

**THE COMMS AVENUE
CHAT WITH A COMMS PROFESSIONAL**

The Comms
Avenue

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PATRICIA OBOZUWA'S SESSION

- ❖ I started my career working in an art gallery and then moved to the British Council as the Arts and Sponsorship Manager after a couple of years.
- ❖ I decided to be more deliberate about my career. So I did an audit of my abilities; what I wanted in a job, what skills I had to offer and what I needed to develop.
- ❖ I realized that the common thread between what I did in both jobs was image building through communications and events.
- ❖ Pioneering the communications function for West Africa at Procter and Gamble was where my career really took off.
- ❖ Seeing the sheer power and the impact of effective strategy communications in changing the fortunes of a company, person or even a nation fuels my passion for the industry.



DEVELOPING SKILLS

- ❖ Verbally, I've always been a pretty persuasive communicator but I had to develop my writing skills when I decided to embark on a career in Communications.
- ❖ Writing was the most critical skill for a Communicator. Writing press releases, articles, reports, printed newsletters etc. We didn't have social media and all the various informal internal communications tools that exist today.
- ❖ It is important to keep up to date with the demands of our function and ensure you're able to meet your communications objectives.



DEVELOPING SKILLS

- ❖ Things are constantly in flux. There are new ways to communicate every day. Some are more effective in reaching a particular group but not so much for another audience.
- ❖ I always ensure that I understand the trends in our industry and I master any new skills needed to navigate a new territory.
- ❖ No leader knows it all and we'll miss great, new innovative ideas and big results when we think that we do.



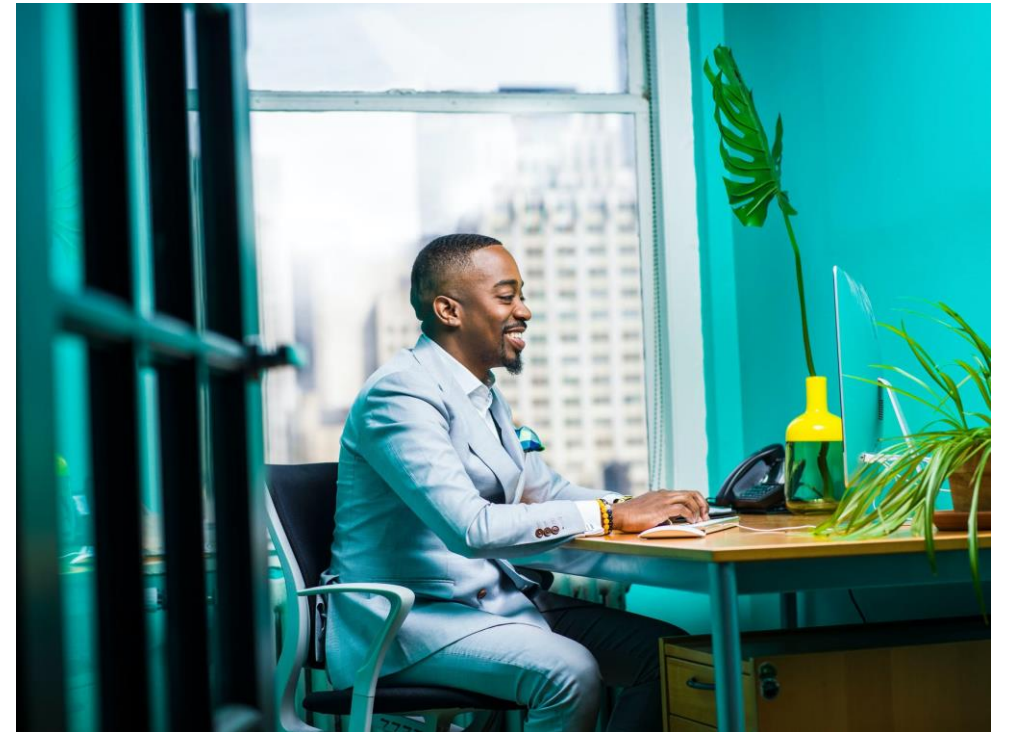
CHALLENGES

- ❖ One significant challenge I personally faced was when Communications started evolving and moving away from drafting a press release and seeing it printed in the newspapers the next morning.
- ❖ In 2006/ 2007, social media started to take-off and online real time news started emerging. This posed a big challenge for a traditional communicator such as myself. That territory was completely new and unfamiliar to me.
- ❖ Even as a highly experienced and accomplished communicator, I knew these skills were essential.



MASTERING NEW TRENDS

- ❖ To master social media, I asked the youngest person on my team who was social media savvy to reverse-mentor me. I insisted that she should be very strict in getting me to meet my deliverables.
- ❖ It is important to understand when something new is here to stay. You need to get on board very quickly and evolve along with it.



PREPARING FOR CHANGE AS A COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL

- ❖ In light of COVID-19, watch closely and understand where things are heading. Don't make assumptions.
- ❖ Stay close to your business or your client and understand what the needs are today. The needs are different from company to company and industry to industry.
- ❖ With employees working from home, there is a much bigger need for internal communications and with most audiences focused on COVID-19, the external communication balance is tilting in that direction at the moment.



IMPORTANT METRICS TO MEASURE RESULTS

- ❖ Firstly, devise the right communications plans to achieve business objectives and then use the metrics that have been agreed to measure with reasonable accuracy.
- ❖ It is important to know how well you're doing vs. your competitors. We have to align ourselves with how the business thinks/acts.
- ❖ The important thing with metrics is that you choose those that best reflect how well communications meets business objectives and you periodically analyse the results. You will need to amend your plans as needed based on the results you see.



IMPORTANT METRICS TO MEASURE RESULTS

Some metrics to consider are:

- Share of voice in the media.
- Favourability of media coverage (negative, positive or neutral).
- Spokespersons featured.
- External endorsement.
- Penetration of key messages that we pre-select.



PARTING NOTES

1. Always set a high standard for yourself.
2. Never lower that standard.
3. Always operate with utmost integrity.

