



Transcript for S15, E3– 2026: a year of internal communication impact with Colin Archer FIIC

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.

Dominic Walters (00:01.026)

Hello and welcome to another edition of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. I'm Dominic Walters and I'm joined as ever by my colleagues, Cat Barnard and Jennifer Sproul. And today we welcome back Colin Archer. Colin is Head of Communication for the Steam Thermal Solutions business at Spirax. And I'm going to find out a bit more about that in a second, Colin. But also Colin was one of the first guests we had. I think some five years ago, back at the early days of the Future Internal Communication podcast. And someone that if you do listen to a number of our podcasts, we often refer to because the insight he gave us that we have permission as communicators to ask questions across the whole of the business. And it's something we've talked about and referred back to a lot. So again, we'll pick up on that. It's great to have Colin along, not least because he's a fellow and also very influential on the fellows committee as well.

For those of you might be considering fellowship or wondering what it is, it is the pinnacle of involvement in IoIC and reflects someone with experience, expertise, and a wide range of knowledge as well. So it's absolutely fantastic, Colin, to have you back on the podcast. Welcome.



Colin (02:08)

Well, thank you, Dominic, and it's great to be back. I hadn't realised it was quite such a long time since we first recorded that episode all that time ago. I still think it's a great privilege to be in this profession and it applies, I think, if you're a nosy person, being able to go anywhere in the organisation, ask anything and always be given an answer. It's one of the great privileges of this profession, definitely. And it's just what makes it interesting. So thanks for having me back. Lovely to be here.

Dominic Walters (02:33)

No, and I think it's even more important perhaps now what you've just said than it was when we met five years ago because if we're looking at the future of our profession, one of the key things we're about is bringing things together, is getting people talking. We're in a unique position to connect organisations. And I think, as you were saying, the fact that we know so many different things, we have permission to understand what's going on across the organisation helps us to do that. One of the key reasons we wanted to talk though was about impact and about measurement. It's a perennial thing for anybody working in internal communication. **How do we measure the impact of what we do? How do we prove our value? How do we demonstrate worth?** And I know we've had some conversations about that. And I think one of the things I know we've spoken about before is the relative merits of measuring return on investment when it comes to internal communication. I think the general gist of that has been maybe that isn't best and most effective way of doing it. But it'll be great, good to get your take on this, the whole idea about measuring ROI and how appropriate that is or not when it comes to proving value around internal communication. What are your thoughts?

Colin (03:35)

Well, I think first of all, it's one of those things, isn't it? You kind of go, well, how do we make a measurement in internal communications is really important. How do you prove the worth? How do you prove the value? And often return on investment is seen as one of those things that many other functions actually do measure their outputs and their deliverables in. For me, I think it's too restrictive.

I think looking at things through a purely financial return doesn't allow us to capture the scope of what we actually do. And I think if we consider one of the kind of measures that looks at how do you really look at the value of your function and what are the roles that your function fulfills in internal communications? I go back and refer to



the model that Bill Quirk used in his book, Making the Connections. And he looks at the different kinds of roles that an internal communications function can fulfill from being what I call the postman, the just send this out for me to, through, can you put it into better words? Can you tell me whether I need a town hall? Can you tell me whether this will work as an email or as a newsletter? Right through to the top end of the scale where actually you're working as a consultant or a coach.

Now, if you are working at that end of the scale, actually talking about, , the financial return is not enough because what **we should be looking at is the complete, the more complete picture around effectiveness. What was the impact of the things that we put in place?** So if you're if you're working at the end of the scale, which is about, delivering the email, delivering the newsletter, putting the town hall into place, creating an amazing podcast right counting how many people got to it counting how many clicks it received you may well be able to turn those into into a financial measure and certainly can if you're in the marketing world because you count the clicks through and the revenue gained as a result But that that's not what we're about we're about behavioral change **we're about culture we're about Getting things done differently. We're about building connections in an organisation were about helping to shift people's experience at work to a better place.** Now, I'm really strongly of the opinion that that cannot be measured in pure financial terms. There may be a financial outturn that comes from us doing those things well, but you can't say that that gave me this financial return. So for me, it's too narrow a measure to talk about ROI.

