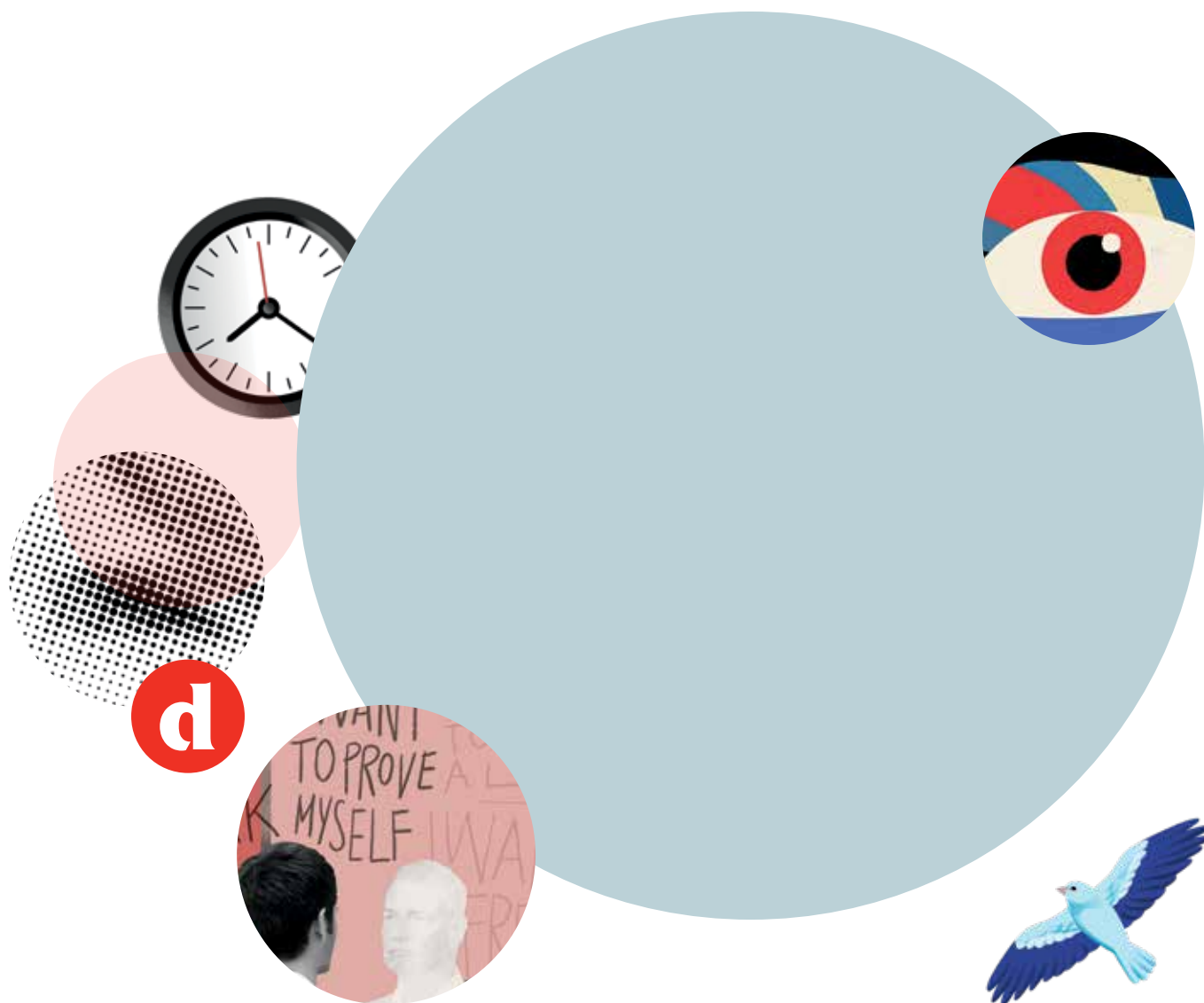


PUBLIC RELATIONS

The magazine of Seneca's  
Public Relations–  
Corporate Communications  
program  
Winter 2020

# dialogues



Reflecting on work-life balance

Do we present a corporate image that inspires loyalty and trust?

What brings you joy?



What is your communication DNA?



What do you want?

**ROI**

What do you thrive on?

Who's in the driver's seat?

Is our message consistent with our brand and our values?

# Reflecting on work-life balance

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### About the Public Relations – Corporate Communications program at Seneca

Seneca  
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Toronto, Canada  
M3J 3M6

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This eight-month graduate certificate program will immerse you in public relations and corporate communications theory and practice. You will learn to write news releases, work with the media, research and develop strategic communications programs, hone digital communications skills and work in teams. You will be mentored by highly experienced teachers and learn how to effectively pursue a career in the public relations and communications industry.

In this program, you will collaborate with exchange students from Europe. You will have access to one of the best public relations and corporate communications libraries available and develop transferable skills valuable in a rapidly changing economy.

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### Errata

We would like to correct the following errors found in the Spring 2019 issue: Student writer, Khadlead Najak should have read Khaleed Najak. The correct lifetime dates for Susan Sontag are 1933–2004. Gordana Pjescic is a member of IPRA—International Public Relations Association not the PRSA (Public Relations Society of America). We apologize for these errors.

# Welcome

## from our editor



Winter 2020 Issue

**PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS** are often required figuratively to hold up a mirror to our clients and employers so that those in decision-making roles can reflect upon how others view our companies. Is our message consistent with our brand and our values? Do we present a corporate image that inspires loyalty and trust, or is our reflection distorted by inconsistencies and crises?

This issue of *Public Relations dialogues* revolves around the theme of reflection. We asked a number of practitioners to reflect upon how they maintain equilibrium when faced with demanding jobs and the pressures of dealing with difficult situations. Suggestions ranged from taking time for oneself to “unplugging” during non-work hours, as well as maintaining a healthy mind in a healthy body.

As we advocate for spending more time with one’s family, the spectre of a “work family” arises. Where *is* the boundary between those we are close to at home, and those with whom we spend so much time at work? Maintaining work-life balance means being very clear about the difference between your true family obligations and the people who demand your time during working hours.

Thinking of co-workers as “family” can cause additional stress if someone leaves or changes roles. While relationships with colleagues create mutual bonds that can make work something to enjoy, they also impose obligations that may require more of us than we are able to give. The dictum of “Don’t bring your problems to work” loses force when we’re drawn into thinking office mates are like family and perhaps confidants as well. Add the “always on” nature of electronic communication and employees are less able to separate themselves from colleagues when work messages encroach on personal time at home.

By contrast, Barbara Fagan-Smith suggests that business principles can positively affect one’s real family by employing concepts such as a shared mission and better internal communications. Working together to create shared goals gives families “a better idea of who they are and where they are going,” she says.

Finally, taking time to reflect upon our individual skills and attributes, as prompted by the Myers-Briggs assessment, leads to a better understanding of the strengths we bring to this profession of Public Relations. When our inner being aligns with the outer expression of our abilities and desires, we can better achieve our objectives and be the best version of ourselves, leading to greater job satisfaction as well as a healthier approach to our work.

As one of our student writing teams asked, “If you can’t produce the best results for yourself, then how can you produce the best results for your client?”

*Want to keep the conversation going? You can reach us at [prdialogues@senecacollege.ca](mailto:prdialogues@senecacollege.ca)*

Beth Agnew, CPTC  
Chair, School of Media

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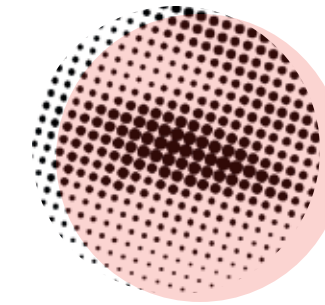


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## Write to us



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### What's your opinion?

This publication is a dialogue and we want to hear from you. Tell us what you think about our third issue and what you would like to see in future issues. Let us know what you think is making an impact in the communications industry. *Let's have a conversation.*

# How the executives keep it together



## Rules Always rules

Grind, endless travel, red wine (as you note) but not every night (hopefully), regular exercise, long hours and ups and downs, late night conference calls, early morning conference calls and boundaries for family life; always the priority. Skiing, biking. Friends and laughter.

Sleep? Occasionally!

**Alistair McLeish**  
Chairman  
Speyside Group  
Switzerland



## Kick your mind in another direction

A work-life balance is important, but within that work time it is also important to have a number of projects that you can switch to when things get bogged down (and they will). The ability to do so often serves to kick your mind in another direction, often providing clues or even answers to that project that is stalled. Outside of the office, find a hobby and give yourself time in the day to actively pursue it. For me it was first running and then as my legs went I turned to bike riding. Using this time to simply zone out provides renewed energy. As an academic, for instance, I typically had at least four projects—at least one a book or monograph—at any one point in time. This not only kept me productive but sane!

**Don Stacks**  
CEO, International Public Relations Research Conference Inc.  
Florida, USA

## Delegate

First of all, I delegate as much as I can to my experienced team, saving most of my judgment calls for high-level decisions on direction. That keeps me out of the weeds, as the weeds can be very all-consuming.

Second, once I leave work I hit the pool and swim every night, and try to get a good night's sleep. I can't function on poor sleep or jet lag very well.

Finally, I try and eat right and not overdo it, particularly during hectic weeks. For the past five years, I've had the same thing for lunch every work day, which is a bowl of tabbouleh, over which I read the local newspaper and the *Financial Times* to educate myself on issues outside of my inbox.

**Brian Lott**  
Chief Communications Officer  
Mubadala  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

## It's just work, don't lose sleep over it

With all these miles behind me (at 54 years) I have learned to remind myself: "It's just work, don't lose sleep over it." In this online environment one can—and might even be expected to—work anytime and anywhere. To me and my team members it means full flexibility. There is no need to follow up at all hours at the office as long as the job gets done and team members stay updated on process using cloud-based tools.

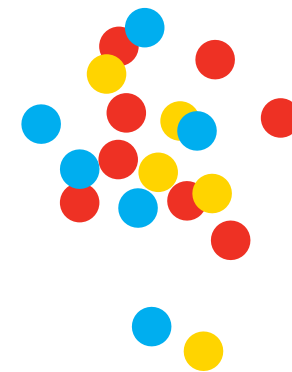
My "secret sauce" is active morning sports; starting the day at 7 a.m. with a game of tennis or ice hockey. Exercise before office hours gives a nice boost to the day, and evenings can be dedicated to unwinding.

**Atte Palomäki**  
Executive Vice President  
Communications, Branding & Marketing  
Wärtsilä Corporation  
Helsinki, Finland

## Celebrate your achievements

The challenge with public relations, like many professions, is that our work is never complete. We are engaged in an ongoing drive to earn and maintain the reputations that our organizations or clients deserve and need. No matter our successes, there is always much more that could be done. My advice is to celebrate your achievements and learn ways to clear work concerns completely from your mind during your downtime. Sometimes I am able to follow that advice myself.

