



President's Letter

IABC Barbados had a healthy turnout for our first official get-together recently, and those of you who didn't make it missed a good one.

On September 18th, a solid crowd of members and non-members alike mixed and mingled at the Island Inn over food and drink, and three winners in our "draw" took home valuable prizes including one-year's fully paid up membership courtesy of Ernst & Young.

Yes, it pays to participate!

Door prizes aside, the real value of our events, both social and developmental, is the opportunity to network: to meet others in this profession, get a peer's input on a problem or an issue, and make valuable and profitable connections.

Despite the small size of our community, there are still many of us who don't know what our

counterparts do. We might have skills that are complementary, and which could be combined to meet the needs of an employer or a client, but we never connect. We cruise the same waters, but pass like two ships in the night unaware of each other.

Opportunities to work together, make clients happy, and make money too, are lost. And that's not smart.

We are talented and creative people. And what we do can have so much more impact when we combine those talents and creativity. The added benefit is that we build respect for our profession at the same time.

We plan to have other events in the months ahead. Don't miss

them. Come and be seen. Come and be recognized. Come and **BE HEARD.**

Sincerely,
Sophia Cambridge

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Why membership matters

Membership matters because if we want to be taken seriously as professionals we need to come together to form the go-to body for professional communications advice, guidance and knowledge in Barbados. The real question is: do we want to be taken seriously? How can the answer to that be anything other than a resounding: yes! How then do we attract members and maintain our numbers? Well, internationally, IABC is the place to go to for professional guidance and development, innovations, research and networking. Locally, our chapter provides members with opportunities for professional development, networking, peer support and much more. Membership is what you make of it, and IABC Barbados is here to help you with your career growth and to provide you with the support and opportunities you may need.

Finally, as a gentle reminder to members whose membership may be about to expire please don't let it happen, your fee can be spread out over four payments which can help to ease any challenges you may face when considering renewal.

***Always remember:
Membership is an investment,
not a cost.***

New members

IABC Barbados is pleased to welcome three new members: Jewel Forde; assistant program manger and well-known presenter at CBC TV; Wingrove Phillips, graphic designer at Ernst & Young (EY), and Erica Lazare, corporate communications officer at the Barbados Revenue Agency. Erica was the lucky winner of one-year's free membership courtesy of EY.

Upcoming events

December 10, 2014

IABC Barbados will hold its final membership meeting for the year. Barbados Light & Power has once again generously offered the meeting room in its annex. Meeting starts at 5.30 p.m., followed by Christmas fare. Come and share season's greeting and good wishes will your peers.

June 2015

IABC 2015 world conference will be held in San Francisco in June. Whilst this may seem a long way off it's not too early to start making plans. If you have never attended this event before, make the effort. It is a feast of learning for communicators who want to stay sharp. Keep monitoring the IABC website for further information as it becomes available: www.iabc.com



Chapter president **Sophia Cambridge** congratulates new member **Erica Lazare**, lucky winner of one year's free membership courtesy of EY.



L to R: New member **Wingrove Phillips**, graphic designer at EY, shares a laugh with **Valerie Hope** of the Nation, **Maria Robinson**, head of EY in Barbados, and **Sophia Cambridge**, president of IABC Barbados.



Jewel Forde, assistant program manager and presenter at CBC TV, gets a helping hand in signing up from former IABC chapter president, **Lynda Holder**.

Event attracts a "mix" of professions

IABC Barbados chapter members and many non-members gathered recently at the Island Inn to rub shoulders, share ideas and meet members of the chapter's new board of directors.

Professionals from many areas of communication turned out for the Mix and Mingle, including marketing, graphic design and the news media.

"This mix of professions is proof that you don't have to have 'corporate communications' in your title or job description to be an IABC member," says Sara Odle, vice-president of membership. "We are business communicators, and if you help businesses to communicate you belong."

Sara Odle
Vice President, Membership



IABC can transform you, says longstanding member

Membership in the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) can transform you into a highly valued professional with greater access to the C-suite, according to a veteran corporate communicator and long-standing association member.

“If you want to be able to think like a corporate strategist and to become a trusted advisor to the people at the top, IABC can help you do this. But you must be willing to take responsibility for your own professional development and have a hunger for new knowledge and skills,” says Richard Thomas, Principal of Clarity Communication and vice president of marketing for IABC Barbados.

Thomas, who first joined the IABC in 1982, made the remarks at a recent event hosted by the

Barbados chapter for members and non-members.

