



The Internal Comms Podcast – Season 13

Episode 112 – *From intent to impact: take charge of your career*

Katie 00:03

Hello and welcome to Season 13 of The Internal Comms Podcast. I'm Katie Macaulay, and for more than three decades, I've been on a mission to help organisations better, inform, inspire and truly involve their people. This podcast is part of that mission, a quest to uncover fresh ideas and proven strategies to transform the way we connect, collaborate and communicate at work. Now, one of the greatest joys of hosting this show is shining a spotlight on the rising stars, the trail blazers shaping the future of the internal comms profession. And today's guest is a great example of just that. Eduvie Martin is a powerhouse in the world of comms. She's the Group Communications and Engagement Manager at BAT, British American Tobacco. She is president of the UK and Ireland chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, and she is Executive Director of Marketing and Communications at Comic Republic, that's an organisation bringing African superheroes to life in comics and now in partnership with Universal Studios.

Katie 01:27

This is an episode packed with Eduvie's passion and many, many practical takeaways. Eduvie shares her advice on how to build great trusting relationships with senior leaders and stakeholders. She opens up about her philosophy of intentionality, from setting herself meaningful goals to conducting personal performance reviews with herself. She offers candid, actionable advice on resilience, career growth, and she's also refreshingly honest about navigating the complexities of working for a controversial industry like tobacco. She also reveals how working for Comic Republic has influenced her approach to internal comms campaigns, pushing her to be far more creative and bolder with her ideas. Whether you are an experienced pro or just starting out in internal comms, I'm pretty sure Eduvie's insights, her energy, her generosity, will leave you feeling inspired and energised. So without further ado, let's dive in. So Eduvie, welcome to The Internal Comms Podcast. It's lovely to have you here.

Eduvie 02:51

Thank you for having me.

Katie 02:53

Often we start by asking people their route into internal communications, because what I've discovered is that a lot of people discover the profession almost by accident. What was your route into internal communication?

Eduvie 03:08

Well thank you for having me, Katie, it's great to be here. Internal comms was something I didn't plan to do at all. I was actually a science student, very much like one of your past speakers, Monique. I graduated with a science degree, and in Nigeria, where I'm from, at the time, when you graduate, you go out and find a job as a global graduate somewhere. And at the time, banks were recruiting many of us, so I just went into a bank as a global graduate, did the usual one year rotation where you do your customer service and all of that. And then, you know, eventually I was on the customer service desk when the first person who recruited me to a comms role found me and thought, what is she doing here? I've always had a passion for communication, and so when I saw an opportunity to apply for a comms role in the organisation, I went straight for it.

Eduvie 04:03

It was the Marketing and Communications Department, the very first time they were setting up one, and they had a new Head of Communication, Folake Ani-Mumuney, Fam, as we all called her. I went into that interview with PowerPoint slides to talk about how I wanted to become the next Head of Events. I had only been in the organisation for a few years, but I was so convinced I could do the role, and I had my decks and everything aligned me on how I was going to execute this role. She was like, have you ever heard of internal comms? I was like, what is that? She said, Okay, go read about it, and then let's have a chat. And so I went home and I Googled, and I was thinking to myself, I like this. This is nice. I could do this. And so she called back and asked me if I would consider being the first internal comms hire for the bank. I said, Yes. Could I set up the governance, created the first internet, and put a lot of things in play. And I had a really lovely Head of Internal Comms who joined halfway through the journey. She gave me lots of freedom to do so many things from an internal news channel creating the internal TV shows, we had so much fun, and we were really respected by the organisation in a very short time.

Katie 05:15

That's an amazing story. You said you set up the internal comms function from scratch. When you reflect back on that achievement, is there one lesson in particular you take away from that that you'd pass on to somebody else about setting something up from scratch, from the beginning?

Eduvie 05:34

I think there's always the tendency as comms practitioners to feel like we know it all, and so we go with the prescription without really understanding the symptoms. One of the things I learned from my journey was, yes, you understand best practices for internal comms, but actually listen and understand the problems that the function has, so that you're sure that



the solution you're recommending is the right one for them, not just the one you'll want, because it's part of your policies or procedures. So that was something I learned along the way as well.

Katie 06:07

You mentioned your degree, but you also have an impressive array of additional qualifications, certifications. What's your view on evaluating whether professionals need those additional qualifications?

