

Too much communication at #MelcrumSummit



The next two presentations this morning have been from Rebecca Edwards at GE and David Harrington at Shell - both good case studies with similar themes.

The main topic for me is about too much communication - meaning that the goals for Internal Communication practitioners shouldn't be to communicate more.

Take these stats for example:

- 91% of US workers discard work information without fully reading it (and the other 9% are just lying!)
- 65% of UK employees state their work is negatively affected by the amount of data they receive
- The total cost to US companies annually of interruptions caused by information overload is \$650bn (not sure if this is a US or a UK billion)
- The total cost to UK companies of searching online for information someone saw but then cannot find is £120 per person every two weeks (this is a big one for me personally)

Shell have 6000 users of their corporate social network, Q&E and 1372 articles were posted in June but 74.3% received less than 100 views.

David Harrington showed a nice video of a Shell employee being served a succession of foods which acted as a useful metaphor to the way we often try to communicate, communicate, communicate (it also brought back fond memories for me of sponge puddings in the Shell Mex restaurant when I was working there 20 years ago).

They're trying to change behaviour by focusing on measurement, including this rather nice social engagement index:

$$\frac{\text{VISITS} + (\text{NUMBER OF LIKES} \times 20) + (\text{NUMBER OF COMMENTS} \times 50)}{\text{INTENDED AUDIENCE} \times \text{NUMBER OF STORIES}} \times 100$$

David is big on measurement, in fact for him, if you can't measure something you shouldn't do it! (NO - see these two posts for why: [1](#), [2](#)). This also provided an interesting contrast to Anne-Lise Kjaer's perspective that measurement is sooo 20th century! - a difference which unfortunately we didn't get a chance to explore.

GE try to tailor their communications (to potentials and alumni as well as current employees) according to age, gender, culture and ability etc. One interesting thing they do is to allow members to opt-in to particular communications.

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