



TICP – Episode 58 – The state of IC: what's behind the numbers?

(Season 7, episode 03)

[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.

Welcome to the internal comms podcast with me Katie Macaulay. Listeners before we leap into this episode, it feels only right to acknowledge what's happening in the world right now. I'm recording this episode on Tuesday, the 8th of March 2022, which is day 11 of the military attack on Ukraine, a sovereign state larger than France, two and a half times larger than the UK. We are witnessing some harrowing scenes, as Ukrainians flee their homes or decide to stay and defend their country from invasion. This crisis like so many others, brings into sharp focus the importance of the work we do as professional communicators, because alongside the physical battle is the fight against misinformation and propaganda. This conflict is yet another reminder, if we needed it, of the importance of a free independent media and a factual ethical communication. Thank you to listeners and comms colleagues around the world upholding these standards and telling the real story the human story of this war.

With that, let's turn to the subject of today's show. The State of the Sector report from the comms agency Gallagher. Now Gallagher calls this 'the definitive global survey of the internal communication and employee engagement landscape.' And I think that's a fair assessment. Since 2008, this survey has given us the inside track on the evolution of internal communication, our priorities, challenges, influence, and our day-to-day practices. I asked Siobhan Hammond, Gallagher's Head of Communications and Change, what this year's results are telling us about the current state of our profession. So, Siobhan, thank you so much for appearing on the Internal Comms podcast to talk about your state of the sector reports.



[Siobhan 04:30]:

Oh, it's a total pleasure, Katie. I'm delighted to be here.

[Katie 04:34]:

Let's start with who actually responded to the survey this year. Was there anything different about this year's respondents?

[Siobhan 04:43]:

This year's participation was the biggest ever yet with over 1,300 plus respondents from all over the world, which was just really amazing. And for the first time, I think in the history of the state of the sector report, North America became the most represented territory when it came to survey respondents, so pretty awesome. And we also successfully grow our footprint in other regions this year, Canada, Latin America, and APAC.

[Katie 05:10]:

I mean, I noticed on the front page, you call it the definitive, IC survey. And I think it absolutely is. So, let's get straight into what internal comms pros are saying about their priorities for 2022.

[Siobhan 05:28]:

There's no big surprises here. And I'm actually really pleased to see the priorities that are in the top three. So, the number one priority is engaging teams around purpose, vision and strategy. But the biggest challenge is disengaged employees. So, we'll probably talk a bit more about that shortly. And then the question around hybrid working was a first this year. And that's also now the second priority for comms professionals. And I'm really pleased to see that enhancing people manager communication, made it into the top three priorities this year, no surprises really given it's been a really tough year with the pandemic, and the importance of people managers has just escalated in terms of the contribution they bring.

[Katie 06:59]:

It's interesting, because I think it's several years back, we've seen people managers being called out as a barrier, or obstacle to better internal communication. So, it makes perfect sense that now especially as you say, after the pandemic, and everything and changing the way we work, that that has become a priority. It's really good to see, I think. So, you'd mentioned challenges there. And number one, is that right? Number one is disengaged employees.

[Siobhan 06:36]:

Of employee disengagement, you're absolutely right, it was seen as the biggest challenge by respondents. And again, I think, you know, the pandemic has pushed many people to the brink. And

what we're seeing as some of the kinds of key themes that are emerging around the future of work, and what's really important to employees is around work life balance, absolutely key. Flexibility, no longer do people want to be five days a week in the office. Clear vision and purpose, people want absolute clarity. Most organisations are reinventing themselves post the pandemic, people really need to be clear on what that means for them. And then mental health focus is a top priority. We're also seeing another challenge for the profession is a lack of capacity. So, this is an issue for most communication professionals with 32% of respondents actually naming this as a critical issue, which is an increase of 10 points over the past year. So, no surprises given the last few years and the rising importance and recognition of comms and the constant demands, I guess really, that's been put on the profession.