Eduvie 06:21

Well, I've always been a curious person. I've always liked to learn new things. I think my passion for comms, I naturally like speaking. I love to write. I've always exhibited all of those skills from a very young age. But then I went on to read a science degree and do very well at that, but I always felt like I was missing something. I never did literature, any of those art courses. So I constantly kept trying to learn more. I kept feeling like there was a gap and that I needed to cover with all of these certifications. But the more I did them, the more I realised that I actually knew what I was doing. I think for me, the certifications became more like a validation of what I was doing. And in some of my most difficult times is when I started doing more certifications. It's almost like trying to prove to myself that I know these things. And when I do very well in the certifications, it's like a reassurance to myself. But that being said, well, I love school. I love learning new things. Well, I love the concept of school. I always find it fascinating to see how theory marries practice. As someone who loves the practical side of comms, when I find the theory that speaks to the practices, it just sets my heart on fire. I'm like, yes, there's something that says, this works? Yes, yes. So that's that's it for me.

Katie 07:37

I love that thought. I remember Bill Quirke, the legendary Bill Quirke, who wrote so many brilliant books on internal communication, saying "the way you describe a consultant is they see something working in practice and wonder whether it will work in theory," that is, that's a great explanation of how, as a consultant, we're always reaching for those frameworks and theories. But you're so right? It's the practice and it's the melding of those two that is the magical part. I've heard you say that internal comms brings together all your favourite skills. My reflection is internal comms can look quite different under the hood. When you get inside an organisation, the activities, the practices, the tasks, can look very different. How would you describe those skills, and how do they play out in your current role?

Eduvie 08:30

I think this is a really good question. I speak to a number of young comms practitioners who want to understand internal comms, and I also speak with colleagues who see the fun side of internal comms and feel like this is just the right environment, your work is not hard at all...

and that's not the case. Internal comms is interesting in the way that the different skill sets that I see helping are your writing skills, your speaking skills, but you could put all of those skills out there. For me, the most important one is your stakeholder engagement skills, being able to influence comms professionals to deliver work that adds value, being able to influence your leaders to communicate the messages that are most impactful or most needed at the time that they are needed. Influencing skills, for me has been one of the things I didn't actually consider as something that was required when I joined and very early on in your career, you get quite far with your writing skills, your designing skills, the speaking skills, those were the things that got me far, very quickly. As I started to advance in my career, I found that influencing is even more important. And I always encourage people to be able to speak truth to power. You are in such a powerful place where you understand the voice of the employees, and also you have a ear with the leaders as well, so making sure that you're not just saying yes to the request that you're being given, but you're also giving insights on how employees think about the situation or how the message will land. So that's the one thing I struggled with early in my career, but as I began to progress, I've recognised that actually I could speak to my leaders, tell them the things that were uncomfortable to them in terms of how their messages were landing, and it will be okay, because that's why I'm there.

Eduvie 10:26

And also it's about learning how to prioritise. And that sounds like a no brainer, but it's such a huge thing for comms practitioners. We're very helpful people, and we can do it. So I look at the copy and I'm like, I can rewrite this thing now. You know, it's quicker. Let me design something better for you. Let me speak to that person for you. But as you begin to advance in your career, you need to prioritise and actually empower our colleagues to be able to communicate in some shape or form.

Katie 10:58

Yes, and you can replicate yourself, then can't you? It's much more sustainable. It's don't give someone a fishing rod. Teach them how to fish. One thing I was going to ask him, what you've just said, though, is around those tricky stakeholders, because I think not all stakeholders are born equal, and there's some way you can quickly build rapport. I think you can quickly build trust. And there are others, for whatever reason, they just seem much harder to pin down, to understand and to get that human connection with. What's your advice around those you must have had quite a few, or at least some, in your career.

Eduvie 11:38

You know, I don't believe that there's anything like a difficult stakeholder. It is an understanding of what that stakeholder requires at what point in time, and that's how I've been able to navigate it. I've often been in situations where people say to me, I can't believe

you're the one managing this person. And then I go into the situation with a very open mind, just listen, listen to the stakeholder, the things that are important to that stakeholder. And I do a lot of listening. I take notes. Say not much. And when I come out of that situation, I'm like, I know what the stakeholder wants. This stakeholder wants visibility. This stakeholder loves analytics. And I just take note of those things. Because my role is global, I can identify where that stakeholder would make some kind of difference. Or it's not just about the task at hand that you've been given, it's truly understanding the stakeholders, speaking to people who work with the stakeholder. For some I understand this person likes the optics. This person likes the leadership visibility. I've got all these global channels. How can I amplify this person's deliverables with these channels I've got, so that when, next I show up and ask this person for something the person is feeling fuzzy inside, because they see that, you know, we understand their needs, their requirements. So I always encourage comms professionals not to walk into the situation thinking this person is so difficult, but just to really listen to what is that agenda that that person is driving? And how can you support the agenda, considering it's a positive one. And do you know, at the same time, get what you need from said stakeholder. It also helps to know their circle of influence. These stakeholders have quite a number of people that they listen to or they enjoy being around and seeing how you can get your message across, leveraging on their circle of influence where possible.