We ought to be looking at the effectiveness in terms of the impact. So for me, let's think about impact. **So did we see people change behaviour? Did we see a shift in culture? And measuring those things is closer to what we are about when we think about internal communications as being about the experience people have at work every day, the things that they do when they turn up and how they do them and the behaviours, the networks, the relationships that they build between themselves, their colleagues, the rest of the organisation.** So that's, I think, the impact. And that's what I think we should be measuring.

Dominic Walters (06:54)

And I guess that suggests very different conversations with the people who are commissioning any work or the stakeholders with whom we're dealing because I imagine to do that we need to have some very frank conversations upfront as to the shifts they're looking for. And in my experience that could be quite a complicated and difficult conversation because not every stakeholders thought that through. But I guess we have to do that because in order to show the shifts we need to be clear on what they are upfront. What's your experience of doing that and how do you help stakeholders to give you clarity over what would be a good result, what shifts you're looking for?



Colin (07:26)

Well, I guess it comes back, first of all, to where are you operating on that scale of postman through to consultant or coach, because it's only at the end of consultant or coach where you actually can have those conversations and be believed. And that's something about your own gravitas, your own personal impact, your degree of professionalism and how you're viewed in the organisation. So there's something about personal development and how you shift, how you and your function is seen. That's the first thing. I think the second thing is, maybe this is an exaggeration, but it helps to make the point. **The number of times that people turn up with their deliverable in mind.** So I'd like a podcast, I'd like a video. When I started, it was always I need a newsletter. But, know, whatever the outcome is, that's often the request.

And to go from there to let's talk about the outcomes that you're trying to see in the organisation can sometimes be a real challenge, particularly if it's a senior stakeholder who's got a very strong view about how fabulous they are on video or how wonderful they are when they stand up and deliver a town hall. So I think, first of all, it is, how have you positioned yourself in the organisation? And many of us have a lot of work to do to position ourselves in the right way.

And that's where coaching, mentoring and development can help us. I think the other thing is to make sure that you're having the right conversations from the start. So when faced with the can I have a fill in the blank, the challenge is to reframe that conversation. So let's talk about what it is that you're trying to achieve. I'd like to understand your business outcomes. And so we have to shift the relationship to business partnering. Now, it's easier if you've had previous conversations about what are our strategic goals? What are we trying to do? What's the overall strategic priority this year? What are the key projects that are going to help us to deliver that? If you've had conversations about that and you understand what those are, it's far easier then to say, well, let's talk about how this newsletter, video, podcast, whatever it is, is going to contribute to that. It's easier to say, what is it that we're really trying to do? How does it support goal A, goal B, or project one, two, or three? So sometimes I think it's about taking that step back and going, OK, let's just talk about what it is that we're trying to do here. And it could well be, actually, that that deliverable will will be part of the mix. But let's understand what we're really trying to achieve. Now, a number of questions that you can use are all kind of like the consultancy questions. What are the outcomes? What would we see people doing differently? How would people feel? What would people be thinking? And those then allow us to begin to understand what's really behind the request. And then we can begin to think about shaping the conversation in a in an entirely different way.



Dominic Walters (10:31)

But I just want to say it is about that earning the rights to have the questions. And what stuck in my mind, you mentioned Bill's book and I was lucky enough to cut my communication to keep working with Bill.

And remember one of the things he would say was, if you walk into a post office to post a letter, to buy a stamp for a letter or a birthday card for your aunt, and the person behind the counter says, hang on a second, Colin, just to step back here, what are you trying to achieve with this postcard? You'd probably think, well, hang on a that's not an appropriate question. So I think you're absolutely right. It's about getting permission. It's about building up that reputation, about having the conversations beforehand that you can refer back to. And then you're better placed to start to push people back at the decision process. I suppose that's a way of looking at it.

Colin (11:12)

That is a great analogy, a great analogy. And firstly, I'm very jealous that you actually worked with Bill Quirk. He is a personal hero of mine. But I love that analogy because that's what the post office is set up to do. So if you've set yourself up as a post office, that's what you're going to do.

