



TICP – Episode 57 – Unboxing internal comms at IKEA

(Season 7, episode 57)

[Katie 00:03]:

This episode of The Internal Comms Podcast is brought to you by the AB IC Health Check. This is a brand new, free online tool for evaluating your internal comms activities. Now, you've probably seen, you've probably used these online diagnostic tools before. Let's be honest, they can be a little lightweight, rather rudimentary, not always worth the effort of completing. We wanted the AB IC health check to be genuinely useful. So we designed it to be thorough, how does it work? The tour takes you through a series of questions in six categories, insight and understanding, strategy and planning, channels, content, measurement, and professional development. Now my advice is, don't rush through these questions. Make time to sit down with a drink of your choice and work through your answers you'll need a good 15 minutes. At the end, once you've entered your details, your bespoke report will land automatically in your inbox. This will give you an assessment of where you are today in terms of your internal comms activities. Plus, the report will be packed with insight advice, and practical hints and tips for what to do next, whether you're ahead of the game, or just starting out. So what are you waiting for, head over to abcomm.co.uk/health. Get a free fresh expert assessment of your work and take your internal comms to the next level. That website address again, abcomm.co.uk/health. Hello, and welcome to the internal comms podcast with me. Katie McCauley. Every fortnight I sit down with the leading lights from the world of communication, business, and academia to tease out the smart thinking fresh ideas and the new tactics for improving workplace communication. And this week, you are in for a real treat. We are going to unpack internal communications at IKEA, the world's most successful furniture retailer. My guests are Daniela Rogosic, who is the CEO communication leader and Guy Britt who is Global Head of co-worker communication. Together, we discussed the challenge of communicating to 170,000 colleagues working in more than 60 markets worldwide. We start by talking about IQ as unique culture and values and how that's come to be so baked into the DNA of the organisation. Your head guy talk about how he sees his role as primarily serving the frontline ensuring all colleagues, especially those who are unplugged, have the right information at the right time to do their jobs effectively. And just as importantly, how his team listens to what's happening across IKEA to amplify and celebrate local stories across the entire community. And Daniela and Guy also share the story behind *Flatpack TV*, their own brilliant fortnightly show watched by IKEA colleagues worldwide. And finally, I'll just add that there's an infectious energy and joy, I think which Daniela and Guy bring to their work. And you can hear it throughout this conversation, which makes it really special. So I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. So Daniela and Guy, welcome to the internal comms podcast. It's such a pleasure. I'm super excited about this conversation. So thank you so much for joining us.



[Daniela 04:24]:

I think we are actually more excited, right?

[Katie 04:31]:

I just thought to set the scene for listeners, maybe if you just sort of explain a little bit about your background and your current responsibilities when it comes to comms that just sort of paints the picture for people that would be great.

[Daniela 04:43]:

So I'm Daniela, then, of course, my primary responsibility is putting our CEO with communication, and I'm responsible for all of the communication that he does. However, don't keep me responsible for everything he says!

[Katie 05:02]:

Yes, I like that distinction.

[Guy 05:06]:

My name is Guy, I'm the nice one in this relationship. I'm the Co-worker Communication Manager at INCA, which is the retail side of IKEA. We are responsible for communicating with just over 170,000 colleagues in 32 different markets/countries around the world. So an amazing challenge, but one that's super exciting every day.

[Katie 05:32]:

Yeah, I bet. And the thing about IKEA, I was thinking about this, probably almost all listeners are going to be familiar with a name with a brand. But as you say, I mean, a huge organisation, the scale and the scope or size of your organisation is massive. You've already mentioned that 170,000 people across all those markets, talk to me a little bit about what they look like and how you segment them, you know, the kinds of people and their diversity within that mix, the sort of jobs that they're doing and their comms needs and preferences.

[Daniela 06:04]:

I think all the tough questions, we're going to redirect directly to Guy.

[Guy 06:13]:

This is going to be a very one-sided interview. No, it's, um, it's a super good question. And it's, it's really part of our daily challenge. I mean, if you think of, you know, 32 different countries, and they're just the cultural differences, the time differences, the language differences that we face, in that every day. On top of that, a really diverse workforce. And as we like to say, if we're ever going to segments, I guess, the clearest segmentation we have is what we call plugged in and unplugged. Yeah, it's easy in a company



to do communications when the majority of your colleagues are behind desktop computers or have a phone on them, which you can reach them through, you know, those channels. But I'd say the vast majority of ours are unplugged. They're either on the shop floor meeting customers, they're driving forklifts in warehouses, they're cooking food in the restaurants, their washing dishes, you know, dressing the store, there's just such a variety and diversity amongst that group that there's just no one way or one channel in which to reach them, you really have to rely on as many channels as possible, of course, but for us, it's critical that we have the people element to that human element side to it, you know, it's going to be through their fellow colleagues, through the managers through the latest, that the communication is going to reach them we can't rely on digital channels at all.

[Katie 07:39]:

There is so much to ask in response to that. There's a lot in that answer that um and I will get into the weeds as listeners know that I always do. But to step back a little bit, in preparing for the show and doing my research. First of all, I was really surprised to discover that IKEA was founded in 1943 because the brand feels so contemporary, so much, and so kind of future-facing. But then I found this document and we'll put a link in the show notes. Of course, *The Testament of Furniture Dealer*, published I think in 1920. What's fascinating about it is, it's publicly available, it's lovely to see a sort of values culture statement that's publicly available, anyone could look at it. It's beautifully written. I mean, there's some lovely lines in that. Talk to me a little bit, Daniela, about what role this document plays in our careers day to day everyday life.

