Transcript for S13 E4 – How to build community at work with Adele McIntosh

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 opportunity 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.

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

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

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Cathryn Barnard (01:06)
Hello and welcome to a new episode of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. I'm Cat Barnard joined as ever by Jen Sproul and Dominic Walters. And today we have a brilliant guest coming to speak with us on the topic of community at work. So I'm really excited to welcome back to the podcast Adele McIntosh. Adele was on the podcast a few episodes back because she has been pivotal in our AI ethics charter task force. And more importantly, in the context of today's podcast, she came and presented at the IoIC festival in 2024, where she talked about finding your organisation's North Star.

So as a tiny bit of background, Adele is VP of Internal Communication and Community at Arm, which is one of the UK's biggest and most successful tech companies. And the moment I heard about the presentation at the festival, I was curious because it's a non-standard job title, I think, that Adele holds. I'm not aware of too many other organisations who have blended internal comms with community. And as I gaze at the future of work and look at the way in which organisations will need to transform, community is going to be an increasingly pivotal, crucial piece for organisational future proofing. So I really wanted to bring Adele onto the podcast again to talk to us about her work at Arm, the role of community, why it's important and so on. So without further ado, Adele, welcome back.

Adele McIntosh (03:04)
Thank you, really happy to be here and thanks for having me back.

Cathryn Barnard (03:07)
You are a love and we are delighted to have you back. So I don't want to put words in your mouth in any way, shape or form, but I want to start the conversation off by going back to your job title, VP of Internal Communication and Community. Tell us why Arm has prioritised community, why it chose to pair it with internal communication.

Adele McIntosh (03:37)
Yeah, it's really interesting. You're right. You don't see those two things paired together very often. I actually gave myself that job title and Arm was very supportive. And that's because I think that internal comms is all about creating community and connection and the two go hand in hand. So when I talk about what my internal comms team does, we talk about everything that we do to create connection.

So we create connection to our purpose, our strategy and our impact. We create connection to like information and knowledge and things that people need to know, whether that's your pension providers changing or you need to use this new AI tool to great Arm experiences. And that goes from our big internal events through to life moments that matter to people and also to each other. So to me, that's what our job is and communities obviously really caught all of those things.

I've been really lucky in Arm that it's really supportive internal communications has never been a post box or it's always gone beyond cascading information. So I've been really lucky in that sense. It's always been gone beyond that to creating community and belonging. It's kind of at the core of our culture, collaboration and how we collaborate and work together and feel part of something bigger is really important. I just think it builds community rather than just informing it, which is why I think it's really important to sit with internal communications.

Cathryn Barnard (04:53)
Yeah, I was going say, for those people that don't know who Arm is as an organisation, you are a technology company and you're truly international, aren't you? How many offices and how many locations have you got?

Adele McIntosh (05:03)
Yeah, gosh, I lose track of the number of offices we've got. I think we're about 10,000 people now. We're across Asia, we're in America, we're in Europe, we're in the UK. So we're really truly global organisation. So that obviously brings another dimension to create community as well, because there's so many different dimensions to community from teams to groups to sites to cross team projects to keeping the global community connected to our employee resource groups. There's whole loads of different dimensions of community.

Cathryn Barnard (05:36)
So you're doing this at a real kind of truly global scale. You are working 24 seven to instil that connective glue that brings everybody together relationally and culturally and strategically.

Adele McIntosh (05:55)
Yeah, but I would say that everyone needs to be responsible for it. I mean, as with the lot of stuff that internal communications does, everyone has to be responsible for building community. So it's not just our responsibility, but I see us as sort of guardians of the community and drivers of it. So, for example, if we see fractures in our communities, you're going to get some fractures in communities and maybe silos building up or things like that. I see it as our responsibility to get in there, find out what's happening, hold focus groups, try and come up with actions, work with our business leaders on how we heal those fractures and bring people together. So there's lots of elements to it, but I think we're, like I say, the guardians of it, not just like everyone's responsibility to build community.

Cathryn Barnard (06:36)
And please may I, I know this is jumping in with a question that we hadn't talked about in advance, but you've just raised a really interesting point that I'm hearing anecdotally all the time, which is organisations experiencing more and more divisiveness within their work teams.