Cat Barnard (11:29)

I think this is all really really interesting. I think you know here we are start of 2026 and think it's fair to say that we're in uncharted territory now. I think it's fair to say that it is anybody's guess as to how the year is going to pan out. I think most of us are struggling now to just get through to the end of the day, if not the week. And one of the things that I'm thinking about as I'm listening to this conversation is well, I guess my big question is how many leaders are able to think strategically right now because the operating context in most organisations is surely one of continuous firefighting and continuous meeting of novel situations that are cropping up for which very, very few business leaders have been educated and prepared. And I think that puts those people in fear mode. And I think it's really hard to think strategically when you are in fear mode, the brain gets flooded and you are almost immediately put in a kind of tactically responsive situation. And I'm also thinking just when you were talking Colin about, you know, the spectrum upon which an internal comms professional can deliver going from that tactical right through to the consultant coach piece.

When you were talking about the consultant coach piece, something that immediately struck me was way back when I did a coaching qualification. And one of my most prolific aha moments was realising that when you are in that trusted relationship with somebody,



very often the conversation won't have an impact until it has ended. You will have your big reveal moment of clarity long after the conversation has ended. It has reminded me entirely of the Maya Angelou quote, which if I'm not mistaken is something along the lines of, people will forget what you said and they'll forget what you did, but they won't ever forget how you made them feel.

There's something in this conversation that I want to just draw light to. ROI kind of feels very widget-y. It feels like the human is a commodity, a disposable commodity to be manipulated, whereas impact is arguably more esoteric, but far more deep and meaty and resonance, isn't it? And I guess my question here is, you know, this idea of shifting the internal comms narrative from away from ROI towards impact seems very apposite for 2026. So how can we make it a viable alternative? How can we start to erasing ROI and replacing it with impact?

Colin (14:44)

I think you're right. I think first of all, reflecting on what you were saying, it is a very turbulent time in most industries and most sectors. And I think I agree. I've seen many business leaders kind of unable to think strategically because they're thinking about what happens next. I think that's one of the places that internal communications and how we influence culture can really help because what we've seen and are seeing, if you look at the reports of things like the Edelman Trust Barometer, that's coming out fairly shortly, I think, how people are shifting in terms of who they trust. And that's coming more and more close to the individual and the people around us as we look at the progression in that over the years.

I think that business leaders who look more to their colleagues in their teams to help them think and adapt more quickly are the ones that are able to make those strategic adaptations. And so the internal communications profession, the internal communicator in an organisation that can help a leader connect with that sense of the local and therefore free up the knowledge, experience and know how that comes from the people who are doing the job every day is the one that we'll be able to adapt more quickly. I've heard phrases like dynamic strategy evolution, which basically means, you know, as the curve ball comes in, you think about what we've got to do to adapt our strategy to move us on. And that only comes with a real sense of what's the impact on the organisation and how we're going to do that. Sometimes the only way you can assess that is by being close to what the people in the organisation are thinking and feeling and doing. And so the internal communicator in that sort of situation is firstly able to say to the leader, here's a way of listening, here's a way of understanding, and here's a way of you then taking account of that feedback to shift into your strategy to help it move in a different direction. It can't all be down to a business leader to come up with all of the brilliant ideas. I think that the days of the hero leader are long past.



And actually the internal communicator helps the new kind of leader that is going to be more successful because they have the benefit of the wealth of experience around them to understand the impact of the changes that they're making and to make those changes. So I think that's the first point I wanted to make. The second is when you think about, the spectrum that we were just discussing, that's where you have to be working in order to do that.

And so it sort of brings us back to that point Dominic was making. You have to, step into that role. Now, it's kind of, it's a bit chicken and egg, because I think sometimes you have to talk about impact to then shift the conversation to measuring impact. So if you and again, let's exaggerate to make the point. If you go into the conversation with, our internet story on whatever it was generated this many clicks the other day, that's what you're going to be about. But if you go in there and talk about the fact that the story on the internet or wherever it was that you published it, maybe the post on your social feed generated this much conversation.

And as a result of that conversation, you saw the behaviours change and you saw people begin to do X, Y and Z differently. And as a result of those people doing X, Y and Z differently, actually we've seen better sharing knowledge across our sales team on this particular account, which has then led to a greater customer satisfaction and further onward buying. Now there we're talking about impact.