**Simon Buerk**  
Senior Vice President  
Corporate Affairs  
Emirates Global Aluminium  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates



## How to stay sane

I love Philippa Perry's little book called "How to Stay Sane". In it she suggests writing a diary every day. I have been doing just that for 30 years. Every morning, while having a cup of tea with my husband, we both write our journals. It helps me sort my thought, write down my worries and hopes and keep track of my many blessings that I am thankful for. My husband and I then read our journals to each other—it's helped us stay in touch as a working couple with three kids.

I am also a practicing Christian and as such find peace and calmness in reading the Bible, praying and participating in a Church community.

Apart from eating healthy (lots of veggies, little carbs and sugars), I jump the trampoline every morning. I have found this to help me with my posture, my energy and my creative thinking.

**Sabia Schwarzer**  
Global Head of Communications & Responsibility  
Allianz Group  
Munich, Germany

## Keep it together

I have tried to "keep it together" by setting certain boundaries and giving myself personal KPIs for sleep and exercise with the help of my Fitbit. Though it rarely happens, I strive to get eight hours of sleep and have stopped reading email if I wake up in the middle of the night because it starts my mind racing. Also, the Japanese concept of "moai," strong social networks of long-term friends, serves as exceptional support. My makeshift moai are largely current and former communications colleagues who really can appreciate the absurdity of the challenges we face in our craft on a daily basis. Being able to find humor in most situations with these empathetic friends and not fretting over problems that cannot be controlled help me keep it together.

**Travis Parman**  
Vice President, Communications  
Nissan North America & International Media & Global Engagement  
Nissan Motor Co.  
Nashville, USA



How the executives keep it together

## It is a challenge!



- Self-reflection, i.e. knowing my own strengths and weaknesses well and find enough areas to use strengths rather than compensating weaknesses.
- Regular sports activities is an absolute must / minimum of four hours a week.
- Whenever possible I don't work more than half a day on weekends and keep either Saturday or Sunday completely work free.
- Healthy food.
- Delegate as much as possible into my team and keep free slots for thinking time.
- Two alcohol-free days a week.

### Key challenges:

- Get enough relaxing sleep.
- Lots of breakfasts, lunches and dinners with clients or team members.
- Overloaded agenda and not much room for maneuvering for unexpected incidents (internal or client side).
- "Hero model" very often agency culture.

### Roman Geiser

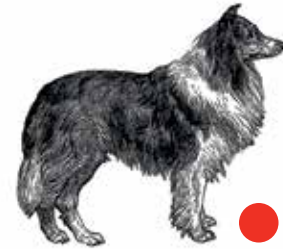
CEO & Managing Partner  
Farner Consulting AG  
Zürich, Switzerland

## The work will wait

For me it is about trying to detach myself as much as possible from my phone in the evenings and weekends—not easy to do but I find I do not switch off with my phone constantly alerting me to new work to do. Carve out time where you do not take your phone with you—the work will wait!

### Lisa Harrington

Executive General Manager,  
Stakeholder Relations  
AGL Energy  
Sydney, Australia



## Walking is my favourite workout exercise

I wake up every morning at 6 a.m. in order to solve my daily routine and tend to have breakfast with my family as I generally have lunch and dinner outside.

Walking is my favourite workout exercise, it allows me to clear out my mind whilst some new ideas and thoughts come out of the way. Every week, during my free time, I look for contemporary art novelties either in art galleries or museums and also meeting artists being contemporary art my passion. I also enjoy very much having friends coming over for dinner with my wife.

### Marcela de la Peña

Consultora Senior  
LLYC Public Relations &  
Communications  
Madrid, Spain

## Are you in control?



I have a simple suggestion for people like me. People who sit in the driver's seat 24/7; who keep raising the bar, never miss an opportunity, are always alert, etc. People who try to control the uncontrollable.

Take for example the 'Reputation' of the organization you work for. I know all about that. I keep a very systematic record of the reputation, advise the board to include KPIs in the long-term bonus system, etc. But I always realize that a company cannot manage or control its reputation. It is the mind of the people that will eventually reflect on whether you are doing the right thing. It's about the behaviour of the organization. As an organization, all you can do is stay true to your *raison d'être*, your values and stay in touch—in a constant dialogue with all your stakeholders—to find out what you need to do. This never stops.

Reputation is built on countless small or epic moments of truth, in good times and especially in bad times, and it certainly helps if you have the right intentions and at the same time are really receptive to your stakeholders, but the result is certainly beyond your control.

Fortunately in my case the company received awards for its reputation and is at the top of the telecommunications industry in terms of reputation, sustainability and CSR.

So my suggestion is: always be aware that it is impossible to be in complete control. Be happy with success and be modest when things don't move the way you want. Don't fight the inevitable.

The same goes for your own body mind system. A pretty essential system if you are in a 24/7 'always on' and extremely dynamic environment. I had two cardiac arrests in 2013 and a very severe car accident, which I miraculously survived with hardly no injuries.

It was a lesson but I didn't listen. My cardiologist gave me a little bionic device to keep me going and warned me that my energy levels were not really suited for my lifestyle. But I thought I could control my body and my mind.



I was convinced that an ascetic lifestyle would do the magic; exercise, no alcohol, a small vegetarian diet, meditation, lots of sleep etc. In other words, I was doing anything to 'manage' my body-mind system to keep it running at the same pace it did before. And did it work? My body isn't the same anymore since 2013 and after years of overexploitation it came to a halt. Like I drove into a concrete wall. You can't control the body or the mind. It's an immensely complex and pretty holistic system, designed to function perfectly, as long as you respect its laws and don't violate them.

Now that I'm sitting at home, sick, without any energy, trying to recover, I realize that more than ever. The knowledge about 'control' that I tried to live up to in my work was not applied to my physical condition. So, you guys and girls out there, be aware.

You are not in control. The only thing you can do is stay connected, attentive and be careful, not only in your work, but also with your body mind system, the system you need to be out there, every second of the day. It needs your undivided attention to keep it healthy and happy.

*Take care of yourself.*

### Hans Koeleman

CCO Royal KPN  
Telecommunications  
The Netherlands  
President  
European Association of Communication  
Directors (EACD)



Have the flexibility to work around personal and professional schedules so that no one feels pulled in both directions.

# Work-life balance—**Fact** or fiction?

## Perceptions from the field

### Our team

Bolatito Laniyan  
Madhumonti Maitra  
Nahjdlia Seale

### Illustrator

Angie Wang  
Los Angeles, U.S.

**HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED** where the term “work-life balance” came from, what this colloquialism even means? When did it become such a hot topic of conversation?

### Let’s take a quick look at its history.

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1966, a period of high employment and prosperity. For the most part, the economy rewarded boomers for their efforts. According to David Rook, August 29, 2017—“The Changing Definition of Work-Life Balance”, they were able to attend college, buy homes and stay in stable jobs for many decades. He also states this is certainly not true for all of them, as there were plenty of economic slumps and layoffs during their prime working years.

The phrase “work-life balance” was on nobody’s lips. Instead, it was normal to find a job and loyally remain with the same company until you retired. A new survey of more than 1,000 Americans, ages 50 and older by the Associated Press – NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that 41 per cent of employed workers have spent two decades with the same company, including 18 per cent who’ve stayed at least 30 years.

Next came Generation X, a generation defined by most demographers as those born between 1965 and 1980. According to John Rampton, Entrepreneur and Investor, in the article “Different Motivations for Different Generations of Workers: Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z,” Generation X was a smaller cohort than the previous and succeeding generations, but they’re often credited with bringing work-life balance to everyone’s attention.

John Rampton also stated that Generation X puts more importance on forming a work-life balance in their own lives. They look for perks such as telecommuting, recognition from the boss, and such monetary rewards as bonuses, stock, and gift cards.

In the U.S., Millennials (born between 1981 to 1996 and reaching young adulthood in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century) are on the cusp of surpassing Baby Boomers as the nation’s largest living adult generation, according to population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Work-life balance—  
Fact or fiction?



### Millennials demand work-life balance

According to a report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation published in 2012, Gen Xers tried to achieve work-life balance, but Millennials demand it. At almost twice the population of Generation X, Millennials may just get it, with three out of four saying that work-life balance drives their career choices. While their parents and grandparents craved structure and stability, Millennials have demonstrated that they value freedom and independence in the workplace. They express a desire to work outside the restrictions of the average nine-to-five work schedule. Millennials have consistently been known for making ‘work-life balance’ a high priority. The ideal work-life balance allows Millennials to be part of successful organizations and remain involved in their communities while allowing them to spend adequate time with their families.

Millennials actively seek out employers who have established flexible work environments that allow them to learn, earn, and grow more over time. According to Ryan Jenkins, Millennial and Generation Z Speaker and Generations Expert, in the article “This Is Why Millennials Care so Much About Work-Life Balance”, in today’s employee market, creating a work-life balance for Millennials is a compelling competitive advantage.

Vipan Gill, Account Executive, Corporate Communications, FleishmanHillard, NYC, and a recent graduate of the Public Relations–Corporate Communications program at Seneca College in Toronto, shared similar thoughts while discussing the importance of work-life balance.

“Employers not only need to be competitive in their benefits and perks, but they also need to keep their employees happy. Organizations that still have not adopted work-life balance policies are missing out on a huge talent pool. There have been several studies showing that work-life balance is key to a productive work environment. So really, this is important to everyone—employers and employees alike,” says Vipan.

“A” leaders won’t get “A” players just by offering the highest pay, the shortest commute or the trendiest water cooler. Instead, they’ll attract them by allowing employees the space to incorporate their personal and professional lives into one cohesive, meaning-driven life. The term work-life balance is now a cliché.

### What is work-life balance?

The concept of “work-life balance” has gained even more traction within the past few years. This is partly due to the dominating presence of Millennials in the workforce.

According to the U.S. President’s Study of American Work-Life Balance, conducted in March 2010, work-life balance programs can reduce turnover and improve recruitment, increasing the productivity of an employer’s workforce.

Work-life balance is a matter of concern for everyone. But how does the world define it?

A quick glance at a few dictionary definitions of the term yields only a partial answer.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “... the amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing things you enjoy.”

The Oxford Dictionary says, “It is the principle that paid employment should be integrated with domestic life and community involvement in the interests of personal and social well-being.”

And the Collins Dictionary takes a similar approach to Cambridge: “Work-life balance is how you organize your days, for example, how many hours you spend at work, and how much time you spend with friends or doing things you enjoy.”

But how do communications professionals define it? And why is it such a concern for practitioners in this field?

Tolulope Oludapo, Media Consultant, LifegivaDotCom Int’l Ltd. of Lagos, Nigeria, believes it’s a person’s ability to have a thriving work life, social life, and family life. Swati Sanyal, Senior PR Executive, PR & EM Candid Communication Private Limited of Kolkata, India, thinks work-life balance is a blend of work, career and personal ambition with one’s health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development.