I don't know whether it's putting you on the spot too much to ask if you have an example of what you might do when you notice those tensions and frictions, what could be a kind of remedial, restorative activity to bring people back into community with one another.

Adele McIntosh (07:21)
Yeah, I think it really depends on the situation. And I wouldn't want to give one specific example. But when we've seen it happen, and of course it happens in, in the best organisations, it's just human nature, particularly when things are changing very quickly, the external environment is so pressured as well as you know, there's so many pressures on people. Just recently, I got people together who were affected, we asked for people's different opinions, kind of did like mini focus groups that were global. And then we came back and looked and sort of synthesized all that feedback and then really looked with our HR team actually on kind of what are the key things we can do. **And some of the things are just explaining the why more. So it's about communication. It's like just make sure you explain the why of decisions more.**

That sounds quite simple. It's not always as simple when people are moving really, really quickly. But some things are, right, we need to get people together in person. Sometimes, once you see people face to face, it's hard to, it kind of knocks down barriers, I think. And I think in a global community, where we're in a hybrid environment as well, that kind of connection, face to face connection is really important. So that could be another example of bringing people together. It could be just going and working with their teams, with their leaders about how they communicate. So yeah, lots of different things really.

Jen Sproul (08:37)
I love listening to this Adele. I think great to hear about how you position it, but also those examples that you've given or that kind of explanation you've given of how that then as a

function and as a department, you then live to that goal and that role that you've created for internal communication and community at Arm. And I see it really interesting. Obviously this podcast is all about the future of internal communication. And I think that as I look around, there is lots to go for, right? There is a lot of challenge. There's a lot of things happening. And then there's sort of this AI tactical, technological bubble, which feels like it could then push internal comms into one space where really the problems that perhaps businesses are experiencing and need to solve are so much more rooted in that complexity of connection, understanding, dialogue, conversation and therefore how do we build our roles and our functions to be ones that as you say, the guardians of that. And I like the way you've described community as well, I think that's super helpful. I guess one of the things I wanted to ask is, obviously community is really important, so A, why is it so critical? And I guess with that kind of question, how do you explain if you're in a room with leadership or with that kind of what's the pitch for internal comms to be part of community and why do we go beyond doing the informed part and why is that so critical? I guess it's that helping our listeners to think about, I want to be doing all the things that you've talked about and how do you present that to your leadership team and how do you present that in something that is A, mission critical and B, is going to really add value to the organisation, if that makes sense.

Adele McIntosh (10:17)
Yeah, totally. I mean, again, I'm really lucky at Arm that our leaders and everyone else sees the power of community and why it's important. But it powers everything really, from how you innovate to resilience levels, to trust, to retention, to engagement. So it powers everything community. **Because when people feel connected together, that's when they're connected to each other and to something bigger than themselves, to a purpose.**

They bring more sort of creativity and energy and sort of care to their work and they care about each other a bit more as well. Going back to that piece about, you know, divides within divides, we've got a lot of external division and any internal division as well. I think also, when change is constant, a strong community isn't a nice to have anymore. It's like a foundation that you have to have for a sustainable business. You really have to have it. There's something that my boss who is the Chief People Officer, always puts this big number on a slide, which is 90,000, which is apparently the number of hours we spend at work in our lifetime. Now, to me, that's a bit low. I think it varies by type of job you do in your career. And I suspect it's going to be a bit more in the tech industry. But on a personal level, if you're spending that many hours at work, you want to feel connected to the people around you in the company you work for. You need that. As human beings, we need that connection. It's really important.

Adele McIntosh (11:33)
I guess in terms of internal communications, why we've ended up being the guardians of it. There were so many pieces to the puzzle of creating community from workplace to our leaders, to our people team, to our managers. **And you really need someone to bring it all together and join the dots and have that sort of helicopter view of everything that**

goes into community, how you measure it, how do we measure sentiment and community.

How do we help people, give them the right tools basically to create community? How do we give people advice on how to create community? So it sort of goes beyond that kind of cascading of information to that. And I think internal communications, because of our role, we see the entire organisation, we're privy to lots of things that other people aren't. So we can see where there are problems, we can see where there are opportunities. So I think that's why it's a really good place for it to sit.