[Katie 07:42]:

Yeah, absolutely. It makes perfect sense. We are being asked to do more and more with the same resources, or I think in some cases less actually.

[Siobhan 07:49]:

Yes, it is certainly less for some of the smaller, medium organisations, the larger ones, that the opposite seems to be the case, there is a bit more investment.

[Katie 08:00]:

Let's talk about listening to employees and getting their feedback, which I'm guessing has, you know, become even more critical, because we have more remote in every sense of the word remote employees. I noticed that 84% of respondents agree with the statement that internal communications should play a crucial role in capturing and amplifying employee voices. But would it be fair to say that there's little evidence that IC teams sort of actively doing this, would that be fair, or am I being a bit harsh?

[Siobhan 08:35]:

No, I think it's, it's a totally fair judgement Katie. Around 74% of respondents told us that they run engagement surveys, they've run pulse surveys in the past 12 months. But what we're seeing is a rapid decrease in more two-way listening. And so only two in five organisations are really leveraging things like focus groups and listening sessions, despite obviously, this channel being a critical resource to listen and to gain valuable feedback from employees. So for me, this is a disappointing statistic. But I guess it's also a huge opportunity for communicators to really leverage more of that two-way channel potential and give people a voice.

[Katie 09:07]:

Yeah, I agree. I mean, I think a lot of the tools are giving us that quantitative benchmark data, you know, this has gone up that's gone down in very closed questions. But for me, and I've said this, many times, listeners will be bored with me saying it, but the quality of the information you get from qualitative research can't be beaten, can it - it really makes the difference?

[Siobhan 09:35]:

Absolutely not. Yeah.

[Katie 09:38]:

Now you asked respondents how well they think their workforces understand the kind of core strategic messages about their organisations. And I found this absolutely fascinating. So, what do we think our workforces truly understand about the big things to do with our organisations?

[Siobhan 09:55]:

Great question. We asked respondents how well they think their people understand their organization's purpose and vision. And 63% of respondents rated this as either excellent or good. But there was a significant drop when it came to the actual business strategy. So more than half of respondents 53% told us that understanding is either average or poor in these areas. So, there's again, that kind of suggest a bit of a disconnect. Only 41% of the respondents think employees are actually really understanding what the purpose and strategy means for them, which is absolutely critical. There's no point in really communicating if people don't understand what how it impacts them, and what it means for them.

[Katie 10:39]:

This is fascinating for me, because what it suggests is that, you know, they're seeing the posters on the wall, or the kind of, you know, the representation of them somewhere written down, but potentially not making the link between how that impacts my day-to-day job my day-to-day decisions, but day to day decisions made in my department, my division, my business area. And that's actually where it's lived, isn't it those values and that strategy.

[Siobhan 11:06]:

Totally Katie. And I wonder whether it's back to that kind of, you know, the lack of two-way communication, that lack of dialogue, where, you know, people aren't really engaging, because we know that the best way people engage is in two-way dialogue. So actually, they're not really interpreting some of the key messages around the purpose and strategy and what that means for them.

[Katie 11:27]:

When it comes to the employee experience rising up the corporate agenda, this phrase EX, I think your data is suggesting that, you know, certainly C suite executives are discussing employee experience. But you're - I think your survey suggesting this might be a sort of case of all talk and no action. Maybe that again, that's a little bit harsh, but it seems to be coming through as a theme in the data. Would that be fair?

[Siobhan 11:53]:

Yeah, unfortunately, I think it is fair, the evidence points to there clearly being a 'say do' gap. As we know, the employee experience shouldn't be ignored. There's so much compelling evidence in terms of return on investment, and the benefits of organisations. But the evidence suggests that leaders recognise employee experience can increase morale and talent retention with 59% of respondents saying this. And interestingly, again, 82% of respondents said that internal communication is seen as the key driver of the employee experience. But when you actually look at the view from the top 31% of respondents feel there is a clear mandate from the top to drive employee experience, which is pretty low, with 42%, saying that actually, the employee experience hasn't been formalised yet. So most organisations dedicate time and resources, obviously, to looking at the customer experience, customer journey maps, customer personas, but it really doesn't feel like enough is happening in terms of how do we align internally with that and look at employee journey maps, employee personas, and you know, just reiterating what I said, the evidence is there are organisations that have excellent employee experience, they have 2.3 times greater revenue. So, I guess for me, it's questionable why employees and employee experience isn't a top priority for every CEO.