Vipan Gill believes that work-life balance is mainly “flexibility”; to be able to work around personal and professional schedules so that no one feels pulled in both directions.

Our personal lives are the key to re-energizing ourselves to work another day and keep us grounded when our workload becomes overwhelming.





Work-life balance—  
Fact or fiction?

Glenn Heshka, Professor, Broadcasting, Seneca College, Toronto, says, “I would define work-life balance as feeling happy in both places and content in both places. When you consider your work just an extension of the rest of your life and what makes you happy, then you have a good balance. And if your home life is mostly home life, but yet is affected by your work, I think that’s a good balance.”

Samantha Kemp-Jackson, Media Commentator and Seneca professor, says, “Those who want to succeed in the workforce need to feel that their work—even if they love it—isn’t consuming their lives every day.”

Most people love their jobs. But not having a life outside work can become a real problem somewhere down the road. The constant pressure of doing well and never letting up has consequences.

The times I worked round the clock,  
I experienced burnout  
more frequently and I was  
less creative and less productive.



“Stressed-out and anxious workers never give their best when they’ve got other things besides work on their minds,” says Samantha.

“Long working hours do not account for more productivity. Working more hours round the clock doesn’t necessarily make for getting more done. Neither does it make for effectiveness,” says Tolulope.

“The times I worked round the clock, I experienced burnout more frequently and I was less creative and less productive despite staying awake (working) for longer hours. My work schedule had an effect on my health. For one, I began to have constant migraines and fell ill more frequently than I normally would.”

The picture drawn by Tolulope is a familiar one—especially to mid- and senior-level corporate communications practitioners who work in an atmosphere in which stress and even crises are commonplace, if not routine. For such people, downtime is absolutely essential.

“There should be a clear demarcation between work and home life. If not, you run the risk of working too much and not feeling that balance is part of the equation,” says Samantha. “The fact is that the more rested and balanced I feel, the better the work output is for my clients.”

But, is it possible to have balance in a field like public relations and communications, especially in an age when you are just a click away from work?

Sueann Tannis, Communications and Digital Strategy Leader, United Nations, of the U.S., has wondered the same thing.

“What is work-life balance? Do I have that? Does it even exist? I think it’s a term that has been overused. It sounds really good, but recently, people have also floated the idea of workplace integration, suggesting that if you ever try to balance work and life, you’re going to be unsuccessful. So, integrating them makes sense. For example, recently, I arrived at a concert early and while waiting for it to start, I edited an entire paper in that time, and finished just as the lights came up and the artists walked on stage.

“So that’s what I mean by workplace integration. You just make it fit, instead of trying to balance the two. And that has been the story of my life.

“Similarly, it means that when I’m at work, I also make time for family and friends, and that might be just to make myself available for a five- or 10-minute FaceTime call or video call. Perhaps I leave the office and go for a walk and get some sunshine in. I could also check on my mom in Barbados. So, since work-life balance is hard to achieve, let’s go with workplace integration.”

“There shouldn’t be a hard line between if I happen to spend a few minutes while I’m at home, thinking about some work stuff or jotting down some ideas. There’s nothing wrong with that. As long as that’s not taking me away from what I want to accomplish when I’m at home, which is spending time with my wife, and spending time with the family,” says Glenn.

The definition of work-life balance varies from person to person and is always changing.

“I guess priority is the key word here. Our work-life balance revolves around that. It changes as our priorities change with time,” says Swati Sanyal of India.

“When I was younger, I felt that it was really important to put as much as I could into my work and career. Now that I’m much older, I realize the importance of having downtime,” says Samantha.

“I would say I probably didn’t have work-life balance, especially in my earlier years of working in a broadcasting career. It was probably lopsided, or at the very least, very seesaw,” says Glenn.

The experience and the process of trying to find work-life balance is different for everyone. Despite factors such as extra hours, after-work emails, and constant communication with clients and reporters, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is achievable as a public relations practitioner.

Our personal lives have value. It’s the key to re-energizing ourselves to work another day and keeps us grounded when our workload becomes overwhelming.

“Create a clear division of boundaries between work and home. The division doesn’t have to be a physical one, it can be time-focused or otherwise,” says Samantha. She says this should not be taken to mean your personal life is a greater priority than work, but it does mean that you should value work and a relaxing weekend equally.



Work-life balance—  
Fact or fiction?

“It’s of paramount importance to have specific blocks of time set aside at home during which outside work is not being completed,” she says.

Carving out personal time every week is crucial for physical and mental health. During your personal time you could exercise, watch a movie, read a book, enjoy a hobby or take a nap. You can do anything you want, as long as it doesn’t relate to work.

Time spent away from work will replenish your mind and body, so you can come into work with energy and fresh ideas.

“I always use the example of being a student and leaving my apartment to study in a coffee shop or to just ride the train and read, or go to the park and read and I am fulfilling my need for sunshine and human interaction and social integration for lack of a better word,” says Sueann.

Technology has made our lives easier in many ways, but it has also created expectations of constant accessibility. “It’s very easy to get pulled into the constant notifications, the updates, the “likes,” et cetera,” Samantha says.

Public relations practitioners are trained to be nimble communicators and thanks to technology, we can respond in real-time faster than ever before. Therefore, it may seem counterintuitive to suggest, but there’s no need to reply to an email the second it comes flowing into your inbox. Instead, set interval times throughout the day to reply to emails. If you’re expecting an urgent email from a client or reporter, or you have a high stakes client account, keep your devices at hand. If not, breathe a little. You don’t want those emails distracting you from other important work. While it’s imperative to complete work tasks, it’s also important to unplug after work and enjoy the moment. Eat dinner away from your phone. Take a walk. Read a book. If you need to check work emails, schedule time to do so rather than constantly looking at your email or phone. It’s important to make time for your life outside of work so you can be happier and more focused at work.

“I have mastered the practice of turning my laptop off and shutting down anything related to work, once the sun sets. Despite the implication that this management measure has on my working hours, I have been able to get a lot of work done and meet my deadlines,” says Tolulope.

Viphan has similar suggestions. “I think my biggest piece of advice would be, when you are offline, stay offline! There is nothing worse than deciding to take time off or away from work only to find yourself checking emails and replying to work requests. You need to be in charge of

### If you can’t produce the best results for yourself, then how can you produce the best results for your client?

those boundaries and in order to really have that balance you need to have some limits. Clients are always the number one priority in agency life, so it can be difficult to fully ‘unplug’ but if you communicate with your teams and set up alternative contacts during your absence, it’s not impossible. You just need to find that balance yourself.”

So how does one achieve the perfect work-life balance? Is it even achievable?

With global insights from communications professionals, it seems that there is no clear answer on how to maintain a healthy work-life balance. But, one note rings true. If you can’t produce the best results for yourself, then how can you produce the best results for your client? **d**

#### Our team from l to r

Madhumonti Maitra

Bolatito Laniyan

Nahjdla Seale (not pictured)





Our mission

Our vision

Our values

This is our mission, and this is our vision, and this is how we contribute to the successful accomplishment of these goals.

# Grand #workfam seduction

The work family as home family

**Our team**  
Shanna Callaghan  
Julie Hambleton  
Valeriya Kohar

**Illustrator**  
Elise Conlin  
Toronto, Canada

**IT'S 7 a.m. ON TUESDAY.** You drop your kids at daycare, have breakfast with your husband and chat before work. You work until noon and then head to a lunch-time yoga session with your sister. Post-yoga, you meet up with your husband again for lunch. Here, you discuss office politics and your strategic plan for a new project. At 4 p.m., you multitask getting your kids to soccer practice while you finish a load of laundry before dinner with your husband and some friends. You've arranged for a friend to pick your kids up from soccer so you and your husband can stay out a little longer, until 7 p.m.

Suddenly, someone calls your name. You look up and realize you've been daydreaming during a co-worker's presentation in a dimly lit boardroom. In reality, you're in a meeting at work. Your family is dressed business casual. You think to yourself: "These are my coworkers—not my family."

This scenario could—and likely does—happen in many offices around the world, to people just like you.

And it shouldn't come as a surprise, thanks to:

- On-site amenities such as daycare, laundry, and yoga classes.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner provided.
- Colleagues who are closer to you than your non-work friends and family.

There is a cohesion of work and regular life. The "work family" is a narrative that is not necessarily fostered by the organization. *#workfam* is a phenomenon in a rapidly changing workplace.

Grand

## seduction



It is beyond sufficient  
to work together as a team  
and be fully engaged  
and aware of what  
we are working towards.

## #Wearefamily

Holly Cybulski, APR, a Communications Consultant and Professor at Seneca College, has noticed this trend and has begun research into this type of corporate culture, the concept of

“The Fallacy of ‘Family’ as a Foundation of Positive Corporate Culture.” She presented this topic in May 2019 at the Corporate Communication International Conference held at USC Marshall School of Business in Los Angeles.

She explained the following model that proposes the use and effect of the word ‘family’ in a workplace: “When you use the word ‘family’ you’re creating a false obligation. It lacks measurement and becomes an emotional exchange between your internal publics. From that, you are destabilizing your commitment, your engagement, and your loyalty. Inadvertently, you will break your ‘psychological contract,’” says Holly. “This may result in emotional betrayal which cannot be measured. The change is emotional, inexplicable, inconsistent and founded in unsatisfactory key messages.”

From that betrayal there is a threat to your organization’s reputation. The psychological contract, a term created by Professor Denise Rousseau, refers to a relationship formed on informal expectations between a company and their employees and between coworkers.

Holly goes on to tie this back to what we, as public relations practitioners, need to create. If we instead root our organizational culture in mission, vision and value statements, it’s both measurable and transparent because it’s equally accessible to everyone.

“It is not about, ‘I am part of the family, therefore I will work harder for you.’ It’s ‘This is our mission, and this is our vision, and this is how I contribute to the successful accomplishment of these goals. This is my skillset,’” she says.

This reinforces commitment, engagement and perhaps even increases loyalty because you will know where you stand. The psychological contract is therefore fulfilled because it is rooted in what is expected of each employee in the mission, vision, and value statements. The success of each person can actually be measured.

This is an interesting model that furthers the understanding of the use of the hashtag: #workfam, and its variant forms. In a professional setting, the use of the family dynamic may be used by all kinds of employees with the sincerest and most positive connotation. Are the ramifications worth its use?

“While working as a publicist I observed the use of the language ‘family’ and ‘work family’ to define colleagues. I myself have even used it to define an organizational culture, and I slowly began to realize this was a powerful and perhaps compromising dynamic,” says Holly.

“This language was being used in a context that didn’t relate to family but intended to define loyalty and solicit commitment to engage the participating employees.”