[Daniela 08:45]:

I actually, like, without sounding like we're a sect, I truly have to say that it plays a huge role. And it has played a huge role for the last 78 years and will continue to play an important role in the future as well. It is fundamental to who we are, how we do things and what we do in a way. Not only is it like you say beautifully written it actually has a deeper meaning for all of us who work within it. I think it and it's also even though it was written in the 70s, I think it has this forward-looking always on the way trying to prove things in order to meet the customers in the right ways. That kind of mentality is built into them to the testament, which is I mean, it is a privilege to work for a company that not only has that kind of values-driven, purpose-driven foundation but also actually works very much in that in that area as well. I would say or with that, as a direction.

[Katie 10:02]:

It's a great example of the message and the method coming together because it talks about simplicity and humanity, but it does it in a very simple and human way. So, it's very, very clever. Is it true that you carried it around with you? And you reread it quite a few times in your when you first joined IKEA?

[Daniela 10:21]:

Yeah, did I say that out loud? But I think for me who joined IKEA about eight years ago. And for me, that was something that truly differentiated IKEA from the other companies that I had worked for or worked with before. So, for me, I truly think when I came in, I was like, yeah, yeah, another culture of values, a book that I need to read and I really didn't understand the depth of it. I think, across the years, I find myself coming back to that when I am in challenging, like situations or complex projects, where you're thinking, how will we solve this? And is there really a solution that can fit our culture and values, but also be ethical from a business perspective? I find myself actually just finding inspiration there thinking, oh, right this is about common sense. Say it like it is, be who you are on all occasions, but do it with people at heart and the business at heart. So, I think I actually find quite a lot of inspiration in that study.

[Guy 11:49]:

But I think it's also inspiring the practical application of it today. Like you said, it was written a long time ago. But you know, when we were lucky enough to travel, pre-pandemic, you'd be in some countries, which, you know, Sweden is a very beautiful open democratic place. But there are other countries and cultures where the work culture isn't like that it might be a lot more hierarchical, or, you know, a bit more male-dominated. But you get to IKEA and in those countries and meet your colleagues, and especially the younger ones, they're in absolute heaven because they were being listened to their opinion was being sought. They felt they had a seat at the table, they were included in absolutely everything. And it was deeply shocking for them. Because that's not part of perhaps that standard work culture in that place. But at IKEA, it absolutely was. And I think that it's such a big part of the foundation, it's so built into everything that we're doing, including how we hire people, to be honest, that it really just maintained that their culture and those living values.

[Katie 12:58]:

I mean, that there is this thing, isn't there, the founder mentality. So those organizations that have a very strong founder, those values seem to become part of that organization's DNA. But if I'm not one of those types of organizations, is there anything that I can take from Ikea, so the secret of success that might help my values be lived like that? I mean, truly live truly guide, decision making and behaviour. Is there anything in particular that springs to mind? I think, well, it all comes down to the fact that we do this.

[Guy 13:45]:

For me, I think if I have to pinpoint one thing, it's the values-based hiring, you know, if someone comes to an interview, and they're like, an absolute killer, they're going to go and hit every sale and they're going to step on to wherever they need to step through to get to the top and I'm going to deliver results, they're not necessarily going to be the successful applicant because they're just not going to last long. In this culture, it has to be values-based hiring, you need to make sure that that is a critical part of what you're looking for, to bring into the organisation. Now, of course, we're always looking for new opinions,



and new skills and new ways of doing things. It's not about being set in this old-fashioned model mode, but there's something within the culture and values which is just some core thing and even around the world you know, it's not necessarily they're not Swedish culture values Scandinavian it's, they all bring their own their own mix in their own spin to it and localised way of doing it. But it's, it's just that bedrock and if you if you make sure you keep hiring in that certain way, even if you're starting from scratch, it's your brand-new company, it's day one here they Yeah, then you need to have that as your base level that you're going to hire to go look for those type of people to help develop and grow.

[Daniela 15:07]:

And I think to just build on what Guy is saying here, is one thing that I think is a key to success in living the values and truly working after the values are, of course of the people that are working at the company lead by example. So not saying one thing but acting in a different way. I think that's super important. Like we talked about simplicity, and maybe simplicity is one of the many challenges that we have within IKEA. Because we are a global company, we have many markets, many colleagues indirect supply chains, and so on. It's a huge organisation. So, it is really, really difficult for us sometimes to be simple. Yet, that is something that we strive for every single day, like how can we make decisions faster? How can we be more agile? How can we be more relevant and so on. So I think being a leader at a company, you have to live the values and you have to act after the values. Otherwise, it doesn't really matter what the book says in a way.

[Katie 16:18]:

Walking the talk, as they say. So, let's talk about the nuts and bolts of internal comms that IKEA and first let's get our terminology right because Guy I know that you are Global Head of Co-worker communication and that the term co-worker rather than internal or employee comms is deliberate. And I just wonder, why is that? And how does that shift in language influence your thinking and approach?

