



## The Internal Comms Podcast – Season 11

### Episode 100 – *Meet the super-connector behind #CommsJobs*

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[00:00:00] **Katie:** Hello, and a very warm welcome to a milestone episode of The Internal Comms Podcast. I'm Katie Macaulay, and this is our 100th episode. To our regular listeners, your continued support and loyalty has been incredible. Thank you for being part of our journey. And to those of you joining for the very first time, welcome aboard.

Every fortnight, I invite a communication expert, an in-house practitioner, academic, consultant, or author to sit in my podcast hot seat. And together, we tease out insights, advice, and inspiration to For those of us working in internal comms. My guest today is Daniel Mendez, an experienced internal communications professional and the driving force behind the hashtag comms jobs.

There's no other term for it. Daniel is a super connector. He very generously devotes his spare time to helping comms professionals move forward in their careers and navigate what can often be a complex and bewildering job market. Daniel's early career involved crafting internal comms for employees of a copper mine in the foothills of the Chilean Andes.

He later emigrated to the U. S. where he has worked in many highly technical industries, including engineering and construction, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, and now healthcare.

Now this is a conversation about many things. How to find the right role. How to grow your network. How to gain the trust and respect of highly technical stakeholders and audiences. I learn about suitcase words, a new term for me. And Daniel gives the most thorough answer I have ever heard to the question of how to build resilience, based on his own experience of overcoming a series of professional and personal challenges.

I've often said that internal comms attracts some of the loveliest folk. We are genuinely people. Daniel is the very best example of a people person. Vivacious, warm and generous with his time, his network and his insight. So without further ado, I bring you Daniel Mendez. So Daniel, welcome to The Internal Comms Podcast.

It's a pleasure to have you here.



[00:02:55] **Daniel:** Thank you so much for having me. I'm so honoured and I'm a big fan, so I can't believe I'm talking to you.

[00:03:02] **Katie:** Oh, it's great to have you here. As comms professionals, we often have to write about diversity, equity, inclusion, those kinds of initiatives. We don't always have first hand experience of these issues.

So I was wondering, in terms of setting the scene for listeners, could you give us a sense of your background? What was it like emigrating to the U. S. from Chile in 2016?

[00:03:29] **Daniel:** And thank you for asking that question. I've always say that D&I in general, the way I see it is very American centric, and it doesn't really represent the experience of many people that come to the U.S.

I wrote a post at some point about discovering my identity as a Latino and Hispanic male, because I never really thought about myself like that before coming to the U.S. So it was scary and lonely at times. And then talking to other people, it seems to be a pretty standard experience. The one thing that really hit me, I always acknowledged that I had left my home.

So I left my friends, my family there, and the things I loved about my hometown and all those little things. But I never thought about not bringing my network with me. And that is something that, of course, it doesn't come immediately to you when you're like preparing to do a, big relocation like that.

But then it hit me when I started trying to find a job here in the U. S. I realized that I didn't have my classmates, I didn't have my professors, my colleagues, my bosses that could advocate for me and tell other people like, This dude can do a good job and can perform in different environments or do the work that I was doing in Chile.

And even if I wanted to connect a lot of the people that were my mentors and members of my network in Chile, a lot of them don't speak English. So it was a very tough time to just get my foot on the door. So that's one thing. The other thing is that I felt the pressure of looking for work in communications as a non- native English speaker.

I started speaking English in 2011 after I met my wife. My wife is American and we met in Chile. She didn't speak Spanish. I didn't speak English. So it was like a whole dynamic there. And at some point, the language of love can only take you so far. We both had to start learning each other's languages.

And there's this pressure of, really proving your value as a communicator, because if maybe it's a silly thing, but I felt it. It's like, how is this guy that has an accent, you can tell that English is not his native language is going to be providing advice about how to communicate. So that was another thing that really affected me in the process of trying to find a job and really rebuild my value as a professional when I came to the U.S.

I started attending happy hours, dinners, conferences, job fairs, job boards, networking events, you name it, and took every single opportunity I had to connect with people and show them that I was capable and really show my value because what is in paper in a resume or an application, it never represents the real value of a person.

And then after I found my first job in the US I never stopped networking. And I think it's just so critical for people that immigrate into other countries to just feel that support that gives you the confidence to advance your career and continue to do what you were doing back home.