One must ask: who is responsible for promoting this “Fallacy of Family” in the workplace? Holly recognized on social media that these hashtags were being formulated and used by the employees, not *necessarily* the company. If employees are accountable for cultivating these relationships, are they responsible for moderating conflicts that may arise from them? What happens when a “family member” is let go or chooses to leave? In the end, where does the line lead in terms of productivity?

## #Changemanagement

Most will assume that when change happens, people are supportive of one another and cheer them on to their next venture. She insists on thinking deeper about this phenomenon. The word family insinuates forever. The use of this term can create obligations to another person that were not part of their job description. Times of change highlight how a workplace is still a business: people move up, move on, and move out. Holly reminds us that these seemingly innocent terms of endearment between colleagues can negatively affect an organization.

“If we do not create an organizational culture that is rooted in mission, vision and value statements, and a standard model that can be consistently measured during times of change, using language such as family can pose a threat to your organization’s reputation.” That is, during times of change one may experience emotions of personal rejection, interpreting the organizational change as breaking the “forever” of the implied professional family instead of understanding the practical, professional purpose of the change.

So, if this is a narrative not necessarily created by executives, is it something they should consider having control over? In reality, how much control does management have over their own corporate culture? Can they balance connectivity and flexibility between their employees during times of change?

As Holly suggested, it is important that the companies can monitor, research and evaluate the effects that this concept has on their company. This is not about control. They must investigate how this view of the workplace promotes their brand. It is possible that companies can use this to their advantage by having employees—ambassadors and champions of their brand—expand on the promotion of their company. The public relations team should consider an approach that will help them use #workfam to their advantage or manage this use through a social media policy guiding the narrative to other rhetoric such as “team” or “partners.” It is about managing this from a practical organizational perspective rooted in measurable mission, vision, value statements and objectives and goals. People don’t necessarily have to be family to keep working together. It is beyond sufficient to work together as a team and be fully engaged and aware of what they are working towards.

Another factor is that all of the office amenities make staying at work for long hours easy. These initiatives are provided by the company; possibly a grand seduction to coax employees to enter the workplace early and stay late, enticed by little more than cafeteria food and accessibility to household amenities.

## #workfam

During times of change,  
using language such as family,  
can pose a threat  
to your organization’s  
reputation.

## #International

In Europe, the attitude towards time spent at work differs from North America. Meghann Augustus, previous Director of Corporate Communications of UBS Investment Bank in London, England, says her company provided additional services such as a gym, a beauty salon, a doctor’s office and a restaurant. Thanks to such onsite perks, employees could more easily participate in team-building events and training days, town-hall strategy updates and employee celebrations. Employee-run committees organized these events with sponsorship from senior leaders. It thus appears that employee relations can be maintained in keeping to the mission, vision and values of the company.

Certain countries have a particular outlook about how much of one’s life should be spent at work and working. France has a 35-hour workweek for all companies, allots 15 hours per day to leisure and personal care, and encourages a two-hour lunch break.

“My office offers the possibility of remote work. Therefore, people are able to adapt their hours to what suits them best,” says Marie-Hélène, PR professional in Paris, France. “Our agency is based on the values of transparency.” (Quote translated from French.)

In Spain, the workday begins later in the morning—around 9:30 a.m. or 10 a.m.—as opposed to the North American start time of 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. A breakfast break at 11 a.m. is incorporated into the workday, and they stop to have lunch and a siesta for up to three hours, beginning at 2 p.m. The Spanish workday ends between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., when people go home to relax and have dinner with family and friends.

*Cool fact:* The Spanish go to bed between two and four in the morning!

Grand

**seduction**

Foster a healthy work family  
that furthers and  
advocates for the  
company mission, vision  
and values.

Japan operates differently. The work culture is unlike any other. According to BBC, “Nearly a quarter of Japanese companies have employees working more than 80 hours overtime a month, often unpaid.”

Indicative of Japan’s collective culture, coworkers are expected to spend time together after work. Often, these coworkers and bosses gather for a large group drink after work, known as a Nomikai. It is expected that almost every employee will work overtime and stay even later with their coworkers. Interestingly enough, this is why Japan has sleeping pod hotels for workers who need to stay overnight and cannot commute home. This is the norm in Japan, where it’s do or die.

Globalization of industries and changed economic times has affected even the most traditional family-oriented places.

Italy, which permitted employees to take a two-hour lunch break to leave the workplace and have a home-cooked meal with their family, no longer encourages this in most places. People live and work further from their families, and lunch breaks are getting shorter or replaced with business lunches. “As practitioners, we have to recognize that although it begins with best intentions, sometimes the rhetoric of ‘family’ in a professional context can lead to a negative situation because people are

going above and beyond their role or compensation, and that leads to disengagement,” says Holly. Having close relationships with your coworkers can make going to the office each day more enjoyable. When you do have to give up your

lunch break for a meeting, or work longer hours when it’s crunch time, your work family makes this less painful. On-site daycare makes being a working parent easier. And hey! If you can do your laundry during work hours, it frees up your evening for something more fun.

We spend a lot of time at our workplace. It is a place where we socialize and build relationships with people that we never expected to. This is translated into a family dynamic that can be worked into the aspirations of the organization.

If this is the culture of your organization, proper monitoring, research and evaluation may be the key to successfully using this trend and fostering a healthy work family that furthers and advocates for the company mission, vision and values. **d**

**Our team from l to r**

Valeriya Kohar  
Shanna Callaghan  
Julie Hambleton

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# Work-**life** balance— Who's in the driver's seat?

## Our team

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## A roadmap to misperception

AT A LOCAL COFFEE SHOP popular with the public relations crowd, you overhear a Generation Z, someone born between 1997 and 2012, complaining to her friends that her Generation X boss, who was born between 1965 and 1980, expects responses to emails at all hours, expects her to answer her phone after she leaves the office and even expects her to be reachable on weekends.

"That's just the norm in today's work environment," you say to yourself.

But is it? Are Generation X executives really expecting this from younger workers?

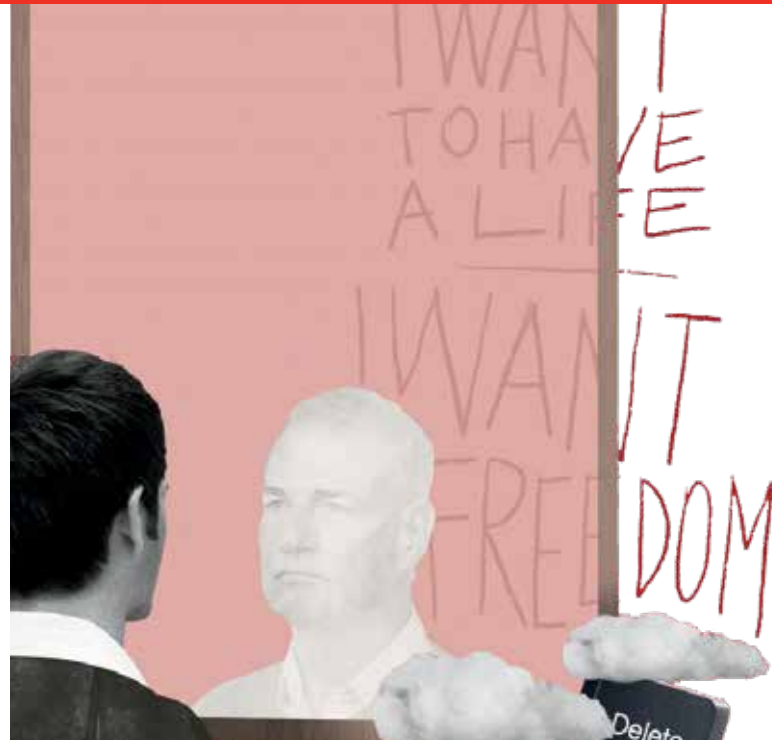
There is a common misconception that workplace tension exists universally between the older and younger

generations. As the myth goes, young employees enter the workforce with the expectation that they must work grueling hours to begrudgingly satisfy their bosses. But a number of industry professionals would seem to disagree. In fact, much of these expectations are self-imposed by the very same young employees and may have sprung from a sense of competitiveness or an overblown sense of guilt. Regardless, Millennials, who were born between 1981 and 1996, and their younger Generation Z cousins often feel compelled to work virtually around the clock.

Generation X employees working in the corporate communications field don't appear to be indifferent to the younger generation's plight, either. Having lived

Work-life balance—  
Who's in  
the driver's  
seat?

Balance is about finding what works for you in order to feel **emotionally** and **physically healthy,** as well as **productive.**



similar experiences when they first started in the industry, many older executives actually have a lot of empathy for the incoming class of public relations employees and don't want them to repeat their mistakes of employee burnout.

Due in large part to the advancements of technology, young workers, who often work in entry-level or even middle-management positions, find themselves operating in a field that is drastically different than it was 30 years ago. The rise of the internet and the development of smartphones compel tech-savvy Millennials and Generation Zs to stay connected to their jobs all the time. In the corporate communications industry, this new-found connectivity to employees by senior management and even clients is pervasive. It means employees are within reach at all times. This can come at the cost of dissolving the boundaries between "work" and "home life" and makes one wonder, "where lies the distinction?"

#### Technology's abolishment of the nine-to-five

Technology has obliterated the nine-to-five workday with a perpetual rotation of notifications and emails, extending far past the hour an individual leaves the office. At first glance, this interference with one's private life was considered toxic, but is it possible that work and home life can strike a balance? And could their integration be the future of corporate communications?

Adhering to single time zones and operating within a nine-to-five workday is unrealistic and becoming obsolete. As an ever-expanding global industry, we must take advantage of the global accessibility that technology affords.

Emails demand instant responses, and in the fast-paced world of communications, this technology is essential.

"Balance doesn't necessarily mean spending equal amounts of time between work and family. It's about finding what works for you in order to feel emotionally and physically healthy, as well as productive," says Estefania Dotti Ratti, Director of Dircoms, in Ecuador.

What was once a black-and-white distinction between work and home has blurred grey. The amalgamation of the two is now unavoidable in the digital age. Digital streams of communication and media are constantly lighting up smartphones; rather than turning notifications on, we must manually turn them off. Business News Daily reports that technology's advancement in instant communication has allowed workers to create an office anywhere.

"The physical limitation of a fixed workspace and home doesn't exist in my case. I allow myself to seek balance not by leaving the actual space in which I'm working but by learning to prioritize and organize my time," says Estefania.