[Katie 13:15]:

It's going to be interesting as your, hopefully, your survey does roll on through the years to see if this becomes a challenge. We get our heads around because there's many things, I'm guessing that's needed to make this happen, collaboration, greater collaboration between departments, I'm guessing, because no one department can own the employee experience. So, there's all sorts of potential barriers and obstacles, I can see that hopefully, we will see in future surveys, IC teams getting over, do you think that's possible?

[Siobhan 13:46]:

I really think it is possible. But as you just rightly said, it's about connecting the dots. It's not just the role of IC, it's connecting the dots with HR with AD, L and D. You know, the leadership team. There's an awful lot to be done in making that happen. But yeah, I feel positive that it's certainly becoming much more of a priority. And the fact that communicators recognise that I think just more needs to be done in terms of really demonstrating that ROI to the CEOs and leaders of organisations.

[Katie 14:16]:

Let's turn to channels we'll get a little bit more tactical now, what are IC pro's saying about the strengths and the weaknesses of their channel suites at the moment?

[Siobhan 14:27]:

Well 80% of respondents said that their channels enable them to reach their people wherever they are, but then this number drops to 69% in organisations with unconnected employees. 70% of respondents felt their channels help their people engage with content and leadership messages. But support for all

other statements was much lower. So just over half of respondents about 56% told us that their channels are good for empowering people to share their opinions. And that really is where we're seeing that disconnect in terms of you know, people really understanding the business direction, feeling involved in the purpose and strategy. Because we know the top priority for building engagement is two-way dialogue.

[Katie 15:00]:

So, we're still got quite a few broadcast channels, maybe still.

[Siobhan 15:10]:

Yeah. And I do think the pandemic has actually probably exacerbated that in terms of the channel piece where we've seen organisations just add to the channel mix without really thinking about what's that channel strategic framework. And, you know, how does that align to the business needs? And importantly, the employee needs?

[Katie 15:13]:

Your survey does suggest, I think that quite a few teams are in the process, or about to review their channels, though. So that's potentially a good finding, I guess.

[Siobhan 14:27]:

Yeah, I don't think the statistic is as high as I would like to have seen it, 39% of organisations named adapting their channel strategy to hybrid working as a priority. But only 19% of respondents say they have actually completed a channel review, despite hybrid ways of working, and only 14% of overall respondents told us that introducing a new digital or social channel will be a priority for them in 2022. So, I'm slightly disappointed that more comms professionals aren't really focusing on that channel strategy piece and looking at this in a more strategic way. So really designing their channels to meet the needs of employees. Because I think the evidence suggests that organisations really need to keep better pace with change and adjust now in order to meet the changing requirements of employees.

[Katie 16:37]:

On a very basic level, if you don't keep up with employees in this world, they will go off and find their own ways to communicate. And I know lots of clients are talking about shadow comms. But this is going to become a real reality. And the conversation is potentially going to be on channels, you can't even see if you don't keep up. Would that be fair comment.

[Siobhan 16:58]:

Yes, totally, totally. But I think it's, it's about, you know, that strategic channel choice, it's about, you know, how does it align to what audiences require and what their needs are? But also, how does it

support your business vision and strategy? So, I think looking at that strategic channel framework, is really essential.

[Katie 17:19]:

And giving each one a clear and defined purpose as well. What's the survey telling us about the importance of leaders and particularly line managers in the communication process? Because I think that's a kind of missed opportunity that your report highlights in this area.