[Guy 16:47]:

It's very deliberate. And it's based on the fact that the people we're communicating to are people. They're humans, they're our colleagues. It's not a strange entity, or where you know, or employee, if we say employees, then it's like, we're talking down to people, if it's internal communications, then it sounds like we're just clicking memos about or updating an intranet, we're not just communicating with our colleagues, we're engaging with them, we're trying to inspire them, we're trying to activate them, we're trying to, you know, bring them along with the journey. And, you know, Communication is a two-way street, it's not, we're not just pushing things out to them, we're pulling as well, we're talking to them, we're having a dialogue, we're learning from them. As much as we're trying to share things the other way. So it's, it's just that human element which is so, so critical, to the way we go about it. And that comes down to the way we communicate comes down to the use of language that comes down to the tone, it comes down to, you know, not using corporate language or not using, you know, media release template type,



ways of writing, which are absolutely inhuman in every way. You know, it's robotic, so it's about heavy to a human tone, and a respectful one, and respecting their time and, and their energy.

[Katie 18:07]:

Now, I'm guessing, you know, you can't possibly be everywhere all at once. And you've talked about your time difference, all those kinds of things, or people across all those different markets. So, you must presumably have to rely on a strong network of, I don't know what you call them, but local comms champions, as it were, can you tell us a little bit about what that network looks like, what their role is, in the communications process, how you sort of develop and interact with that network.

[Guy 18:32]:

We call it a matrix here. And so, we have colleagues in every single one of our markets that we, we work with, to get the messages out there, but also to stay on top of what's going on in the ground. You know, it's fantastic to be here at some, you know, global headquarters, but we're so far away from a lot of what's happening on the floor, you know, and meeting the customers in their day-to-day challenges, that it's absolutely critical that we stay extremely close to them. So, we're in touch with reality, where I would have our finger on the pulse and, you know, make sure that what we're putting out there is well received is needed, and is appreciated when it arrives, you know, we should be helping them and, you know, it shouldn't be top-down. I always say when we would bring someone new into the team, you know, I report to them, I'm here to serve them, I'm here to work for them. And to help them in any way, you know, at the end of the day, for me that the key part of this job is just simple air traffic control. You know, there is just daily floods of flights of communication that can come from all sides, hitting the markets and then hitting the stores and hitting the co-workers and colleagues on the floor. We need to make sure that we're directing it in the right way, so they're not been overwhelmed, they're not being confused. They're not getting double messaging that it's extremely clear what they need to know when they need to know it, and how they need to know to and you know, of course, the recent times the pandemic Make a show that that is absolutely crucial.

[Katie 20:02]:

So, these local comms champions, are responsible for co-worker communication to territory level at their local level. And that's their day job, they don't do another job as well. That is their job, they have a similar role profile wherever they are around the world.

[Guy 20:18]:

Absolutely, absolutely. As you can appreciate, in some markets, you think of countries that the size of the US or China or Russia, huge markets, geographical challenges and all the rest, so they have enough on their plate, just dealing with what's happening on their home turf, you know, without having to be inundated all the time with us. So it's critical that they're able to also establish their own communication channels within their countries, we shouldn't be forcing people onto certain channels and say, No, this is



where it's where it all is come and get it, you know, we need to make sure that they're utilising the channels that work best for them and work best for their culture, and that we're doing our best to make sure that it's received in the most easy and time responsive way possible. So whether that's, you know, simple things like, you know, our global corporate language is English. Luckily for me, Daniela will tell you my Swedish is horrendous. But you can't just rest on your laurels with that you can't say, well, the global cover languages English, that's it, you know, 70% of our colleagues around the world don't speak or understand English. So, we're missing out on 70% of our colleagues, if we just take the easy option and say, well, it's English. So that's it, we do everything in English, you know, we take the time to translate all that we can, you know, which is expensive and time because time-consuming, absolutely. And it has to be triple checked by the time it reaches them. Because mistakes can be made, and small twisting words can get you in legal ramifications sometimes. So we've got to be super clear what we're saying. But again, by doing that, you're making sure that you're truly making the effort to communicate to the many, you're not just the senior leadership or not just to who needs to know, if you're genuinely trying to communicate to all co-workers, then it's these things that you need to do. And you need to really, as I said, make sure you're going for the channels where they are going to where the co-workers are, don't try to force them to where you are.

[Daniela 22:23]:

Also, the only way to become relevant for the many colleagues out there. It's both by finding the news in the country together with the Comms Department, but also having their ear or having their view or getting them engaged in what we do across IKEA.

[Katie 22:44]:

I was thinking that I mean, the comms network itself a co-worker network, presumably they get together occasionally as well. I mean, out of curiosity, that must be fascinating, because there must be loads of great practices and ideas and things like that, they must share do they share between each other.

[Guy 23:02]:

It's a secret to a successful network and why we've been so thrilled and happy with ours is that they work together, whether it's sharing a success or sharing a challenge. If something's happening in France, and they're dealing with some kind of issue or challenge, they can reach out to their colleagues in Germany or in the US or in Australia, or wherever it may be, whom they know may have been through a similar challenge and say, Hey, friend, where did it work? Where did you fall over? Help me out, give me some advice, rather than coming back to global, which we certainly don't sit on all the answers there. So, it's having this extended family, they can all talk and work together and share to prove success. Like I said, there are fast cultural differences sometimes. But there are also a lot of similarities between what they're doing and what they're trying to achieve. So that's absolutely the way.

