



Transcript for S16, E6 - Using internal communication to inspire young people at work with Antoinette Gyan

Intro: Welcome to the future of internal communication podcast. I'm Jen Sproul, CEO of the Institute of Internal Communication.

Since we launched this series in 2021, the world of work has been disrupted by event after event. A pandemic, geopolitics, AI, extreme weather events, remote and hybrid working, generational shifts, inclusion, diversity - the entire nature of how we work needs transformation.

This podcast explores opportunities for internal communication in the future of work. Internal comms is a critical function that helps organisations achieve lasting change, building trust and relationship between people, in pursuit of shared goals.

Please, join me, Dominic Walters and Cat Barnard as we dissect what this means for internal communication.

With relentless change the new norm, it's time to reimagine our profession.

Dom (01:01)

Hello and welcome to another episode of the Future Internal Communication podcast. I'm Dominic Walters and joined as ever by my co-host Cat Barnard and Jennifer Sproul. And today we're talking to a professional that rather than building careers helps build people. I'll explain a bit more about that in a moment, but looking particularly at the systems that allow people to thrive. So our guest today is Antoinette Gyan who joins us from Accra in Ghana and is a leadership communication coach and mentor communication auditor.

Antoinette has spent over a decade working with the United Nations, UNICEF and Plan International shaping how organisations communicate, lead and grow. She now partners with organisations globally to transform culture from the inside out. But alongside that, perhaps the most personal work lives closest to her heart and we're going to talk more about this. As founder of YSA Global, a youth-focused NGO investing in the development of young leaders who will shape tomorrow's workplaces. Today we're to be talking primarily about what internal communication must do differently to support, retain and empower young professionals although I suspect we'll go more broadly. Anyway please welcome Antoinette, hello welcome thanks for joining us.



Antoinette Gyan (02:13)

Thank you for having me. Hello Cat. Hello, Jen. I'm happy to meet all of you.

Dom (02:18)

We met, I think, on LinkedIn, actually. So as we were saying, it's nice to have something positive to say about that often maligned social media source. And we had some great conversations about all sorts of things, particularly leadership communication, which we both do, and also around the ethics of communication. And I know we're to be talking primarily about some of the issues that young people encounter, the difficulties and challenges they face when coming into work. And in fact, today we're speaking at the end of May in 26. It's interesting that here in the UK one of the leading retailers next, a fashion retailer, the chairman has said there was a massive problem with youth employment and he's quoting that whereas two years ago they would receive 10 applicants for every job working in their shops often taken by younger people in two years that's doubled. It's now nearly double. It's 19 application per job and his point is that there's a real problem with starter jobs. Not just those that we may say get taken over by AI, but starter jobs in general as businesses contract as finances get tougher. It's those sort of entry level jobs certainly in the UK that are being taken away quickest. So it'd be great to get your take Antoinette because I know you've done a lot of work on this. So from your experience what do you think are some of the biggest challenges that young people encounter today when they're entering the workforce? There you are, that's a big question to kick us off with.

Antoinette Gyan (03:49)

Yes and that's actually a great question. And ahead of this podcast I had gone to speak to young people about this particular issue because I wanted to apart from the experiences that I've had with them I wanted to also talk to them about how they are feeling about this their workplace and all of that so shout outs to all the listeners my name is Antoinette often I go by Annette and the young people call me Miss Annette which I love very much.

So I'm joining from Accra and I'm excited for this conversation. Often for young people, when they are coming into the workplace, they are going through various internal struggles and the conversations that I've had with them especially for cultures where hierarchy is a big issue and there is high power distance, young people tend to wonder what their role is



in the organisation, how they are going to adjust or fits into the system. So some of the things that they shared with me as understanding the workplace culture itself becomes a big a big issue for them because apart from school, so they are making a transition from school into the workplace.

And it became it becomes a challenge to understand what is it that I'm expected to do apart from my work. How are people perceiving me? And one person told me that it took them two years to actually understand their role, even though they already had the technical competences, they've done everything, but it's taken a long time and also managing relationships then becomes a big issue for them, learning how to deal with other colleagues, how to deal with power, how information flows and all of it. And a lot of these things are things that fall into the domain of internal communication.

Dom (06:04)

Do you think that these things have got worse over the last decade or so these issues and challenges?