[00:06:57] **Katie:** I've got a follow up question that's running around my head here.

Are there small things that people can do, colleagues, teammates, people in your network, to make you feel like you're welcome and that you belong? I'm just thinking when you reflect on your experience.

[00:07:17] **Daniel:** Yeah. So I think that a lot of what I just said, it was really more in my head than in reality. I've been privileged and very lucky to have really welcoming teams and very supportive managers.

But I know that maybe that's not the case for everybody. I would say acknowledging the differences is so important. And a lot of times we just pretend that by not acknowledging that, we are accepting. And that's not the case. So I feel like really being interested in genuinely expressing your interest in knowing about that person, background, understanding where they're coming from, why are they thinking that way? Why are they thinking differently? All of that really helps to build that confidence and show up in a way that it's going to bring that extra spark. I'm a true believer that people coming from different backgrounds and different experiences, different societies and communities can add so much value, especially in the U.S. And not because I'm Hispanic but just yeah, I agree. Spanish is the second most spoken language in the U.S., and the Hispanic Latino community has grown so much, and it's adding so much value to American society. And I feel like there's still a lot to do in terms of positioning and building leaders that will lead



organisations that are representative of those communities and addressing the needs of those communities head on.

[00:08:53] **Katie:** I had someone else on the show talk about the importance of seeing and celebrating difference. And that's exactly what you've said. It's exactly that. Yeah, 100%.

[00:09:03] **Daniel:** Yes. And just have that curiosity of understanding the point of view of others is just so important and such a critical thing to make people feel welcome.

[00:09:13] **Katie:** You provide an incredibly helpful service to the comms community because you are the person behind the hashtag #commsjobs. First of all, what inspired you to launch this service?

[00:09:28] **Daniel:** So hashtags can't really be owned. They come out there and they just grow. They're very organic. So I appreciate you saying I'm behind comms jobs.

There's a lot of people contributing to it. It's just that I've been very intentional about adopting it and positioning and dedicating that to building a community for communicators. So all of that actually started as part of this effort of rebuilding my network in the U.S. Three years ago, I was working at a company that announced a significant round of layoffs. And unfortunately, many of my colleagues were impacted. And many of them had been with the company for 15 or 20 years. So it was a very tough situation. And when I asked them how I could help them, they asked me to connect them with people and help them network and get back into the market because most of their network after 15, 20 years was in the same company.

The last time they actually interviewed outside of the company was decades ago. And they didn't even know where to start. So in having those conversations, it hit me. I spent a lot of time curating my LinkedIn network by following and connecting with many communication professionals during my time when I was looking for a job.

And because of that, of how curated my feed was, I was seeing a lot of jobs that were popping up in my feed. All these hiring managers or members of the hiring team that were advertising. So I told my colleagues, look, I'll start posting these jobs and I'm going to add this tag #commsjobs so that you can follow it.

So that's how it started. And the whole thing took off. Which I didn't expect. And today there's just thousands of followers of that tag. And my followership has grown significantly because I feel like there was a gap there that was not being filled. It's



become this beautiful thing. I get really lovely messages of people thanking me for posting a certain job or telling me that they landed a job through an introduction I made or just telling me they feel helped and supported in their job search.

Because again, it could be so lonely and overwhelming. And just knowing that there's a group of people that are genuinely interested in sharing opportunities and connecting with people and helping each other just really adds a layer of comfort and trust that helps so much in a job search.

[00:12:09] **Katie:** You've now got nearly, I think, 8000 followers on LinkedIn, more than two and a half thousand people are following the hashtag CommsJobs. Is there a secret to growing your community online when you reflect on what you've achieved?

[00:12:25] **Daniel:** There 's a lot of advice out there on how to build communities.

And I honestly have been learning along the way, winging it in the beginning. But I would say that the biggest thing is like building, growing, and maintaining an online community takes time and dedication. That's the first thing. If you're not willing to put the work, to be consistent and show up every day, then it's just not going to stick, right?

And the things that have worked for me are: The first one is really focusing on a specific audience and a specific need. All communicators, like us, hate when you ask, "Who's the audience for this?" And they tell you, everyone, right? No, it is not everyone. Focus on a specific group of people and offer them something uniquely valuable.

