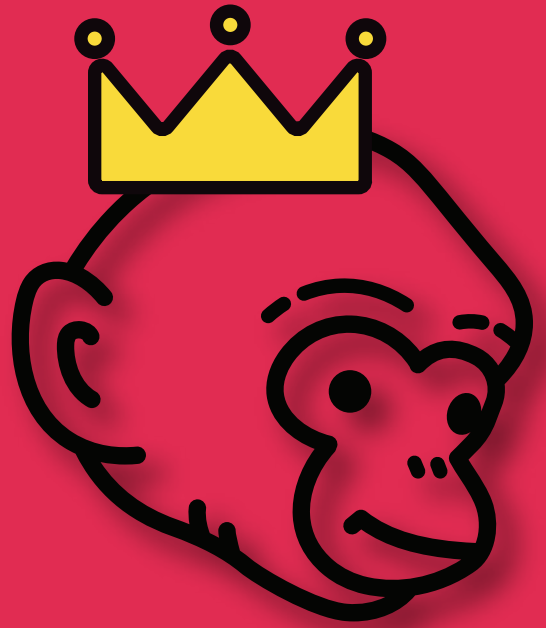


# The Gorilla Games



## Winner Showcase

A comprehensive look into the best entries for this international Internal Comms competition.



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# Introduction

## About the Gorilla Games

As an internal comms pro, did you ever have the most creative idea that you couldn't wait to show your executive team?

"They're going to love this one," you thought to yourself. You could barely contain your excitement.

But when you approached the C-Suite they asked you to prepare a strategic plan outlining how you'll launch the campaign only to later turn it down due to budgetary restrictions.

We put our heads together with internal communication consultant, Mike Klein from *Changing the Terms*, and came up with the idea of introducing **an exciting contest in the form of "The Gorilla Games" to urge internal comms pros to come up with creative solutions to common workplace scenarios without having to worry about a budget.**

The idea was to unleash their inner creative by applying a guerrilla approach to comms problems. Internal Comms pros chose from 5 different scenarios and attempted to solve them by writing a creative solution, using a "guerrilla approach."

The best entries won some fabulous prizes.

*"I thought 'why not' – most of us know how to write and many of us do more writing than anything else in our jobs. And **why not an approach that focuses not on 'what we did' – but on what we could do if we were operating at our full potential, free of financial, political or bureaucratic constraints,**" said Mike Klein.*

As Mike puts it, the goal was to get a new group of writers and thinkers to get into the game, and to do so from a next practice perspective rather than trying to justify previous work as best practice.

We then decided to recruit a group of experienced IC professionals who would judge all the entries for the games. We wanted IC professionals who were committed to the profession and who covered all the bases: in-house, consultancy and academia. US, UK, Canada and Europe.

We're so excited to share with you more about what The Gorilla Games entailed, introduce you to the judges (a.k.a The Gorilla Troop) as well as allow you to read all the creative winning entries we received.

Happy Reading!  
-The ContactMonkey team

# Challenge & Scenario Overview

The challenge at hand was for internal communicators to **come up with a disruptive, "guerrilla" (or as we at ContactMonkey say 'Gorilla') approach in response to one of five epic internal communication challenges.**

Using creativity and awareness of their strategic situation, internal comms pros were tasked with finding a way to break through the status quo by introducing something that can't go unnoticed – something that will sit deep in people's minds long after the first interaction.



## Scenarios



### Scenario 1 | The Flu Outbreak

There's a flu outbreak at work. Sickness-related absence is at an all-time high. Although you've been sending weekly emails on how to prevent the spread of germs, they keep getting ignored and more people just keep getting sick. For the sake of keeping the business running smoothly and efficiently, it's time to get in your employees' face and start being heard.

### Scenario 2 | New CEO, New Program, Low Engagement

Employee engagement scores have plummeted 10 points company-wide following the appointment of a new CEO and the launch of a far-reaching transformation program. How would you tackle this using a disruptive tactic? How will you make sure your employees' voice is heard by higher management?



### Scenario 3 | All the Money in the World

Your CEO has just told you to solve your biggest internal communication challenge - and not to worry about the budget this year. What would you really do about it if money wasn't an object?

# Scenarios



## Scenario 4 | How Do You Get Around Budget Cuts?

Your company is going through budget cuts. The bad news: your internal comms budget has been cut by 25%. The good news: you can spend the remaining 75% on whatever you'd want. What will you do?

## Scenario 5 | A Merger Leads to an Identity Crisis

Your company has just gone through a merger and will undergo a rebranding. This has resulted in an identity crisis internally. You know many employees are not happy about the changes this will bring. How will you lead the rebranding efforts in a way that gets employees on board, rejuvenates the workforce and fosters a stronger company culture and identity?



# Introducing the Gorilla Troop aka the Judges



### 1) Priya Bates, President of Inner Strength Communication

*"I like the idea of a contest that allows those passionate about internal communication and the role it can play in organizational success to dream about what is possible."*

Based in Toronto, Canada, Priya Bates is an award-winning communication professional and President of Inner Strength Communication. **Priya has over 20 years of experience leading communications for organizations including Loblaw Companies Limited, HP Canada, and Compaq Canada.**

"I like the thinking and people-centred approach in many of the entries. I also enjoyed the out-of-the-box thinking on starting with the employee and extending the conversation to identify commonalities," she said.

# Introducing the Gorilla Troop aka the Judges



## 2) Silke Brittain, Managing Director, ClearVoice Comms

*"The Gorilla Games gave writers the opportunity to be free of their normal day-to-day constraints and push the boundaries to be revolutionary with their thinking."*

Managing Director of ClearVoice Comms, Silke Brittain from the UK, was another one of our judges.

**Silke is a highly experienced senior executive with an exceptional record of driving strategic direction and vision, leading global marketing, performance improvement and behaviour change strategies for prestigious, multinational brands.**

She focuses on aligning senior leadership and people with their organisation's strategy and purpose.



## 3) Neil Jenkins, Internal Communications Leader

*"The best entries were from those internal communicators who weren't afraid to unleash their inner passion, showcase their creative drive and demonstrate the art of the possible."*

Neil Jenkins was another one of our brilliant judges, also from the UK and was delighted to be a part of The Gorilla Troop.

**Neil is an award-winning internal communications director and leader with 21 years of experience across FMCG, technology, manufacturing and engineering sectors.**

He's passionate about using the power of communication to get the best out of people, connect them to their organisations and build reputation and trust from the inside out.