[Daniela 23:48]:

And I think many times we actually act as the facilitators almost like bringing people together, solving some of the complex issues that we have together. And I think also, the privilege of working for a brand like IKEA is also the downside sometimes, because the news spread fast, spread fast. So, whenever there is something small happening in one country, that could easily become a huge thing in a country or in a market somewhere else. So, I think that's also one of the roles that we have at global, like just trying to facilitate all of the things that are going on in the IKEA world and just trying to keep people up to date and to be able to be speedy, when and if a crisis might happen.

[Katie 24:38]

Yeah, it's a really good point. Because you're so well-known, you're high profile, as you say, and newsworthy everywhere.

[Daniela 24:45]:

I know. It's, I mean, it's a privilege to work for a brand like that, but it's also sometimes it's exhausting. There are so many expectations

[Katie 24:57]:

I've heard you say that your role is to sort of amplify the voices and the stories at a very grassroots level. And we've talked a little bit about this already. But is it through those local comms champions that you find those stories? And I'm just I'm a guy who mentioned something about Plug and Play content. I'm just wondering what you do with those stories. Once you've got them, what does it all look like in practice?

[Guy 25:20]:

When we say local comms champions, you've got the communications managers in the different areas. But there's also, you know, here we talk about anyone can be a comms champion, there are so many co-workers out there that come up with great ideas, and they're so excited to share them. And so, again, it shouldn't be just us pushing things out, we are always on top of our channels, looking for that amazing content. You know, a great example we had was, during the pandemic, one of our co-workers shared this brilliant idea where he was trying to meet customers in the best way. And normally in a retail environment, you smile at a customer across the room to let them know you're here and friendly and available to assist them in any way. But they were in masks. So that became a little more tricky. So this co-worker came up with a super simple idea where they just took photos of each other with a big smile on their face and made to a nice big badge, which they'd wear on the uniform. Just say, "Hey, here I am, I'm a friendly human person, come talk to me," you know, when you couldn't engage as well with the mask. And so we found that story, and we put it on our little TV show and just amplified us. And then that idea was picked up by 10-12 other markets almost straight away because it wasn't an idea that took a lot of money, it didn't take a lot of time, they didn't need to pull in agency support or big funds, it



was just like, yeah, we can do this in the store, we've got a camera, we've got premium facilities, let's just go for it.

[Daniela 26:47]:

And I think that's also a great example of like things that happen in the markets that sometimes we have no clue about. And then we find out, we take a look at it, we actually take it up to a global level, and then spread it out to the rest of the markets. I think that that is also the strength and having that network and being able to take a look at like what is being what is actually happening in some of the other markets that we can use. I would say one of the key things that is our responsibility is to spread all the great things that are happening within the markets, no matter how big or small it is, if we think that that can support somebody else, somewhere in the IKEA community, then why not?

[Guy 27:31]:

I think that's the biggest secret to any success we've had is that we are just so laser-focused on their total audience is our colleagues out there in the markets, we're not doing communications, to please our manager, or please our senior leadership, you know, that's the easy way to do things, you it's like writing the essay a certain way for the teacher whom you know, is going to grade us and this is a way to, you know, we had this fast audience, but we remain laser-focused on who they are, where they are, how they're feeling at the moment, and you're what's going to help them in their day to day, what do they want to hear about what do they want to know about, and that's where you can have your biggest wins. And that's, it doesn't mean focusing on the simple and small things all the time. But it does mean taking big complex communications that might need to go out and simplifying it as much as possible and making sure that it's, it's delivered in a way which they can consume as easily as possible.

[Katie 28:29]:

One of the channels you use is Yammer. Is that right? You've got a fairly vibrant Yammer channel. Has that been going for a long time? I care?

[Daniela 28:39]:

Yeah, I think for several years. So, I do want to say like five, but I'm actually not 100% sure, somewhere there. We also think that the beauty of Yammer is that it's not really monitored, or driven from a global level, it actually is more of a channel that is used locally, in stores among sales teams, going up to service office level and the country levels, so to say. So that has a different approach and is a platform that reaches maybe audiences that we do not necessarily reach with only our intranet.

[Guy 29:20]:

That's why we get such great content from there because as to my last point, the colleagues on there, there's no senior leaders with big profiles on there. So they're not trying to impress up the chain. They're trying to impress each other. They're trying to inspire each other. They don't care about us which is the



beauty of it. It's fantastic. They just look at this cool thing we did here. Oh, that's amazing. I'm going to take that ID you know, it's beautiful.

[Katie 29:45]:

Is there a way that others can kind of emulate the success that you've had with Jamar is actually the secret of success, letting it grow organically and not trying to kind of manipulate it too much with you know, stakeholder content or corporate campaigns, or I'm just curious whether you've got any advice for someone trying to enliven their Yammer channel if it hasn't yet taken off.