Antoinette Gyan (06:11)

I would tend to think so because I think that the young people of today are going through a different transition than perhaps our time, which is a bit closer, and then maybe your time, because they are dealing with social media. Social media it's a different world, and they tend to do comparisons and see other people's progress. And some people actually told me that they tend to see how people are progressing in their career, looking at themselves and what it is that they expect and the narratives they are picking up online and then now to translate that into their own life when they go into their first entry role or all of that, then they are navigating this idea of what it's supposed to be as against what it actually is. And there becomes a dissonance they have. And so apart from managing their own, the work that they have to do with the relationships, the power dynamics, the culture, the engagement they have to be in it, the trust, everything. They are also navigating their own internal struggles of what it is that they have to do. And one word that came into almost the 10, 15 conversations that I had with these young people is uncertainty. So they are very uncertain about themselves, how they are navigating the space, what their future is going to be like, meaning for them, etc. One interesting narrative again that I've heard from some people is that young people today are short-sighted and then they go into the workplace and they leave too quickly and they don't they don't stay and all some of it is based on this



uncertainty they have about what it is that they are supposed to be, their life, their meaning, etcetera.

Dom (08:14)

I find this fascinating, I'm going to pass over in a second, but just to pick up on this idea about uncertainty and people having expectations set by social media, that's a fascinating insight because I guess everyone has always compared themselves with other people but now younger people have more immediate and more comprehensive ways of assessing their performance and how they're doing. I hadn't really thought of that. I've got three daughters in their twenties, the youngest of which is still at university.

But I'm sure that they get expectations from parents, but also from other people. And they see other people doing better. And I suppose no one ever presents themselves in a negative light on social media. No one's going to say, well, very rarely, I imagine, I'm not doing that well. I'm not coping that well. It's always a very positive way of approaching stuff. So that's a really insight. I guess my question before I pass over is, how can we help young people to put that sort of social media pressure into perspective to cope with it, to deal with it? What sort of things can we as employers if you like do with that.

Antoinette Gyan (09:13)

That's a nice question and I wanted to share this anecdote that in the past if you wanted to find out about someone you would gossip or someone would tell you today you open your phone and everybody's life is before you and we didn't have to do that. If you had to go and find out something from someone, it was gossip. You had to go and nose it out to actually find it. But today it's in your face and all of that.

But I believe that as employers, what could be done is the meaning making, sense making, and the connections that they can draw in terms of the storytelling and making young people understand the various stages in their career growth and development and making connections to what where they are now, the role they play in the organisation, and what what realistic what is realistic for the stage they are in in their career development so that they are not putting unnecessary pressure on themselves and feeling like they are not meeting expectations or stretching themselves thin and not achieving what it is that they have to achieve because they want everything so quickly.



Cat Barnard (10:26)

This is such a fascinating topic, isn't it? Because what strikes me, and thank you so, so much, Antoinette, for going out and doing some research and chatting with some of the people in your community to get a real sense of hopes and fears. But what I think is so interesting is that is that since the arrival of the internet and media going absolutely mainstream so that all of us have access to 247, 365 news feeds if we choose to tune into them, that generational tropes and memes have never been more pronounced. And obviously it started manifestly with millennials in the workplace, which kind of went in step with the arrival, the emergence of mainstream 247, 365 news feeds. But now, of course, we have the next generation in the workplace, which is Gen Z. And what I was thinking about as you were describing some of the issues that young people face when they're entering the workforce for the first time is we never allow ourselves enough time to really think about how much has changed in a really short period of time. And one of the things or a couple of observations and reflections that I want to throw into the conversation is actually we underestimate how parenting styles have changed. So as a for instance, I'm Gen X and when I was growing up, my parents were still kind of of that view, children should be seen but not heard.

Right? So we weren't actually particularly invited to have an opinion or an active role in conversations about adult issues. And I don't think that is true anymore because I think that later generations have absolutely encouraged their children to think more broadly about global issues and to have an opinion. So that's one thing. And that will obviously have an impact on how people, young people show up at work and the challenge of understanding whether or not it's okay to state my opinion on a topic, that must be really problematic because you're probably coming from a home domestic environment where you are allowed your opinion, your opinion is really valued, it's part of the conversation to going into a place where there's no certainty around, as you said Antoinette, hierarchies, power systems, reporting structures, et cetera. When is an appropriate moment for me to share my opinion, my point of view? That's one thing. And then the other thing that I think is so fascinating is that we rarely stop and reflect on the fact that social media as a phenomenon has allowed everybody who has access to it to have a platform and a voice.