So sometimes it's about taking the conversation to a different place. And that can help Dominic in terms of, how do you open the door to those conversations in the first place? Well, talk about them in the first place. Talk about what it is that we want to achieve. So as I say, it can be a bit chicken and egg, but sometimes you've got to step into the cycle in the right point and have the right conversations. And sometimes you've got to say actually, that's not what we're about. This is what I'm about. And that's not always easy. I get it. Some of the organisations we work in have scary leaders. Some of the organisations that we work in don't have the kind of culture where you go to a leader, actually, no, this is what I'm about. But if we want to be taken seriously, I think we have to do that. And the best organisations are the ones that will listen. And so I think **if we can help leaders by shifting that strategic conversation to impact by talking about culture and people and what they need to be doing in order to help that leader with the struggle about is it strategic or is it tactical right now, then that enables us to have the longer term conversation in the long run**, I think.

Cat Barnard (20:15)

I am really interested. I think the agenda for anybody in the business of communicating in 2026 must be to harness collective intelligence, that you're absolutely right, there is no plausible way that any one person, regardless of their executive qualifications, can now



come up with all the answers to the complexity of the world as it sits before us and there's something really binary, isn't there, about ROI when you start to think about it. It kind of comes with the inference that it's numerical and that it is a formula to be crunched on a spreadsheet, whereas impact is more inclusive, less measurable arguably but quite you know to some degree more magical and more representative of groups of people and the potential of groups of people and what they might become and how they might perform together in the right circumstances.

Colin (21:21)

Yeah, think that's right. But, it's not impossible. It's not impossible at all. you know, you can think about, well, yes, you can do post surveys, but you can have focus groups. You can have sentiment analysis through those things. All of those tools give you a quantitative and sometimes qualitative measure in that area. But going back to what we were saying earlier, if you are thinking about a particular campaign or activity, if you've had the conversation about the outcome that you want at the end, then you can look at how you measure that outcome. So if you need people to come up with innovative new ways of developing a particular product, then you can look at how many new ideas were generated and what that meant in terms of new product development. That's the impact of whatever it was that you did. If you need people to share their knowledge and experience across the organisation in order to drive the quality of customer service, then you can look at what you did and how it turned out. And there's a specific outcome that you're looking for there. So going back to the, we need a deliverable that will help us to get colleagues to talk to one another about the customer stuff that they're doing. You reverse engineer that request to, what is it that we're trying to do? And you get underneath the, well, actually we need our sales teams to be thinking about this when they talk to our customers. Now we can start looking at, well, okay, let's design a campaign that will do that. But we've got the end in mind.

So let's look at the shift and think about how we measure that. And you might have leading indicators that show the quick things that turned out quickly. Was it number of customer conversations that led to a lead? And you might have lag indicators that come a little bit further down the line that are closer linked to the overall business outcome. And it could be that actually what we say is in terms of the outcome we can show a correlation between our activity and the outcome, but we can't show a direct causation. Because just because I ran a campaign that said X, Y, and Z doesn't mean that that's the only thing that influenced the outcome that we got as a business. But there'll definitely be a link between that and that. So I think that you can claim that you have assisted in the delivery of a business out through a particular communications intervention, you might not be able to say that because I did this, that was the outcome. But you can say, **because I did this, it contributed to, and this was the outcome.** And sometimes that's a bit difficult because, you know, it would be so much easier if we could just say, yeah, my campaign led to, and sometimes you can say that, but



most times you can't, and most times it's about making sure you've made the correlation where you can't claim causation.

Jennifer Sproul (24:30)

love this Colin and there's so much you're saying I've just been sort of sitting here nodding along and going back a few steps there's things that that that make me think consider in this so when I think about impact which is a phrase that we've talked about in business, in marketing, in many arenas, in research arenas for a while but it's about saying impact is a jigsaw of many many things it's a jigsaw of a conversation to a saving to a reduction to a jigsaw of brand, innovation, culture, reputation to how we talk, how we move forward, how we innovate. And I think that it allows you to move yourself into many more spaces to make a claim of the value that you therefore then derive because value happens in every function of a business, just because we cannot and not every function can make a direct correlation to spend X. make X back margin is Y. So, but if you took out the process in the factory where they make the shoes, then they probably wouldn't have a product. So it is a whole rich, rich tapestry. and I think it allows us to think in that wider lens. And I think as well as you were talking as well about Bill Quirk and that consultant piece as well, is the other thought as you were talking that strikes me is that we also move away if we take impact from the sense of we spend X on comms to make X and Y in revenue to being, well, actually, we're going to be so trusted that when a leader is thinking about something, we are phoned up to be part of a decision making process, to be in the arc of how we decide what to do, when to do, because we are so well tapped in.

