

IABC conference discusses communicator readiness for 2020

The IABC Africa Conference, taking place at the Vineyard Hotel and Spa in Cape Town from 2-4 November 2016, will feature a panel discussion focusing expert opinions on communicator readiness for 2020. Strategic communication specialist Daniel Munslow, a director of MCC Consulting and a director on the IABC's international executive board, chairs the panel.



© Cathy Yeulet via [123RF](#)

“The demands on communicators are ever changing and growing, as the needs of businesses evolve. Being future fit means forecasting where you need to be in five and even 10 years, to offer relevant, timely and strategically necessary communication skills to business,” says Munslow. “This panel will ask the fundamental question, ‘Are you future fit?’. We will tackle the key strategic issues impacting business communication and review and discuss trends and practices that are forcing the profession to rethink its focus areas and what best practice looks like.”

The panel will consist of expert professionals Janine Lazarus, owner of Janine Lazarus Media Consultancy; André Oberholzer, group head corporate affairs at Sappi; Dianne Chase, senior partner/president at C4CS and 2016/2017 Chair of the IABC's IEB; and Mia Azam, senior communication manager at Woolworths Financial Services.

Lazarus believes one of the challenges for business communicators is the management of ‘information overload’ and the skills to encapsulate complex messages concisely. “Broadly speaking, leaders in business have rarely had a more challenging time. Rapid technological disruption, the rebalance of world power, and continuing economic uncertainty, all combine to create highly volatile and increasingly complex messages,” says Lazarus.

While digital technology has added a layer of complexity to communication, she feels that people in leadership and the

communicators who work with them need to drill through huge volumes of information and translate complex issues into easy to understand terms.

“Today, a CEO shares the stage with much younger and often self-taught opinion makers who have a natural talent to get their message across in news their audience can use. So, in order to remain relevant, it is absolutely critical for them to adopt an agile approach and reduce complex messages into short and powerful soundbites.”

Local and global research shows that the traditional core skills-set that defined corporate communication is changing drastically. “While the basic skills, such as media relations, writing, creative thinking and technical skills will always be central to the communication function, 2016 local research shows that business acumen, strategic thinking, financial management, organisational development and risk management, are the skills business leaders are looking for in the function,” continues Munslow.

The 2016 Holmes Global Communications Report summarises the future landscape by suggesting, “New services will drive revenue, but new skills will be needed to deliver them. The value equation is shifting, but compensation needs to catch up. On the road ahead, PR will become a more demanding job, but also more rewarding one – if we have the courage to lead the way.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>