Katie 13:30

I've got a big smile on my face because what you said up front there, around mindset, you're going into the room and you're not necessarily assuming that they're going to be difficult. You're going with an open mind. When a client comes to me and says, Oh yes, you've got to meet my CFO, my Chief HR Officer, whoever it might be, they're known for being a bit tricky. I always go into the room thinking, I'm going in to find out how, in the past, you have been misunderstood. So my goal there is to work out why they're perceived that way, because I am not going to assume they are. They've just been perceived that way for a reason. And I think that mindset shift of leading with curiosity, and that openness to find out a bit more is so important. So I love that answer so much. Thank you. We first met, or I'm sure I first saw you, probably at an event. I imagine it was because you, at the time, were the president of the UK and Ireland chapter for the International Association of Business Communicators, the IABC. What prompted you to become involved with a professional organisation?

Eduvie 14:43

Oh, I often talk about communities. I encourage anyone starting out in comms or who's just moved here for the first time to join a community. And I recommend this, because when you are a part of communities, you meet like minds. You meet other professionals are going through the same thing. It's an opportunity to expand your network, build your profile. We have to transcend beyond our nine to fives, and for people like me who work in



organisations that are very strong brands, sometimes you forget your sense of purpose, and you're very tied into your organisation, and you introduce yourself first with where you work. If it's a big tech startup, you're like, Oh, I work for that company, and you're very proud of it. It's the fear of losing one's job, is a fear of losing a sense of purpose, a source of income, and that status that you've got in the society. But when I had my first redundancy scare in my organisation as a result of restructuring, I made the decisions in the same organisation. But that day became a change in my mindset in terms of how I approach my career here in the UK. And I said to myself, I don't want to be just my nine to five. I want to be more. If I ever leave the comms space, I wanted to be seen that I had left a legacy of helping other young comms professionals. And I think that was also driven by how I started my career, and I was hired by someone's believed in my skills. I actually wasn't qualified at the time, and have grown as a result. So for me, I want to give back. I want to impact the lives of young comms professionals around me, and I want that to be my legacy when I finally live in the world of comms beyond my nine to five. So that's why I chose to go with communities.

Eduvie 16:37

As soon as I joined the IABC, I was met with all of these fantastic people, and I couldn't believe it. I will be speaking to people like Mike Klein, Monique... I'll just be speaking to people I was reading books, and I'm like, wait, hang on. I just met this person last week, Ann Marie Howard, Mike Pounsford, fantastic people. Very honest. You mean no egos. And when I would have any issues at work and I'm trying to crack my brain around it, I will call someone from the IABC, and they would ask for nothing in return, there will be a coffee chat and they walk me through it, and I wasn't even a member at the time. So for me, I just fell in love with that community of very experienced, strategic communicators who were always available for me. And so I made a decision to join as a member, and when there was a call for board openings, I put my hand up. But I never, in my wildest dreams, expected to be appointed as President, but I saw it as an opportunity to continue to influence the profession, so I said yes to it, and I've been there since.

Katie 17:45

Wonderful. I couldn't agree with you more about the IABC, and especially face to face. I think their events and they, just as you say, attract a very wise, inspiring, but quite humble crowd, but are very quick and easy to get to know, even if you're new to it.

Katie 18:04

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Katie 19:34

I've got a tricky question to ask you, and I'm not going to dodge it. You work for a tobacco company, so you currently work for BAT, British American Tobacco. How do you approach conversations about this with people who challenge the choice to work in that industry?

Eduvie 19:52

No, that's an interesting question. I think, when I was hired over 10 years ago back in Nigeria, I was asked if I was comfortable working in an organisation that sells tobacco, and I said yes, actually, because I saw it as a challenge for a comms professional. I thought to myself, if I could communicate and inspire employees, then these skills I will have will be great anywhere else. So I took it based on that challenge. I'm also looking at my area of influence as an internal communicator, and how I show up for employees in the organisation, and my commitment there is making sure there's adequate listening in situations where I can speak truth to power, I make sure that I'm that voice that shares the information with the leaders and also passes the leaders' information across. You know that intermediary – that gives me fulfillment as well, and the organisation is a great place to work. It's got a lot of great people, great policies as well. But as with every FTSE, it's quite a challenge as well to work for. And I think that every organisation right now has something that they need to do differently. I see it as a challenge, and being inside and helping to be a part of this solution.