[Daniela 30:09]:

I think for us that actually has been that it's growing out in the markets, I think that one thing that came four or five years ago was that everyone, no matter what position, or what you were doing, or how long you've been with IKEA, or if you're only working four hours every other weekend, and so on, you have a profile on Yammer. Making it possible for everyone to use it whenever they want to use it. So I think that that was that is maybe one of the key things that make it accessible. And also, to seeing some people and some leaders engage and create that kind of like inspirational content, they're the ability to share, have a dialogue and work partly also support you and add value to your everyday work. So that has been one of the key things. And I think I remember we got questions like five years ago, that was like, yeah, how do we what kind of policy do you have? And what is okay to share on Yammer and so on. And I remember us saying, like, there is no policy, like we trust our colleagues to have the common sense of not offending anyone, or actually being able to share transparently what they think, what they feel is challenging, but also what they appreciate with IKEA. So, this was actually more of a, it actually is a platform that at least I haven't seen any bullying going on, or anything like that, it's actually very much about encouraging each other benchmarking, finding examples, and so on. So it's very much a platform where people get inspired and see things from the other markets, which not necessarily is something that you get to you otherwise,

[Guy 32:13]:

I think it encourages sharing as well, like, you see the excitement when someone in Australia shares a good idea. And they get encouragement from Europe and from Asia and from North America like to just so like, wow, my little idea has been validated all around the world, like they get so excited. So yeah,

[Katie 32:31]:

That's lovely recognition, you're creating a profile for everyone. So, part of its success must be it's easy to as you say, it's accessible. It's easy to find people are told about it very early on when they join, presumably.

[Guy 32:43]:



Not so much talking about, but you'll just instantly be added to like a little Yammer group, probably, you know, your team will have a little Yammer group, and they'll add you and you can then fall straight down a rabbit hole of super fun stuff

[Katie 32:56]:

so let's talk about flat pack TV. Now, how did all this start? Because I know you're the stars of the show.

[Guy 33:06]:

It's on Daniela's business card, actually.

[Katie 33:07]:

How did it come about?

[Daniela 33:12]:

I think this idea has kind of like, been with us for a couple of years. And we haven't really executed on it, let's put it like that. I think when we got into the pandemic, we realised that Jesper, who is the CEO, we couldn't really get him out into the markets, meeting colleagues being visible in that way. So, we started like business updates, you can call them with our CEO. So that people felt that he was where they are. So he is in reality, even though he's not there with you. And that started out like one to one, you know, kind of like an interview, we picked up things that were happening in the markets questions that were out there. I mean, we were in an operational roller coaster of both having stores open and closed at the same time having a huge health challenge across the world. All of us were impacted as individuals, but also within the business of course. So, it started out showing that he was present and that people could reach out to us with questions that they wanted answers to and we would do our outmost to answer as many as possible. And then as we kind of like got deeper into the pandemic, we realised Oh my God, there's so much out there that we could share in in a format like this that both has a depth but also is fun and entertaining. We actually held an event together and realised maybe we could do this together. You know? What if, what if we would do this together? How could that work? And I mean, it seems like people were reacting nicely to our energy and the chemistry and we were finding things that nobody actually knew about. So, we just made a really quick kind of like, you know, quick and dirty video on our iPhones and sent it to a bunch of leaders and said, Hey, friends, we want to do this. What do you think?

[Guy 35:33]:

You know, I think it's going back to the culture and the values. I think that's the pandemic almost helped us in terms of when we were trying to crack this, like internal TV show idea. Before we were not following the values, it was getting overly complicated with the agencies. And we were saying, oh, we need a studio. And we need scriptwriters and four cameras and lights. And, you know, we need hosts, exactly host additional hosts, and we need to audition them and see what's right, and what's the right balance and, and then when it came down to okay, everything shot to pandemics and this trust, we got this and



this, then it became, okay, it's us, we'll write the scripts to other friends that will do the filming the lights. And that said, so you know, when we do an episode, it's just four of us, that pull the whole thing together.

[Daniela 36:23]:

And I think the key here is simplicity in a way, we found some things that we saw that people liked, we understood that it could be a channel for us going in to something that soon hopefully, will be post-pandemic, and can include, like business growth, all those things that we haven't really found a way of sharing in an entertaining way. And with this, we get to meet colleagues across the markets, we get to bring in voices from units across the world. And it's not so much about globally sending messages to our countries, it's rather about like finding things in the markets that we can also bring up and amplify across flat pack TV.

[Guy 37:15]:

There's so much colour and life and movement and joy internally amongst our co-workers around the world. It's just the ability to find that, you know, whether it's on Yammer or somewhere else, I mean, literally 1000s of dancing videos of co-workers doing whatever the dance trend at the moment is, and then, you know, it's just, it's endless, what they're doing and being able to just share that inspiring content and, and lift up and also the challenges as well. Yeah, when there are challenges that we have to live up to, to share that as well with our community and look at ways we can address that. It's um, it's really critical and important, but it just works so well, because of that simplicity.

[Daniela 37:54]:

Yeah and it's also about like, if you are a colleague, how can you go from just feeling like you are a co-worker to actually feeling like you are an ambassador? How do we know we are, what we're trying to do is to package this in such a, like, simple way that it's easy for anyone to kind of like retell the story, in a way to a customer to a friend. So we can really bring that what do you say that pride for the brand and for the company you work with and the people you have around you out there?

[Katie 38:31]:

Just out of curiosity, how often does the show go out?

[Guy 38:35]:

At the moment? It's once every two weeks for a while they will join a weekly but it almost killed us because we do this. I talked about day jobs. So it's a lot of work. But it's also a lot of fun. Yeah. Which is what keeps us motivated.