What do they need? How can you help them? How can you bring them value? It's really all about the other person. It's not about you. I see a lot of folks trying to build their online presence with a very self focused approach and their content just doesn't resonate with others. So that is one thing I would say.

The other thing is what I mentioned, it's very critical to be consistent, very intentional and relatable. You have to build this habit of putting your thoughts out there, connecting with people, having a two way conversation and not just throwing stuff and let it be, right? And that content needs to connect with others.

And the last thing I would say is that you have to be ready to pivot. Things move so quickly in social media and in the world in general, these days. So what works today may not work tomorrow. Like it changes that quickly. So it's important to always



keep your eyes open and listen to your audience and tweak things based on what your audience is telling you.

And then for that, you have to be agile and don't be afraid of trying new things.

[00:14:29] **Katie:** That's such good advice. This episode is brought to you by my IC Masterclass. This is an on demand, self paced learning journey for internal comms professionals looking to turbocharge their career. It draws on my 30 years of experience and includes many insights from the wonderful guests that I've had on this show.

The IC Masterclass launches later this summer, but you can sign up today to get updates on the launch and exclusive early bird discounts. Simply visit [icmasterclass.com](http://icmasterclass.com). This is a comprehensive program, eight work streams, more than six hours of content, all designed to give you confidence, capability, and inspiration. Register your interest today. That website again, [icmasterclass.com](http://icmasterclass.com).

Can you share with us what you are up to now during your Friday lunch hour, ?

[00:15:37] **Daniel:** Yeah, so yeah, I dedicate my Friday lunchtime to connect with others. It's like a sub product of what [#commsjobs](#) started. A lot of people started messaging me like, Hey, would you be willing to connect with me to talk about job opportunities or how I can change industry, how I can get into corporate communications from media and all sorts of things.

I started having exchanges via LinkedIn and texts sometimes can be awkward and you just can't engage in a conversation. So I was already doing this, but internally. I honestly tried to be very intentional about connecting with people within the organisation. And there's a lot of colleagues that you don't see every day or do just collaborate every once in a while, but I feel like you have to follow up, stay present. And so I was dedicating lunchtime to connect with those people. Yeah.

Now I expanded this and sometimes our current colleagues, I don't get to see too often, sometimes it's people in my network who I haven't seen in a while. And sometimes it's people I'm meeting for the first time, especially young professionals entering our field.

And I believe that, as I said, building a strong network really takes dedication and patience. It doesn't happen overnight. And I think the most important thing is that you can't build it under pressure. So my motto is you need to make friends before you need them.



[00:17:07] **Katie:** I like that.

[00:17:08] **Daniel:** So my lunch hour on Friday is my intentional time of the week where I nurture the relationships I already have.

Start new ones that will bring new perspectives to my life. And it's part of putting this hard work to plant those seeds that would allow you to harvest support in the future when you need it.

[00:17:31] **Katie:** We hear a lot about the importance of generosity, but it's clearly that two way relationship.

You're building, you're investing in your future and your future network. And you're also offering advice. It's such a lovely idea. What are some of the challenges you're hearing about typically when people are seeking a new role? When we spoke in preparation for this show, you mentioned that actually there are many job opportunities that don't even make those mainstream platforms like, LinkedIn.

How do people actually then uncover what's actually out there in the job market?

[00:18:09] **Daniel:** Yeah. I actually wrote an article a couple of years ago about this because it was one of the most frequent questions that I got. And yeah, a lot of people rely exclusively on the jobs tab on the LinkedIn platform to apply for jobs.

And I honestly believe that's the worst approach possible because it's very inaccurate. It's very unreliable. You really don't know anything about that specific position. And that's for many reasons. Like first, posting jobs on LinkedIn is very expensive. So many companies don't have the budget to post on there.

And even companies that invest in having a job post on LinkedIn don't post all the openings that they have because they have to prioritise. There's just a certain amount of slots. Depending on the membership they have or the account they have to post. So they have to prioritise. So there's a lot of jobs that are not listed there.

The other thing is that job openings rarely have a human contact associated with them. There are some best practices. I always say when companies put the name of the recruiter or even the hiring manager on the job listing, right? But a lot of times that is just part of a process that has been defined internally in the company.