Katie 21:07

You ended a post recently with the words 'stay intentional,' and I loved that so much. Can you talk to me about intentionality? How would you describe it? What does it look like, and how has that philosophy of staying intentional shaped your professional career, do you think?

Eduvie 21:28

I think the pandemic has some credit to my existential crisis, really, because after the pandemic, it was like, Oh my gosh. Life has to be more than just work. Life has to be more than just earning from a nine to five. We need to be more for each other. And I'd sometimes

be listening to conversations, and I'll hear people talking about their lives and what they've been through, and I'm like, oh my goodness, I didn't know that. And for me, very quickly, I started to think about the concept of staying intentional. I started to really question moments where you would take a decision without full understanding of that situation and how it will translate on others. So when I say, stay intentional, like saying to people, we have to be more measurable about the things we say. We have to be more planned about where we are, you know, so we have just as much hours in the day, but how do we show up in those hours?

Eduvie 22:26

For instance, so I'm often available for coffee with anyone who's reaching out to me on LinkedIn, saying they want to start a career in the UK, or they're having troubles with their job and they don't know how to navigate. And one could say, I have a very busy portfolio. How do you find the time? I stay intentional. My lunch break today is going to be with that person. I'm going to be in a meeting room, having my lunch and having a chat with this person. Still the same number of hours of the day, but I've chosen to spend my time impacting one life rather than having random conversations, you know? So it's that being more mindful about how we spend our time, the way we show up for people, and just being kind to each other. So for me, at the moment, my biggest platform to do that is on LinkedIn, and I just use that platform to share the things that I've been through, being very vulnerable with my experiences. And things I've learned along the way, and that's my own way of staying intentional, just coming out there, sharing things that have helped me along the way and on my own journey.

Katie 22:32

You're making me think of that phrase that behavioral psychologists use, which is 'we think less than we think we do.' A lot of what we do is actually on automatic pilot, but what you're talking about is the opposite. You're talking about that moment of reflecting on what you want to achieve in the next hour, the next day, and really tuning into that rather than going on autopilot, which I absolutely love. You mentioned LinkedIn there. You have an incredible profile on LinkedIn. I think you were a top voice at one stage, just for anyone who's thinking about their social media profile. Do you have any advice for building a strong personal brand on social media?

Eduvie 24:16

I think quite a number of people think that I've sat down and there's a big plan of how I'm gonna show up on LinkedIn, and I moved to the UK six years ago, and no one knew me. Now, when I walk into events, people are like, oh, I saw your post. But what I did was just show up genuinely, and I keep saying to people, you've got to identify your why. My one thing was redundancy. I had moved from Nigeria to the UK, and in my first year my

company was restructuring. This company brought me and promoted me. So it was this great opportunity, and I moved everything I own to this country, to the UK. And then I got the first redundancy. I didn't even know what it meant to be made redundant, so I had to Google it. I had to understand it. And I just thought to myself, well, I've been here now six years, and I keep hearing redundancies. This wasn't a thing that was popular where I'm from. Never heard of the concept before, and now it's a thing. So I said to myself, how do I help other comms professionals coming after me, who will come into such a situation very confused, how do I help them? And so LinkedIn, for me, became like my accountability partner, my gratitude journal, and I would just write on LinkedIn: This is what I did when I heard about my first redundancy. So here's how I navigated it, and this is how I came out of it. And one of the biggest things for me was communities, which is why I'm often talking about communities. I'm a member of all of the communities. I joined them all. I'm the president of the IABC UK and Ireland chapter, so there's some bias there, but I'm actually a member of them all right? So I experienced them all, volunteered my time to all of them and found a way to give back. For me, it was about sharing. People would reach out to me and say, how did you get to speak? Wow, you're doing so well. I'm like, no, no, no. They are often looking for speakers. Here's the email address you need to write, yes. So it's just letting people know these things are accessible. Build your brand that way. If that's something that's important to you, but most importantly, don't try to be like someone else. Identify your own purpose. For some people, it might be helping people build their personal brand. For others, it might be measuring. It could be anything. What is your one thing that you absolutely enjoy and you think you're skilled at, then share that skill with others. That's how you show up for people. For me, it's just, I'm just navigating a career here in the UK, and I'm bringing all of my LinkedIn contacts along with me on that journey – we're navigating it together. So that's my one thing is building your personal brand by just being vulnerable and being genuine. If it was tough to get that certification, say it! Don't be out here saying, hey! I got that certification. Just be real. Be real. Yes, just show up real. And people who resonate with that, you see that my interactions are often in the DMs, and people reach out to me. I go for private coffee. You know, where people are like, Well, I haven't told anyone yet, or I'm about to be made redundant, I don't know what to do, and then I go for coffee, and I'm like, right, here's how I navigated it. It's those kinds of conversations and for me that leaves me fulfilled. That for me is success much more than the reach of my posts. It's those little conversations that I have where I'm able to help others in those situations.