[Daniela 38:49]:

Yeah, I think it gives so much energy back in a way like sometimes you're frustrated, because you're like poof, God no, again, like did it was it really a week ago, we did it. But then it's there's so much



appreciation for the things that are shared in Flatpack TV, and it's being amplified across the world. And it's I don't know, it just like opens many doors in a way and builds a network between our many friends and the community because you feel if you've seen a colleague on Flatpack TV, you feel like that's a great idea. I will call whoever Alan and have a chat with him about people strategy and how they launched it. In India, for example, or whatever it could be.

[Katie 39:37]:

Also, it's translated I think it's worth saying that as well. How many how many languages?

[Guy 39:43]:

I think it would take that top 28. It goes up and down after take-off budget, but no, I think I think, you know, translations where we hit any glitch least that 85 to 90% of our co-workers.

[Katie 40:02]:

Wow. And that's obviously subtitling it rather than awful overdubbing.

[Guy 40:07]:

Yeah. There's a need for subtitles in English as well.

[Katie 40:20]:

You talked about simplicity being the way forward there and the fact that and I can imagine a lot of people thinking, what's the time? What's the investment? And who's the agency and who's going to script it? And actually, getting your phones out and having a go is really the first step. And that gets you sort of kick started. But after having done is it two seasons of the show, now that you've got under your belt?

[Guy 40:42]:

We're approaching 50 episodes.

[Katie 40:45]:

Any other lessons you want to share that you've learned along the way that you've thought, Oh, I wish I knew that at the beginning.

[Daniela 40:51]:

I think one of the learnings is, if you don't test it, you will never know. So I mean, my spirit is just do it. Don't overthink it, don't over plan it. Like we were saying this idea has been with us for a couple of years, yet we never executed on it. And it was because we were overthinking it. Like if you keep the simplicity going in something you that you do, and just like test and try, adjust, add take away

[Guy 41:20]:



And if it wasn't, it's not like we're going to break IKEA. The only people are going to be embarrassed to Daniela and I. And of course, like when you when you're in the testing phase, you know, of course, we look back at some of our early episodes and go, Oh, my God, that was not a good one. Or thinking when she put all those clothes that was written by Bay, but we got better and better and better. You know. And same with our, we've gotten more ambitious and how we film it and where we go and and you know,

[Daniela 41:59]:

I think one of the key things is simplicity in this, I think I'm so scared that now that we want to adjust an add and so on, it will be too robust in a way and it will be too complex, or it will become too professional if I can use that word because I think that both what we appreciate in the team. And also what is appreciated among our colleagues, is that it's not perfect. I mean, I say the wrong things all the time, or mostly Guy. But anyway, I think, like that's what makes it fun in a way. And that's also what makes it more relaxed with our colleagues when we're interviewing them. Like I met a colleague yesterday, who was really nervous, I said, what are you nervous about? Like, it's just me, I'm likely going to mess up like 10 times before we get this like sentence, right? Because it's so difficultly written. So, you know, we'll just roll, we'll just, ya know, it'll be nice. And it's not to say that we don't care about it, brother, it's about bringing that energy and bringing just, you know, in a way to this interview, because that is enough.

[Guy 43:22]:

I also think to inspire people in terms of, we don't want it to be the be all and end all this is the communication channel. Like, you know, like, I'd love if there were 32 flat back TVs out there, you know, Oh, wow. When we're lucky enough to go to another market. You know, you see the shock on some people's faces when we walk in, because they're expecting this entourage of like, the studio. And there's four of us all carrying the heavy bags, like, Hey, we're here. And they're like, that's, that's it, it's just four of you? We're like, yeah, this is the team say anything, you see them sort of clicking Go. Maybe I could do this. I could have my friends, we could pull together something, you know, and a lot, a lot of there's lots of little shows out there now across IKEA, where they're trying to just put their phones and you know, lights within the store and whatever. It's, um,

[Daniela 44:08]:

and I think also for our developments. I mean, we are of course looking into, should we add in, you know, reporters in each market so that we almost can have, we can make it together with our friends out markets, because that's when we get to all the fun things anyway. And that's where, honestly, that's where the content sits. Yeah, they're doing amazing things. We're just trying to amplifier correspondents across the world.

[Katie 44:35]:

I love it. Sounds fantastic. How are you measuring success? So are you sort of doing that in an informal way? Just through sort of ad hoc feedback and just knowing what your audience is thinking or feeling?



Or do you have any sort of hard metrics that you set up for this that you are keen to hit? How has measurement work?

[Guy 44:55]:

I think I think it's a combination of both. And that's been really tough for us. I mean, the first year or so of the We were in a pandemic. So we were sort of stuck doing the show from a couch here in our office. And we were just only getting the hard metrics, you know, from our, our channels, and that we had control over. So that's certainly been a challenge where we, we can see, you know, where we posted on our intranet, we can see the hard analytics from there. But then we also make it available, you know, to send out around the world, with translated burned in subtitles. So they can put it on local screens in the stores and in the different units. So we have no idea what the views are, what the numbers are, and all the rest of it. And then, once we things opened up a bit, and we were able to sort of go out to the markets, that's when we got quite a bit of a shock. We go, I mean, we've been into a few stores in Sweden, and maybe it's a cultural thing, you can explain it better as a swede. Usually swedes won't run up to you and be like, "Hey, it's you!", they'll just smile and give you a sideways glance. When we got to a store we had colleagues running over to us and asking for selfies. And it was really strange. This is okay, we're making it clear that we just, we just had no recognition or, you know, we'd seen on the screens for we're in an empty office, we're like, okay, there we are, on a big screen that no one's watching.