And it doesn't mean that when you reach out to that person, they're necessarily going to answer. And unfortunately, it's very often you message those people and



they just don't reply. So you don't have that human connection. Unless, of course, you know someone in the company, right? My recommendation is to always start from a human connection.

And that's something also that I've brought to Comms jobs. I really appreciate folks that are churning directly from the jobs board and they say, Hey, there's an opening here. But. All of the posts that I amplify through comms jobs are from either a hiring manager or someone that is in the hiring team.

That is something very intentional that I've put as a critical part of that effort. Because I want people to start from a human connection. That was my approach of looking for a job. Like I was always looking for posts, discussing the type of roles I was interested in and see who was talking about those and then reach out because the people that are putting themselves out there to say, Hey, I'm hiring or Hey, my team is hiring, or Hey, there's an opportunity to join the company,

they are willing to connect. If not, why will they do that? So I try to be very intentional about that and people should take that as an invitation to reach out. And I always say like the worst thing that can happen is that those people don't respond. Yep. And if they respond and you don't get the job, at least now you have a connection for the future.

Yes. So no matter the outcome with that approach, you always win.

And it really takes a lot of the anxiety of just throwing your resume and cover letter into a talent acquisition tracking system and just. Wait to see what happens and you never hear they ghost you. So it's something super important that I try to really prioritise in the posts that go under comms jobs.

[00:21:35] **Katie:** And does it also help counter the worry that AI is going to be the system, not the person that's responsible for actually selecting first and second round candidates? Because actually you're making that human connection and going round the AI as it were.

[00:21:51] **Daniel:** Absolutely. This may sound weird, but I think that the arrival of artificial intelligence to processes across organisations, right, at all levels, finance, HR, legal, communications, supply chain... all levels, it's going to be all over. And that arrival, it's really going to reposition the human elements of work in a way that hasn't been done before, because I feel like because we didn't have the ability to

easily automate things that are not very value add, a lot of people do work that is very mechanical and it's very machine like, but as we start moving into automating those and adopting technologies that will make it easy for everybody to do that, then you can start focusing on the human side of everything, right? A lot of people are scared about AI taking over, but I always say don't focus on that fear, focus on the things that AI won't be able to do.

And one of those things is that human connection. Some people would say I'm wrong, but I honestly believe that AI, and even if we get to a point of AGI, artificial general intelligence, the things that are awakening the deepest, most soul of our essence as humans will never be replaced by AI.

That is something that you can't duplicate it in artificial space. It's so complex. So yeah, sorry, I went very deep there, but I feel like definitely as AI enters the game, I feel like those human connections are really going to matter more than any other time.

[00:23:46] **Katie:** Looking at your experience, you have largely worked in the technical industries.

You've worked in engineering, construction, oil and gas, pharmaceutical, healthcare. I'm just wondering, has that been a deliberate choice? And if so, why?

[00:24:01] **Daniel:** I think there's always a little bit of luck in things and there's also a little bit of being deliberate about some of the decisions that you make, right?

Yeah. It's been something that I've decided to do for my career, but also I've been very fortunate. Like I've been fortunate and privileged. I started my career in mining because that's the main economic activity in Chile, where I was born. I was born in the Atacama desert, and I was always surrounded by mining activity.

That was the big thing. And it's really a fascinating industry. Later on, when my wife and I decided to relocate to the U. S., my experience in industrial settings and communicating with non wired employees in large mining operations, where trucks and drillers and bulldozers and all that opened the doors for me to my first job in the U.S..

And my first job in the US was working, doing communications in an engineering and construction company. And I stayed there for about four years. Career progression led me to the oil and gas industry within that same company. So we moved to Houston because of that. And then the pandemic hit.

So I was in this very technical environment dealing with engineers and geologists and architects and all of that very technical area. But seeing the impacts of COVID 19 in the communities all over the world shook me, right? And that's when I started entertaining the idea of exploring a career in healthcare.

And also I'm a cancer survivor. I've always been inspired by people who dedicate their lives to saving lives and serving those who are fighting the good fight. Bringing it all together, I had solid experience managing functional communications like HR and IT technology and supporting C suite executives.

And I figured those are very transferable skills across industries. Human resources is always human resources, no matter where you are. Technology is the same. The use cases are different. The applications are different, but in essence, it's the same with finance. So functional communications is a very transferable skill, right?