Katie 27:41

I look at the stats on this show, and I can see nearly 400,000 downloads, and yet one person says to me, I love that show about blah, blah, blah. That means so much more than the stats. It's just as you say, that personal connection is so meaningful. You mentioned the mentoring young professionals. To the young professionals that might be listening to this

show. This is your moment to pass on some hints, tips, some lessons learned. What would you be keen to pass on to the next upcoming generation of internal comms people?

Eduvie 28:15

Oh well, congratulations for choosing comms as a career path. It looks very flashy on the outside, and it is flashy, but it also comes with some hard work, which requires you to be resilient. There is a difference between being resilient and being overwhelmed.

Understanding the thin line between those two will get you to a successful end. Do not wait to be given a role before you do it, show up and do all of the different roles. When I started my career, I was the one who would take the banners to the sites. I was events manager, I was internal communicator, I was publications manager, I was everything, because I would show up for all of my senior comms managers, very keen to learn, and that's how I became a well-rounded comms professional. So don't say no to work, stretch yourself and identify gaps that you can fill with your vibrancy and fill them. Good luck.

Katie 29:20

I can't think of a better answer to that, I'm not even going to ask you a supplementary question. That's the takeaway from this show. Thank you so much. This show will be going out at the beginning of a new year. Here we are at the beginning of 2025 this will be a time when we get lots of commentators saying, five predictions, 10 predictions for trends in 2025, but I believe you advocate for planning over predicting. Can you talk to me about planning over predicting? What does that look like, and why is the planning bit more important for you?

Eduvie 29:58

I mean, after some time, all of the predictions begin to look the same which is hilarious to me. I was reading books over the summer, and I was just thinking to myself, If this sounds like something that we're going through, this book is not a new book. We need to plan much more than predict. I think the foundational skills of a comms professional have remained the same 30 years. We are still needing to manage change, manage our stakeholders, and also ensure that our employees are energised to deliver results at the end of the day. Those are the things, and they remain the same. I think planning is identifying the things that already happen in the course of the year. So if you're working in house, for instance, your four year results, your end of year results, your world days for as many years you celebrate all happen at a particular time each year. Stop waiting for stakeholders to come to you, and then you're running all over the place, you need to be proactive. Or for my stakeholders, let's say International Women's Day is in March, they will begin to hear from me from January with my slide decks and my proposals of what I think they can do, and we start those conversations on time. So planning ahead reduces the stress for you as well. When everybody suddenly remembers a week to the event that this is what needs to be done, you

already have all of your resources in place. Now is the time to identify the gaps. What agencies you need if you need any, try new things, but you need to identify those opportunities that align with your strategic objectives as an organisation and start to plan ahead for that. And that's where I thrive. I love planning and also understanding that you need to be flexible, things change, you know, and that's okay, but having a plan helps you to set your cause before those changes come.

Katie 31:45

You strike me as someone who's very good at getting things done, and you also have a very calm manner. I love to ask high performers such as yourself, are there any small habits that have an almost disproportionately significant impact on how you sustain your well being, maintain that well being, get things done?