"I was looking for submissions that showed no sign of the shackles that can hold back our ideas, like time or resourcing," he said.

# Introducing the Gorilla Troop aka the Judges



**4) Ashli Davis, Senior Communication, Marketing and Change Strategy Consultant, Type A Consulting**

*“I was looking for forward-thinking, creativity and strategy. Internal communications provides endless opportunities to engage, connect and share meaning and purpose to everyone from the CEO to the receptionist.”*

Another one of our esteemed judges was Ashli Davis, a Senior Communication, Marketing and Change Strategy Consultant at Type A Consulting in the U.S.

**Ashli has demonstrated success in global communication, leadership development, culture, crisis and change management in companies such as The Coca-Cola Company and Deloitte.**

Ashli brings a diverse range of experience to the table and that’s why she was a perfect fit for our guerrilla internal communications judges’ panel.



**5) Jason Anthoine, Managing Founder, Audacity: Bold Thinking, At Work**

*“The best entries were from those internal communicators who weren’t afraid to unleash their inner passion, showcase their creative drive and demonstrate the art of the possible.”*

Jason Anthoine is another passionate internal communicator who was enthusiastic to be a part of The Gorilla Troop.

He’s also from the U.S. and has 30 years of experience working exclusively in internal communication, culture change and employee engagement.

He helps companies reimagine themselves and make a stand for their employees, their customers, and their shareholders.

# Introducing the Gorilla Troop aka the Judges



## 6) Mike Klein, Principal, Changing The Terms

*"The reason behind the Gorilla Games was to get a new group of writers and thinkers to get into the game, and to do so from a next practice perspective rather than trying to justify previous work as best practice."*

And last, but certainly not least, we have Mike Klein one of the world's leading internal communication experts, who helped us come up with the idea for The Gorilla Games.

According to Mike, this competition was about enabling IC pros to think of what they can do even when the sponsorship, finances and attention we "need" aren't readily available, and they still take on the challenge.

**"This competition was about communicating without budgets. When the CEO doesn't give a crap. When survey fatigue is epidemic and when the old posters have to be left up for no reason. When the chips are down, the back is to the wall and the gloves simply have to come off,"** he said.

## The Prizes

We decided to divide the prizes into three main categories:  
**Gold, Silver and Bronze.**

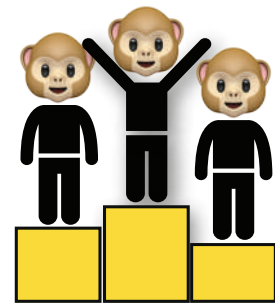
**The winner of Gold would get to see their idea come to life.**

ContactMonkey will help to make the winner's guerrilla internal communication tactic a reality by aiding in creation, set up, and funding.\*

**We decided to reward the silver and bronze winners with a mix of free licenses to ContactMonkey's employee engagement tool and masterclasses from Dr. Leandro Herrero** from The Chalfont Project.

**ContactMonkey enables you to create, send and track personalized internal emails all from within Outlook.** It is the only tool that tracks individual employee emails from your existing Outlook distribution lists. **We help IC pros create responsive HTML email newsletter templates with an easy to use drag-and-drop email template builder.**

Dr. Herrero's masterclass is particularly insightful for internal comms pros working with change, transformation or culture within their organizations.





# The Winners

With multiple entries from around the globe, our esteemed judges found **Stephen Welch** of **Eleven Consulting** winning **Gold** and **Rachel Fraser** of **MAG (Manchester Airport)** winning **Silver**.

They were joined on the podium by the internal communications team of **Euroclear** in Belgium, led by **Anne-Sophie Duchene**, independent practitioner **Gaurav Ghose** of Canada, **Terry Hart** of **Designing Successful Change** in the United States, **Debbie Aurelius** (Peppermint Fish) and **Frank Dias** (Lloyd's) winning **Bronze**, both also from the UK.

## Overview of Winning Entrants & Categories

Prize	Scenario of Choice	Contestant	Organization
Gold Winner	Scenario 4: Your company is going through some budget cuts and organizational restructuring.	Stephen Welch	Eleven Consulting
Silver Winner	Scenario 3: Your biggest current IC challenge.	Rachel Fraser	Manchester Airport
Bronze Winner	Scenario 5: A merger leads to an identity crisis and low employee engagement scores.	Frank Dias	Lloyd's
Bronze Winner	Scenario 5: A merger leads to an identity crisis and low employee engagement scores.	Debbie Aurelius	Peppermint Fish
Bronze Winner	Scenario 1: The Flu Outbreak	Anne Sophie Duchene	Euroclear
Bronze Winner	Scenario 5: A merger leads to an identity crisis and low employee engagement scores.	Terry Hart	Designing Successful Change
Bronze Winner	Scenario 1: The Flu Outbreak	Gaurav Ghose	Freelance Consultant

# Gold Winner - Stephen Welch

## **An Open Letter to the Internal Communications Team of BigCo.**

Dear colleagues,

As you have heard, we have to make budget cuts of 25% across the company. This includes us in the Internal Communications department.

As your leader, I want to give you my perspective about how we can rise to the challenge. If there is any good news, it is that we have carte blanche to do what we like with the remaining 75%.

Clearly this is not the outcome that we would have liked, but it does give us a chance to fundamentally rethink what we do, how we do it, and how our work adds value.

### **A different perspective**

It is easy to get focused on delivery targets, producing regular content, delivering against a project plan, etc. But what if we were to take a step back and be inspired by the content, and the communications that we encounter in the outside world? Do you pay to have a print subscription to The Economist?

Do you have Netflix at home? What about your online subscription to the Financial Times? Or, for those colleagues based in the UK, your BBC license fee? Or just your annual membership to IABC or IoIC which gives you access to great content in exchange for money each year? You all pay for content outside of work.

Why? Because it is content that informs, delights and entertains us. If it is well written, informative, gives us insights, educates us, and maybe even helps us do our job better, then that is an investment you pay for. Equally, think of the stacks of junk mail you get through your front door every day ... mostly I just 'press delete' or throw it in the recycling. Is that the equivalent of all the standard emails we send out?

### **Economist, not Econo-mist**

So from now on, we're going to be more like the Economist, and less like "Econo-mist", the window cleaning service that drops a flyer through my mailbox every week (or so it seems).

To respond to business needs, and to contribute to the cost cuts we all need to make, we're going to create a different future for the Internal Communications Function here at BigCo.



