

» Challenge 2019: communicating from the context

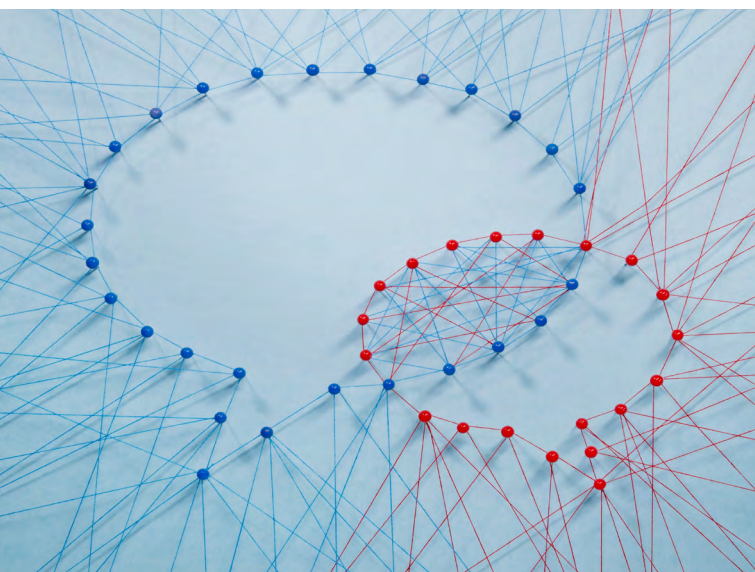
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The basic concepts of communication state that transmitters and receivers can only understand each other if they share code and context, thus preventing communication from becoming noise. Time has shown that pauses do not exist; Jan. 1 does not mark a change in anything, and whatever happens in May 2019 will be more linked to something that happened in June 2018. Based on these assumptions, figuring out this year's communication trends implies first making a brief analysis on the events modifying the social, economic and political scenario in the Western hemisphere in general.

The following are some of the highlights:

- **The growing mobilization of dissatisfied citizen groups**, separate to organized groups such as trade unions or political parties. An example: France's "yellow vests," whose diffuse—maybe even ever-changing—claims have been strong enough to force President Macron to back down on his intentions.

- **The emergence of radical political options** using the concerns of fearful communities to their favor (e.g., Vox in Spain, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Salvini in Italy).
- **Certain governments changing the economic "status quo"** (reluctantly accepted as a formula to overcome the economic crisis), by adopting corrective measures with uncertain consequences despite their well-intentioned desire to support underprivileged social classes. These are sometimes substantial changes to rules affecting tax treatment, labor relations, foreign investment regulation, etc. The new government of López Obrador in Mexico, or Sánchez in Spain, are examples of this shift.
- **A frustrated young population** distancing itself from traditional values and principles, failing to find answers in them. This group demands compensation for what it believes it has "lost," but is also attracted to different lifestyles (leisure, estrangement and collaborative), unlike prior generations. Who can understand them?
- **The return of localism in the face of globalization.** Multinational corporations are having a hard time communicating who they are, who directs them and how or when they pay their taxes—causing them to have fewer supporters. Suspicion affects large corporations: significant operations such as mergers or acquisitions are interpreted as actions that always harm third parties. This also affects large investment funds or countries with clear investment voracity (for example, China).
- **People's fear of changes they do not understand but frequently hear about:** data control, artificial intelligence, machines that think, robots that will replace their jobs... Furthermore, they are disoriented due to "infoxication" and "fake news," making it increasingly difficult to identify genuine references.



Companies, governments and institutions must know how to present, explain and vindicate themselves. Transparency is vital to avoid a potential disaster and, when used correctly, has the power to transform an organization's reputation.

This is the core of the matter: to communicate to give effective answers to what is disturbing, challenging or worrying society. Out of skepticism, there will be many organizations that will continue to manage their communications as usual, with no major changes beyond a minor digital tweak (as if that were enough!), speaking without listening, sharing what only interests them and showing just enough to avoid compromising themselves...

But organizations that really wish to have an active role in the conversation, those that want to contribute and those that want to become promoters of shared value, know the best ways of communicating in the midst of an always uncertain terrain.

There is often talk of an upward tendency to practice communications based on ethical and responsible principles (that is, using them as disseminators of the organization's honest behavior), which deepens transparency to respond to the demands of a society that wants to know who you are, what you do and

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why. Honest communications, built upon an authentic corporate purpose, gives organizations the opportunity to participate in debates and conversations centered on personal contributions to their business environment, while giving disoriented citizens a credible reference for information. Additionally, transparency and inclusivity place companies and people on the same level, improving dialogue and enhancing reputational value.

For this transparency to be successful, it is necessary to constantly know more about the scenario where the organization is operating by: listening to those who have something to say; acknowledging in advance the opinion trends that may potentially become a factor of mobilization or change; analyzing data and giving it meaning; identifying relevant communities; and knowing how to interact. Once this ongoing analysis is complete, using the correct channels and media formats will be essential to reach the audiences of interest omnicanality, entertainment, creative and attractive stories, trans-media contents (videos, games, voice, etc.).

Truly, there are no major changes with respect to what occurred in 2018. What is happening is the widening gap between those rushing to adapt their communication to culture and context, and those still languishing in traditional methods.



Arturo Pinedo is Partner and Managing Director Europe at LLORENTE & CUENCA. Arturo Pinedo directs the consultancy operations in Spain and Portugal. With more than 27 years of experience as consultant, he is expert in corporate and crisis communications. Throughout his professional career he has managed communications of national and international organizations and enterprises and personally assessed their key executives in the design of integral communication strategies and in risk management. With a BA degree in journalism and a Master in Marketing & Communications, Arturo was CEO of Issues Consultores de Comunicación and Director at Agencia A. For seven years he has worked as a journalist on the news services of Cadena SER radio. At present he is Vice Chairman of Dircom (Association of Communications Directors).

apinedo@llorenteycuenca.com





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