Eduvie 32:08

I can think of two things. My sister got me a goals journal, which I love. At the start of the month, you identify the thing that you want to achieve, and throughout the month, you can plan the little habit to help you achieve that goal, and then it would ask you to fill in a couple of lines on what you're going to reward yourself with as a result of achieving that goal. I love movies, so I subscribe to a cinema every month where I can watch as many movies as I want. An example can be put yourself out there and register to speak at three international conferences this year. How are you going to do that? So when the call for so and so opens on this day, you apply on this day, I mark that. I put an alarm on my phone. When am I going to do that? After work. Things like that. Then at the end of the year, I have a performance review with myself, by myself, and then I start to identify all of the things that I've done. I'm like, right? So now you can watch the movie and you're gonna see more now, or weekend this weekend, because you applied to that one, tick. Okay, you're gonna get your head done at some time. I'm like, I'm not gonna get my head done until I do that. I'm like, now you can get your hair done because you've done that task. I need to tie it into something that makes me do it. And then also, it's that fulfillment of being consistent that I also enjoy. And then for me, also it's exercise. I love to run. I mean, I say this and you're thinking, Oh, she's like, running marathons, not really, like, I don't time myself. I just run a certain distance every day, and I run back. It's no pressure. I'm not trying to do a 10k or an Iron Man. I'm just running nice, soft, easy, run nice. But for me, I do that every day, every single day, come rain come sun. I do it every single day. And that, for me, is a way of thinking through any of the difficult tasks that I have at hand, I say to myself, I'm going to do it during the run. Being consistent, identifying ways to reward ourselves when we do these little things that lead to big outcomes, is how I get that done. I don't know if that answers the question.

Katie 34:20

It beautifully answers the question, and when you said you always run, rain, wind, snow, it makes me think. I'm sure it's a commitment speech, and I can't remember who it was, but it was the importance of making your bed every day, which sounds like a simple thing, but it just means you start the day having done something and you've achieved something. A small thing is that, how it feels to you that you have achieved something already. Before you even start, you set out to achieve it, you do it, and it gives you that slight dopamine hit because you've achieved something you set out to do.

Eduvie 34:51

It's such a beautiful feeling. It's when you set out to do something and you actually do. It's such a beautiful feeling. And I always advocate for kindness in moments where you don't know, some people say to me, Oh, I also had to do this and I missed this day. I'm like, Don't dwell. Just do the next day. You know, you miss one day and you're like, Oh, I couldn't do yesterday. Now it's all spoiled. No, no, just do the next day and then the next day and just keep going. Because the moment you stop completely, that's where the real failure is, is picking yourself up and just cracking on with it anyway.

Katie 35:26

I just want to go back on one thing you talked about, prioritisation. How you prioritise what you have to do, particularly at work, when you've got lots of demanding stakeholders, lots of tasks, is there a process that you go through which will work out what is a priority? I'm always thinking of Eisenhower's matrix. I don't know if you know it, but he separates the urgent from the important. I don't know if you do anything like that. How do you prioritise? Is it systematic?

Eduvie 35:54

What I do is I identify the projects that are very strategically aligned, and I just prioritise that. So I look after functions, and I also look after a global remit. And so there are some situations where there's a global object, global deliverable, versus a functional deliverable. Some global deliverables, for instance, will always take precedence over the functional deliverable, irrespective of if the functional deliverable is happening before the global deliverable. That's my own way of looking at it, and then also, it's about delegation. I had to learn that because I'm a doer, and sometimes I just want to do everything I can... craft the campaign. When I say I can do everything I'm referring to for a campaign, for instance, I will craft the plan, conceptualise it, write the copy, do the design, like end to end. If you leave it with me, I will execute. But I have to also be mindful that there are other parties that can also play parts, and then I can free up my time to do more of the other stuff. So for me, it's delegation, and now I am empowering my colleagues in other functions, for instance, to do their own thing like you don't need me to post on Viva Engage for you. You don't need me to design for you. Here's the access to Canva. You don't need me to speak to your director.

Here's the contact. Here's the contact of the EA to book a meeting. So I started removing myself from all of those processes that take take up time so I could free up the space to actually execute on those global projects – prioritising is also learning how to say no, but never in an unkind way. It's more like here's how, not me, but here's how you can get it done. That's how I prioritise.

Katie 37:37

Really good advice. Thank you. We can't head to those quick fire questions without asking you about Comic Republic. Tell us a little about Comic Republic. What is the organisation about and what's your involvement?