*Stephen Welch, Eleven Consulting*

- A future where IC is informative, gives people insights, educates them, and helps them do their job better.
- A future where IC teams are focused around high-quality relevant content.
- A future where there is a 'pull' from the organization, not where your teams are just 'pushing'
- Finally, a future where Internal Communication is so good that employees will pay to receive it (just like they do outside of work).

Yes, that's right – we are going to start charging employees to receive our Internal Communication.

### **How? What? Huh?**

Yes, if employees don't pay, they don't get. But this does have some important implications for us as a team. From now on we will need to do three things differently:

1. Ask tough questions about relevance, usefulness, quantity and quality. There is no point in us producing materials that employees wouldn't choose to pay for.
2. Anything you do needs to have a clear two-way ROI. Not only for the audience (they would expect some advantage or benefit from paying) but also for us. Each communication would ideally cost less than it receives in 'sales'.
3. Finally, important business communication such as strategy, goals, etc. is going back to where it belongs: leaders.

Let's call these three implications pertinent, profitable, and personal.

### **Pertinent**

From now on, you are content sellers. This means you make sure it is timely, relevant and useful for your audience. You take time over it and make it professional and impactful. This is the opposite of 'sending out stuff'. Ask hard questions about what you are doing and whether you are publishing it for your own satisfaction, to meet a KPI, or for the audience's benefit. Make it so useful and relevant to your audience that they would be willing to pay for it. Like they do outside of work.

### **Profitable**

When someone comes to us with a story idea, or a message they want to send out: think like a publisher. Either it is a story that can capture and move the audience, or it counts as 'advertising' and we sell space in our channels for other people to promote their work. Here at BigCo, we often lose sight of the real cost of Internal Communications. Take our monthly team briefing document. As you know, all 50,000 global employees are expected to attend a half hour monthly meeting with their manager to go through the content and discuss it. Our average cost of employment is £40/hour. This means we pay £1m a month in salaries while people are attending the team meeting. £12m a year. Or put another way, we spend £50k every day on this one communication channel. Is it delivering?

## Personal

As you know it is my belief that “every time IC actually does a communication, somewhere a leader isn’t doing his or her job properly”. From now on, it is leaders’ jobs to take responsibility, and to align their teams. After all, if the leader personally motivates the team effectively, they will perform. The team, and the leader, will both be more successful. You can coach, support, and guide these leaders – we have plenty of templates they can follow. But we’re not ‘doing’ business-as-usual communication for them anymore.

As you have already seen in your calendar invites, my PA has asked you all to come to HQ next Monday for a brainstorming session where we are going to reset what we do to figure out how we are going to implement this new approach. But in the meantime, here are some ideas I’ve already heard:

- **Advertising.** If leaders think their message is so key, can we charge them for space in the team briefing document?
- **Building skills.** We’re all experts. Can we sell our expertise to the rest of the business through training, pay-only material, subscription-only podcasts on key communication topics, or even 1:1 coaching?
- **Canteens.** We know that the most popular pages on our intranet site is the weekly menu for the canteen in each facility. People can get this free anyway when they get to lunch so why not charge them to access it early?
- **Do-it-yourself.** Can we charge people for the convenience of using the intranet to book their own holidays?
- **Email.** What if we set it up with IT that each person’s budget got charged every time they used the ‘cc’ or ‘bcc’ field in an email?

**I want to be clear: these are just ideas. They need to be evaluated fully.**

I do expect every person to come to next Monday’s meeting with at least one radical idea on how we can monetize our services. We’re going to have a free and open brainstorm where we’ll explore and discuss different ideas. So please come with an open mind ... and one that is ready to be part of this exciting new, profitable, incredible future for IC in BigCo.

**Best wishes – see you all on Monday.**

**Bob Parr**  
**Director of Internal Communications BigCo.**

# Silver Winner - Rachel Fraser

**George Harrison  
23 Buddy Holly Close  
Manchester**

Dear Mr Presley,

I wanted to write to you today to say thank you. Thank you for listening to the feedback of myself, and my fellow security officers, and making our working lives better.

When I look back to working here twelve months ago, I was close to leaving. Amazon had just opened up nearby and were offering an extra pound an hour. But I decided to stay. I couldn't say why but there is something about this airport that goes beyond a normal business. It buzzes (and not just from the planes). It's 24hrs a day, non-stop full of families, tourists, business people not to mention stag-dos (I spotted fifteen jockeys from Blackpool in the terminal the other day). People all coming together to travel and experience something whether it's relaxation, going to Disney for the first time or dancing all night in Ibiza.

But this time last year, it was getting hard to feel that connection to the airport. I was tired, fed-up, sick of getting up for a 4am shift to be shouted at (by the public and managers), noticing things that were constantly wrong that just never got sorted. How hard is it to change a bloody clock twice a year? I didn't even get a break at home. I can't tell you how many times in the pub I heard people slating our airport. My airport. I gave up defending it in the end. I didn't feel like ABC airport was defending me so why should I bother.

But, you did something small earlier this year. You listened.

We've all filled in staff surveys. Blah blah blah. Where does all that information go - probably the same place as one half of my socks? But this time, something happened with the results. For a start, I think you must have brought in a new system because I actually heard the results in the same calendar year I filled it in. Usually it feels like a new epoch of history has started before my line manager even mentions action planning, listening strategies or whatever new jargon he's just learnt on his latest training course.

But this time within a week we saw a list of what our team had said. Some of it was ridiculous. I get you don't like your uniform but comparing your clip-on tie to Satan is a bit much. There were themes though. It sounds ridiculous writing them down - ripped seats in the staff rooms, not being told about changes, the extra hour getting the bus to the car park adds on to our day. What shocked me was how easy some of this stuff was to fix. I know there are always money issues but come on, if you can't provide a seat for someone to sit down after a six-hour stint on the security lanes, what are you playing at.

So, hearing the results of what we were saying was the first shocker. The second was you actually started to do something about them. The broken TV in the airside restroom got fixed. We got one phone number to get through to the cleaners. I asked the duty manager what had put a rocket up the senior team to sort this stuff out and she said that it had finally twigged this was the right thing to do.

Now I had to admit I was cynical about whether all this progress would continue, but it did. My manager was giving the team updates every week about what was getting resolved and what was delaying other stuff getting sorted. Then a couple of months later I got asked if I wanted to volunteer to be part of a focus group. I always volunteer for them. It's not always because I care but because I get to sit down for a couple of hours and there are usually some free butties on offer.