[Siobhan 17:36]:

About 1/3 of respondents said people managers are the primary communication channel. And this result doesn't change whether the audience is deskless or not. So, people managers are absolutely one of the most critical communication channels in any organisation. And I think in any survey that I've ever done, they are the preferred method for most people, for most employees. So, 81% of respondents said their expectations of leaders and people managers has increased in the last 12 months. And whilst we've become more reliant on increasing digital capabilities, there is clear evidence that we really can't replace that human interaction. But are organisations really doing enough to support their leaders to support their people managers, in giving them the right skill, giving them the right tools to really kind of elevate their communication?

[Katie 18:29]:

That is the big challenge, isn't it? That's the that's where I think and we've seen that so many years, in state of the sector, as being a really hard problem to crack. It's time it's resources, as you say, probably requires some collaboration with organisational development, learning and development. But clearly, it's going to become even more important as we keep in this hybrid world. It's not going away, is it?

[Siobhan 18:55]:

No, it's not, it's going to be critical. And I think a lot of organisations are really, I'm seeing that they're taking this as a priority and want to invest in their people managers and give them the skills they need and give them the tools they need to really support them more.

[Katie 19:09]:

Yeah, I'm seeing the same. So, there was anecdotal evidence, certainly from my conversations with practitioners throughout the pandemic, that our influence as IC professionals was on the rise. But tell us tell us what's really happening. What does your survey say about our influence as a discipline?

[Siobhan 19:28]:

Well, I'm really pleased to see that our influence has risen, and we're getting the recognition that we probably finally deserved, so a significant 62% thought that their influence had continued to increase in the past 12 months. 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they're viewed as trusted

advisors by leaders. So, this is really excellent news. I guess it's a shame it had had to be as a result of the pandemic that's my only thing because you know, actually comms professionals have been doing a brilliant job for a long time. But I guess you know; we are now actually getting recognition that is required. So, there is a significant increase on the pre-pandemic levels.

[Katie 20:12]:

Yes, as you say it's a shame it took a worldwide pandemic. But it is so good to see that we're getting the rest, you say the recognition we deserve. We've been forced into the spotlight, we've stepped up to the plate, and we've been recognised for that, which I think is wonderful. I'm always fascinated. And it's a question I always like to ask guests, you know, what are you looking for? You know, what are you looking for now? What's coming over the horizon we should be aware of? So, you asked this question, what broader themes and skills internal communicators should look to explore and develop? Can you share some of the top answers with us?

[Siobhan 20:44]:

The top answers were data analysis and measurement. And 61% of respondents said that this is a key area for them. Employee experience themes such as wellbeing, DNI recognition, compensation, 58% of respondents said, you know, this is an area that they're really looking to explore and develop, and then changing attitude to work 58% and change of management 57%. So, you know, some really interesting statistics there. And I think some of this starts to reflect, as we were talking about earlier, the broader emphasis, comms professionals are putting on the holistic employee experience. So, looking at the entire employee lifecycle, so really looking at everything employees think, feel and see and recognising, you know, how much more productive and profitable organisations can become if they really focus on that broader employee experience.

[Katie 21:38]:

That's a really interesting list, because one of the things we've seen over the years we've stated the sector is, is measurement being a challenge. But if there's a significant focus now on data exploration, data management, data interrogation, that bodes well, I think, for the future of measurement, potentially, let's see what happens in the future.

[Siobhan 22:00]:

I think it's just essential. And I think, you know, comms professionals are recognising it's essential, but I think many are struggling to find the time to do it accurately. And also, to really understand how they do measure and look at the KPIs they need to measure to support kind of, you know, measurement around mindset and behaviour, not just the channels actually reaching people. But actually, are they having the right influence needed to change mindset and behaviour?