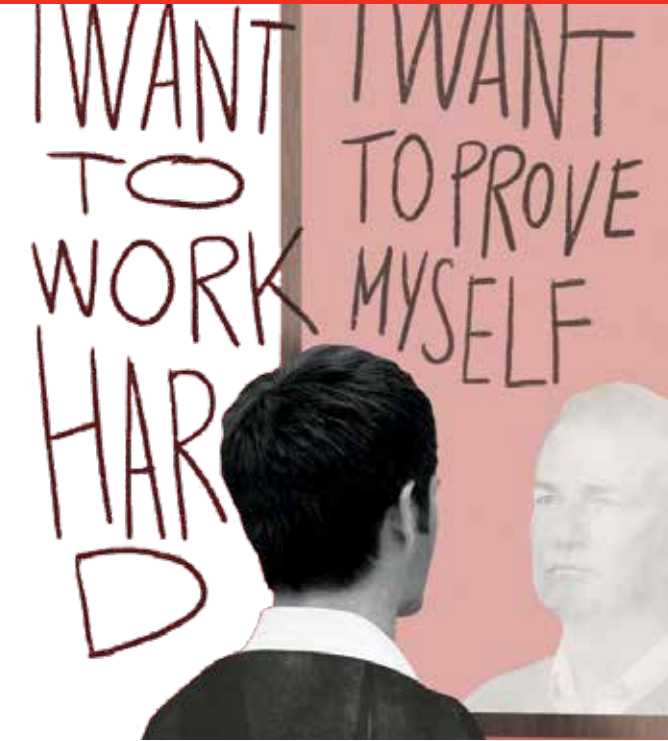
Flexible hours bring a new balancing act, face-to-face communication versus virtual communication.

"As long as employees are meeting in-office regularly, enough to coordinate concrete schedules and tasks, I find the freedom of flexible scheduling has created such a positive environment," says Caity Abugov, Communications Coordinator at WeedMD Toronto.

It's clear that adaptable hours pave the way for the constructive work environments employers aim for, and this pattern is international. Yusur Al Dabbagh, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Rouya Public Relations Consultancy, in the United Arab Emirates, feels that their monthly work-from-home initiatives contribute to the company's family-feel work environment. Such freedom is granted by employers who trust the people who work for them; the trust to get work done or be online is transparent.

Even more transparent is the fact that we cannot restrict our industry to a nine-to-five workday. The disruption of the typical workday has increased company morale and created international connections. It's clear you can take the worker out of the office, but you cannot take the office out of the worker.

Internationally, practitioners believe technology's transformation of the public relations industry has only begun. Public relations is a fast-paced industry, and it seems the previous work-life boundaries are dissolving into a fusion that is tailored to individual lifestyles.



#### Always online: technology and communication in the workplace

Technology has been influencing and shaping the communications industry for years through new advancements and inventions. Whether we are connecting with someone in the same room, or reaching out to someone across the world, communication is vital. While technological advancements such as smartphones and the internet have made it easier to stay connected, it also casts a misconception among its users that they should always be available.

"I do not stop working as soon as I leave the office. No content creation or sit-down tasks, but I do still focus on email correspondence," says Caity.

The evolution of technology from the first computer, to dial-up internet and now having smartphones in our back pockets has allowed Millennials and Generation Z to grow up in a world surrounded by these advances, while also enjoying traditional means of communications. What used to be a sought-after skill that many would go to post-secondary to learn, is now somewhat expected for these two generations, as it is so effortlessly woven into everyday life. Additionally, other generations seem to think that they are always connected and available to talk at the drop of a hat.

Because technology has changed the way that we operate daily, the impact on our collective mindset has been profound. This rise in the ease of communication has allowed workers, primarily Millennials and Generation Z, to adopt the "always online" mentality. By definition, this refers to the mentality that makes whoever adopts it feel the need to always be connected.

Work-life balance—  
Who's in  
the driver's  
seat?



## Get your head **free.**

For example, if an employee at a job finishes work around 5 p.m., she or he might continuously check for emails until 10 p.m. to ensure no message has been missed or that some need hasn't been met.

In a study conducted by the Academy of Management, a professional association for scholars of management and organizations headquartered in New York City, employees reported an average of eight hours a week answering work-related emails after leaving the office.

"Technology makes it easy to remain connected even when you have left work. And hence you continue working either answering calls, responding to texts or reviewing documents which you didn't get time to review at work," says Mayukhi Mondal, a Millennial communications professional working for Adfactors PR in India.

Blurring the lines between work and life often leads some to only focus on the work. While strong work ethic has been around for a long time, technology is having a major impact on the amount of work that is getting done. Many young workers fear that if they are not always available, they will be out.

"Once you are not available, your colleagues and bosses start counting you out in case of emergencies," Mayukhi says. "And as a consequence, so do your clients."

### Mastering a bespoke work-life blend takes time

The pressure of staying constantly connected is not unique to junior- and middle-management; senior employees experience this pressure, too. Andreia Garcia, General Manager within the healthcare sector at Miligrama, in Portugal believes, "It is expected that those responsible for the companies, or for the management of teams will always be contactable."

But while junior employees can feel burnout in their positions, seasoned practitioners appear to have accepted the reality of a "work-life blend".

In fact, the line between "work" and "life" has become so blurred that the possibility of isolating one's work-self and life-self becomes futile.

"It's you, you know," says Ann-Gret Iturriaga Abarzua, Head of Communications at the global petrochemical and oil manufacturing company, INEOS. "You have certain hours, you are in another environment, but it's still you."

Rather than trying to compartmentalize one's personality into neat boxes, senior employees like Ann-Gret believe there are benefits within fusing these two "selves" together.

"Some people think I have to switch off when I'm at home. It's sometimes helpful because I've learned quite a lot in the company, for example in seminars or whatever, that I can also use in my private life."

Senior employees appear to have found the balance that younger generations strive for and can empathize with those still searching for that harmony.

Estefania recalls her early experience in the PR industry, working around the clock and even staying reachable on holidays and weekends.

"The consequences were clearly visible in my physical and emotional health," she says.

This sentiment bears a striking resemblance to Millennial middle-management, who experience feelings of burnout, driven by a need to prove themselves. To combat this, more experienced employees are using empathy to educate their younger colleagues. Regarding a junior-level employee working longer hours, on the verge of burnout, Ann-Gret made the younger employee take the time off she needed.

"I really forced her to get her head free and after the weekend she said, 'You know what? That was amazing. You need that.'"

Having the support from senior employees can be the reassurance that younger workers need to take a step back from work and focus on themselves. There is no one-size-fits-all recommendation for finding that balance; rather, it takes time and industry experience to develop.

### Balancing the stereotypes between work and life

"Some people want to have a fixed job, with a fixed schedule, and have their personal life. Others are always connected to work. It will always depend on the person," says Andreia.

As the French critic Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr famously wrote: "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

Despite myths of overwhelming workplace expectations from older generations, public relations companies across countries seem to focus on office mentorship and camaraderie through shared experiences. Senior-level employees, having more expertise in navigating the intricacies of work-life balance are demonstrating their readiness to guide the way for eager new hires.

"I think it's important to tell students and recently graduated professionals that there is no job worth losing your health over," says Estefania.

Junior employees must be able to find their own balance between work and life. This could be the key to dissolving the stereotypical generational conflict of the public relations workplace.

The need for balance is there; but will the stereotypes prevent this change from happening? **d**

### Our team from l to r

Jessica Walke  
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Seneca President David Agnew chats with Bolatito Laniyan (Nigeria), Nahjdla Seale (Barbados), Tatiana Arenas (Columbia), Ruoshui Wei (China), and Carolina Salinas (Mexico).

## Reach out to our admissions advisors

### Admissions

Need to know more about your application and/or the application process? Reach out to our admissions advisors for assistance.

#### Domestic

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### Student recruitment

Have questions about Seneca's campuses, financial aid, student supports and more? Connect with one of our student recruiters for more information or to book a campus tour.

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PRCC

# International

**The current Public Relations – Corporate Communications program has 30 international students from 11 different countries, in addition to our domestic students. Here's what our students had to say about why they are here and what their aspirations are.**

**IT'S BEEN EXACTLY THREE MONTHS** since I came to Canada, and how time has flown! A major reason for this is the intensive Public Relations – Corporate Communications program at Seneca College. To be honest, I believed I was somewhat knowledgeable in this field because of my work experience back in India, but I was happy to be proven wrong. We have only completed one semester of this program and it has already opened up so many new avenues and pathways for me. The best part of the program to date has been all of our teachers and their comprehensive teaching methods that cover all the bases. Today, I can proudly say that deciding to study the PRCC program at Seneca College has been one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

**Manasi Sohoni, India**

**MY WHOLE LIFE** I have lived by my high school's motto, "Whatever you need to do, do it right." In Spanish it is, "Lo que debes hacer, hazlo bien." It has prepared me to deal with the real world and to perform well in the workforce. Because of this motto, I have always strived to be a proactive person, a go-getter and a little bit of a perfectionist. It has definitely had an impact in my life, not only professionally but personally. Everything I do, even the smallest thing, I want to do it right.

**Camila Ruiz, Peru**

**I CONSIDER MYSELF** a person who likes challenges and living new experiences. This year my big challenge was moving to Canada to explore one of the most multicultural countries in the world. It is not easy leaving your country, your house and family, but Canadians have been so kind and friendly that I haven't felt like a stranger. I don't regret choosing Seneca College as my place to study. Professors have been really helpful, encouraging us every day to give our best and become the professionals that the future needs. There is so much knowledge that I can acquire and that will help me to achieve my objective of bringing back to my hometown new ideas that can have a positive impact.

**Tatiana Arenas, Columbia**

**COMING TO THE OTHER SIDE** of the globe was something I never imagined doing. I have never been away from home for more than 10 days, so this one-year program seemed daunting. From finding a place to live and making new friends, from getting used to this country and living the college life again, it's been an adventure. Toronto really has a place for everyone and you grow with every interaction. Life here in the beginning may be difficult and I still feel homesick occasionally, but every day is a new adventure. I don't know if I will settle here or go back to Mumbai but for now, I know that I have made my place in the city and the city has made its place in my heart.

**Srishti Palimar, India**

**MOVING TO CANADA** to pursue my dreams has been the most impactful decision I have made in my life.

The adjustment has been nothing short of life changing. My personal growth in a few short months has been huge. But, moving to Canada was the right choice. I have been fortunate enough to have been placed in a program at Seneca College with people from all over the world. I'm being taught how to traverse my way through a career in public relations, gaining invaluable insights from some of the best PR professionals and professors in Canada. Also, I have made friendships that will last a lifetime with people from countries and places that I have never been to, or in some cases, heard of. While I'm still adjusting and sorting myself out, I look forward to all of the crazy, random educational experiences life in Canada has to offer.

**Nahjdla Seale, Barbados**

**MY DESIRE TO EXPAND MY HORIZONS** professionally and explore life skills out of the comfort of my home is what brought me to Canada. Being an English graduate was not enough, I knew I wanted to learn more. I tried many jobs but the only thing that stood out for me was the art of storytelling. I read many books about it but didn't feel ready, so I accepted the challenge of competitive and practical learning by pursuing Public Relations at Seneca.