I was right, there were some excellent butties on offer, but it was also interesting. This time they wanted to talk to us about customer service. I am sure you get all kind of reports telling you how bad it is out there, but they seemed genuinely interested, about what us at the coalface actually had to say. They asked us for our opinion on all sorts – staff rooms, training, processes and something they called 'the people promise'. They wanted to know what we needed from ABC and what we could do in return to improve customer service.

We definitely gave them some food for thought and it was fantastic to see a poster appear a couple of weeks later with a plan of what they are going to do.

Probably the best thing that came out of it was ABC-I, our new app. To be quite honest, I didn't have a clue what was happening at the airport before ABC-I apart from what Keith, our union rep used to tell us. It used to drive me bonkers how hard it was to access basic info. I used to have to go on my break, find a free terminal, log-on with some random details, work out which ruddy button to press and then every so often, it might all work.

ABC-I has changed all that. I can do so much myself now – change my address, check my hours, contact the HR Service Centre. I also had no ideas we had access to discounts for working here. I managed to get dental insurance and cheap cinema tickets.

I also find out what is happening in my team, daily briefs go on there. I'm a massive football fan so it's also great to see who has been spotted in the airport and see the pictures when the clubs are travelling through.

I can also send feedback to ABC-I about how I'm feeling. I'm not going to lie – sometimes when I get asked for how I am feeling today on the app, it's not good. But it's better than it was.

It's not just the technology that's helped. I guess following the feedback from the focus groups you realised that you weren't helping us enough to deal with customers. Last month we all did some training on how to treat our customers as guests. Some of it was common sense but I think even I, whose been around the block more than a couple of times, realised that sometimes a reminder is good. ABC-I has been giving me some reminders as well – sometimes it's as simple as remembering to smile a little bit more.

By no means is this place a perfect place to work but it's better than it was. A lot of what has changed hasn't been big money or flashy, but you've fixed the basics and put in place things that just make my life easier. You listened and acted and sometimes that's all it takes.

It's always nice to say thank you, so thank you to you and the team for listening to us guys on the frontline and doing something about our ideas, issues and concerns. Here's to another great few years at our wonderful airport.

**Best wishes,  
George Harrison**

# Bronze Winners | #1 Frank Dias

THE

GORILLA

GAMES

## Drastic times, calls for drastic actions.



**Scenario 5:** Engagement has plummeted by 10 points, even though we have a new CEO. We can only connect this negative result to our far-reaching transformation programme, which hasn't landed well. Why wasn't internal communications brought in sooner? Time to get our gorilla on 🐼

### **Q. How would we tackle this using a disruptive tactic?**

One hyphenated word, Get-a-room – a giant escape room, where no one can leave until we solve our problems.

Let's call a one/two-day, emergency summit. A global summit like never before, where our business shuts down (which we've never done), and bring all our employees and leaders together to figure things out.

The aim is to do it openly, authentically, honestly, respectfully and have fun while trying.

**An unsummit meets multiple escape rooms.**

### **Q. And at the same time, how are we going to make sure our employees' voice is heard by our senior leaders?**

The 'escape room' summit will be initially lead by our leaders, but their primary role is to listen. They will be observers/contributors in our different breakout escape rooms, tackling the topics of low engagement and the transformation programme, etc.

Employees will also be part of the panel discussions and will have the opportunity to appear on the internal Yammer feed wall and using it to do the upvoting so it's transparent.

The new CEO issues a video to promote our own 'shut down' and invites everyone to a one/two-day 'Involution: Engaging, Listening and Connecting Better With You' Summit. There are some urgent issues to tackle. The CEO wants to do that openly and with everyone's input and to build out their leadership credentials. People have seen the engagement results and know that the transformation programme has been a big part of the negative. This is not going to be a normal summit. People's participation is vital. The issues that need tackling are top of mind if the business is going to improve and be successful. There is a need to gather and recalibrate.

Having an employee voice and population that feels and sees it is being heard is key. The entire summit is geared around the opportunity for employees to speak their mind and share their voice on the issues that matter. Using the unconference format, employees will contribute the topics to be grouped to create the agenda. The 'escape room' concept for each of the breakout groups will have a framework around it where people in the group have 30 minutes to outline the issues, spotlight the problem they're trying to solve and to come up with realistic actions to fix them. The leader in the room will act as scribe, will listen, playback and summarise the suggested solution. Everyone goes to their next escape room session apart from the leaders of each room.

Celebrate our great community. This gathering has been created with input from employee reps. Introduce the concept of an unconference beforehand and what prep is needed by everyone. The outcome is for all people to walk away feeling upbeat, more together and focused. Things will change for the better because of everyone's input. Leaders will play a greater role throughout the day, listening and contributing and sponsoring the actions from each 'escape room' session and be accountable. We want everyone to feel important and appreciated and that we are rebuilding trust and a renewed way forward.

Each leader in each room will then be accountable to make the solutions happen. They will all meet together with the CEO to develop the action plan following employees' input and voice into the solutions. Each of the escape rooms will be gamified in terms of the solution and the time it took to solve. These will then be open to upvoting by the population in terms of which ones should be focused on to make happen. All this will be fed back to the CEO and their team. They will then score and outline the priorities and sequence. The CEO will then wrap at the end of the summit the actions from each escape room and who is accountable to deliver. Internal communications will be heavily involved in the design, outputs and the narrative after the event.

By Frank Dias

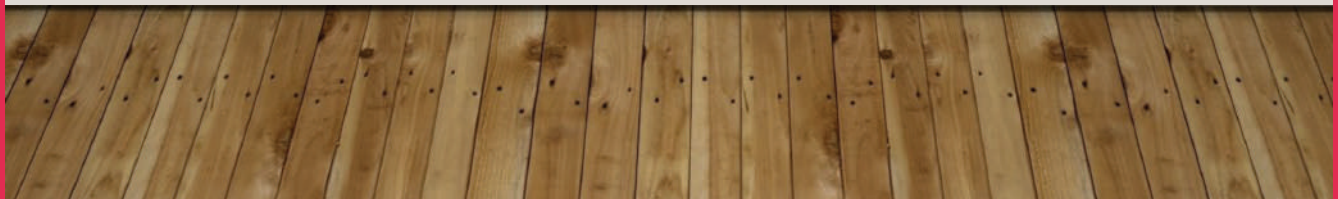


## **INVOLUTION: ENGAGING, LISTENING AND CONNECTING BETTER WITH YOU**

### **// OVERALL SUMMIT AGENDA**

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- Inspirational opening video featuring employees' hopes and dreams to improve engagement
- CEO welcome. Our theme, topic and idea for today
- Employee panel: tackling the things that matter
- Unconference: building your agenda
- Escape room sessions
- Upvoting of each rooms' solutions
- External speaker: building trust, motivation and morale
- CEO wrap-up: promised actions and accountabilities for success





# Bronze Winners

## #2 Debbie Aurelius

As Internal Communications professionals, most of us have either led or been on the receiving end of high-impact rebranding campaigns. Despite the excitement of an apparent fresh start, to a company's internal audience, rebrands can feel like impersonal white-washing exercises. Sometimes they are criticised as costly distractions, or a frustrating diversion from other issues. At the least, many people may feel somewhat uninspired by tried-and-tested approaches.