Yeah. So given my experience supporting technology organisations in large multinational companies before, I was able to land a job in a healthcare company and I continue to be amazed by the work we're doing in the industry. Especially in times like this, when science and technology are really defining the future of health for everybody, globally.

And it's so interesting, it's mind blowing. It's like you're living in this science fiction movie, but things are happening in real life.

[00:26:36] **Katie:** Just backtracking slightly to those non wired employees you described, the guys, and girls, I'm sure, driving the trucks. Yeah.

[00:26:44] **Daniel:** That's always been lots of girls. Lots of girls.

[00:26:46] **Katie:** Good. I'm glad to hear it. Yes. It's always been a tough nut to crack in internal comms, how you engage and communicate with that non wired workforce. I'm just curious on your reflections of what made the biggest difference in terms of connecting with those people and really resonating with them.

[00:27:04] **Daniel:** This is always something that comes up in conferences and I always get a little tickled by comments like, Oh, today's everything about digital platforms and being connected. And you have to be on your audience's phone because that's where they live. You need to find them where they are. The newsletter is dead. The bulletin board is dead. And I always tell them like, not for everybody, it's really not if you go to some parts of the Atacama desert today and you do communications for a mining company where there's very little reception, people are



operating big machinery where they can't be looking at their phone and they're not connected to a computer.

How do you communicate with those folks bringing this digital element to it? It doesn't work. So you have to really understand the needs of those audiences and employees and not be afraid of using the very basics of communications and the old school stuff.

[00:28:17] **Katie:** Yeah.

[00:28:17] **Daniel:** It was tough being there.

And of course you have all the corporate employees that are connected to a computer every day. So you can communicate with them via email, via Viva Engage and all different But all those other folks that are in operations in manufacturing and in these industrial settings, they just don't have access to that.

So what do you do? You print stuff. We go to the bulletin board. You use digital signage. You show up to their lunch room and talk to them, sit on their tables. Those are the type of things that you do. There's this pressure in the industry of always leveraging digital and not looking old school. But sometimes you got to do what you got to do.

You need to do what works for your audience. So that is one thing. The other thing is that, again, these people that are in very technical jobs and they have positions where it's very hard to reach them. I think the main challenge for a communicator is to fit in. Because to fit in, you need to speak in their language. And that's how you build your reputation and you gain respect and they start talking to you as a peer and not an intruder. So you need to have full immersion. When I first sat at a meeting, for example, with members of a technology leadership team, I had never worked in, in, in IT before. Also, it was my first job in English, fully in English. I understood probably 30 percent of the whole conversation, but it wasn't because I wasn't understanding English. I wasn't understanding tech. The acronyms, the technical terms, the lingo, the challenges, it's really like a different language. And I'm sure that happens to everybody when they go into something that is new and it's very technical, very specific.

So you need to learn to speak that language of the function that you're supporting or the audience that you're serving and demonstrate that you're one of them.

[00:30:13] **Katie:** Yes.

[00:30:13] **Daniel:** You're one of them. You can talk to them as peers, but never forget that you're a communicator. And your career path is in communications, unless you want to change jobs.

If you want to become an IT person, that's fair and that's great. But one thing is being able to blend in. Another thing is to believe that you are part of that function. You're not, you're a communicator.

[00:30:41] **Katie:** Yeah. And I love the answer because I think you need to understand the technical terms. Your stakeholders need to know you get it and then you can say, but you know what?

We're not going to use the acronym or you're going to explain what agile means or what a waterfall is or whatever it is. But I think you have to prove your understanding before you're allowed to make that challenge, if that makes sense. Yeah. That's right. Yeah. You describe yourself as a master storyteller.

I know my listeners love a case study. Do you have an example of how you've used storytelling to turbocharge a comms initiative?

[00:31:17] **Daniel:** Turbocharge. I love that question. I think storytelling is such a critical skill within our toolkit, right? And what I love about storytelling is that you can do it in many ways.

There's literature, there's audio, there's videos, multimedia, graphic novels, music, and even dance performances. You, there's a lot of possibilities and I would encourage everybody to really explore those. And on that, during my first job in Chile, I supported a mining project. And it was a very early stage mining project.

So one of the first jobs that I had was to roll out the company's mission, vision and values, like very basic stuff to start building culture and start attracting more people because at that point it was just a small team. And we had to start hiring, so we also had to work on that employee value proposition.