**Rashi Jain, India**

**SINCE CHILDHOOD, I'VE BEEN A STORYTELLER.** My background in professional communications started with volunteer roles during my undergrad. On the job, I picked up skills and developed expertise in writing, public speaking and designing. This qualified me for my first job as a content developer. I took courses online and researched daily while simultaneously handling two other jobs (radio presenter and blogger). Later, I discovered David Ogilvy and the role creative communications plays in advertising. I discovered the importance of PR skills for my career goals and decided to learn as much as I can in PR. I appreciate that Seneca trains its students to handle real life concepts. I was impressed by the remarkable changes the students made in enhancing the user experience for the school website. Together, these and more, led me to study the PRCC program at Seneca.

**Bolatito Laniyan, Nigeria**

**MOVING TO CANADA WAS A TOUGHER DECISION** than I ever thought it would be because when you are an international student, one thing that keeps you up at night is doubt. What if this program is not what I think it is? What if I have made the wrong choice? But in my case, I couldn't have made a better choice. We dread making decisions, but now I am at Seneca, learning about the industry more than I ever did when I worked in the industry. The professors here make sure you know what the PR industry really looks like. And I think that has been the most beneficial. The hands-on experience, the great opportunities, there is nothing that you would want to miss out on. I think I might have become my own hero for making this decision and sticking to it!

**Apoorva Sharma, India**

**I SPEAK FOUR LANGUAGES** and have worked in five countries. I came here because a Canadian guy "trapped" me with a diamond ring. As a young immigrant, I needed to further my studies. I bumped into Seneca's Public Relations – Corporate Communications program on Google. I thought it was related to what I learned before, Anthropology, so I gave it a shot. My professors' passion for this field is contagious, and I was infected immediately. The program is very practical and involves a lot of active learning, which fills me with a sense of achievement after each project. I realize as long as I make the effort and keep learning, I will be able to contribute and will be valued for it. I'm so grateful that I have found the thing that was long missing, I've found my "Ikigai" at Seneca. The word "ikigai" is usually used to indicate the source of value in one's life or the things that make one's life worthwhile. The rough translation is, "thing that you live for" or "the reason for which you wake up in the morning."

**Nora Anniwaer, China**

**BEING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT** from Mexico has been rewarding, but challenging. Studying Public Relations – Corporate Communications in English would be stressful for anyone with a different mother tongue. But I am used to being outside of my comfort zone as I grow personally and professionally. Currently, I am living a dream that has been in my mind for 10 years since I obtained my Bachelor's degree in Communications. My educational journey so far has been amazing, showing me that you can make your dreams come true by working hard. I appreciate the support from Seneca faculty, classmates, and administrators. I will have knowledge of PR and have the opportunity of doing a co-op term. This will enhance my employment opportunities and expand my professional horizons internationally and domestically.

**Carolina Salinas, Mexico**

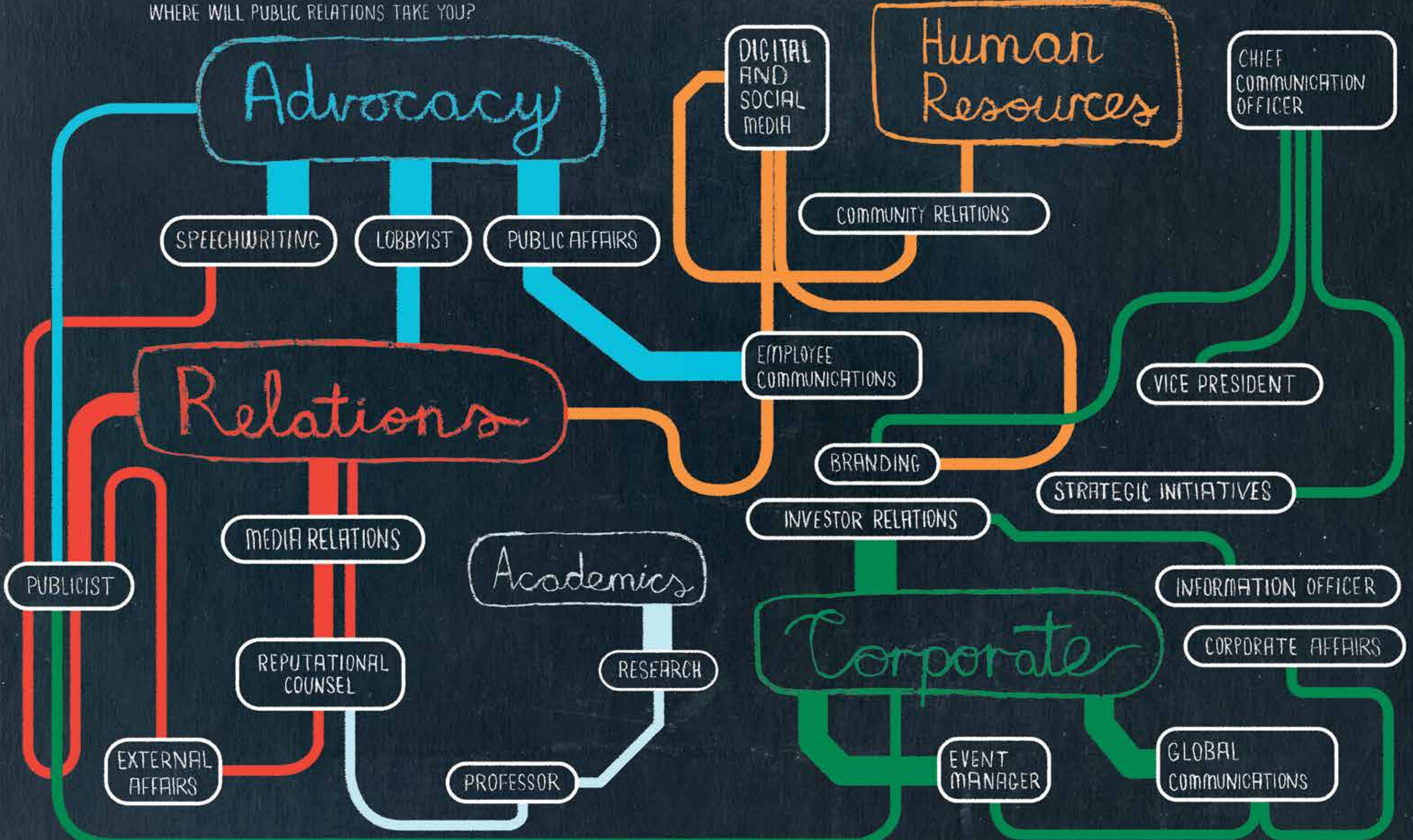
Some of our international students relax at the end of first semester in the lobby of our campus building. The Public Relations–Corporate Communications program currently has students from Barbados, China, Columbia, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru and United States...and Canada, of course.

# Welcome Centre



# Career Paths

WHERE WILL PUBLIC RELATIONS TAKE YOU?



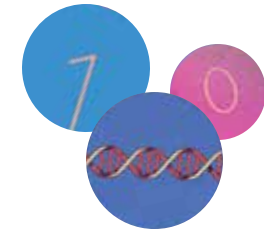


# What's your communication DNA?

## ENTJ

Breaking down that PR code

Extrovert  
Intuitive  
Thinker  
Judging



**DO YOU RESONATE WITH ANY OF THESE WORDS?** If you do, you're exactly who you want to be, if you aspire to be a communications professional. You're very likely an "ENTJ" on the Myers Briggs personality scale.

Most of us have heard of the Myers Briggs test and how it combines various characteristics from introversion to analytical abilities to form 16 different types of personalities. ENTJs are considered to be 'commanders' at work. They are drawn to leadership and strategic roles; they are highly efficient and welcome challenges with gusto and excitement.

Sounds familiar? Sounds like you?

James Humes, the former U.S. presidential speech writer for Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, once rightfully said, "The art of communication is the language of leadership."

This not only applies to your work life but is also a constant every day. Be it conversing on a casual basis or conveying a particular message, there is no one way to communicate.

**Our team**  
Chandana Budhiraja  
Disha Dhingra  
Kanishka Punjabi  
Camila Ruiz Vargas  
Nikita Uberoi

**Illustrator**  
Emmanuel Polanco  
Sweden

Stay knowledgeable about everything that is going on in the world.

Thinker



#### The multi-dimensional individual

“Communications is not a one-size fits all industry,” says Ellen Gunning, Director, Irish Academy of PR. The statement holds true in every form. A communications professional is someone who plays diverse roles and fulfills responsibilities; strategically and tactically.

A corporate communications professional is not only someone who will hold your attention but he or she will also be able to persuade you to a degree which will garner them a desired outcome. This surely sounds very strategic; however, it’s the aim of all communications professionals. We can be perceived as magicians of conversations. We know how to be charming, persuasive and subtle.

“It is important to have an open mind. It means you will have no preconceived notions about the conversation you will have with someone. You have to have a knack for entering, holding and carrying on a conversation,” says Sholom Kemkar, Assistant Manager, Star TV India.

Communication skills are the cornerstone of what makes us good at our work. There are many qualities and attributes that communications professionals use to their advantage. James Grunig’s and Larissa Grunig’s *Excellence Theory* talks about gender roles in the communications field and how even though the industry has more women practitioners, there are few in leadership roles.

“Women have way more sensibility than men and maybe this is why they have the ability and the skills to be able to have this job position,” says Eduardo Cordova, Climate, Culture and Internal Communications Manager—Pacífico, Perú. “We are 13 people in my team—including me—and 10 are women.”

This can be attributed to personal skills, or as we like to call them collectively, “emotional intelligence.” Women tend to be more emotionally awakened than men. That means they have a greater chance of being persuasive, empathetic, conversational and intuitive. Communicators may need to have a ‘feminine outlook’ and approach work in a collegial manner. PR is often considered as the soft side of the various functions present in the gamut of communications. There is a certain set of personal skills that each successful practitioner in the field possesses.



Judging

You don’t always have the answers. Make sure you listen.

“Talking about soft skills, there are three requirements that are the most important,” says Carolyn Fazio, Chair and Chief Executive at Fazio International Ltd (U.S.), a business consultancy group.

“The first is the ability to write well. Second, to stay knowledgeable about everything that is going around the world. This is because you don’t know when and where it will have an impact on your work or your organization. Being involved and informed is very important. The third most important thing is the ability to listen. You don’t always have the answers. Make sure you listen,” says Carolyn.

Creativity, innovation and interpersonal skills are fundamental to succeed in this area of work. A practitioner is someone who is a good public speaker and an even better conversationalist. Versatility and adaptability are also key.

“All of what we do will become a written message or a speech depending on the plan or strategy. In this field, we need versatile professionals who can change their approach from one media to another. Normally, the tactics include graphic design pieces, audio-visual pieces that end up being posted on different platforms. A communicator needs to be versatile in order to write and create pieces that will go to different media,” says Eduardo.

However, are personal skills enough to be a well-rounded communications practitioner? Do you see yourself thriving with just these skills? To be an adroit professional we need the textbook combination: personal skills plus technical skills.