I believe that the cornerstones of any well-planned internal communications campaign are prerequisite to successful organisational change, and should not be dismissed. For example, the CEO or most senior leader should be highly visible throughout the process, explaining the 'why' of the whole initiative; clearly describing a post-merger strategic narrative in alignment with the new organisation's values; inviting and responding to questions and concerns.

This role modelling should be echoed by line managers and leaders, who themselves are encouraged to ask the questions they anticipate from their teams. Leaders who are supported to thoroughly understand changes and, in this case, the opportunities the merger presents, will be better placed to engender a sense of confidence in the future and a more positive mood overall.

However, my guerrilla tactic is not just to replicate the type of internal communications approach we're familiar with, nor to undermine it. In order to make this a change process that truly comes to life, I propose we focus on the companies' employees, rather than the rebranding process. After all, it is the people of these merged organisations who are going to build the new culture. I'd do that by inviting individual employees to think afresh from a first-person perspective, then gradually apply that insight to their organisational context.

My idea centres around a podcast series, designed to be internal to the organisation.

The format of the proposed podcast is a series of facilitated, round-table discussions. These should be attended by a cross section of colleagues, of all levels of hierarchy and tenure. Importantly, there should be representation from both former organisations. The subject matter of each episode will provide the factor that unites the participants and the focus of each episode should be a simple personal change in the preceding year.

# Bronze Winners

## #2 Debbie Aurelius

**For example, episodes could include a discussion between 4 – 8 colleagues who have:**

- Been promoted;
- Got married;
- Had a baby or adopted a child;
- Returned from maternity leave or sabbatical;
- Had to take unplanned time off;
- Proudly engaged in community activity;
- Changed their shift pattern, working hours or workplace location;

**And if the organisation is brave enough:**

- Challenged some form of prejudice;
- Openly discussed their mental illness;
- Decided to take a step back from responsibilities;
- Dealt with personal loss and grief.

The conversation should be gently structured to focus on the highs and lows the panel members experienced – how their change challenged them; how they overcame those challenges; what are the benefits of those changes; what they learned from it; what they'd advise a friend or colleague in the same position; how the company/ies supported them, or not, and how that could be improved.

It's likely the impromptu cohorts of colleagues may bond into micro-teams and find they are better able to network with each other across the organisation. They may step into the limelight more to champion the issues they've spoken about. Support should be available to help them develop any additional skills they need to prepare them for what might seem to be a 'rise to fame' in the context of the organisation.

The conclusion of each podcast conversation should include a challenge to the participants to reflect on the parallels between personal change and organisational change. For example, the question "In what ways have the skills you developed to navigate this change helped you as you deal with workplace changes?" should help draw out experience-based tactics for success that anyone else might be able to adopt.

As the series unfolds, some points of commonality will become apparent across the episodes. The evolution of these conversations should help everyone to refresh their own perspective on change. Change is part of life – sometimes we choose it and it goes well. Sometimes we choose it and it is a huge challenge. Sometimes it is imposed on us, but we can choose our response to it.

# Bronze Winners

## #2 Debbie Aurelius

The important link to make is that organisations face this too. Just as someone who's newly married has effectively (arguably!) rebranded, and now has to learn how to compromise and collaborate, so does a merged organisation. Just as recognising the impact of a change in personal circumstances can be painful, so it is, sometimes, when there's a change to your workplace set up.

I propose that this would enable the people of these organisations to recognise the core humanity that binds them; to identify the parallels rather than the differences; to accept the challenges and the triumphs of change and to reconnect with their new brand in a personal and considered way.

Here's a summary of some of the key benefits of this approach, as an addition to the more conventional style of internal campaigns:

- **Producing a podcast** series is a relatively low-cost way to capture and share content across a large organisation;
- **Podcast content is easy to access** for deskless employees and can be listened to at any time, increasing accessibility and improving the likelihood that employees will engage with the content;
- **Focusing on individuals** in the organisation is a more personalised and human approach to what may be seen as an impersonal topic;
- **Grouping colleagues by topics** will bring together representatives from both former organisations in a way that unites them around a common human experience, demonstrating the commonalities that reside in both workforces;
- **Producing episodes centred on human issues** will generate engagement among other colleagues, particularly if they are considering or facing any of the changes being discussed;
- **Inviting open and frank discussion** demonstrates an organisation's willingness to listen and engenders higher levels of trust, which will be critical to the success of the post-merger culture.

I accept this approach would take courage on behalf of the leaders of these merged organisations, but I hope it may be seen as a truly guerrilla response to the challenge, in that it is definitely of the people.

# Bronze Winners

## #3 Anne-Sophie Duchene and the IC team at Euroclear

### Euroclear Internal Communications fights seasonal influenza

#### Introduction

There's a flu outbreak at work. Sickness-related absence is at an all-time high. Although we have been sending weekly emails on how to prevent the spread of germs, they keep getting ignored and more people are getting sick. For the sake of keeping the business running smoothly and efficiently, it is time to get in our employees' faces.

Our communication objective is to motivate behaviour change. To do this, we will need to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the importance of preventing the flu to spread further
- 2) Create clear messages for our staff about the actions they should take to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading the flu:
  - **Wash your hands** and use hand sanitizers (clean hands are safer hands)
  - **Cover your cough**
  - **Stay at home if you are sick**

Our business objective is to prevent employees from getting ill, which will positively influence performance, cost and business continuity.

#### Intervention plan

**Campaign messages:** Our key campaign messages will address the issue of social responsibility, thanks to the three recommended behaviours (see above). The objectives here are to draw on current beliefs and attitudes about the flu, to raise the responsibility of each individual and his/her behaviour, and to encourage people to adopt simple habits to reduce the spread of the flu.