Rolling out those type of artifacts can be really dry if you stick to a more traditional style, doing a town hall and just cascading that. We had a thought in trying to do something a little bolder and fun around it. And again I think I was privileged because my team was very receptive of that, but also we had a lot of room to be creative because we were starting, so we weren't dealing with a lot of legacy stuff.



So I acknowledge that, but one of the first groups of people we hired at the company were young trainees looking to build a career in mining as machine operators, truck drivers, like very specific to work in the mine pits. And we had heard, in just talking to them, that two of those trainees were MCs. They were rappers, right? And they had written a rap about the company. And these are like 18, 19 year old kids, right? We talked to them and asked them if they will be willing to use the song as an anthem for the campaign rollout. And they were super excited about it and they were willing to work with us to, to adapt the lyrics and incorporate the messages we needed to position.

And we hired a studio to record the song professionally, something that they hadn't done before. So they were like over the moon about it. And we even recorded a video clip on site of them singing the song and just walking into the different facilities.

The operations at that point, there was a lot of work in the mine pit to do the pre stripping, they call it, when they take off all the sterile material to get to the ore.

So the trucks were connected with a closed radio station that we were able to just send messages there. So we started playing the song there and we also brought the two kids, the rappers to a company's annual Olympics that happened at that time. And they performed the song on stage. So the whole campaign ran for a whole year and the song was central to the whole thing, right? And it was so cool. I remember walking around and you could hear some employees just humming and singing the song when they're walking around the offices. So it was really lovely to engage at that level. And I always remember that because it was such a fun experience.

And I'm also so into music that it was so great to bring that knowledge and passion to this project. And I just loved it. It was great.

[00:34:44] **Katie:** I have to tell listeners, I am looking behind you at, I think, six guitars, acoustic and electric. Is that right?

[00:34:52] **Daniel:** Yeah, there's five guitars and a bass guitar.

[00:34:55] **Katie:** So the love of music is very real.

I love that example. Because we think about user generated content or we ask people for their stories. But what goes through my head when you were sharing that is what a great way to break down generational boundaries between workforces as well, inviting your youngest colleagues to be the central pillar of a campaign.

I think that's such a lovely idea.

[00:35:20] **Daniel:** User generated content is in vogue today. Everybody's talking about it. And really when you're listening and then again, getting involved and immersed in conversations of those groups, and you're not living on an island you hear this thing.

[00:35:35] **Katie:** And I also want to pick up on the point that you mentioned that you were using closed circuit radio to play the song. What a great way of reaching people inside their trucks. Again, it's what you said before about understanding the way they work, how they work. You've got to be there, almost observe it before you can communicate.

You had a very successful career now you've worked for some major organisations across different sectors and countries. You mentioned earlier being a cancer survivor. We hear a lot of talk about the importance of resilience these days, you do seem an ideal person to ask this question of, what does that word resilience mean to you? And what's your advice to others when it comes to building their resilience?

[00:36:22] **Daniel:** Can I go deep here?

[00:36:23] **Katie:** Please go deep. This show is only about going deep.

[00:36:27] **Daniel:** All right. Yeah. So last year I took a course about AI for business transformation at MIT. I promise I have a point here. And I learned about the term suitcase word.

I had never heard that before. And...

[00:36:42] **Katie:** Suitcase word?

[00:36:43] **Daniel:** Yeah, and this is a term that was coined by Marvin Minsky in a book, The Emotional Machine. And a suitcase word refers to big words that mean nothing by itself, but hold a bunch of things inside that you have to unpack.

[00:37:00] **Katie:** Right?

[00:37:01] **Daniel:** So they're so broad, they cover too many things for a precise definition.

For example, intelligence. What really is intelligence when you talk about artificial intelligence, right? Can we really be sure that a machine can be intelligent? Because there's so many things into that word. Same with creativity. There's so many things, emotions, it's another one.

And to me, resilience is one of them. It's a suitcase word. Because it has so many things in it. For example, adaptability, to be resilient, you have to be able to pivot and approach things differently, depending on the situation or the environment, what's happening at that point. To be resilient, you also have to be persistent. You have to keep sight of things that will happen in the future and really focus on that goal, despite whatever life throws at you, because there's going to be a lot of obstacles and setbacks, but you need to be persistent, right? In resilience there's also a lot of learning because with change comes so many different new things. So you have to have this growth mindset of acquiring new skills and knowledge that will enable you to remain relevant and effective as you're trying to achieve that goal that you're setting.

