communications seems to be taking over everything we do. For me, new is not always better and you need to consider what will work best for your people. My simple formula tackles this head on:

Online + Offline = Oneline Where possible, try and connect all of your channels and treat them as one.

## 4. Drastic times call for drastic measures

We are living in a significant time of change, but this does not mean that we have to completely change how we measure effectiveness. Too often measurement is seen as the last thing we do but reviewing the results and sharing learnings has never been more valuable.

## 5. If it's not broken don't fix it

We should always challenge the norm. Personally I shudder every time I hear the words “we've always done it that way”. Challenge yourself to consider how what you do could be even better.

It's the responsibility of each of us to make the IC of the future, one where we are comfortable with the unknown and seek to challenge one another to push the boundaries. To paraphrase [Marshall Goldsmith's book](#), “What got us here, will not get us there”.

# In brief

## The smartphone society

We are now a smartphone society.

Users are spending twice as long online with their smartphones as on laptops or computers. So it's no surprise that advancements in internal communications technology are now leaning towards smartphone apps. An average company utilises up to 20 different online and offline communication channels, the majority of which employees are unaware of. Internal communications apps, like our Employee Engage App, allow for these channels to be streamlined into an easily accessible and familiar platform allowing you to reach and empower your people, wherever they are.



John Porter  
Commercial Director  
[Engage Solutions Group](#)

## Comebacks and getting to the heart of engagement

Some traditional and obvious platforms – which may have fallen by the wayside in recent times – such as face-to-face meetings with line managers are making a comeback. Walkabouts and town halls are also on the agenda. There is also a fairly widespread feeling that employees are not listened to by so-called experts, so comms will be about what are people feeling and thinking, which will help ‘close the divide’ between the top and bottom of organisations. Visual comms will continue to have a strong presence and we are seeing ‘point and shoot’ where the quality may not be brilliant but is more realistic. ‘Emotional content’ will continue to gain traction – this is what really engages internal stakeholders – and joined-up content for internal and external stakeholders.



Bob Wailing  
[beetroot](#)

## Triple-A trends for 2017

Here are my triple-A trends for 2017.

### Authenticity

The US elections and UK referendum took a hacksaw to our sense of collective identity. This will remind smart organisations that ‘post-truth’ soon leads to ‘past caring’; and that honest, open communication is a sine qua non of a healthy culture.

### Activation

IC will finally earn its place in the boardroom. How? By forgoing the purely tactical. By taking the business strategy off the walnut table and translating it into meaningful action at desks, in meeting rooms, and throughout factories and stores.

### Agility

Everything was ‘agile’ in 2016. Except, of course in IC it wasn't. In 2017, ‘agile’ will enter the IC lexicon as vanguard organisations look to solve the problem of how in the world you turn culture into an asset.



Richard Wilding  
Chairman  
[WMW](#)

# In brief

## Virtual reality

Few trends in interactive comms are more persuasive than the success of Pokémon Go. Its appeal delivers what IC and HR professionals crave:

- Creating interested, loyal followers (engagement)
- Rewarding effort (thereby improving performance)
- Interacting with others (sense of community)
- Promoting active lifestyles (wellbeing)

The opportunities for using augmented and virtual reality gamification to communicate new products, processes and workplaces to an employee audience are obvious, but still largely untapped.

In the game, players are rewarded when, for instance, they catch a Pokémon character. In an IC version, employees would be rewarded with benefits by collecting measurable knowledge as they journey through a landscape that's virtual but recognisable as their own community.

And all the time having fun!

See you in the Pokégym.



Steve Turner  
Editorial Director  
[Pressgang](#)

## Insights from neuroscience

Communicators need to be experts in many different areas these days: we're part data analyst, part psychologist, part IT support, part storyteller. It can be tough trying to be all things to all people, so the more insights we have to help us, the better. That's why I'm intrigued by scientists' growing understanding of how our brains work, and how these findings can help us to communicate more effectively. 'Neuroscience' was a topic that started appearing at comms events and on comms blogs during 2016, and I'm fascinated to see what's next on this topic in 2017. Already, we're developing our understanding of why certain words and phrases connect with our brains more directly than others (quick tip: use the word 'you' more often, and try not to use the word 'just'). Put this knowledge together with the latest tone and sentiment analysis software and you have some incredibly powerful tools for your comms toolbox.



Paul Jones  
Associate Director  
[Sequel Group](#)



## theblueballroom's top IC trends for 2017



**The Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC) is the UK professional institute dedicated to supporting IC practitioners throughout their career.**

We are a not-for-profit, membership organisation and all our activities are based around five key pillars:

**Advocacy** – we work continuously to promote a wider and deeper understanding of internal communication and the added value it brings to organisations of all kinds and sizes

**Career development** – through our training and qualification programmes we are equipping practitioners to be the best they can be

**Community** – we are a forum and network, bringing people together from internal communication and other related fields to exchange ideas, experiences and techniques

**Thought leadership** – we are building a body of high-quality knowledge to explain and demonstrate the impact of internal communication

**Organisational development** – we are investing in the development of the Institute so we have the capability to provide the best support for IC professionals now and into the future. The Institute provides seminars and workshops, stages a national conference, runs the largest competition for internal communicators in Europe, provides short training courses and accredited qualifications, and supports a large knowledge bank.

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