Our key campaign slogan is: **The flu, don't let it get you.**

**Physical campaign:** As our emails so far haven't been working and people keep getting sick, we think it is time to really confront them with a worst-case scenario. We need to show them what will happen if the flu keeps spreading and if people aren't careful, because it affects everything and everyone.

We want to use a shock-effect campaign to wake colleagues up. To do so, we will hire people to walk around the building in 'bio-hazard' suits, just like during a chemical disaster.

# Bronze Winners

## #3 Anne-Sophie Duchene and the IC team at Euroclear

These people will go from floor to floor, spraying different areas of the departments, without talking to anyone. They will also put up 'bio hazard' tape in certain areas that have been 'too contaminated'. The idea is to make people feel (a bit) scared and curious. This will for sure trigger people's interest and will make them talk to each other - of course our Facilities and Security and Health & Safety departments, as our management will be informed beforehand.

**Engagement centres:** Around noon, we will notify everyone via our intercom about pop-up field hospitals (name: quarantine in the canteen) on the ground floor and coffee and lounge areas. Here, our staff will find posters and trained professionals (nurses, doctors) who will explain how to avoid catching the flu and will offer free examinations.

We will also create hygiene centres per open office space, where we will offer boxes of tissues, bottles of alcohol hand rub and an anti stress squeeze ball with the text: The flu, don't let it get you.

On each floor we will also indicate one person who will keep an eye on the general health. If they notice that an employee shows signs of the flu, they will have the 'power' to send that person to the company nurse. If the nurse decides that the employee has to go home, we will put up a sign at their desk saying 'The flu, it might just catch you too' to make other employees aware. It also gives a good visual representation of how many people on your floor have already been affected by the flu.

We will make sure how leadership is seen to be taking this seriously (having the shot, sanitising their hands etc).

**Campaign channels:** Besides the physical campaign, we also want to deliver the campaign messages via a range of different channels to achieve a maximum visual impact, opportunities for engagement and to overcome identified barriers to adopt the recommended behaviour. Therefore, we will use easy to understand posters, with a funny undertone. These posters will be placed in various locations across the building (toilet stalls, in the elevators, in the kitchen, on whiteboards, next to the waste bins).

On TV screens, which are available on each floor, we will run a visual of the same posters and at the same time give an update on how many people have been affected by the flu so far via a newsreel that will run all day long in all locations. We will also show the link to our social intranet where people can find more information at any point in time. It will be like a real crisis broadcast.

# Bronze Winners

## #3 Anne-Sophie Duchene and the IC team at Euroclear

Social media campaign: First of all we can use our social collaboration platform to provide our colleagues with detailed information (explanatory videos, point of contact to ask questions about flu, flu shots etc. ) about the campaign and the three desired behaviours: **wash your hands, cover your cough, stay at home if you're sick.**

A direct link to this intranet page will be available on everyone's desktop.

Besides that, we can also make use of the corporate app, where we will replicate the same information. The advantage of the app is that everyone can consult it whenever and wherever they want, while the platform can only be accessed within the company's IT environment. So, the app will make sure that we reach more people.

On top of those 2 items, we also have our Mass Notification Tool in case of crisis. With this tool we can notify everyone via sms/text message about the situation.

After 1 week and 1 month we will draw up a report for management with some key measurements (absenteeism levels, awareness level, etc.) to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the campaign.

We made this video to show what we had in mind: <https://youtu.be/0d5avu0oMlk>

## Bronze Winners

### #4 Terry Hart, Designing Successful Change

**Your company has just gone through a merger and will undergo a rebranding.** This has resulted in an identity crisis internally. You know many employees are not happy about the changes this will bring. How will you lead the rebranding efforts in a way that gets employees on board, rejuvenates the workforce and fosters a stronger company culture and identity?

Two companies reach an agreement for a merger. For employees, it's an intersection of work overload, change overload and information overload. Both sets of employees work for a company that no longer exists.

The acquired firm's President and his six vice presidents all leave the day the merger closes, taking their millions and exiting. Employees are suspicious of each other. Normal routines are disrupted. Nobody's job seems safe. Even the rock stars are anxious. It's a scary time to work for REBRANDED.

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "HR is scrambling to consolidate benefits, bonuses and organization structure. Finance has to close two sets of books. IT is trying to keep two systems secure while administering dual system access. Payroll has to pay everyone accurately and on time. We need you to forge a new identity."

**Internal Communications:** "To get to a new identity, we have to help everyone understand why this happened, help them feel less overwhelmed. We need to give employees something new to look forward to, something bigger than themselves to be proud of.

Credibility is critical. We don't know – right now – whom, if any, of our leaders the employees trust. It's too soon to know which of our communication channels will best reach this new combined workforce. But we do have data. And we're going to use it.

Data tells us our top five customers. We're going to work with Sales and Marketing to identify one for a testimonial about why this merger is a good thing for our customers. We'll do the same with Manufacturing and Procurement and find one of our most critical suppliers to interview why this merger will solve key challenges in our supply chain. We'll work with Investor Relations to get a respected buy-side Wall Street analyst to speak to our Finance employees about why this merger makes sense."

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "Isn't this a little outside the scope of Internal Communications?"

**Internal Communications:** **\*\*takes a deep breath\*\*** "With all due respect, we're the only ones with the strategic understanding and the tactical reach to coordinate a collaborative dialogue across multiple stakeholder groups – and maintain a common narrative necessary to produce a common identity."

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "We have people in 37 countries. We can't afford to put them all in one room."

**Internal Communications:** **\*\*with not a little trepidation\*\*** "We just spent eight billion in stock and cash for this merger. Before doing so, you did your financial due diligence. It's time to do a cultural due diligence. Let's spend what we need to conduct an organizational network analysis.

## Bronze Winners

### #4 Terry Hart, Designing Successful Change

This will identify our most influential employees and how information traverses our new organization. We'll make sure these sense makers see the stakeholder testimonials in person. We'll facilitate opportunities for them to resolve any uncertainties with you and your team. And we'll video the external stakeholder testimonials and stream it live for the rest of our employees."

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "We're hearing a lot of noise out there."

**Internal Communications:** **\*\*Gathering a head of steam\*\*** "We anticipated it. We hear it too. You were very clear in the business press when promoting the consolidation savings of this merger to shareholders. Everyone knows that there are two people for one job and the "savings" you referenced mean some of us.