[Katie 22:25]:

Very good point. Now, I was shocked, again, to see and this has been a problem, and you've highlighted it, the State of the Sector's highlighted this before around planning, you say even in world class organisations, they still don't have some of the basics in place when it comes to planning. So yeah, what are the results telling us about our ability as the profession to plan effectively.

[Siobhan 22:50]:

These results are really stunning for me, in my 20 plus years in in kind of employee engagement communications I've always seen this as a problem, but I would have liked to without thought that we might have fixed it by now. So, what we're seeing really is that I think, many IC teams have been pulled in multiple directions. Clearly, again, the pandemic has really exacerbated that. And I think there's been a lot of reactive communication going on, last minute requests, so less time has been put on planning and strategy. The results do indicate that larger organisations, which are probably the ones that are better resourced, do tend to have more robust communication strategies, but with many media, smaller organisations not having anything. So, I think overall, the focus seems to be much more on planning on a campaign-by-campaign basis, with really disappointing the only 31% of respondents saying they have an overarching internal communication strategy in place. And as we know, Katie, you know, a communication strategy is critical in helping any organisation achieve its strategic objectives and priorities, and importantly, engage effectively with their employees.

[Katie 24:04]:

Yeah, I mean, I'm wondering whether this comes back to one of those early challenges we mentioned, which is lack of resource, it could be, as you say, We're just in reactive mode, to what comes along, but if we don't get into proactive mode with a plan, it's quite hard to push back on stakeholders to say, no, we don't do that we do this or this is more of a priority than that. We have this agreement that we're going to focus on these five things, and not necessarily do these 59 others. So, it takes time, but actually, it's one of those things that if you do it, right, saves time, longer down the road.

[Siobhan 24:40]:

Totally. And it's absolutely critical. You know, I was asked a question on a webinar the other day is, you know, is it an issue if you know, less is more? And I said absolutely not, you know, choose five things and do them really well. But make sure that those five things are aligned to your business strategy, and have a demonstrable impact on you know, return on investment, and you can really see the impact they have. So, measuring what you what you do. Unfortunately, I think it is it's time poor, but it's kind of you know, if you don't have a communication strategy in place, then it's going to create much more of a headache.

[Katie 25:14]:

Is part of the problem, that we're slightly procrastinating. And we're worrying too much about creating the perfect strategy. And actually, two sides A4 is better than nothing at all.

[Siobhan 24:25]:

I totally agree. And I'd even say, you know, just having some sort of kind of, you know, model in place that aligns, what the communication priorities are, and how they support the business priorities, and the business KPIs. And then having an action plan underneath that is not necessarily robust, but it is sufficient. But what we need to look at more is kind of, you know, the audience segmentation piece, the audience persona piece. So, what we're doing is much more personalised and customised to employees. So, we're really meeting the needs of employees. So, I think that's, that's a critical part. So, I think you're right, in terms of, you know, actually, we can keep it fairly simple. But underneath that what's really important is what resonates for different audience groups. And actually, how can you tailor your communication and key messages to really have the impact they need?

[Katie 26:17]:

And that brings us beautifully back round to qualitative research, which is where you find that all out. Let's talk briefly, we have talked about measurement a little here. But what is the report telling us about measurement and the barriers to measurement?

[Siobhan 26:30]:

Well, interestingly, measurement is the number one skill that communicators believe they need to improve on, and it's scored as the third biggest challenge for 2022, as I touched on earlier, but this year's results seem to indicate the measurement continues to be very hit and miss. Most efforts, concentrate on whether or not communications reach their target audience, with 71% saying they measured this but 36% saying they only measure it systematically. But measuring behaviour change scored more poorly, and with just over half of respondents saying that they measure this. And I think possibly it's because people find this harder to measure because certainly at Gallagher, we're seeing a rise in the number of clients wanting support to determine KPIs that will really help inform how they have actually changed that mindset and behaviour.