Eduvie 37:51

So in 2013 I met Jide Martin, the CEO of Comic Republic, and he is an exceptional individual, very fired up about shaping the African narrative using comic books. He's been sketching since he was six, so he tells stories of how he he would make comic books and sell them to colleagues in his secondary school. But what was a passion of his has grown into this big organisation that's now signed up to do movies with Universal Studios Group. Moving from that is the journey of consistency, diligence and resilience. It's not been an easy journey, which I've been a part of from the very start. So my role there is, I sit on the board. I also look after Marketing and Communications, and I build up our social media platforms, and I was responsible for reaching out to the external parties, the media and key stakeholders, to invest, to talk about the business. And at the moment, we have been featured in all of the major news outlets in the world for the quality of the books. And my work was made easy because Jide and the team is exceptional at what they do. On the website, we've got 1000s of free comic books that people can read, and each of these stories touches on something that's important. We've tackled every situation, from the sad tale of kidnapping in Nigeria to, you know, some very difficult situations that we've done from colonialism to all sorts having tackled. But there's also fun and light stuff in our repository. We've also now launched an animation studio, and we're animating and creating games from some of these stories, which had a cult following back in Nigeria. So it's just it fulfills me to be a part of Jide's dream. It has been his dream for as long as I've known him. I'm really proud that he's trusted me to lead on the marketing and comms efforts for over 10 years now. So it's something I've always done as a side hustle. I have a very good team. I'm led by my project manager who looks after the copy, the design, and I offer strategic advice in terms of placements in the media and partnerships with corporate organisations. It's been quite a fulfilling journey to be a part of.

Katie 40:06

Do you see the two things as quite separate in your mind, or is there ever influence that your work with Comic Republic has on the way you approach internal communications? And I

only ask that because I've looked online at Comic Republic. It's so artistic, it's so brave, it's so bold, it's so powerful. Stories are amazing. Internal comms, sometimes we have to be we sort of, I think it's Steve Crescenzo says, you know, we sometimes have to write for the approver or feel we have to write for the approver rather than the audience. We can't be as brave as we want to on behalf of the audience. I'm just wondering whether your work with Comic Republic ever impacts or influences the way you think about your next campaign in internal comms.

Eduvie 40:51

Always, always it always does. I am. ..I'm often stealing some concepts from our very creative team and bringing it into the internal comms world. I call it my advantage here, because my colleagues at Comic Republic are so creative. I remember in my organisation, we were about to launch a book, and the Comic Republic launches digital books every other week for free on the website. So we have a whole campaign on how we launch books. Yeah, just took that campaign from interviewing the creatives, to showcasing them fun TikTok videos, to showcasing pages of the book, to the trailers that we create. I was like, This is how we can launch this book. Because of the influence I have with Comic Republic, I've also done some cybersecurity campaigns in the form of animations, nice, influenced by the work we do at Comic Republic. I should credit Jide and the team for giving me some inspiration, because he has some very creative staff working for him, and they churn out some fantastic stuff. So yeah, it fires up my creative side and makes me think beyond just the regular posts for an internal comms campaign. And I start to think beyond that into how else can we make this more fascinating?

Katie 42:07

I love that answer. We usually employ people, particularly on the design side, not from internal comms, to bring that mainstream in. And yes, it just makes working in that environment so exciting and inspiring when people are bringing those bolder ideas in. I love it.

Katie 42:26

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, so you do need to sign up, but that is super easy. Simply go to abcomm.co.uk/Friday. We just need your email address, and it's equally easy



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Katie 43:59

I'm gonna head to those quick fire questions, if that's okay.

Eduvie 44:04

Yay, let's do it.

Katie 44:06

What advice would you give your 20 year old self?

Eduvie 44:11

Ah, that's a good question. I don't really look back and think about how things could have been different, because I believe that we're right where we need to be at such points in time. But if I could speak to my 20 year old self, I would say, there's no rush. You'll be fine. At that age, I felt like I needed to do everything now, because, oh my gosh, you know, I need to achieve all of my objectives now. But no, you'll be fine. You know, you don't have to do it now. Take your time. I started working very early. It was always ambitious, always in a hurry. But as I've gone through life, I recognise that it's fine. At the end of the day, it's alright. You don't need to rush to get everything done at a certain age. Just take it at a natural pace. Is what I would say to myself, Oh, there's no clock, there's no timer, there's nothing... everything takes its time. So just enjoy the process.

Katie 45:07

And enjoy the ride.

Eduvie 45:08

Yeah, exactly.

Katie 45:10

I love that. Thank you. How would you complete this statement? World class internal communication is...

Eduvie 45:19

I actually believe that we all create the internal communication that we need for our organisation, and there's not one way to do it. It's the way that suits you. You might be an organisation of very few number of people who will thrive with face to face sessions and one or two newsletters and not necessarily a big bank event or an app for your intranet and all that. It's very easy to be sat today, looking out and thinking, oh, we need to bring all these

shiny new things in, because that's world class. Not necessarily. Internal communication for an organisation needs to be one that's strategically aligned with the organisation's objective, one that has listening at the heart of it, listening on both sides, listening to what employees want, and an understanding of the strategy of the organisation so they both meet. One that is very targeted, one that understands that an email to all should rarely exist unless required, and one that also is comfortable with curation of comms from employees in order to create content that employees need, not just content that is required by the organisations. For me, I don't think world class exists. I think internal communication is one that works for the organisation at each point in time.