[Daniela 46:26]:

No, and I think also, I mean, looking at some of the markets that are coming back to us now they're like, can you please like, make a Flatpack Special of France or Italy, or whatever it could be. So we can really, we can see that they are all so keen on getting their message out through flat pack, which is kind of proof that Flatpack is a good platform and channel to get your messages out there and to show where you're doing create pride among the colleagues and the countries and so on. So I think that just that warms my heart.

[Katie 47:08]:

I'm going to switch tack slightly, Daniela, you're responsible for CEO communication, you lead that effort? And I know, obviously, that's a broad comms remit includes external audiences as well. Yeah. What's the relationship between internal and external comms at IKEA? Are you pretty much aligned? Do you plan on work together?

[Daniela 47:31]:

I'm more of a media person with a public relations background. And so together with like when guys started four years ago, we started to look into this together in a way just finding ways of like, when I'm working with Jesper, from a media perspective, how can we also find ways of looking at what we're doing, from media perspective from a 360 perspective? So are we could we amplify this internally? If yes, how do we do it? And what other messages do we bring out into what audiences and then looking at



that we also started thinking, okay, but when he's doing that, from a media perspective, that's also quite a good opportunity from a social media perspective, for example, or when he's visiting that market, he could also meet with this stakeholder while also doing this media interview, and so on. So we're, like, when I am in that work, I'm really trying to capture all dimensions of communication when we can and if we can. I think that the most important thing across the last two years has been the internal aspects of it, because it has been so important for us to stay close to the many colleagues across markets. That's the most important audience. And then if we do that, through external channels, or internal channels, it doesn't really matter. The most important thing is that we are being relevant to them, we understand their reality, and we are present in that to your to your ask about or cheer question around the planning. We really try to get that overarching perspective of like, if we say this externally, we need to kind of say it internally as well. Or if we say this internally, we need to think about how do we use that externally as well. So we truly look at communication from the broader perspective of like, these are the audiences how we ship is, is dependent on the channels that we use.

[Guy 49:58]:

And also be respectful of our people, so it's we don't want our colleagues to read this news in the newspaper, you know, they should have heard about it first through IKEA, you know, and being respectful of like your work for this company, you are our colleague. So we will let you know first as best we can, to, you know, inform you. So you're up to date and you feel respected and engaged with before you read about it in the local paper or see it on TV.

[Daniela 50:25]:

And I think also from, from a CEO perspective, and for the comms there, I think one of the priorities we have, when visiting a market is meeting the colleagues, that is always the priority number one, we wouldn't do a media interview or meet a stakeholder or politician or whatever it could be, without actually being in the store or meeting colleagues in a wider group. So to say, I think, that's really like a hard principle that we have. So we would never go to any country without actually being there, and meeting the many first,

[Katie 51:09]:

do you have any advice listeners who are new to leadership communications, and, you know, hoping to build that trusted rapport with a senior stakeholder, potentially a CEO or Chief Operating Officer, any advice to sort of the first steps to building that kind of relationship?

[Daniela 51:29]:

One thing that has been a success, or is a success, I want to say is, of course, to bring out the authenticity in his personality. So it's not about like, changing the leaders language or so on. It's about how can we enhance the qualities that he, in this case, he, has that are amazing? And how can we? How can we actually make him feel and be even more authentic and his voice in his presence in order to be



credible, and to get the engagement among people? So I think, like, for us, that has been super important, like, what is it that that drives the communication, that is that he is 100%, authentic in everything he does when we talk about communication? Does that answer your question?

[Katie 52:20]:

It does. Yes. And I suppose I was also wondering about how you make your leader. Trust your advice, I guess, and come to you for that advice. Because I mean, here in the UK, we don't need to mention politics too much. But there's a lot going on. And I think to myself, where was that communication advisor when he said that, and unfortunately, is often a man who opens his mouth and says something you just think, where was the PR advisor at that? Well, they were taking a long lunch break, or did no one listen to them?

[Daniela 52:53]:

I understood I see your point. I've also seen a lot about the UK in the media lately. No, I have to say I'm so privileged to be working with a person that understands the value of communication, and truly, is engaged and passionate in the topic. Honestly, I mean, it's a true privilege. And I think we of course, it takes time to get to know somebody, but I think it has to take time. If you are to support a person, then you have to understand that person deeply. You have to understand the passion, the energy, what drives him, and so on. And I think we have invested a lot of time and energy into our relationship as such, the first year, and then it makes it easy because we talk the same language in a way we understand each other. But then, of course, like you have to evaluate, evaluated continuously to see what works, what doesn't work. How can we optimise this, how can we create an even bigger impact with less time and effort? So it's all about improving the process of working with communication. But then, of course, like I feel privileged, he is truly understanding the value of communication in that sense.

[Guy 54:19]:

I think from a slightly to the side point of view, looking at and I don't say nice things about Daniela very often, so this is very difficult for me to say. But I think from my point of view watching the success of their working relationship, it's also because Daniela very much is her authentic self. And you're not a yes person you really do you give good advice to Jesper, you tell him when you don't agree. Or when you have a different point of view and you know, you push him when you think he needs to be pushed and he pushes back but you're an authentic and very honest and open person. So, I think that that puts that layer of trust which is so critical in there so that I think he feels that he will get the best and most honest advice when he goes seeking from Daniela rather than just Daniela trying to say whatever is going to please him. I think that's cool to have that layer of trust in a relationship like that.