Jen Sproul (12:23)
I agree with everything you said and I think there's so much in what we do in the way you described that that in if organisations are going to survive and to be sustainable with the level of transformation level of change the level that is needed it is fundamentally I think a problem that needs fixing and as you say as internal communicators we are privy to so much many people describe this role as our opportunity is to be a bridge between those sort of parts of it and connects all that together

I just wanted to ask if this is a cheeky thing as well as I think about the profession and where we're going. And if we're taking on that sense of connection and community, when you're thinking about your purpose and your function, what are the kind of key skills we need as internal communicators to be the guardians of our community and how do we build that into our roles? Do you think there's sort of a key skill set that stands out beyond sort of the technological aspect of actually the human skill set of communication.

Adele McIntosh (13:16)
Yeah, it's interesting. We've been looking at skills for the future of the future. And when you look at those just generally, not even in internal communications, it's things about empathy and, it's the what you would have called previously the soft skills, which I hate. I hate that description of them. So those are the skills that are going to be really, really, really important, particularly, as you said, with AI coming in. And like, as you know, I love AI. ChatGPT is my friend.

But it's those often softe skills, I think, and internal communications people have these skills in spades, right? We're always having to think about, ok what are people feeling and thinking? What do we want them to think, feel and do? We naturally think that way. So I actually think we've already got a lot of the skills that are needed for the future. I really do. So I think we're really well positioned. I think it's then, like you say, within our organisations, repositioning ourselves a little bit as all the new technology comes in. And just making sure that you're thinking ahead in terms of, of course, we still have to do all the stuff that we have to do. We still have a lot of sort of general sort of admin tasks to do and helping people set up their Zooms and AMAs and webinars. And we still do all of that stuff. But I think it's also starting to turn the ship a little bit towards developing the community building skills, the engagement skills, beyond just the doing of the tasks, if you know what I mean.

Cathryn Barnard (14:37)

I just want to jump in there. I absolutely agree. I think we should 100 % do away with the term soft skills. think that deprioritises what is the most fundamental skill set for any kind of success in increasingly AI and digital futures. We have to reconnect with ourselves. So at Work in the Future, we've called the soft skills vital skills. And we thought about that for quite some time and we did some research and we heard about organisations that were calling them, human skills or durable skills. But for me, I suppose as a linguist, I was like, well, vital, vital, the origin of vital is, key to life itself. And we've come up with 16 different skills, but I absolutely agree that when I look at those skills, they entirely play into the sweet spot of anybody at work who is pro-social and recognises that intrinsic link between how we speak to one another and the relationships that we then have with one another. And I think, I mean, obviously right from the genesis of Jen and my first conversation, we've talked about internal communication being this bridge, this relational bridge between all the different functions. I kind of think AI is great and absolutely that is the way of the future. But the antidote or the yin to the yang, if you like, is these vital skills, deep empathy and compassion for the people that we work with. So just being able to put yourself in another person's shoes and think about what another person's experience of a scenario or a context might be. I think that's invaluable. And I think inside and outside of work. I think we need it at work, we need it in schools, we need it in our local communities, our villages, our towns, our cities, everywhere. Absolutely, imperatively needed.

Dom (17:02)

So let me pick up on that. First of is it really 90,000 hours? That's an amazing way of looking at it.

Adele McIntosh (17:08)

Yes, well I'm sure it's some study that said that but yeah.

Dom (17:12)

But that sort of analysis does really put the focus on squeezing the most we can out of every moment, doesn't it? with that in mind, listening to what we've been saying so far, what you describe, how you operate, what you do seems to be where we would love internal communication to be in general. You obviously are, and your organisation are pioneers of where internal communication can add value. So I guess if I were now listening to this, if I were a one person internal communication manager who'd taken time off from a pile of stuff they have to do, and I know you do as well, but lots of different stuff they've got to process, they may be thinking, well, I'd love to be where Adele is, I'd love to be in that situation, how do I get there? And I guess part of that is, as you mentioned, you've got an organisation that's more amenable to community and convention. But just to pull together some of the strands we've been talking about, how might an internal communicator start to shift the dial, to start to build community more, to move away from some of the tactical stuff and add the greater value we've been talking about? I know that's a $64,000 question, but let's see if we can start to chip away at it a bit.