As you said, all those times ago, we're so well connected. So I think that that was just my reflection on the first part. And then talking about the stakeholders as well. It seems to me lots of stakeholders at the moment are concerned that organisations don't need the strategy, don't know where we're going, don't feel it's understood, don't know how to do that. So how can internal communication plug that gap when we can't always really plan that accurately for the future and it gets me on to thinking about well how do we become somebody that's seen as a trusted partner in decision-making, risk management, impact delivery because that's also where we're fixated on this break between showing evidential data driven and I think the explosion of big data has made us also feel super conscious that we should have big data at this end of this scale to actually make sure we do that part of our process. But the other part is because we so listen and we're so tapped in that we were there before wrong decisions are made. So I guess my question is, how do we measure that impact? How do we play those two parts? How do we discern, perhaps as practitioners, what is valuable evidence? What is valuable data? But also what just good intelligence to make sure our leaders are well advised in the right moments when we can't always think ahead. How do you think we play those two sides of the evidential part and the kind of advisement part, if you like?



Colin (27:40)

That is a really good question. I think that for me, there's a bit about what a colleague of mine in the past used to call the Spidey sense, right? You have to have a kind of Spidey sense about what's going on in the organisation. Now that makes it sound a bit kind of mythical, magical, and as you said, esoteric but it's not. We...If we're doing the job right, I think understand what's going on in the organisation. We understand what's going on in different parts of the organisation. Because we've been asked those nosy questions that I was talking about earlier, we're plugged into different bits of the business because we can go anywhere and ask any question. And that includes, in the business that I'm in at the moment, having to wander around. It's not a wander around, obviously, because it's a factory floor and so it's carefully guided with safety measures in place. But during that walk, I can have a conversation with anybody on the factory floor and ask them what's going on. Similarly, I can chat to colleagues using the wonderful world of Microsoft Teams anywhere in the world and find out what's going on.

Now that builds a picture for me that I can put alongside Colleague Engagement Survey, the engagement focus groups that we hold across the organisation, the stuff that I see being put on our social feed in the part of our online platform. And it builds a picture. Now, in the past, I would have just consolidated that in my own head and gone, I think this is what's going on. And that is, a learned kind of skill. But increasingly, I'm seeing that AI helps me to do that. AI can do sentiment analysis. AI can tell you the output of, the conversations in a focus group much more quickly and probably just as well as me reading through the flip charts if I was there in person and then trying to put it all together. So there are tools now that allow us to hook into that and then have the conversation to say, here's what I think is going on. Now, I don't know whether that's, therefore, art or science, but whatever it is, that's a key part of our arsenal. It's a key part of our reading.

Cat Barnard (30:01)

And can I just interrupt and say, God, I wanted to interject at the end of this and say, art and science. And you've absolutely hit the nail on the head. It is art and science. It's where data meets storytelling. It's where all of the things come together to bring business and organisational functioning back into technicolour instead of reducing it to this dry and sterile grey of quant that the commercial world suddenly seems obsessed by.

Colin (30:39)

Yes, and you're absolutely right, because, and you've taken me just where I was going, so thank you, because it is that piece, and I think this answers your question, Jen, it is that piece about taking all of that and putting it together in a compelling story. Now, we do that, and it's part of our skill set, part of our skill set that we sometimes teach leaders how to do



as well. But we can put the stuff that we've brought together from our intelligence gathering from the data that we get from surveys, from all of those other pieces. And we can tell a story with it. And that is the bit that I think allows us to have the conversation and to do what you were just talking about, Jen, because we can go, this stuff tells a story. It isn't just anymore. It isn't just my feeling about these things, because now I've had AI analyse all of this stuff. And actually, there's the science behind it.

The art is in my interpretation, which tells me the intervention we should be making is X, Y, and Z. And some of that might be within my gift, but some of it might be within the gift of our colleagues in HR, or it might be within the gift of the line managers in your organisation. But that's the advice, the guidance, and the direction that I can give to leaders because I've got that stuff going on.

