

It's not about trends, it's about a reality check

By [Dustin Chick](#)

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There are no trends in the communications industry this year. There are realities. Fundamental, yet often simple, factors which then influence how communicators can bring value to the organisations they work within.



Indeed, value is the rub. It's the communicators who understand these realities and how they translate into results that are able to move beyond just "Peee Aaar".

2012 is wholly and completely about understanding what is likely to influence how communicators bring value. Critically, this is about a clear and considered reality check both of how we work, and the environment we work within.

How we work...

- "Pee Aaar this" is not a brief. It's delegation to the point of abdication. There is no way any communicator can begin to meet expectations of those around them if these expectations have not been clearly articulated.
- Success is not something we determine after the fact. If communications is not benchmarked at commencement, it will never be successful (or at least it will never be perceived to be).
- Measurement should be embraced, not something communicators should be afraid of. When considering measurement metrics, don't be afraid to link communications and business metrics. AVE is not a business metric, no matter how much you tell yourself it is.
- Credibility sets the rats from the mice. Marketing is not communications. Remember this when communicating both your company and its products.
- A frame of reference is a table stake. If your people don't have one, along with a strong understanding of business and current affairs, you should panic. A lot.
- Research without interpretation is just data. Having the right insights about the world around us is the key to communications that works and just the start of the communications value proposition.

The environment we work in...

- Information is critical. The information environment is changing. The introduction of the [Protection of Information Bill](#) is the single biggest influencer of our work, especially if we work in the public affairs space.
- Budgets are small. Expectations are big. Finding a way to marry the two successfully is our job. Make it happen and spend money wisely to get the best business results. It's tough out there and this has the biggest influence on expectation of return.
- People could not be more important. Almost anyone can organise an event. It's not the same as communications. If you want your communications to positively and measurably influence your brand, then make sure you are using the

right people to do it.

- Skills requires the most investment. The gap between senior communicators and junior communicators is too big. It is the responsibility of those in the industry to close as a matter of urgency.

Look forward to the year ahead. Just make sure you have a reality check in the progress.

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ABOUT DUSTIN CHICK

Dustin is Managing Partner of Razor, the PR, reputation and culture and communications agency in the M&C Saatchi Group. Dustin is recognised as one of the top reputation managers and communicators in Europe, Africa and the Middle East - having being named by the Holmes Report / PROvoke Media as one of its top 25 innovators in public relations across Europe, the Middle East and Africa in 2019.

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