Adele McIntosh (18:17)
I think probably there's lots that they're doing that's building community already. So the shaping of stories, signalling what matters most to people, making sure that we highlight our people and case studies and what they're thinking and feeling and doing. We already do that as internal communicators. So I think that's already part of community building.

Ensuring there's two-way communication. We talk about that a lot. I mean, again, I'm sure all internal communicators are thinking about that, but that helps to build community. Celebrating differences, looking at inclusion. **Belonging is so important and belonging is obviously really key to community as well.** That sense of belonging that you create between people. So I think being, really close to any DEI activities because that's a really important way of creating belonging and community with people. I think some of the stuff I talked about earlier in terms of really digging into the detail of the data. Are we seeing fractures anywhere? What am I hearing? As internal communicators, we hear a lot. **You need to have your ear to the ground as an internal communicator about what's happening in your organisation.**

If it's a big organisation like mine, I rely on colleagues. I've built my network, built my internal community to be able to go out there and say what are people hearing? What are people feeling? So that's really important in terms of then working out, okay, so how can I help solve this business problem? So bringing it back to a business problem as well. So actually, there's a business problem here. There's two teams not working together well. How can I help? Sometimes it's as much as that going like we can help and this is how we can help.

Adele McIntosh (19:55)
Obviously you have to create space and time to do this. I wouldn't underestimate the having fun part either. Having fun really brings people together and creates community. it's part of our ethos is you've got to have some fun at work. I know we're all there. We all work incredibly hard. I mean, during COVID we ran virtual parties and some of them were like follow the sun type parties. I don't know if I talked about this before, but we had like an ABBA band, like an ABBA tribute band during COVID. So they were somewhere in a studio being safe. Everyone else was online. I can't see at the time going to be why on earth are you getting this band to play virtually. But it worked so well. And he came to me said, yeah, you were right. You were right. Because it was so much fun. People joined in. There were like people there with their kids online. Everyone could see each other.

It really created a sense of community between people when that was really, really tough during COVID. So yeah, so I think that's some of the ways that you could do it.

Dom (20:58)
Look, that's really helpful. So three things I've taken from that. One is you're talking about business focus. So I guess we're not going to build community by talking about the mechanics of communication. We do it by focusing on business. Secondly, you talk about the network, and that's really interesting because for internal communication functions to have a high profile in the future, they need to have their finger on the pulse by the sound

of it. They need to be able to tell others, senior managers and whoever it might be, what the organisation is thinking and feeling.

AndI think the other thing you said is about how we equip people, my words, how do we equip people to have conversations. Which perhaps some people may look askance at and think that's not what internal communication is about, but it sounds like it very much is, if we're there **to help equip people to have conversations.**

Adele McIntosh (21:42)
Yeah, absolutely. And I work really closely with our people team. My relationship there is really, I sit in the people team, but I work really, really closely with our people business partners, our people and neighbouring managers who are actually on sites, with our site leads. You have to have those connections and work really closely with them, I think, to build community.

Dom (22:03)
I will pass over in a second, but that's something else that'd be good to get your take on it because in our experience, obviously working with lots of different internal communication people, one of the barriers is a clash with other functions, particularly with HR and sometimes with marketing, sometimes with the chief executive's personal office, that sort of thing. And the pushback can often be this is not what internal comms is about. This is what HR does. This is what learning development does. Now it sounds like you've succeeded in building good relationships and clearly part of that is down to personalities. What other tips can you give people listening to this as to how you can start to make your case to own these areas when other functions might be looking over enviously?

Adele McIntosh (22:44)
Well, I guess I wouldn't say that we say that we own the areas. It's more that we're there to help and guide and facilitate. So I wouldn't want to tell our people business partners what to do. It's more we can help them and we can help sort of I guess our effort is amplified if we work together. We're greater than the sum of our parts. So but yeah, it is all about relationships. You just have to have really good relationships with people and know when to step back, when to step in. And I think that's what's important really.

Cathryn Barnard (23:11
I would like to go back over the story that was kind of the origin story for the presentation that you gave at last year's festival helping Arm find its north star because the background to finding the north star was pretty extreme, I think. And so, yeah, I mean, just so much richness in that experience that you found yourself having to work through. And I would love it if you would be happy to share with listeners what happened at Arm, and why was it then necessary to double down on the north star.