And therefore, it's part of everyday culture that you are expected to have an opinion. Your opinion kind of forms part of how you show up on social media, right? So that, again, makes the issue of what am I allowed to say, what am I not allowed to say more complex for a young person.



I think what you said about the impact of social media on how I feel about my job and how I might feel I am comparing my progress with my peers. I'd not even thought about that. I'd not even thought about that. And that does clearly have a knock-on effect on how long somebody might stay in their role if they don't feel like they're making a comparative amount of progress to their peers who they hold in high regard. So all of that to say, my goodness, it takes the issue of induction to early, for early careers, people joining the workforce for the first time to a completely different level.

I think I've only probably touched on two points there, but from your point of view, through the work that you have done to help with the development of young leaders, what's your thought about inductions? What's the benefit of providing a thorough induction to new joiners in this social media age?

Antoinette Gyan (15:12)

Thank you, Cat, for the question, and you raise very important points here about the appropriateness of speaking up at a certain time and platforms and voice, etc. The truth is that it came up in some of the conversations we had regarding the fear of speaking up at work.

If the workplace is where there is high power distance also, is especially in our African system, there is some of these young people raised the issue of age and hierarchy and how they feel uncomfortable to speak up in certain domains because they don't know if their voice will be punished because then sometimes you don't speak to adults, etc. So back to the question of induction, these young people are going through a cultural adaptation journey. They are going to a way of understanding a new system. So that becomes very important. And especially for the person that said it took them two years to understand how to even fit in their role.

She isn't even the only person. Other people also said it took them such a long time. And if they had a body that worked with them through the understanding their workplace culture and how power worked and how engagements and what the expectation is like, it would have made them perform better in their role than rather than spending time understanding the role and also spending time to perform the role. So you are taking double time and obviously it will not make you perform to the level that you want to. So I believe that internal communication professionals have a very unique opportunity here to bring young people in and help them understand culture and what the expectations are in the organisation. Also, the issue of voice.



We need to think about listening systems, introducing these young people to what the opportunities are for speaking up, what the expectation is, what is right. Because then again, you would also find that the way young people interact in some spaces, right? There is the aspect of business communication, how they need to send emails. Someone can send you email and writing or do all these things, and then they think it's right, but their workplace has its own culture. So the internal communication professional has a role in helping them make that transition, adapt through this journey of learning a new culture, a new way of doing things, and how they can appropriately use their voice in the workplace.

Cat Barnard (18:09)

Which reminds me of a previous podcast guest and conversation that we had in the last series. Gill Ereaut came and talked to us about the work that she has undertaken through the course of her career in discourse analysis, understanding how the words and the language that we use shape organisational cultures and we suggested in that conversation this is a rich opportunity for the internal communication profession to become more involved because the culture is shaped by the things that we say and the culture is shaped by the things that we don't say and then of course how we say them and it's really interesting as you were talking then I was thinking about how I started my journey in recruitment and staffing in the early 1990s. And bluntly, the story is that I had graduated university and taken a job. It was the very tail end of a recession. And my mother was very keen that I would not be unemployed for a prolonged period of time, right? So she found a job in the local newspaper and it was listed as a graduate recruitment scheme. It was not. It was awful. The person that I had to work for was an absolute tyrant. And so when I took the job with the staffing firm, I was so grateful to be there. I cannot even begin to tell you. I was so grateful to be in a new, fresh environment with new beginnings that I think it took me the best part of six to eight weeks for the penny to actually drop what the role entailed because I'd understood what the role entailed in a very abstract way. Here's a job description. Yes, I can do all of those things, but I didn't understand it in a systemic way that allowed me to get a handle on what my contribution was to a wider group collective endeavour. And that for me comes back to, and we miss so many opportunities, don't we? Because we make assumptions about what we think it is that people know and what they don't know. But actually the reality is for somebody joining the workforce for the first time after school or after college or university, we cannot assume anything about what it is that they know. They're entering the world of business or industry for the very first time.



We can't make any assumptions. We have to start the conversation where they are at. And we can't do that until we take the time to listen and learn what their understanding is of the world. So this piece around communication and induction is really foundational, isn't it?