[Katie 55:19]:

Now comes to the time we're at the hour, Have you got time for those quickfire questions?



[Guy 55:25]:

Please go for it.

[Katie 55:26]:

If you could go back in time, what careers advice would you give your younger self?

[Guy 55:34]:

I would say, certainly don't do what was what your parents hoped you would do, or what you felt society was pushing. I started out in law. And I was never more miserable in my career, then. When I was, you know, studying law, and then trying to practice law, it was just completely wrong for me. So once I found communications, and I didn't even know it existed as a role for me, you know, as a lawyer, I was told that I smile and laugh too much. And it's a sign of weakness. So, okay, maybe that's not the right area for me.

[Daniela 56:07]:

I think for me, it is find the intersection between what you love to do and what you aspire to do. I don't know for me, I've never had a plan. I got to say, when I was 18, and graduating us like public relations. I wonder what that is. And of course, this was just last year. But I, I think that I kind of read about it. And I was like, maybe I'll try this. And we'll see where it takes me. And I think saying yes to some of the things that come to you, is what you should do if you feel this is a bit scary, but it's still a bit intimidating. And there is something that I kind of liked with it. Why not? I've always been like that. And I think that is my advice, at least, like, if you feel that you are, this is intimidating, it is a bit scary. And you should go like, what if this becomes your next, I don't know, superpower, and you can just continue that path? But I mean, just find something that you love, and that you want to be good at, and everything will solve itself.

[Katie 57:28]:

When you feel the fear, you know you're onto something because you know, you're setting yourself slightly out of your comfort zone. Yeah. So can you complete this sentence? World-class co-worker communication is ____ for everybody.

[Guy 57:40]:

For everybody

[Katie 57:44]:

Oh, I like it, I like it a lot.

[Daniela 57:48]:

I'm just going to echo that.

[Katie 57:51]:

That was so what somewhat book and it doesn't have to be a book. It could be a film, it could be a report. But is there something you think all you know, comms professionals should see or read?

[Guy 58:05]:

Tough question.

[Daniela 58:08]:

Yeah, really tough question. I think one thing that I do, I can't recall the name of the film, but it was about this lobbyist who was -

[Guy 58:17]:

Oh, Thank You for Smoking?

[Daniela 58:19]:

Yes exactly. I think actually, that displays like the backside of communication. But I think it's so important in a way to understand the what do you say, the drama in communication that you need to create? And also what's happening in the background? I think that many who don't work with communication don't really understand how things become big or small. For us, I think we are a part of not only us, but comms professionals are a part of creating that as sometimes to go big and sometimes tried to mitigate some of the things that are happening. And I don't, I don't always think that people understand what is happening in the background. And that film, I think, kind of displays that this is actually happening in the background, and you need to understand it. To be able to actually work with it as well.

[Katie 59:24]:

So that was Thank You for Not Smoking. Right. Okay. I don't know if I've seen it. Thank you. I'll check it out.

[Guy 59:32]:

That's a really good question. It's funny, I feel like in every movie where there's a PR person, they're always evil noise like, the slightly that's why telecommunications is the way to go. No, you know, what really inspired me is a book which has nothing to do with communications, but it's called Touching the Void. It's quite a famous one about this mountain climber and he fell down and but it's just the storytelling element of it. It's just the way that it's going instructors, I think it really for me it's something which sort of, you know, I started out in PR myself, it sort of moved me over to, you know, this not so much storytelling sometimes in PR, I think in telecommunications has such a richer vein to sort of mine from when it comes to being able to share whether it's a simple or a big or complicated little story, but to have that, that art and then elements that energy to put into it. So, I think that's something which really,



both the book and the movie, you know, the author is quite a hard, tough guy. But the way he's able to share that story and bring in the different voices, I think, really, fundamentally changed the way I looked at communicating.

[Katie 1:00:42]:

Thank you for that. And finally, we give you a billboard for millions to see around the world and you can put on that billboard any message you'd like? What's your message on that billboard going to be?

[Daniela 1:00:57]:

Remember to have fun.

[Guy 1:00:58]:

I can't make it better.

[Katie 1:01:01]:

That so sums up this interview. I have to say it really does. This has been so much fun. Thank you so much, Daniela and Guy What a joy to have you on the show.

[Guy 01:01:15]:

Thank you. Thanks Katie, really appreciate it

[Daniela 01:01:18]:

Thank you, it was so much fun.

[Katie 01:01:20]:

So that is a wrap for this episode of the internal comms podcast. For the show notes and the full transcript and all the links that Guy and Daniela mentioned, head over to our website. That's abcomm.co.uk/podcasts If you found this episode helpful, if you enjoyed it, I would be really grateful if you could give us a review on Apple podcasts. This will help other IC pros out there find our show. We have some great guests lined up this season an interesting mix of in-house practitioners, advisors, consultants, so you may want to hit that subscribe button today. All that remains is to say thank you, thank you to everyone who reaches out to me on LinkedIn and Twitter to say how much you're enjoying the show. I really value your feedback. I do try to respond to every comment and thank you too, to my producer John Phillips and the great team at AB that make this show possible. Until we meet again lovely listeners stay safe and well and remember it's what's inside that counts.