He said membership in the association – and the learning it offers – can transform an individual from being “someone who simply works in the profession into a highly functioning professional – someone who can deliver best practice in corporate communication”.

“And there is a very real difference between the two,” Thomas said. “You can work quite successfully in the communications profession because you have mastered an essential skill, or even a handful of skills. But to be a true professional you must have a solid grasp of the fundamental theories, principles and proven practices on which the profession is built. You have to be crystal clear as to its true purpose.”

Thomas, who is also a founding

board member of the Barbados chapter, said being a “true professional is what makes you valuable to the people who hire you”.

“Your employers, your clients, expect you to know how to use corporate communication to help them achieve certain outcome or to solve certain problems,” he said. “If you don’t know how to do this, your value to them will be limited. You could be pigeon-holed.”



Richard Thomas
Principal, Clarity Communications



“What if, and I know this sounds kooky, we communicated with the employees.”

MIT lecturer says he invented email at 14

For years it's been generally accepted that American computer programmer Ray Tomlinson invented email in 1971.

Not so, says Shiva Ayyadurai, a U.S. based bio-scientist and lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

According to a recent article in Britain's Daily Telegraph, Ayyadurai, now 50, has written a book in which he challenges Tomlinson's claim and asserts his own to be the true inventor of email. He writes that whereas Tomlinson's creation was a primitive form of text messaging, his creation was an inter-office mail system with an in-box and was called "email".

Ayyadurai claims this happened in 1978, when he was a 14-year-old boy living in Newark, New Jersey, and helping out in a dental clinic where his mother worked. His creation was designed to allow office workers to send and receive memos.

The Telegraph article reports Ayyadurai as saying that he copyrighted the term "email" in 1982, but could not patent it because it wasn't possible to patent software at the time.

Ayyadurai's claim has caused outrage in the IT world, according to the article, but the bio-scientist has some influential supporters in his corner, such as author, Deepak Chopra, and Narendra Modi, the new prime minister of India.



We love e-mail: even after sex

While we frequently complain about being snowed under by email and not having the time to read it all, it seems we still love it. Some might say we are even say addicted to it.

According to a recent article in the Regan Report, 90 per cent of us check our inboxes compulsively and 46 per cent spend more than an hour a day reading emails. In addition, 74 per cent check their mail first

thing in the morning and 56 per cent do so right before going to sleep. (Fifty per cent of us get more than 21 emails a day.) The article is based on a survey carried out by Mymail, a free mobile application that allows individuals to monitor all of their email addresses through a single inbox.

There approximately four billion email accounts and some of the survey's data give valuable

insight into the purposes for which they are used. For example, 77 per cent use it for communication of a personal nature, while 45 per cent used it for business purposes. Also, 41 per cent use email to get news, while 43 per cent use it to get information about products.

But some of the findings reveal the downside of email use and it seemingly addictive properties. For example, 33 per cent

use it while watching movies, and 20 per cent use it while watching a game.

But there is more: 20 percent use email while talking to people, which many of us might agree is highly irritating, while eight per cent use it right after sex. You read it right.



IABC: a natural fit for communicators

If you work in corporate communication, public relations or marketing, The IABC is where you belong, says a leading local public relations practitioner and founding member of the Barbados chapter.

Pamala Proverbs, managing director of PRMR, told IABC members and non-members at a recent chapter function, “If you work in any of these areas



Pamala Proverbs
Managing Director of PRMR

of business communication, IABC is natural fit for you.”

Proverbs was explaining how – and why – the Barbados chapter was founded in 2008.

“Back then, there was no organisation on the island for people like us,” she said.

“The chartered accountants had their institute, the engineers had their association, and the human resources people had theirs as well. But we had nothing. As professionals we were isolated. And as a profession we were fragmented. We barely communicated with each other.”

Proverbs said a group of local practitioners felt “it was high time” they had some way of meeting and networking and growing professionally.

“We knew that we didn’t have to invent it because it already existed,” she said. “A few of us were already members of the

IABC through chapters in Jamaica or Canada, and we knew the value of belonging.

“So we held a big meeting and invited everyone in the profession that we thought would be interested. And everyone who came agreed that we should have our own IABC chapter in Barbados. We needed somewhere to belong – to call home.”

Since then, Proverbs said, the

IABC’s executive boards have been working to bring all of the the island’s communicators together.

“Slowly but surely we have been building our membership base, and we will continue to reach out to any and everyone who uses their skills to help organisations communicate, whether it is with their customers, their employers, or any other stakeholder group,” she said.