Katie 46:44

Yeah, very good answer, I think, I couldn't agree more. Finally, it's a bit of a tradition on this show. It's borrowed from the Tim Ferriss show. We give you a billboard for millions to see what message, Eduvie, Would you like on your billboard?

Eduvie 47:02

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it well.

Katie 47:05

Nice. And what a lovely message for the beginning of a new year as well, where so much is in flux, and we're not really certain there's a lot of uncertainty. That's a lovely thought.

Eduvie 47:17

I actually believe that. When I started my career, some people say to me, why would they ask you to go print that document? You should never print documents. I don't believe in that. If my way into the campaign or the project is by printing the documents that are required, I'm going to print the best documents that are required. I'm going to sit there looking at you holding the card, or the cue cards or the talking points that I printed, that was my contribution. So that's activity, and I'm going to use the advantage of being in the room to deliver that document as something that would eventually lead to a bigger project. At the end of the day, I believe that we are in a generation where sometimes we are a bit too critical about some things. And I do admire the generation that feels empowered to challenge things, but I also go back to that generation and say, think about it carefully the fact that you have been given this information to do this tiny bit of the past. And its trust in itself. That's how my career grew. I did everything, and it helped me. So I often advocate for it.

Katie 48:30

I love that thought. Just take the opportunity. You're making me reflect. I'm not proud of this, but I did it, and I'll share it, asking my boss, who was the Corporate Affairs Director at

the time for a very large British bank before a big investor day. What can I do to help? I was the internal comms person, so I had no need to help with investor relations, but I could see how stressed she was, and she said, I'm just wearing the wrong shoes. Could you pop out for me and buy me a new pair of Ferragamos? And I was like, Ah, she gave me very strict instructions. I did it. Of course, I did it because that was the way to build trust. That was the way to build a rapport. Was it the right thing to do? Should she have asked me? I don't know the answer to any of those questions, but I did it. I was very young at the time, and I was pleased to do it, and I was pleased to help. So...

Eduvie 49:16

I mean, in those conversations, my response is very controversial. There's no question to that for me, but that was what was needed. It doesn't have to be like a big strategic plan. That was what was required at the moment. You wanted to help, do it, and you build trust, you built that relationship or for future projects, and you just be wondering why, you know, I never get my emails answered, but this particular person is always responded. It's just because just be kind, just do it. I mean, obviously you're only going to do things that are the right things. I'm not advocating for you to do, like weird things, but in that case of you're trusted with the responsibility, do it. And that's how I approach everything. If you if I need to fetch the glass of water, I will in that moment in time, like we were doing an event and we ran out of packs for the popcorn. That was it. That was my work. That day. I was running round shops to find the packs for the popcorn. And people like, can't believe you went to do that. I'm like, Absolutely, I went to do that. Yeah. And when we came back with the branded popcorns, people were like, oh my god, what a great idea. It's a pleasure to... I'm like, yeah. Me, yeah, I did that. I got the popcorn packs. I love it. This is just a way of it's a way in to build trust, to get yourself assigned even more responsibilities. I always advocate for it.

Katie 50:39

I have loved everything about this conversation, Eduvie, thank you so much for your wisdom and your inspiration, your eloquence. It's been wonderful. Thank you.

Eduvie 50:49

Thank you so much for having me. So exciting to be on this show, and I can't wait to hear it.

Katie 50:55

And that is a wrap for this episode of The Internal Comms Podcast. If you enjoyed today's conversation, please take a moment to rate or review us on Apple Podcasts. It is a small action, but it makes a big, big difference. It helps your fellow comms pros around the globe discover our show. For the resources, the links, the show notes, head over to AB's website. That's abcomm.co.uk, on the Podcast page, there you will find our entire back catalogue of more than 100 episodes. If today's discussion has inspired you to learn more about internal



comms, check out my Internal Comms Masterclass, ICmasterclass.co.uk. There are eight work streams, all devoted to essential elements of our profession. A huge thank you to Eduvie and to the dream team behind the scenes here at AB. My producer, John, sound engineer, Stu, Content Manager, Madi, designer Rob and the rest of the incredible crew at AB who keep this show on the road. And finally, my heartfelt thanks to you listeners for tuning in. This podcast exists because of you, and it is a privilege to share these conversations with you. Until next time. Stay safe and well lovely listeners and remember, it's what's inside that counts you.