We can define technical skills as the ability and knowledge that someone acquires in order to perform specific tasks. But which ones are needed in this profession?

Most would agree that Microsoft Office Suite programs are a must, alongside relevant familiarity with creative design tools.

“Professionals in this field need to have working knowledge of Adobe Illustrator—design of posters, magazines and newsletters—and Adobe Premiere—video editing,” says Ana Maria Zapata, HR Manager, Iron Mountain (Perú).

“A package like Canva for the creation of GIFs and brochures, and good photography skills on a smartphone is now vital.”

These tools can be a life-saver for many.

In PR, there is a particular skill that needs to be present. “Competition tracking is one of the most important exercises for a PR professional. Ideally at least 10 per cent of your day should be dedicated to studying industry trends, competition strategies, third party perception and response to marketing and sales,” says Sholom.

“Being informed will make them [professionals] take proactive decisions before someone else takes the opportunity,” says Eduardo. “Research is a fundamental part in creating a communications plan.”

Rational research is an essential strategic skill; without it, our communications plans and tactics will be made and executed without any basic knowledge.

“Practitioners need to know how to commission good research and, of even greater importance, how to read the information, statistics, graphs and charts they receive and be able to interpret them and extrapolate the vital nuggets of information,” adds Ellen.

In this profession, there is a need for constant awareness. Reading the news daily and listening to people talking—the popular ‘water cooler talk’—is needed to pay close attention to what is happening internally and externally.

Just as Carolyn says, “You don’t know when and where it will have an impact on your work or your organization. You need to read everything you can. You need to follow industry and trade publications as well as media. You need to know what’s going on to know what each company is thinking about, what agency is merging with which one, who took over certain accounts. Read as much as you can to find out how an agency got a new account.”

Do you see yourself doing these things every day? If not, now is the perfect time to start.

From all the technical skills that a communicator is required to have, all can be learned. Nevertheless, the ability to do research is one of the toughest because it is a very specific skill, which needs to be constantly developing.

### Education is just another brick in the wall

Model education. Is it a prerequisite for becoming a communications practitioner?

“One can start as early as elementary school by establishing a strong reading habit and learning to write,” says Harold Burson, Founder, BCW Cohn and Wolfe.

The need to be well-rounded in a field, such as communications, should be inculcated at an early age. Consciously developing technical skills such as reading and writing can certainly result in a clearer, better and more organized understanding of what the subject is trying to communicate. Like any endeavour, the more you hone and work towards it relentlessly, the better the chances of succeeding at it.

Besides developing professional content writing skills, an essential requirement according to Ellen is to have a broad view of the commercial, political, and socio-economic environment. Awareness leads to better understanding and the ability to connect with your target audience on an interpersonal level.

“I believe that PR people must be good communicators. You cannot survive in this industry if you lack communications skills,” she adds.

A penchant for sensitivity and cultural awareness in the postmodern digital era is pertinent to the business of the organization.

One could argue that not every other person can enter the industry. There should be some solid foundational education that focuses singularly on Corporate Communications.

### The art of communication is the language of leadership.



Extrovert

Here, there are two schools of thought: Some might agree that having a bachelor’s degree or a university degree can give you a head start because you already become well-acquainted with the pressures of the job. Others, like Zapata, say that transferable soft skills are indispensable. All other educational qualifications are secondary.

“In my experience I have worked with different people from different backgrounds like Communications, Business, Psychology, even Social Workers, and they all had good results working as practitioners,” she adds.

A keen eye for detail, the art of weaving stories like a craftsperson and telling them to the world, the ability to adapt to an environment of tight deadlines and shifting priorities in a dynamic work frame are some of the key components that define what a communications professional should be.

The concept of being equipped with the perfect education before entering the field is very subjective. Ultimately, what matters is the ability to analyze people effectively and create profiles on the basis of them. This profiling is done by having a molded, integrated and inclusive understanding of the industry, regardless of the career or the educational qualifications. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the capability “to write and speak so others can pay attention and understand” is a “fundamental skill in today’s marketplace”.

“Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune,” said Jim Rohn, an American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker.

Carolyn abides by this statement. She has both a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in music. When she decided that she never wanted a career in performing arts, she moved towards arts management. This included public relations and fundraising. Along with her husband, she recognized that trade associations and professional societies would be the next big market for PR, strategic planning, and fund-raising. After working under the umbrella of a management consulting firm, they ventured into their own consultancy in 1983. This story confirms that it is not a necessity to have an educational background in the field of communication. Coming from a performing arts background, Carolyn made her way through this industry and established her own firm solely through her passion, dedication and hard work. Corporate communications isn’t limited to individuals with a background that combines journalism, communication and PR. Any individual with good communication skills and a knack for words can excel in this field.

Intuitive



A keen eye for detail, the art of weaving stories like a craftsperson and telling them to the world... are some of the key components that define what a communications professional should be.

### The age-old debate: agency versus corporate

Most of us may have watched the characters of “Mad Men,” the award-winning TV series. It offers many parallels to PR, one being the difference between working in an agency versus within a company’s corporate communications department.

“Where there is a need to communicate, there is a PR person filling that role, whether they know it or not,” says Ellen. “The ones that I have always been most drawn to are crisis counselor roles, political lobbying and strategic communications for business. There are also social media communications roles, product promotion, entertainment PR, spokesperson roles amongst others.”

As a practitioner, working for a variety of clients in an agency allows you to become an expert. You get to develop your own brand, because you’re interacting with clients and journalists across the spectrum. Agency work requires professionals to be great multi-taskers and to juggle responsibilities. For their part, in-house communicators gain a vast amount of knowledge of a particular company and industry through studying trends, competition, sales forecasts and the like, often becoming experts in that position.

Corporate communications can sometimes have a niche focus, but it brings a greater depth of experience. It also gives communicators more opportunities to concentrate on the brand and its day-to-day engagement with its various audiences.

Contrary to popular perception, communications professionals who work as in-house communicators need not necessarily have an agency background.

“Not sure if it has to be a PR agency, but it should be a PR function. You might be either the director or the associate of X company, it does not always have to mean you need to work inside an agency,” says Carolyn. “Younger generations are looking to be creative and get a mark on their work. They are definitely opinionated.”

PR and marketing professionals are under constant pressure to create content for their clients’ audiences. Does hiring an agency take the pressure off in-house PR teams? It depends on the type of content. An agency should be able to create content. Some ghost-write blog posts and guest articles, but brand managers will pay a premium for PR agency professionals to work overtime on content creation if the need arises. That’s not the only consideration, though.

A lot of the time it’s hard for an agency to be an expert on a topic and be able to fully create content—especially more detailed than the usual pieces. The key for in-house work or outsourced agency work is to know the expectations and have a clear set of tasks. Whether brand managers use an agency or their own company’s communications professionals to get the job done, both should know how to create and share high-quality content.

Agencies have expertise for dealing with crises, because putting out fires is an ongoing activity. Large agencies usually have far stronger relationships with the media, quite often in multiple offices, which can be leveraged. However, one shouldn’t disregard the ability of an in-house corporate communications professional or team to handle a crisis situation. Not only will an organization’s communications staff have quick access to executives and other brand experts for responses, they often have a better knowledge of the company and situation. And better knowledge can mean better success.

### The push for measurement

How exactly do we measure success? How can we measure our work? Measurement and analytics are still considered a grey area in our industry. There is no particular metric that governs the industry as a whole. The first step is to set targets and make them measurable. It is important for clients and your company’s CEO to understand the benchmarks against which success will be evaluated.

Gunning says, “I’m a great believer in key performance indicators (KPIs). You must be able to measure your deliverables to your client and find a way of apportioning value to those deliverables. I really don’t think it matters how the measurement is done (I’m not going to get hung up on any particular method), but absolutely everything that a PR practitioner proposes to a client should have measurement built in and yes, those skills should be taught in the early stages of studying for the profession.”



**Set targets  
and make them measurable.**



What's your communication DNA?

**Juggling work and life**

“There is no such thing as a typical day for me. I wear many hats,” says Ellen.

A PR professional’s day involves more than pitching to a client or taking care of a crisis. The job involves a lot of creative thinking and writing. With overarching work requirements, these professionals still manage to balance their personal and professional lives. In this digital age, it is possible for professionals to work from anywhere in the world, including in the comfort of their own homes. Hence, completing daily personal tasks becomes easier. Some organizations understand the need for work-life balance and are increasingly encouraging the employee to indulge in activities that will aid them in striking this balance.

“Indulging in daily and bi-weekly activities helps you separate your professional and personal lives and helps you maintain work-life balance. Sports, I believe, is the best way,” says Sholom.

A communicator is essentially someone who is flexible, adaptable and versatile; someone who can adapt and move easily from one role to another; someone who wears many hats and is multi-faceted. Breaking stereotypes, questioning existing ideas of what constitutes communication and delving deeper into what makes an ‘ideal’ communicator, has led to the realization that there is no specific personality and no ideal set of skills.

It’s clearly in their very DNA. What’s in yours? 



It is up to each person to recognize his or her true preferences.

*Isabel Briggs Myers*

**ENTJ**



**Our team from l to r**

- Chandana Budhiraja
- Kanishka Punjabi
- Disha Dhingra
- Nikita Uberoi
- Camila Ruiz Vargas



Barbara Fagan-Smith

# My life ROI

**The most important organization is the family**

What is your company logo?  
What is your goal  
for your organization next year?  
What is your family logo?  
If you're baffled by the last question,  
you're not alone.

**Barbara Fagan-Smith**  
might be the one you want to turn to.

**By**  
Nora Anniwaer

**BARBARA IS AN ENTREPRENEUR AND AUTHOR.** She is one of Silicon Valley's 100 most influential women and runs a multimillion-dollar communication consultancy—ROI Communication with Fortune 500 companies as clients. As an award-winning author of "The Family ROI Experience: A Step-by-Step Guide to Realizing Your Best Family" and non-profit foundation, Family ROI, Barbara is dedicated to helping people apply business principles to strengthen the most important organization—their family.

Barbara's family logo is one that incorporates both her professional and family life and the journey to her own family ROI.

## My life ROI

**Family ROI**

While running a successful consultancy that focuses on strengthening communication within organizations, she experienced a crisis in her most beloved organization, her family, due to accumulated miscommunications.

The crisis negatively affected her family and it broke her heart to think about giving up the beautiful home they had created together. She began to wonder if the business principles that helped her succeed in her career might help her family, too. To revitalize her family, she started learning and experimenting with multiple communications approaches with her husband, Colin. They tested and applied some key business techniques to their family, such as developing a shared vision and core values, setting the foundation for the creation of family traditions and identity, and attempting to define what a family culture meant to them. Ultimately, the family logo was born.