To move employees past the uncertainty, we must give them the opportunity to vent that noise and understand your consolidation plan. We have to listen to their questions and concerns. The size of our firm today means we'll need more than one way to listen – in person, team meetings, teleconference, country issues, business unit specifics – and more than one way to respond. We'll dedicate some of our influencers to help us gather culture signals and form a genuine and coherent current state picture.

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "So what's our new identity going to be?"

**Internal Communications:** **\*\*Leaning in, with emphasis\*\*** "We don't know yet. We have ideas, but there are two dependencies. The first is how you lead this new company, your priorities, who you promote, what behaviors you'll encourage and reward for success. The second is the organizational response to this initial phase of communication, which we'll measure closely and report to you regularly.

**REBRANDED Leadership:** "When do we start?"

**Internal Communications:** "We've already started. Since the merger closed, the internal communications team has been on the road visiting facilities of both companies, making acquaintances, gathering stories and getting a first hand understanding of the challenges they're facing to combine these companies.

Building a culture isn't a one-time event. We know every decision hasn't yet been made, but we can't have a communication vacuum. We have to tell the employees what we know, what we don't and when we think we'll know.

In the meantime, we'll feed our influential employees with key points, integrating their ideas into our formal communication channels. We'll build a narrative from your business objectives, the external stakeholder testimonials and responses to common concerns and questions. The voice we'll use will be sympathetic and humorous. An identity will emerge. One that fits, that isn't forced, and that's human."



# Bronze Winners

## #5 Gaurav Ghose

Four months into my new job as Head of Communications of a mid-sized bank, a crisis struck us like a stubborn flu. Literally.

At the time, we were a 14,300-strong regional bank. For the past 10 months, the bank had been on expansion mode, recruiting as many as 950 people. We were on a brisk upward trajectory, but our bank managers were hitting the panic button.

This was the annual cold and flu season and some of our biggest offices, across 10 locations, where close to 7,200 employees worked, too many were calling sick.

In the past month, 20 to 25 employees a week in each of the 10 offices were unable to come to work. It was exceeding our previous flu-related absence records. Daily functions were starting to get affected. If this trend continued for another two to three weeks, the managers warned, optimum business operations would be disrupted.

The CEO called an urgent meeting of the Executive Committee on a Thursday morning. We had to intervene swiftly, the CEO told the HR and Communications teams.

We had to stem the flow. ANY. WHICH. WAY.

### Blind Spot

Saddled with this challenging brief, we got down to figuring out what was not working. It was clear to us that our message of '**Dos and Don'ts in the Flu Season**' sent via weekly emails and posted on Yammer was being ignored. We had formatted useful health warnings in an attractive, printable poster, but obviously, it did not have the desired impact.

Our tracking data showed that 78% employees had opened the Do's and Don'ts message in the first week. Subsequent reminders did not work. To give the benefit of doubt to employees, they probably did not remember all what they had to do. It's a matter of habit. We had to inculcate it in a more engaging way.

### Getting Real

Here, we were working against time. We had to convince each of our employees to effect a change of behaviour – at least temporarily – to prevent themselves and others from falling sick.

Our three-member communications team brainstormed ideas and ensured the HR team was on board. The Executive Committee cleared the budget and our ideas by Thursday afternoon. We had just three-and-a-half days, including the weekend, to deliver a workable plan before Monday's opening hours. We informed our agency to keep their machines humming on Saturday and Sunday.

Our strategy **TO TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER** had to take on a multipronged approach.

# Bronze Winners

## #5 Gaurav Ghose

This was not a business campaign. It was an intensely personal health issue. We had to be sensitive about employees' health, while communicating that it was not an individual's problem alone—their health also had larger implications on company's bottom-line and more importantly, on customer goodwill if services were stretched.

### **The Summons**

Thursday afternoon: We sent a 50-second video message from the CEO to all employees about the increasing absences due to flu and the urgent need to follow the preventive measures during office hours.

In the video, scripted by us, one of the lines of the CEO was: "This is not a crisis. YET. You all have a responsibility to yourself and towards others to prevent it from becoming one."

Quoting national surveys, the CEO also spoke about the spectre of losses running into millions of dollars due to such absences. Lastly, he asked employees to attend the next day's mandatory briefing by their managers on the same issue.

The communications team, on behalf of the HR head, then sent a firm message on Yammer and email that all employees should arrive 30 minutes before opening hours on Friday for the briefing. Those having prior outside appointments were exempted.

### **Intimate Reiteration**

We then carefully drafted the text of what the managers would communicate to their staff. This was the most critical part of our communications campaign.

They would focus on how increasing absenteeism of the past five weeks was starting to affect our business, especially when we were on track to surpass the financial targets for the year.

The setting and tone were intimate. And funny. For that we used a few lines from a nursery rhyme: "If your nose is tickling and you really, really, really wanna sneeze, don't hold it back, that's the way it goes. Don't be shy, just wipe your nose and cover your mouth, if you really, really, really wanna sneeze."

And then the message: with proper precautions at workplace, flu is preventable, underscoring how employees owe it to themselves, their co-workers, families and especially their children. Simply put, the managers were to say: "Let's CARE FOR EACH OTHER to avoid falling sick!"

From then on, for the next two months at the start of Monday's working hours, we continued this interaction, sharing stories of each other's funny moments.

Throughout the campaign, we had to ensure collegiality and humour remained high among all employees, as they gently cajoled each other to be careful. We were cautious not to offend anyone since we were dealing with each individual's private space.

# Bronze Winners

## #5 Gaurav Ghose

### **The Shots**

Simultaneously, we decided to beef up HR efforts to arrange for vaccination. In a carefully worded communiqué (keeping in mind religious beliefs), drafted for HR, we urged employees to avail of vaccination shots to be supplied the following week on three days in 10 of our offices. Employees were urged to register immediately.

### **Little Heavyweights**

We were, however, more than certain that pep talks and posters would not be enough. We decided to personalize our campaign a bit more and roped in the feisty kids of some of our employees, who were considered our internal advocates. The chosen employees were game. They saw it as a duty for the greater good.

Our agency created a 45-second video with 10 children, ages five to 12. The message to their elders was delivered with a brazenness only children can muster.

The video was a mix of amusing facial expressions and short spoken words, with the youngest kid uttering the clincher: "You make us follow rules, now IT'S YOUR TURN! Or you will make us and your friends ill."