Another really important element of resilience is emotional intelligence, because you have to be able, as you're going through life or whatever it is that you're doing, you have to manage your emotions and understand the emotions of others, because that is very critical to maintain your own morale and the people surrounding you, that it's going to enable you to be resilient.

So that's why I say there's a lot to unpack there, but also resilience is very personal. Because as you were saying, the cancer, the relocation, having kids, being married, living in different parts of the country, all of that, like my personal journey has given me a perspective that is very unique to the perspective that all other people will have.

And I honestly feel that all of those experiences and things that I've gone through life have allowed me to face challenges with a positive outlook and allow me to be resilient.

[00:39:32] **Katie:** That is the most comprehensive answer to a question I think I've heard for a very long time. You're also doing this in a language that isn't your first language, although I know you've been living and working and speaking English for many years.

I'm just curious after just listening to you there, do you think, do you dream in English now? Or are there times when you just think, I wish English had a word for that spanish word that's so perfect that if I use, no one's going to understand.

[00:40:03] **Daniel:** Oh yeah. All the time. That's funny you mentioned that because there's this thing that people say that when you start dreaming in the language that you're trying to learn, that's when it's clicking.

And it's really a magical thing when I feel like at some point in when you're learning, like you're always like processing first, right? And it takes you longer to react. And it's, I like to think that I'm funny, right? But I always tell my wife, I am funnier in Spanish. And I felt so frustrated when we were in conversations with friends when I was still learning English, that I thought about really funny puns and things, and I just couldn't find the words in English to say it.

And then just the moment passed and I'm like, dang, I missed the opportunity. And when then I was able to crack a joke and make people laugh in a different language, it's just like another that's really a goal and it just felt awesome. And yeah, we're getting there.

[00:41:11] **Katie:** This episode of The Internal Comms Podcast is brought to you by my very own Friday update. Would you like a short email from me, never more than five bullet points long, giving you my take on the week's news from across the world of communications? This might be the latest reports, books, podcasts, conferences, campaigns that have caught my eye during the week.

I always limit myself to just five nuggets of news, so you can read it in record time, but still feel a little bit more informed, hopefully a little uplifted as you end your week. Now this is subscriber only content, which was initially intended just for AB colleagues and clients. I don't post this content anywhere else.

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Just in the last few minutes of the hour that we have together, let's pop over to those quick fire questions.

[00:42:47] **Daniel:** All right.

[00:42:48] **Katie:** I know you are a tech enthusiast. What's your favorite digital tool for comms at the moment?



[00:42:55] **Daniel:** There's a lot. I want to disclose I'm not being paid. I love Otter AI. I don't know if you're familiar.

Yeah. Okay. Oh my gosh. It's just elegant and beautiful and it just provides really great insights and it's easy to use. It's not expensive. It just has a lot of things to love about. And I think it adds a ton of value to communicators.

[00:43:25] **Katie:** Are you mainly using it to get that transcript of audio content?

It's got a lot of AI features now, so it'll give you summaries and key points. Are you using it for all of those things?

[00:43:37] **Daniel:** Yeah. Yeah. Speech to text analysis of that summarizing notes for meetings and things. I use it mostly in my personal life though, because internally we have Microsoft Copilot. So it really makes way more sense to use that because it's integrated with the Office 365 suite. So Otter AI is more for me. So for example, if I attend a conference or I go to a show that someone is presenting, I just pop it up sometimes and just start recording. And then it helps me remember certain things or with my notes, double check, and it's just so convenient. But the other thing is I create a lot of content for LinkedIn and a lot of times if I'm walking the dog or just driving even, I get some thoughts and I just start talking to it and that takes the notes. And then I can use the AI part to identify within all that ramble, right? What are the good points and what can I do with it? And help me bring together ideas. Yeah.

That's the main use that I have for it.

[00:44:38] **Katie:** That is such great advice. Thank you. What's the best piece of career advice you've ever been given, do you think?

[00:44:47] **Daniel:** Make friends before you need them. Communications is a team sport.