Antoinette Gyan (21:18)

Yes, that's really true. And let me tell you, as you were telling that story, it reminded me of my own story where when I got into when I had finished school, so I did an internship, so it was kinda like my exposure to the workplace. And I didn't know that reply all means that it goes to everybody.

You know, I didn't know that reply all goes to everyone on the email thread, right? So they had sent an email, etcetera, and then I was sending an email to another person, but it was not part of the initial conversation. I was just saying something and it was actually funny. I was making a joke and saying, something da da da and then I sent it to everyone.

You know your first rule. So I was I was sitting at my desk and I see Jen, look at you. Oh my God no. So I was sitting at my desk and the manager, communication manager comes to call me and says, you know that you send an email to everyone on the mill. I said, my goodness. She said, you need to learn how to do all of that. And I said, Okay, well, you know, you would assume that people know, but they don't teach these things in school. The communication, how you communicate, how to send emails, how you do this, and so the orientation that we have, it shouldn't be like we take the box. There are really important details that we need to say to these young people. Imagine someone like a young person that has come in and they are already very self-conscious. No young people, they're very self-conscious. Everything is personal, and especially Gen Z, everything is so personal. So imagine something like this happened to someone, they would go home cry, and well, me, I didn't cry, but they would go home, cry, feel bad, if I'm rubbish, and why did I? And especially if the boss also doesn't do it in a kind way or look at it as a teachable moment to help them to understand and all of that that becomes like it has an emotional toll on the person and they feel what am I doing here? I don't even know what I'm doing, I'm not contributing anything. Let me find somewhere else and all that. So that that also becomes a big issue for these young people. So again the orientation shouldn't be that we are just helping them to go through what we do for every new stuff. It has to be because otherwise then they will take longer and it will cost the company more money. **So we need to take the time to orient them, let them learn about business communication, what is important, how they do it, what is expected, and then also more importantly, helping them**



understand their cultural nuances. Because what when you were saying about the discourse analysis and about what is said and what isn't said.

A lot of the times it's about people are picking up what isn't said and you have said what it is. We are an open culture, we do this, we open da da da. They are picking up all the things you haven't said to them. And people know, and they will now begin to make their own meaning of what it is that is right or not, the person that spoke in the meeting that was shut down for how people are quiet in the meeting like something is happening. They are picking all of these up and building their own internal systems of how they have to adapt and exist in the workplace and a lot of work actually has to go into it. And we need to also help them to belong, feel safe in the space because the age and hierarchy is a big deal.

Cat Barnard (25:04)

I'm going to pass to Jen, but I just want to footnote that also with some findings that are UK centric, but are very close to the heart of the purpose of the IOIC. We know because there was some research done a couple of years ago by the Chartered Management Institute that a really low percentage of line managers have received any kind of training to help them communicate better. I can't remember what the exact data point is, but it's definitely less than 20%. And so the issue, the opportunity for internal communication becomes even more pronounced because there is this absolute need, isn't there, to create a communication bridge and to not only help fill in the blanks for new starters, but also to help with the development of managers to become better communicators in order that they are better equipped to help their new starters, their early years, careers, members of the team to become, to really feel part of the team and the group endeavour. Sorry, I'm rambling, Jen.

Jennifer Sproul (26:20)

Yes, and you picked up on a point I was going to make out as well and listening to it. And as I've just been listening to it, there's lots of things that stick out that have already been talked about. But for me, there's a couple of things that environment, safety, reality. The reality of how someone feels, the reality of will and how we create the gaps of reality. Reality is distorted before you get to the workplace. What's real is already distorted to you. So you have to unlearn how your brain has been trained to see what's real and what's not real. And I think that's quite a heavy cognitive load on an individual as well. And I think that, we've talked a lot about Gen Z, but there's another thing that strikes me, and I say this with



friends with a lot of younger children now, I have friends in work, it's teachers, schools, et cetera, cetera, early years. The anxiety that young people are experiencing is increasing.

That anxiety of I don't want to go to school, how do people going to look at me, what's being said about me, or the power struggles you have in friendship dynamics, in WhatsApp groups, in all those sorts of things are building even more so. It feels like it's increasing for the generation that will come through in the next raft as well. And then on the flip side, I think what I'm hearing as well is that, this sort of innate responsibility to of course help them understand what their role is technically but where the challenge is where is their role humanly?