This video made our most dour bankers smile!

We posted this rather cheeky video on Yammer. And it was viewed by 98.7% of our employees and continues to be the most popular videos of all time.

### **Constant Reminder**

For the Do's and Don'ts, our agency created 12-second motion graphics, oozing with cuteness, urging all employees to wash their hands, cover their mouths and noses while sneezing or coughing, keep shared equipment clean, maintain personal hygiene and use masks if required.

As a constant reminder, we got our IT department to load it as screensavers on all official desktops, laptops and smartphones.

### **True Camaraderie**

From the third week onwards, we started to see results. From a high of 20 to 25 sick leaves per week, it started to come down to 12 to 15 in the third week, and then by the fifth week, we were reporting about less than five. The best part of our campaign was, it instilled a true sense of belonging among employees and they genuinely started caring for each other. Indeed, there's nothing more satisfying than a good health report!

We hope you enjoyed reading the entries for The Gorilla Games! We truly found them to be a delight.

Imagine if internal comms pros were allowed to be this creative with their approach in corporate organizations?

It would completely change the game, wouldn't it?

# Judging Criteria



## How were the entries judged?

Entries were judged evenly on readability, originality and impact. We wanted good writing (and to also accommodate non-native English speakers), we wanted people to share their own ideas, and we wanted readers to believe that something else is possible for IC practitioners by looking ahead instead of behind.

## What stood out with the winning entries?

The judges lauded the winning entries with Stephen Welch's entry, in particular, receiving a ton of praise.

"There's nothing better than leading from the front. This is bold!" said Jason Anthoine.

Silke Brittain found Welch's entry a real game-changer while Priya Bates thought the impact of this unique way of thinking could be quite profound.

"The approach is radical but potentially actionable. As a vehicle for getting IC folks to question their assumptions, it was brilliant!" said Mike Klein.

Rachel Fraser's entry was also well received.

Neil Jenkins found it to be highly imaginative and felt it was a novel way of expressing the benefits of listening and acting to employees.

"I like the letter writing approach from the perspective of the employee. Enjoyed reading this. A great writer who understands the employee perspective," said Priya Bates.

Anne-Sophie Duchene and her internal communication team of Euroclear, Belgium also received high praise.

"This shock tactic has good potential to stand out and for employees to take notice. Speaks to all audiences using excellent media mix for highest possible impact," said Silke Brittain.

All other winning entries were also lauded by the judges, with Mike Klein finding Gaurav Ghose's flu outbreak solution to be "an actionable campaign that would be worth learning about, even if it hasn't actually happened."

The judges found Frank Dias's escape room idea to be innovative, collaborative and punchy while Terry Hart's entry was praised for being well composed with a compelling storyline.

Debbie Aurelius's podcast idea was thought to have the potential to really work and impact culture.

"Very nicely done and a blueprint for future needs." said Jason Anthoine.

What stood out to you from the winning entries? Let us know by [tweeting at us](#) with #TheGorillaGames, we'd love to hear from you.

# Bonus Section: A Quick Guide for IC Planning

## by Silke Brittain

As one of the members of The Gorilla Troop, Silke Brittain has written a practical guide to help Internal Communications professionals when tackling their next communication challenge. So, if you're about to unleash your inner creative and write your guerrilla approach to address your challenge, here are some helpful tips and a communication planner.

### **1. Be clear about 'why' you are communicating by determining:**

- What the issue is you're planning to address.
- What it is you want to achieve with your communication.

### **2. Set measures to achieve your communication goal by asking:**

- What specifically needs to be addressed.
- How can it be measured?
- Is it achievable and by whom?
- Can it be achieved with the available resources?
- By when does it need to be achieved?

### **3. Define who the communication is aimed at by establishing:**

- Who the audience is you are addressing with your communication.

### **4. Plan which communication channels you will be using by deciding:**

- What the right mix of digital, face-to-face and printed communication will be.
- What channel preferences your audience has.

### **5. Have one clear, compelling idea for communicating by addressing:**

- What you want people to do, think, remember or feel.

### **6. Be clear about the sequence of messages by specifying:**

- What your key messages will be.
- Which tactics will be suitable to achieve the change.

### **7. Clarify what success will look like by asking:**

- How will you measure the required outcomes?
- How will you evaluate success and continuously improve?

### **8. Establish the 'when' and 'how' of delivering your communication by:**

- Determining the timing of delivery.
- Confirming the resources needed to deliver your communication.

To plan and write your creative solution this Communication Planner might come in useful.

# Communication Planner

## Cheatsheet by Silke Brittain

<b>1. Issue and Goal</b>	What is the issue you want to address?	
<b>2. Measureable Objective</b>	What are your SMART objectives to achieve your goal?	
<b>3. Audience</b>	Who is the audience you're communicating with?	
<b>4. Communication Channels</b>	What channels are relevant for your audience?	
<b>5. Single Vision</b>	What is the single thought you want your audience to remember?	
<b>6. Tactics</b>	What are the key messages and suitable tactics?	
<b>7. Measurement</b>	How will you evaluate and measure success? What will success look like?	
<b>8. Delivery</b>	What resources are needed and when will we communicate?	

# Conclusion

The Gorilla Games was a bold experiment. When coming up with the idea, we weren't sure about the response we would receive.

Would people understand the bold thinking we were trying to go for? Would IC pros be willing to push the envelope? Would they be willing to embrace "guerrilla" tactics?

We were genuinely delighted to receive entries that were just as bold as the idea behind "The Gorilla Games" itself.

The entrants were ready to challenge norms and practices within the internal communications space. The winners most certainly embodied the "gorilla" spirit we were looking for.

We're so grateful to have partnered with someone like Mike Klein, who's dedicated to enhancing the flow of internal communication thought leadership and encouraging creativity within the profession.

We're also thankful for the opportunity to create a competition that enabled internal communicators to be more bold, daring and innovative, and look beyond over-used tactics and one-size-fits-all solutions.

We believe internal comms pros deserve so much more credit than they actually receive. They deserve better budgets, more awards and recognition for constantly trying to create a better company culture, for striving to engage employees, and for trying to communicate change smoothly to ensure organizations operate flawlessly.

The work of internal comms pros can be quite exhausting and often time, IC pros are not even given the budgets to execute on creative ideas.

It was time to give this community the recognition they've always deserved. And we feel ecstatic that we got to play a small role in striving to help recognize the IC community.

It was sincerely a pleasure!

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