[Katie 27:24]:

Yeah, we're seeing the same this shift from measuring output, which is nothing wrong with measuring output, there's still a place for that. But how can we actually measure the impact, the business impact that we've had? Where's that link? And how do we measure it is the Holy Grail? I think you asked a lot of questions at the end or some questions at the end about sort of budget and team size. And I bet a lot of people that read a report tend straight to that page, too. I know they do. Because I have clients say how big should my team be? What's the average size? So, can you tell us a little bit about average team sizes and budgets?

[Siobhan 27:55]:

Yeah, I think the subject of resource is a key talking point for all communications. And what we're seeing is for larger organisations, there is more dedicated IC resource. And in fact, when we look at team size,

the number of dedicated internal communication communicators are probably increasing in bigger organisations. But with kind of smaller to medium size, there appears to be a slight decrease. Wow. Which is interesting. And I wonder whether that's because there is a lack of dedicated resource on IC. But yeah, so that so what we're seeing is large organisations, there has been a marginal increase, but smaller, medium organisations less so. And in terms of budget, yeah, so it's slightly different story, Katie, when it comes to budgets, with organisations of all sizes, kind of going back to pre-pandemic figures. So, this has been positive for pretty much everyone, again, apart from small organisations where already tight budgets have really been reduced further. It's an interesting dynamic, really the ones that probably need the budgets to be bigger because they don't have the dedicated teams, it appears they don't have the budgets either. So that that is a real conundrum for kind of smaller to medium sized organisations. And again, I guess I wonder whether, you know, there's more of an opportunity for comms professionals to really, you know, demonstrate to leaders to CEOs about the return on investment in really investing properly in communications and engaging their employees.

[Katie 29:29]:

I don't know if your survey asked this, but there used to be a very, very broad rule of thumb that we could say, one IC person to every 10,000 employees, is that still up to a certain size? Obviously, when you get beyond probably 100,000 that rule no longer applies. Does your survey suggest that's roughly still about right, or do you not go to that sort of level of detail?

[Siobhan 29:52]:

It says that you know, what we've seen as for a roughly number of employees 50,000 on average, there's about 12 dedicated IC people say, and under 500, there tends to be about two. But those figures are not necessarily an increase on last year.

[Katie 30:14]:

One wonders actually how much this might be not so much a budget problem, but simply being able to get people at the moment. It seems not to be a buyer's market in today's marketplace, looking for great candidates. And this is something we probably need to dive into more in this show. But I'm wondering, certainly the pains we're feeling at the moment just trying to attract talent. I'm wondering if this is a bit of a problem for IC teams, potentially, too.

[Siobhan 30:40]:

I think you're totally right, Katie, I mean, the great resignation is here. And you know, that's why the number one concern for most CAs at the moment is talent, attraction, and keeping the right talent keeping the best talent in the organisation. So, it's absolutely paramount that, you know, organisations do look at this, and look at how they consider it. And yeah, that's a really good point, these figures probably reflect what we're seeing in the wider market and wider organisation with challenges around people kind of, you know resigning.

[Katie 31:14]:

Not to bring this completely circular again. But that's why that employee experience the definition of what it means to work for your particular organisation, defining that, supporting it fostering it is so important. I'm guessing we're going to see that rise up the agenda. At the end of your report, you ask a really crucial question, which is, what does world class communication look like? Now, we haven't got time, I'm afraid to go through all nine points, but they are there in the report links in the show notes listeners out, of course. But can you give us a flavour of what sort of some of the activities that world class teams are undertaking?