And I think that historically, and I was smiling at the internet when you were talking about your reply or email, because I remember, my story was going to be, I remember I'd just started work and I didn't understand, again, the human manager, the power dynamic, how that all meant, and I was really scared. So I wanted to book a day off and I didn't know how to do it. And I told my friends I'd be somewhere and I didn't have the courage to ask for a day off.

So I was in this terrible thing where all my friends hated me because I just didn't turn up. Because again, those things that you walk into, asking or having a conversation or having a dialogue with somebody that's above you that you're like, well, I think you're real assist, but it's not like this. And I'm used to this power struggle over here. Are they the queen bee? I need to do differently. It's a lot for people to understand. And we hear narratively in the jobs market as well. We obviously talk about, AI coming and Dom referenced it at the beginning that there's less jobs.

There's that power dynamic going into it. And if you listen to anybody that talks about the future of work, and I know Cat and I were at an event the other week where they talked about the fundamental skills that people need in the workplace right now to have longevity in their careers are innately human. Communication, critical thinking, how to forge relationships, how to have human dynamics. Those are the skills that are going to be needed. I feel like what we're saying and what we're doing are in a great contradiction to each other and then we have managers that come in and haven't been trained or given the space to be that person that helps new joiners understand all of that. But that was my ramble. Where I'm going with this as well is that we talk a lot about, and as internal communicators we talk a lot about it, purpose, belief, belonging, values, what does it mean?

And young people, as you've talked about, are building this sense of, is what I believe, this is my voice, this is my strength, this is what it looks like. Then they're going through this shift of that's not reality, that looks different, that doesn't go any out. And then you've got the



other shift of, well, I think I should work somewhere that has these values that resonate with me, but the jobs market is harder and I just need a job and the power struggles and the hierarchical things are happening.

And you think, well, they sound all right on paper, but when I walk in, it's nothing like the reality that's been pitched to me. But I want to be someone of purpose at work. I want to create an identity for myself because I'm still trying to forge my own identity. But what choice do I have in that when there is limited jobs and no one's helping me understand relationships and dynamics of the human nature in the workplace?

And as internal communicators, we do a lot of work to drive purpose, values, what does it mean, how does it show up? Do you think, I guess my question is, purpose is so important to new joiners, but how do we make for them, where perhaps they don't have as much choice, because the power struggle is more with the employer now than the employee.

And how do we help them feel that sense of purpose? And what do we need to do differently to bring that to life? How do you think that sense of purpose and identity shows up from that transitional phase that we're talking about?

Antoinette Gyan (31:03)

Jen, that's that's a really interesting question and actually rather very difficult question. Over the weekend I was at an event, a lady a ladies event. They call it the barta branch, where we were having conversations around purpose. And actually my second book, which is called Full Circle, When Life Comes Full Circle, is around purpose. So we just talk about finding purpose and bringing meaning to what you do.

This conversation is really difficult because again, what you were saying about finding jobs, finding something that fits, and just getting because you need to pay bills and do all of that, it makes the dynamic very difficult because you will find yourself in an environment where you know that perhaps it doesn't fit or it's not going where you want to go. The values don't align with what you want, etc. And that becomes difficult. So the initial idea is where the internal communications professional begin to do the real work because your vision, your value is not what you paste on the wall. Those internal works that need to be done.

To make sure that what is said matches what we do. Sometimes I wonder why people cry wolf because you cannot say we are doing a lot of good work, but but people don't have no, the right things are not being done. If the right things are being done, people will begin to see and experience it. And so the the whole idea of internal communication, leadership communication, real work has to be done.



here leaders again are prepared on how to to lead. There is this statistic that eighty percent of the work of leadership is communication. So leaders spend majority of their time communicating. And it's a shame that if leaders, if someone who has technical competency has been promoted to go and be a leader.

And they haven't been prepared, then they are going to cause trouble because and it's not them. They believe that they are doing the right things, right? So it has to be a case where every leader we do all these and on trainings, everything, but every leader is trained on leadership communication, leadership presence, leadership, how to influence the teams, conversations to have, even when you are under pressure, because that is the real test of character, right?

When you are under pressure, how you communicate what are your communication ethos, what are your beliefs, what you have to have all this in place for crunch time because when it happens, you are going to show up the way you know how to show up, and you need to be prepared for it. So that is the leadership communication. And then the internal communication colleagues also have to insist. We have to be the people who insist that real things are done if something is not right.