Adele McIntosh (24:05)
Yeah, of course, I mean, I could talk about this for hours, but I'll try and keep it brief. So we'd been through quite a long period of change. Obviously, we'd had COVID, which everyone was dealing with. We'd had a potential acquisition that didn't work out. We had a

leadership change, so a CEO change, leadership team changes. It was a real period of change for the company.

So when our new CEO came in after all of that, it was really important for us to be really clear about the direction the company was headed in, because that had got a bit lost in the way, to be honest with you, it really had. And of course, after that period of disruption, people were feeling uncertain about the future and what they should be focusing on, and they didn't even really know what we were about as a company anymore. We'd sort of lost that a little bit.

So we took a step back and I always liked to go to Dan Pink's drive about intrinsic motivation and what motivates people, autonomy and mastery and purpose. And we were looking at that and we thought, purpose is really what we're missing at the moment. It's not very clear where we're going. And then we looked at all our, we had so many statements, honestly. We had a purpose statement, we had a vision statement, we had two mission statements, just to add complexity into the mix.

No one could remember any of them or people remembered bits or mash them together in some sort of Frankenstein monster. And they really weren't helping us at all. And our CEO was like, I don't know, he couldn't talk about them. He didn't know what we were saying. So we so we made this decision, right, we're just going to get rid of them all. And we're just going to cut it down to one statement. So that's what we did. One North Star statement. So we don't really talk about purpose or vision or mission. We talk about our North Star, which is just very, very short, one sentence, hinged in what we were talking about externally as well. So that was really important for it to align. So what people were seeing externally and internally was aligned and it felt cohesive. Yeah, and was really interesting the way we came about doing that because we'd normally do a massive project and take months and months and months, but we were like, no, we need to do this really quickly. So looked at research we've done in the past when we were looking at our purpose. We had lots of research already. I went and talked to some senior engineers and then just wrote it. I mean, that sounds like it was very easy. There were about a million versions, but very few words, but a lot of versions. Yeah, so we just did it that way and did it really, really quickly and got it signed off and everyone was like, yeah, that's good. And it's still here, which is what I'm glad about, which it should be as your North Star, but sometimes these things change in very fast moving companies.

Cathryn Barnard (26:43)
That is exactly the point that I wanted to convey to listeners. It was a fast moving, you work in a fast moving industry and the pace of innovation and acceleration is just on the up and up all the time. I was transfixed when you and I first chatted about the North Star and the story that you told about how, as a business, and it was in the business press, it was in the business press a lot, that Arm was going to be acquired. And the deal seemed to be in the business press for, I don't know, maybe your reflection is different, but it felt to me like it was just constantly hovering in the press, that this big big, big deal was going to take place. And then as you said, and then all of a sudden, literally overnight, the deal fell apart. And so correct me if I'm wrong, but I remember you saying, we had this strategy and

the strategy was, we're going to be acquired. And then all of a sudden that strategy was just defunct and obsolete and it just didn't exist anymore. And what on earth do you do with all these internal stakeholders who are all as just bamboozled as the next person. That's a really plausible scenario for many many businesses in play today that the thing that you think you're heading towards can be derailed very suddenly for any number of external reasons that have got, I've just finished reading that amazing book called Let Them by Mel Robbins where she talks about, you can only control your side of the relationship. And so, when you're in a kind of an acquisition, relationship negotiation, you can only control your side of the deal, right?

Adele McIntosh (28:42)
Yeah, I was a really interesting period. It was about 18 months. So you're not wrong in terms of keeping seeing it in the press. It was really long time. And of course, at the beginning, it was really exciting. But also, it brings on uncertainty. People don't know, what's going to happen to my role, what's my new package going to be? What am I going to be doing there? But people were really excited. And then, of course, as time went on, we knew we had to go through a regulatory process. As time went on and it sort of drifted and drifted and the regulatory process was in different countries as well. So it sort of went on and on and on. And yeah, by the end, I mean, I think everyone was a bit relieved in the end to have a decision that we were, one way or another. But yeah, massive period of uncertainty for us. And yeah, which is why we had to sort of come back and be really, really clear about our direction to everyone and where we were going, which our CEO is brilliant. And he was brilliant at it in terms of, right, this is what I care about. This is what we all care about. This is our North Star. This is what we all need to get behind.