Jennifer Sproul (31:58)

Going back to your very early point when you quoted that, that if we're going to move towards, and I think we've got to see impact as not a linear, do one, have campaign, produce report, get click rates, give open rates, yay, success, next campaign. That's not how business, intelligence, advice, trusted partnership works. It's about knowing we have those expertise in our businesses that are plugged in. I remember once I went to, was a book I read ages ago, it was an engagement event. When we talk about the iceberg, don't we? That thing is that leaders know 4 % of the problems and actually all the problems are 100 % at the bottom of the iceberg, right? So how can we help get them to the bottom of the iceberg? do actually unearth what needs fixing, because they're looking sometimes at the wrong things. So it becomes this thing that's a kind of symbiosis of continual circularness rather than, I think I've said this before, we can't see the world in a Gantt chart. It's just not how it works, right? And I think the complexity, and I loved what you said earlier about there was no such thing as well about the concept of a hero leader.

It's the concept of collectivism, right, that's coming through in that. Having spent some time working in the market research industry and the customer experience industry as well, we talked a lot about actually that is now what we're becoming as the UK and also in economic terms, we are an intelligence economy. You need intelligence in a business that's going to stop a leader going left or right wrong rather than at the end because we've thought about it in a linear way. I don't know what your thoughts are now, but I sometimes just wonder that the explosion of this concept of big data, we all have this data at our fingertips makes us feel like, and all these things can solve one of our problems that we're not being able to discern what's valuable to what's invaluable to play the role of that circular advisor, that person that shows, yes, evidence at the end, but continually well-informed advisement on decision-making. I don't know if that's a bit of a ramble, but that's kind of my view of things.



Colin (34:00)

No, I like it. What you were saying there just reminded me of, I think it was Edmund Burke, and I'm going to get this quote wrong, but it was something around the only thing that will save humanity is cooperation. I think it was something along those lines. Yeah, and it is about that circular kind of thing. you know, I had a conversation with one of the leaders in our organisation about the fact that we were not capitalising on the knowledge in our organisation well enough to be able to serve our customers and drive the sales opportunity that we saw. We looked at it and we understood that as a result of the investigation, the data, the analysis, the focus groups, the conversations that came together in the Spidey sense, that actually people were not talking across teams. And so, what we did was we put in place a program to improve collaboration, knowledge sharing, and to get people sharing their ideas in a quick way that would speed up innovation around customer. Now, what did that look like?

Well, actually, a big thing was psychological safety. Right. So when we went back and we looked at everything, what we figured was people are not having these conversations because they're a bit afraid that somebody is going to go, don't be ridiculous. So we needed to work on psychological safety. Now, being being in the position that I was in, having the data I had, understanding what I knew about the culture, I was able to say let's work on psychological safety and let's put in place things that build on that that allow people to share knowledge and ideas and their experience in a supported team environment across our organisation. Now, I wouldn't have come to that if the request had been, can you help me put in place something that is a knowledge sharing platform for people to be able to share, which was pretty close to the original request. So working back, you like, reverse engineering to the point where you go, actually, knowing why no putting place, putting this in place, give us the ground groundwork for a culture which will encourage those things. And then suggesting those conversations are the ones that will be most welcome, gave us our end. But I would not have got to that without understanding what the desired business outcome was, so that then I can say this campaign around psychological safety and the means in which we begin to talk about nudging the conversation in the right direction, this was the impact.

And the impact was better served customers, greater number of sales leads followed through, all those kinds of things. So there's a correlation there. There's no direct chain of causation, but there's a correlation, certainly.

Jennifer Sproul (37:09)

I love that, Colin. think that's a great, I'm going to pass over Dom in a minute, but I think that's a brilliant, really practical example of that, how we played with those, all those parts in our, in our arsenal, in our instinct, in our expertise and how we're using that evidential fact and then becoming almost the diagnostician as well of what's going on in the



organisation that might link to other things. And I think that also the thing I would comment on, when you listen to that, as people listening in as well, we get so concerned with, can't report on something if I don't own it 100%.

It's okay and you're, I think there's many internal communicators I speak to go, well, I can't report on, you know, I can't show my impact on retention because that's HR, that's not mine. But something you've done might have been a correlation to that. So do you think we just need to be okay with sharing the successes perhaps?