Barbara's older daughter, Emerald, had actually created it when she was younger. *The logo consists of four redwood trees (the roots of these trees intertwine and are symbolic of support). The logo also incorporates a globe representing the earth they care for and the principle of caring the family identifies with. The last element is an airplane that represents Barbara's husband's career as a pilot.*

"Our motto is to help each other, help our extended family and help other people. We're interested in different ways of helping people," says Barbara. She believes that generosity leads to abundance. She's very grateful that everything she gives keeps coming back.

And that was the start of Family ROI. Fourteen years have passed, Family ROI has helped hundreds of families of all backgrounds visualize their dreams and achieve their goals.

It's hard to imagine a company without a logo, but a family logo seems like a foreign concept to most of us. It is known that if people want to succeed in business, they need to develop a business plan with clear objectives and strategies; they need to allocate their funds and resources wisely to maximize results. Similarly, if we think of a family as a mini organization that requires members to contribute their time and energy to function properly, it may be surprising to see how little effort each family member has made to achieve overall success.

## Our motto:

While cultures and religions may differ, one thing remains certain for all families: kids don't tell their parents anything—ever!

Most parents tackle this problem without direction. Barbara found that open, healthy communication with parents is correlated to positive behaviours with their children. After extensive reading and researching, she developed a way of communication for families that inspires compassion and mutual respect. She shares her tips in a fun and engaging manner for parents and kids alike. The family ROI activities are designed for the inclusion

### The Family ROI experience will help families in four areas: communication, culture, mission and practices.

of the whole family. For instance, when the adults are busy creating the family goal, culture and values, the kids of nine years and older will be engaged with experiential activities and discussion. There is also a "Just for Kids" section for children from three to eight years old, which includes educational craft and play activities related to the project the whole family is working on.

Communications in general between family members can be very challenging given the unique personalities, generation gap and needs of each family member. But better communications methods can be learned, and Family ROI practices provide tools and tactics used in business settings that can be transferred to improving family relationships.

The Family ROI experience will help families in four areas: communication, culture, mission and practices. These modules will help improve the communication between family members, establish a family goal, develop a plan and tactics for achieving this goal. After completing all the activities, families will have a better idea of who they are and where they're going. It ties back to Barbara's belief that families are the foundation of society, so by strengthening families, we will strengthen the world.

# to help each other, help our extended family and help other people.

**A guide to a better balance at work**

"I really enjoy getting stuff done. Not being productive is harder for me," says Barbara.

Like some working adults, she has dozens of productivity books and is always on-the-go. Her day starts at 5:15 a.m. with exercise and is often followed by meditation. Then she will take a shower and have breakfast. She tries not to have any meetings or jump on emails before 11 a.m. because the morning is the most valuable time to do the most important thing, "the frog".

According to Brian Tracy's book on procrastination, "Eat That Frog" the frog means something important to do, but you don't want to do it. So, the idea is that you eat your frog first thing in the morning, even though it is difficult.

Acting as the CEO of ROI Communication for 18 years, Barbara realized she didn't have to be stuck in sales and marketing anymore. Her leadership and expertise were needed elsewhere. She stepped away from the front line and started guiding the company as a decision-maker. But what's unique to her company is that she takes an egalitarian approach with her management style—something she calls a "heart-based approach".

She tries to have a different form of leadership that is less hierarchical in the management team, and she is there to encourage, support, recognize and appreciate them.

"Fear-based management is different than a healthy dose of challenging opportunities, high expectations and clear accountability," Barbara writes in her blog.

"We have a gross imbalance in the workplace of the two primary forces in life—Yin and Yang. We need both. Traditional work cultures that stem from the 20<sup>th</sup> century are primarily Yang (logical and mind-based) versus Yin (intuitive and heart-based)."

Seemingly contradictory, these two forces actually complement each other.

"Employees need to be empowered and have flexibility and support (Yin) while also being given stretch opportunities and challenges with clear expectations and accountability (Yang)."

### When it comes to how to balance these two, here's her advice:

- trust the heart-based approach
- trust your gut
- take care of yourself
- support your team to do the same

"It took me a while to realize that I don't have to do things I don't want to do," says Barbara. "But when I realized that I could shift where my focus is and really think about what I love to do, it opened up opportunities for other people."

Trying out the new model herself, she oversees the business as a leader and has the leadership team run it. This model works for her organization, and it also frees her up to do other things that she really cares about, like addressing the climate crisis and social injustice experienced in today's society.

**Yin Yang**

Flexibility  
Support



Opportunities  
Clear expectations  
Accountability

## My life ROI

**Living ROI**

Despite valuing the benefits of downtime, Barbara can't help feeling overwhelming pressure from the unrealistic standard that is ingrained in the work culture, where we're always required to be productive. We're all too caught up being a better cog in the wheel of capitalism and often forget to take care of our mind and body.

Like most people, she was also afraid of being considered a slacker, and had challenges leaving work behind even if she wanted to. But she had to take a three-month sabbatical after surgery for ovarian cancer last May.

That was the first time in 40 years that she stepped back from her professional work, went fully unplugged. Imagine how much anxiety it caused! Yes, she was nervous before taking the break, but guess what? It wasn't that hard after all. She recounted her experience:

"It makes sense to me now that my ability to have a real vacation is a reflection of the confidence I have in my team being able to handle anything I might have handled."

The trust she built with her team over the years served as the backbone of her company's day-to-day operation.

During the time-off, her mind unwound, and brilliant ideas began to crop up in her head. Now she's hoping to "create a communal community that has self-sustaining food and energy and a really cool culture". She felt rejuvenated by doing things she absolutely loved, including reading, writing and hiking. She introduced another tactic for living a fuller life—designating a "thinking spot" where she can conduct directed and focused thinking for important questions.

"After taking a sabbatical, I do know that I want to be more tangibly involved in solving and being a part of the solution of our climate crisis and social injustice," she says.

"It is time that we needed to get our hands dirty and make stuff happen," she says.

When it comes to making stuff happen, people always think about to-do lists.

"A fulfilling life is not about checking things off, it's about spending quality time in the present," she says.

In a story she shared in her blog, she talked about a cozy Saturday when she left behind her to-do list. Instead, she picked blackberries and, later that night, watched a meteor shower with her husband. She felt connected to mother nature and to the rhythm of the universe.

## I believe the more we share, the better it will get.

**The Ovarian Cancer**

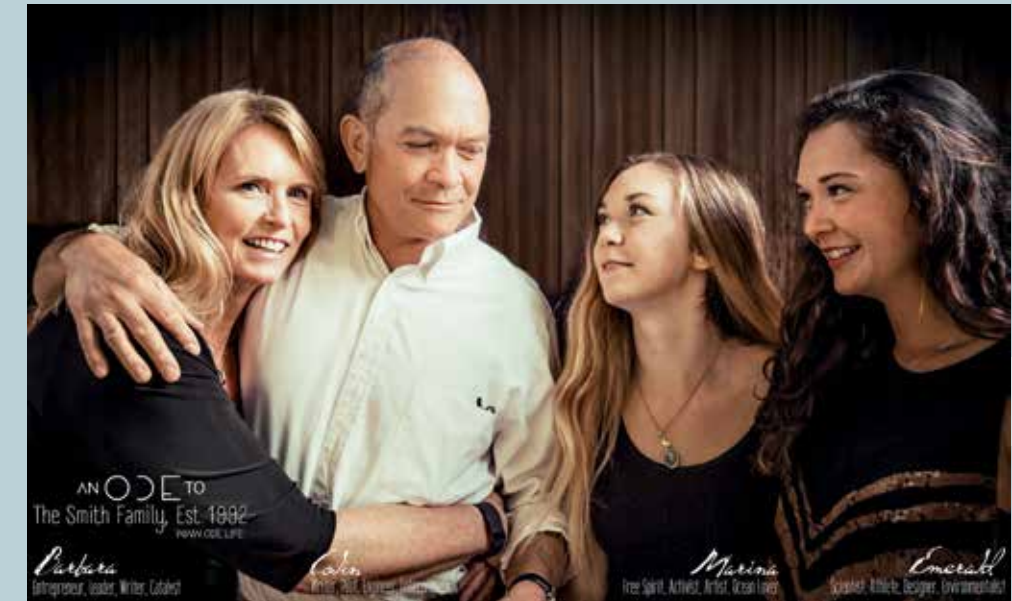
In May this year, Barbara experienced emotional turmoil and an unexpected surgery associated with cancer. The cyst was discovered in her body and immediate surgery was recommended. Barbara was diagnosed with Stage 1C Ovarian Cancer that was caught at an early stage. The second day after the surgery, while morphine was still flowing through her veins, the fear crept its way back:

"Stage 1C was the best-case scenario," she shared on her blog: "I believe the more we share, the better it will get." Rather than agonizing over her health scare, she saw this ordeal as an opportunity to reflect on her life and spread positivity.

Now she is fully recovered, and more grateful for the precious time spent with her friends and family. It puts a smile on her face to reminisce about the time when her family sat around the table and designed their logo together.

## The Smith Family

Est. 1982



**We thrive on adventure,**  
travelling far and wide, sailing, flying, climbing trees,  
hiking, and playing in the ocean.  
We are truly connected as a family.

**We are entrepreneurs—**  
passionate about making a difference  
in the world, helping people  
and protecting the environment.

**We believe in Ohana.**

The Hawaiian concept of extended community—  
in the truest sense of the word.

Nobody gets left behind or forgotten.

We grow food. We recycle. We vote.

We believe in travel and exposure to other cultures.

We believe in experiential learning and the global community.

We believe in packing light, going far and returning home enriched.

We read. We write. We play.

We make music and we laugh a lot.

**Life is good.**

## My life ROI


Barbara believes those important emails still need to be replied to, and work has to be done, but “not at the exclusion of connecting with loved ones and the natural flow of nature”.

**She also gave advice on how to make that happen:**

- set priorities
- engage with nature
- take one day off every week for rejuvenation
- take a minute to think about what you want for this day
- spend 30 – 60 minutes every day on your hobby

For someone who is also thinking about taking time off, Barbara has something to say: “do it!” She also believes people should do it younger.

She shared a great quote she loves: “Life is a piano, it needs to be played, not worked.” Barbara adds, “If you find yourself not playing, take a break.”

People tend to be insecure and think they will lose their position, but taking a break doesn’t mean the end, others around you would much rather have you take a break than leave. So, it’s better to have a rest and get some energy back. Spend quality time with family and friends. After all, “The time to live is now, not tomorrow!” 



The time to  
live is **now**,  
not tomorrow!

Nora Anniwaer

## Write to us



Winter 2020 Issue

***What’s your opinion?***

This publication is a dialogue and we want to hear from you. Tell us what you think about our third issue and what you would like to see in future issues. Let us know what you think is making an impact in the communications industry.

**Public Relations –  
Corporate Communications  
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*Let’s have a conversation.*



# Words,

*once they are printed, have a life of their own.*

*Carol Burnett*

*This issue:*  
Reflecting on  
work-life balance