BUZZ talks to recently elected IABC Barbados president

This month, in our Focus section, BUZZ talks to recently elected IABC Barbados president Sophia Cambridge about some of the challenges still facing corporate communicators and PR practitioners.

BUZZ: What would you say is the major challenge facing people in your profession here in Barbados?

Sophia: Our profession is still too narrowly defined, that's our main problem. This is partially our own fault, because we have let others define us and we haven't pushed back.

BUZZ: What have been the consequences?

Sophia: Probably the most harmful consequence is that a lot of people in business and government, including those in leadership positions, still believe that PR equates to publicity and promotion: lots of grip and grin photos and self-serving press releases, and not much more.

Another unfortunate perception is that PR and corporate communications are basically mar-

keting functions: In other words, help you sell a product or a service. And there is also the cynical view that we are spin doctors: you call us in when you need to cover up some inappropriate behaviour with a smokescreen of disinformation.

BUZZ: Are you distancing corporate communication from marketing? Most people today would say that marketing is an extremely important function.

Sophia: And they would be right. Marketing – and marketing communication – are hugely important functions for any company. You can't survive as a business if people don't know who you are or the value of what you are offering.

Corporate communicators and PR practitioners are often heavily involved in supporting marketing

efforts, and are happy to do so. But in the overall scheme of things we have a different purpose.

BUZZ: So what is that purpose?

Sophia: Our true purpose is help our organisations build and maintain healthy relationships with all of their stakeholders, not just customers. We have to consider employees, investors, regulators and the larger community, which is made up of all sorts of groups.

Our real work is to communicate with these people on behalf of our organisations: earn their trust and gain their support for what the company has to do if it is to succeed and survive.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to communicate in the other direction. It is up to us to tell management when we

believe that some action they plan, even though it is profitable and legal, will affect the company's reputation.

BUZZ: what can you do to encourage people to see you differently?

Sophia: We have to stop letting others pigeon-hole us or position us as junior functionaries. We have to make it clear that our discipline can bring considerable value to the table.

We also have to prove that we thoroughly understand the business context in which we work. People pay us to help them operate businesses more effectively. We have to know these businesses. And of course we have to make sure that we can walk the talk – that we really know our own craft and how to apply it.

Blog – Corporations don't speak-humans do

Most people speak differently to how they write – except perhaps for academics.

So why is it that so many press releases writers fail to capture this essential difference when attributing quotes to sources?

Research shows that readers pay special attention to text that is placed inside quotation marks. This is because quotes represent the authentic, non-paraphrased voice of the source. They are more credible.

For this reason, writers should use the space between quotation marks to drive home key corporate messages. But they need to use a voice that is “human” rather than “corporate”.

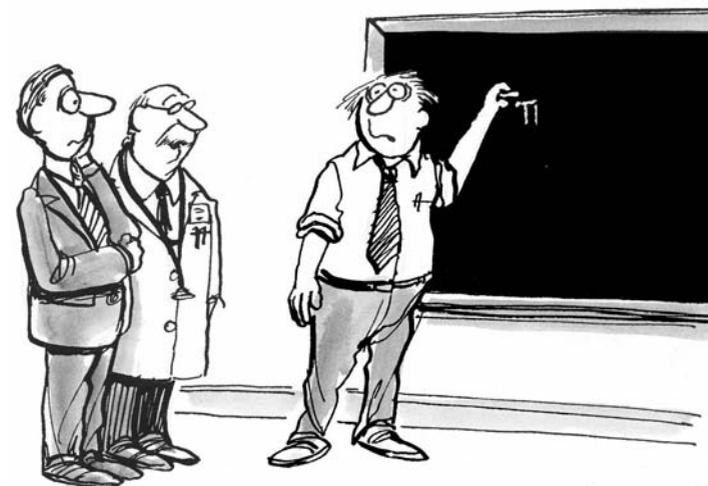
Take a good look at the next press release you read in your newspaper. (It's not hard to identify them; some newspapers



even do it for you.) Check out the “voice” enclosed in quotation marks.

Does it sound as if a human said it? Or does it sound like a piece of boilerplate lifted straight from a brochure? Can you “hear” a voice at all? Do you believe what you hear?

Corporations don't speak – people do. That's why it's so important to put a real human voice inside of quotation marks.



“I've seen this before. A communicator paralyzed by poor listening skills.”

CONTACT US:

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Want to submit a piece to **CW Online**? ▶