Colin (37:58)

Absolutely. We absolutely should. If we talk about what we do in terms of the desired outcome, then we should be able to say, contributed to that outcome. So if the outcome is better retention rates or greater sales, and we've had the conversation about, let's go back and see what's, what we need to change in terms of the culture or people or the interventions that we make in order to, you know, four steps down the line, get there. Well, we claim part of that.

it's absolutely, down to some of the things that we did in some way.

Dominic Walters (38:32)

Colin, we need to come into land, so I'd like to cover off just a few things. First of all, you gave us a teaser right at the start when you mentioned your organisation or your part of the organisation is involved in steam thermal solutions. And you've talked a bit about going around, understanding what the business is doing, et cetera. Could you just tell us very briefly what that's about, what steam thermal solutions are and what they do?

Colin (38:56)

Most people, including myself, when I was approached about this organisation, don't really understand that actually steam is present in practically everything that we encounter in our everyday world. So food and beverages are cooked and the vessels that they're cooked in are sterilised using steam.

Steam happens to be the most efficient way of transferring heat in industrial process. That sounds terribly dull, but it means that it's quite a sustainable solution. And the only byproduct, of course, is water. So we cook, we galvanize rubber, we help to work in the oil and gas industry to distill and clean the products there. Pharmaceutical, sterilization. Pharmaceuticals use this to make sure that the products are delivered and manufactured at exactly the right temperature, which is so important. Steam is incredibly controllable, whereas other heat sources are not. So if you think about, I don't know, what you're



wearing, what you ate, what you are using in terms of the laptop in front of you, practically everything you see in the modern world is manufactured in an environment that somewhere has steam in it. So our business is about those systems which deliver steam throughout industrial processes and not about steam trains, which is what I thought when I was first approached about it.

Dominic Walters (40:21)

Yeah, I was thinking along those lines, thinking that must be quite a limited market nowadays, but now I understand it's a massive market. Thank you for that. Well, that brings us nicely back to this whole area about impact because I can imagine lots of internal communicators listening to our conversation are really quite inspired now to start to do more to have impact and to measure that impact as well. But we also know it's quite tough because we can have great ideas about shifting behaviour and changing that and then tomorrow have a phone call from someone who goes back to your point and says I need a newsletter or whatever it may be whatever channel it may be So I've picked up from your conversation I think at least three things that we need to do it sounds obviously when you just give a list of things straightforward I know it's not but one is build your understanding of the organisation and you gave us some great examples of that. Secondly, sounds like it's about relationships. You can't just go up to someone and say, I'm now your trusted advisor, because they're going to say, we're the judge of that sunshine. And you've got to prove yourself, build that trust, and show you can give advice that might mean something. I think you've also said it's about asking the right questions. It's more than that. But it's about having those relationship skills where you can ask questions in a way that gives you useful information. And I guess also present your ideas in a way that they link back to the stakeholders' objectives and so on. So that's been incredibly helpful. So to bring us to land on that Colin, an internal communicator listening to what we've spoken about, what should they start to do more of do you think so they can increase their impact and the way in which they present that impact? What advice would you give them?

Colin (41:50)

I think the starting point, weirdly, is the last point that you made. It's drawing the link back. So what's the business outcome? And that could be something that's described in your strategy. It could be in a particular project, or it could be a problem that you're trying to solve. And then take the steps back. How do I get to there? maybe you reverse engineer it, and you go, well, I need to get this in order to get that got to do this, in order to do this, I need to do that. And then you've drawn the logic chain. And if you can draw that logic chain back to your intervention, then you can show the impact that you're going to have. You can also then measure that impact. And you might not, as I said earlier, be able to draw causation, but you will be able to show the correlation. And that's, I think, the thing that



then allows you to have further conversations that allow you to increase your scope, your gravitas, and your own impact and influence in the organisation.

Dominic Walters (42:48)

I love it. Draw the logic chain. think that may well be the sound that we take from this and repeat in our future episodes as we've done in the past. So Colin, it's been fantastic to have you back. Let's not leave it five years until we speak again. And thank you very much for joining us today.

Colin (43:05)

You're welcome. It's been lovely to be here. Thank you.

Jennifer Sproul (43:08)

Thanks Colin

Colin (43:09)

Bye!