If we said something and it doesn't align with what we are doing, we need to call it out. That's the foundation. Then when it comes to the young people, if this foundation has been prepared and the workplace is working the way it's supposed to be, or at least there's a semblance of that, then when these young people come in, we are teaching them how to go through the culture of something that is safe, right?

Before they can now begin to look at my purpose in this, what am I contributing to? Because in the storytelling, in the narratives, how we are showing we are doing all these human interest stories and highlighting key contributions in the workplace and all of that, they need to find the link between the procurement that I'm doing and how it links to the overall goal of the organisation, who I'm contributing, what the difference I am making in the community or the organisation or elsewhere with my work that I'm doing. Sometimes they cannot find the thread. They cannot make the connection. And so then they they just look at it like, I come, I sit behind the computer, I do certain things and I'm not doing anything. And maybe the money is new is not good. Maybe I can be an influencer or I can do something else that is fancy. So the storytelling we need to do the storytelling that will help them to make these connections with what they are contributing to and what is meaningful as well for them.



Jennifer Sproul (35:38)

The criticality of storytelling as a skill set for internal communicators comes through because we are in the business of creating emotion that creates action, that creates something, that creates the environment, whatever that's looking for. And it's so powerful. And I think your point around safety, I think one of the things that we do in annual research and we just released our latest IC index, which looks at employees in the UK. And what we're seeing this year is psychological safety is getting lower and lower.

And I think that as you're talking as well about leadership, communication and all the things that we do, it's not the words on the wall that will determine whether the values live or die, it be the behaviours that we enact and the environments that we create and the space that we create for it. I worry, do you, this is perhaps maybe a pointed question and perhaps it's more towards internal communicators but more towards leaders and managers as well. Are we creating the right role models? Because behaviour is learn, right? It's behaviour breeds behaviour where it goes up or it goes down and we have leaders at one end that display this is what communication at the top of the hierarchy looks like and feels like and sounds like. Then you have managers over here that create it. Then we're just breeding those behaviours down when we know we have anxiety and safety and storytelling at the core of it. Is there more work we need to do in whether that's future leaders or development programmes for those that are going through those pathways to progress towards being there that great role model that makes a value or a purpose a lived reality, do you think there's work to do to create better role models of communicators in organisations?

Antoinette Gyan (37:20)

Definitely. And as you were talking, I was just trying to reflect. And there is that thing about performance, right? So you were saying the role modelling. Are we creating the role modelling?

On the surface, when you would look at it in terms of how leaders perform in meetings, at places, at events, they're showing up, there is a performance to it. I don't know if I'm expressing it well. There is a performance to it of they knowing what the expectation is, and then the showing up. So there is that aspect where they are doing it.

But in instances where the cameras are off, the cameras would include real cameras and the human eye cameras and everything. You would find that when you dive deeper and you are checking at conversations around performance review, messaging, if change is happening.



When you go through the nuances of it, that's why I'm saying the performance, because on the surface, of course, things people know what it is that is expected of them. They know people are watching, they will do it. But when you go into the nuances of it, you would find that there is still more work to be done. And those are the ones that build the culture. So they will say the illusion of leaders because then they will say, We are doing everything. This is what it is and then maybe performance review because people will be found out if they write something. So they will write what is expected of them or even in polls or surveys they would so those are the performance aspects of it. But when you will do audits or conversations and all of that and the real issues come up.

Then you will find that leaders are frustrated and then you find the leaders illusion. Because what you are thinking is not what people think. And they've picked up other aspects. So in terms of role modelling it really because the talk must match the work and if we are having this illusion that is happening, it means that there's a missing link.

Jennifer Sproul (39:44)

I get you. That makes sense. I think just I'll pass to Dom next. I'm going to say as you were talking, what strikes me about the way you describe so eloquently there as well is that the illusion of leadership and the reality of leadership, right, from the gloss and the end and the recorded to what it really is like, it's just like we talked about with social media. When you're following this illusion of good and great and comparison and competitiveness. And we're breeding that comparative mindset in our people is also happening.

It feels, we need to get real. That's the best way I can think about it. But it mirrors, I think, that thing you're describing, the social media creates in us as well, that's what good looks like, but it's not real. And we have to work all those things out, don't we? Anyway, that was just my, as you were saying, and that was brilliant. Anyway, thank you so much. I'll pass to Dom now. We're in Dom's space as well now, our leadership and manager, so he's, you know.