Cathryn Barnard (29:39)
And I was just to say, and I'm so grateful that you shared that story because it's a great illustration of the unpredictability and uncertainty of work life in the 2020s, I think.

Jen Sproul (29:54)
Yeah, and I'd add to that as well. I think it's more of an example why community is so important for that point of resilience. Because that community helps that building and that focus means that when things are ambiguous and are uncertainty, if you have community, it helps that resilience because then you feel like you're in it together to navigate that, whatever that might be. And I think it's a really important piece. But I just wanted to pick up because I really fascinated to hear the stories as well as the, and as you said, there was probably a million versions, but I think it's really quite impressive actually that you came up with just one statement. And I think that sometimes, and I say this, I'm not a wonderful wordsmith, but I would say trying to say something. So in a few words that when you want to convey so much is really difficult. Short sentences are really difficult in that way. But I wanted to ask, really when you were thinking about those million versions, how you went through that, but also as well has that one statement, that ditching all that additional stuff, like the number of missions and visions and having that one statement, how does that work and how does that mean? Because I think sometimes

there is, we know employees, they want greater clarity and they want greater transparency and they want greater honesty and they want to understand the strategy, where the organisation is going and what their role is in that. And then you also need your leadership and your functions to be cascading that message so that it has consistency but it has personality to it as well. And I guess I was just wondering how you went about sort of promoting that one statement and how that worked in kind of that such a large organisation to get that point of view in, was that a difficult selling in and has that made the unity to your shared meaning and purpose much stronger?

Adele McIntosh (31:36)
I'll tell you what the North Star is. It's about what matters to us as a company, right, and where we need to prioritise. So it's building the future of competing on Arm. It's kind of full stop, together, full stop for everyone, and that's it. So building the future of competing on arm was something we'd started talking away about externally.

But that's quite motivating, right? The future of computing is huge, it's exciting. And for that to be built on Arm, on our technology, was a really sort of galvanizing statement. And also building was really important to our engineers, because they're all about building. we had the biggest debate was about that word. Should it be building? Should it be driving? Should it be, you what should that word be? That was where the biggest debate came in.

And then the together bit was really important to us for us internally. So coming back to that community piece, we need to work together. We need to work together as one arm. But also with our partners and how we work with our customers and partners, we need to work together across our ecosystems. So that worked internally and externally. And then for everyone really ties into our sort of social impact piece and the impact we have on the world to make sure we had that piece in there as well. So that's what we landed with.

In terms of promoting it, we did a big launch obviously with our CEO talking about it. It was really important for him to lead it and be behind it. We did a strategy on a page. That was really hard. That wasn't as easy.

Jen Sproul (33:01)
Yeah, I've tried those and I am terrible at it. It is so difficult.

Adele McIntosh (33:04)
So hard. I think it ended up two pages, we got there, but it was still really difficult, but we got there. So we had a strategy on a page, was like, right, starting with a north star, this is what we're trying to do. So that's on our intranet and everyone can go and find it. We did packs for leaders on how to talk about it. Luckily, I talked to a lot of leaders through the, in that initial process anyway, so, people were already like, oh yeah, I get it. This appeals to me, which was good. We then sort of linked our engineers work to it. We're mostly an engineering organisation. So we did engineering workshops to talk about what is it, how does my work contribute to it? How does my team's work contribute to it? And I think as I said to Cat a number of times, you can't cut any corners here. It was a real back to basics

campaign. It really was. There was nothing sort of magical about it. We just went step by step by step to embed it.

And then we had people manager conversations. Everyone had to have a conversation about it with their manager, about how their work connected to it, how they felt about it. Did they understand it? Did they understand our strategy and where we were going. So that was how we embedded it and yet it's still used everywhere now. And our leaders use it in their presentations to people. People always come back to it. There's been a couple of challenges of like, should we change this bit? Should we change this bit along the way? And but whenever I go around and talk to people, they're like, no, just leave it as is.

Jen Sproul (34:22)
I find that people always want to tweak their word, but I think what's lovely is the way you've described the statement being really focused on those words and the intention of those words to convey so much. I think it's a really great example. And I think our listeners will really appreciate hearing how you went about launching it and the tools and things that you did. So that's super, super helpful. So thank you. I'll pass back to Dom, I think.