[Siobhan 31:54]:

Yeah, absolutely. And we've touched on many of them, as you said, Katie. So, I think that defined purpose and strategy is absolutely critical. So, need to make sure that organisations are really clear on this. And you know, how communications aligned to the business purpose and strategy to ensure that really, employees understand what it means for them, and how they can actively support that. And then I think, you know, having that clear narrative is really critical, and ensuring that every single communication output is clearly aligned. And really helping people understand the vision for the future, where you're going and how you're going to get there. So that strategic narrative, absolutely key. And I'd say also, definitely, we were talking about kind of measurement, that's being able to demonstrate your value is absolutely key to building your influence. So, focus on insight measurement and evaluation to prove your concept by concentrating on impact, that's not going to go anywhere. And in fact, it's going to be more important as internal communications need to kind of really invest in more people invest in bigger budgets, then they need to be able to demonstrate that return on investment, but they also need to be able to prove is what is the communications that is working, is it really resonating with their target audience groups, so if you don't measure it, you don't know. The final point for me, there's many more, but it's about promoting that open dialogue and collaboration, I think listening is really, really key, your ability to keep your finger on the pulse and see things through that human lens will keep that employee voice at the top table. So, I think, you know, my, my recommendation is do not lose sight of this, look at how we can kind of actively leverage this as an opportunity. Internal communicators need to become a trusted adviser to that C suite. So, make their presence count where it counts. So, with things like the narrative, the communication, purpose and strategy that should be a collaborative effort, with leaders to really make sure that everyone is informed, engaged and involved in in what communications are doing. And they can be kind of in a demonstrable leaders and support, communication and engagement with their employees.

[Katie 34:06]:

And having insight, gaining that insight that leaders can't possibly have, because they're busy. And bringing that to the table is such a brilliant way of opening up a really interesting dialogue, I think with

the leaders and having a view on that insight and saying, I think this is what we should do next, even if they don't agree is a good way to start off the conversation. I mean, at the end, I must say hats off to Gallagher for doing this for so long. And listeners, you will see this at the beginning of the survey. But you have done a timeline. Since this started back in is it 2008 This survey started something like that you pull out the key developments along that timeline. And it's so useful to be able to see the progression and the professionalisation of IC as a discipline is real. It's a real reason to believe, I think.

[Siobhan 35:00]:

Yeah, thank you. It's Great. Yeah. Thank you.

[Katie 35:00]:

Have you got time for those quick-fire questions? Sharon? Is that all right?

[Siobhan 35:05]:

Let's go for it.

[Katie 35:07]:

You said you've got 20 plus years in comms. If you could go back in time, what careers advice would you give your younger self?

[Siobhan 35:18]:

Yeah, love that question. I think if you have the mindset will and desire, anything is possible. I'd also say enjoy life and embrace every opportunity.

[Katie 35:29]:

Nice. I like it. I like it. So how would you complete the sentence? World class internal communication is ...

[Siobhan 35:39]:

It's about creating great employee experiences across moments that matter to influence mindsets and behaviour and enable employees to thrive.

[Katie 35:48]:

Oh, that is so spot on. In the transcript listeners, you'll be able to find that exact sentence if you want to cut and paste it somewhere. So, let's turn to resources. Is there a book a website a film report, apart from your report, of course, that all comms pros should see or read?

[Siobhan 36:13]:

I have just read Monetising the Employee Experience by Mike Sharples and Nicholas Wardle, and I'd say it's a really great read for any comms professional, it really gives you the solid case for why every CEO should be investing in in the employee experience. But also, it provides tactical, practical tools should I



say, on how to actually help you achieve it. So, for me, some really interesting insights really gives you that strong evidence to elevate the employee experience and ensure that your CEO sees that as a priority, but also gives you those practical tools to help you actually deliver upon it.

[Katie 36:50]:

Oh, nice. I'm going to, I'm going to take a look, these might be future podcast guests so that sounds interesting. Thank you. Thank you. So finally, we give you a billboard, a metaphorical billboard for millions of people to see. And you can put on that billboard any message you like, what are you going to put on your billboard?

[Siobhan 37:08]:

I'd say what I would put on my billboards would be – 'The greatest wealth is health.'

[Katie 37:15]:

And so fitting for our times, I think. Siobhan it's been an absolute pleasure to have you on the show. Thank you so much.

[Siobhan 37:24]:

Thank you for having me. It's been great.

[Katie 37:28]:

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, 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.