[00:44:52] **Katie:** Nice.

[00:44:52] **Daniel:** And no one does something single handedly. That gets under my skin when someone says, I single handedly achieved blah, blah, blah. You did not. You always need help from others. And things would go way smoothly when you have friends and trusted relationships that you can leverage when you're trying to achieve something. So always prioritise planting the seeds of friendship, watering those seeds and keeping that alive all the time.

[00:45:23] **Katie:** Love it. What's the one piece of bad advice or unhelpful thinking that you think has consistently dogged the communications profession?

[00:45:33] **Daniel:** So maybe this is going to go against the answer I did before, because it's going to give me some enemies instead of friends, but here it goes, for what it's worth. So I know that we're in a very data driven environment, right? All industries, all companies are always trying to prove value. And for that, you need numbers and you need metrics and you need to measure stuff. I'll go with that. And I love data. Honestly, I believe that in communications, there's many things that you can measure and you can get accurate metrics to see if things are working and you can improve.

It really gets under my skin when I hear leaders insisting on measuring ROI or the value for every single communication activity, because I honestly believe that we work in things that can't be measured. There are some things that can't be measured and I get it. They speak numbers, budgets are quantifiable and all but the insistence of measuring every communication action it's really unrealistic.

And the reason why I say that is we often influence intangible things like brand reputation, employee engagement, customer loyalty, right? So if you try to measure that with in a way that it's very comprehensive and accurate, then it's meaningful. There's really not a good way to do it.

And we sometimes try to fit approaches to measure things that are quantifiable into this, and we waste time because the results that you get are not valuable. So I always said, if we focus solely on metrics that can be easily quantified and we can neglect the long term benefits of effective communications.

I know very few companies that will follow a communication action or a cultural change to measure it for five or 10 years. Everybody wants immediate metrics. And sometimes our work takes time, not sometimes, most of the time. Trying to pretend that we can measure everything and whoever is selling you solutions to do that, I will run.

No one has been able to do it yet because It's just sometimes it's not possible and we need to learn to live with that and we need to help educate our leaders on the things that we can measure versus the things that we can't.

[00:48:08] **Katie:** I couldn't agree more with you. Deep down what I believe is that as the demand for measurement goes up from stakeholders, real belief and understanding in the value of communication goes down.

So the more they're wanting proof. the more that's telling me intrinsically, intuitively, you don't really get it. So that's always been my warning light when there's a lot of talk of ROI. Love the answer. Finally, then we give you a billboard for millions to see. And you can put on that any message you like, Daniel, what are you going to put on your billboards?

[00:48:47] **Daniel:** The end is near. All right. So quick story here. A couple of weeks ago I visited a brewery with my wife and the kids. I have two boys, they're nine and seven, and they found a Jenga Truth or Dare in one of the tables and they started playing. And when they started reading the messages, they were appalled that some of the dares were like, pull someone's hair, or kiss someone's big toe, and things like that.

And they found a couple of pieces that were empty. They didn't have a message. So they asked me for a pen to write something down. And one of them wrote, be kind to others for 38 hours. I don't know, random number. And the other one wrote, help someone in need. Oh, and it was so touching. I felt very proud as a dad.

I will go with that. Be kind. Be helpful.

[00:49:37] **Katie:** I love that. Thank you so much. This conversation has been an absolute delight, Daniel. Thank you so much.

[00:49:44] **Daniel:** Oh, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts and the invitation to join so many other communicators that have been on this podcast and love what you're doing and bringing these voices to learn from each other.

Really grateful for the opportunity.

[00:49:58] **Katie:** We should say a final shout out to Mike Klein who connected us. So thanks, Mike .

[00:50:04] **Daniel:** Yes, Mike, keep at it.

[00:50:08] **Katie:** Thank you, Daniel. So that is a wrap for our 100th episode of The Internal Comms Podcast. All the links you need for this show, including a full transcript can be found on AB's website.

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You may want to hit that subscribe button today. Thank you to Daniel, my producer John, sound engineer Stuart, content manager Madi, Designer Rob and the rest of the fabulous team back at AB who keep this show on the road. And finally, my heartfelt thanks to you for continuing to choose The Internal Comms Podcast.

This show would be nothing without you. So until we meet again, lovely listeners, stay safe and well. And remember, it's what's inside that counts.