Dom (34:48)
I suppose we ought to think about coming into land, but Adele, thank you very much. I think listening to what you're doing, it's generated a feeling in me a bit like when I first saw a Tesla on the road. And I thought, ooh that looks... Well, I'll explain why. It was because I thought that's how the future is going to be, and it looks pretty good and it works. I'm stretching the analogy a little bit, but I think what you've described gives us a lot of focus for where the future of internal communication is going and you're making it work. You're actually doing it. Because as Cat said, who knows what organisations are going to face in terms of disruption this year already. Since Christmas we've seen so much external disruption, the markets have changed beyond recognition. And so you've shown that organisations can get through that and thrive through that by focusing on what they want to do on clarity. I think that's a really good practical example about clarity. I think you've also obviously talked about community. I think picking up on Jen's point, one of the key things that's shone through what you've said is, if you get community right, your organisation can survive a lot because it's trust. And I think trust is something that comes through in all the conversations we've had. So again, I guess I'm going back to as an internal communicator who's saying, that's where we want to be.

And the fact also, you've done this in an engineering company. So, it's a company based upon traditional engineering. I know you're dealing with technology, but engineers as opposed to people you might otherwise think of forward looking or very keen to adapt to new things. People want to see that stuff works and proven. So as an internal communicator, what's the one thing that you think they could focus on to start to make changes?

To start to do more of what you've been doing. So a very long question that really, though. What is the one thing that you think intelligent communicators can take from what we've said?

Adele McIntosh (36:41)
This is really difficult to bring down to one thing and I'm terrible at only having one thing. But I always come back to this connection to strategy and purpose and impact. Because I think that we talk about having passion for the mission. And if you have everyone having a real passion for the mission, I said we shouldn't use mission because we don't use that word, but that sort of passion for the mission for what you're trying to do as an organisation and understanding it. I think that immediately builds community.

If you're all working in the same direction, you'll go out of your way to help each other out, you'll go the extra mile, you'll connect with people across groups to get things done, and you'll have fun doing it along the way if you all feel like that. So think that is a really important thing for internal communicators and it's always been important, but I think it's more important than ever. I do think the trust piece is really important as well. Being authentic, making sure that your leaders are talking authentically.

Making them feel that they genuinely got your best interests at heart. I think when things are moving really quickly, you kind of need that sort of high challenge but high support culture to build community as well. And that's something to navigate again when things are moving really fast and everything's changing around you. And I think my final thing, sorry, it's three things, but I do think coming back to that focusing on the business, what problems is the business having and how can I help them? And have fun. Number 4!

Dom (38:05)
I really want to pick up also what you said there about sometimes bad things can happen. I know not the same in your case, but bad things can happen in organisations. And when they happen and you get through them and people say, I didn't particularly enjoy it, but I was really appreciative of the way it happened or the way you did it and the way people behaved. I think that also is testament to an organisation as well. And I guess builds up their resilience. But the fun thing is also crucially important.

So on that note, I think we'll come into land. Jen, do you want to finalise the runway system?

Jen Sproul (38:55)
Am I air traffic control now? No, thank you so much Adele and I think there's so much in there and I think I would just encourage listeners to really tune into what we've talked about here and tune into thinking about that role that you can create, that enabler you can be, that helper, that interconnector, that relationship builder and how we join all those kind of dots of opportunity and role and function and I also think that one of the things that you talked about as well, which I thought was really interesting at the beginning and something we should do more of as well is that it's like, think of yourself as a spotter,

whether that it's kind of a diagnostician is a real opportunity. When you have your ear close to the ground, you can be a diagnostician and you can help in the micro moments as well as that macro narrative, which keeps everyone together for that North Star. And I think that, tune into think about those vital skills and how you're driving those up and building those. Because that will be the thing that means our role has future and clarity as it goes forward, but also means that we can help our organisations thrive and our people kind of, I guess, keep together in good and in bad and in the middle. So thank you so much, Adele. I really enjoyed the session and I think there's lots of our listeners can take from it practically, but also just a great showcase of how you've built such a great role for internal communication and community at Arm. So thank you very much.

Adele McIntosh (39:57)
Thank you for having me.