Dom (40:37)

Well, I think we've covered so many very interesting points. Again, I have lots of notes. So let's be good to come into land, and focus on just one or two key things. So we believe as an institute that great communication unlocks organisational success. We know that one of the key elements in organisational success has to be nurturing talent, bringing young people forward, making sure the investment the organisation makes in young people is paid back



so that young people get something from their work and the sense of purpose that you talked about. I also, from our reminiscences, realised that we've always had issues. I joined the bank in the 80s, Lloyds Bank in the 80s. And very briefly, back in that time, the banks would shut their branches at 3.30 and then that would allow them two hours until 5.30 to do all the processing. But I joined with a friend, I won't name him because he's now a very senior and respected HR executive nonetheless. He joined the bank largely because he thought they finished at 3.30 full stop. So on his first day come 3.30, he put on his coat and marched through the door and was very surprised and pulled back and asked to do loads of processing. So it's not a new thing, but it's got worse I think from what you're saying. And it's got worse because maybe leaders use your phrase, illusion about how good they are at communicating. And now young people are more critical of themselves because of what they're seeing all around in terms of social media. And I've picked out some fantastic ideas from what you've said, particularly around helping people have a realistic view of what careers they are available and what they can expect at what stage in their career. I think that's something we can do as employers and as leaders. I think helping people speak up at work because you reminded me it's a very frustrating place to be a young person in a new job and know Jen said she felt sufficiently intimidated not to ask for a day off I hope that wasn't when you're at the IOIC Jen but no it was well before that in my career.

Jennifer Sproul (42:36)

No, no, no, wasn't. You'd be pleased to know it was a good 25 years ago.

Dom (42:38)

But it's a great story because it reminds us that people need to be encouraged to open up. And you talked very, very interestingly about having listening procedures and helping people to raise their voice. But I think what really struck me was you talked about teachable moments and that really resonated with me. Probably also shed some light on my failures as a parent, but not using situations to be disciplinarian about stuff, but to help people understand and explain. And that I thought was a really interesting point.

But those are my thoughts. It would be great to come into land with your summary please Antoinette. So based on what we've discussed, lots of people listening to this who are internal communication practitioners will be thinking, this is something I can really do to help the organisation and help people build their careers. So from your point of view, what



are the top three things that as internal communication practitioners we can be doing to help young people develop their careers?

Antoinette Gyan (43:34)

Thank you, Dom, for that. Now, you know, as communication people we are in the business of relationship. Everything we do is relationship building, etc. And so at most times when I talk about communication, I want to be as basic to do the communication one on one because that is where the work as like when you think about the communication practitioner and the roles that we perform, even the various roles, if you think about other our aspects. We have media relations, investor relations, partnerships, all of it. So our role is just about relationship. So when we think about it in terms of internal communication and young people, what we need to think about number one, is connection.

Making young people feel connected in the workplace and helping them to belong to something. Because that is all that they are looking for. Imagine you are an outsider. Even in your own home, when you begin to feel like you are an outsider, if you feel you don't belong, and especially a young person who is not even already sure, they have a lot of doubt. So in helping them to align and do the work. We need to help them feel connected in the workplace. We can do various things. If it's mentorship programmes, if we are helping them understand the listening aspect of things, listening systems, and then the feedback loops and all of that, helping them do that. Then the next one is about safety. Jen was saying about the psychological safety of the workplace and all of that. People spend over 10 hours in the workplace. So you use age to sleep, and then so 18 and then the maths where the rest is. So you are spending a lot of time in this place. And imagine you are going to a place where you are so scared. If you can't ask for a day off, I sent a reply or and the boss is a tyrant, and all of our stories that we have, and this person is putting all this burden on them. How can they contribute anything meaningful?

And then the third point would be about the language that we use, the transition, and that's helping them to transition from school to work, the language that they use, helping them to understand the how to communicate, how to write, what is the right thing to do, and giving them the right tools that they will need to make that transition would be very important for them. And already internal communication professionals are doing great work, so we encourage them to actually pay a lot more attention to the young people entering the workplace so that they can stay a longer etc.



Dom (46:33)

Wow, Antoinette, fantastic. Connection is the future of internal communication and you've helped us focus that on how we can help young people. So connection, safety and language, I think three fantastic points and a great way to bring a really fascinating conversation into land. So thank you very much for joining us.

Antoinette Gyan (46:51)

Thank you.