

A measure of success

IABC Fellow Award winner Angela Sinickas talks about communication measurement

more on measurement

Learn more about Sinickas' groundbreaking measurement methods from her toolkits and planning guides available from the IABC Knowledge Centre: www.iabc.com/knowledge.

She has been called the "queen of measurement," the "measurement guru" and most recently the "leading lady of measurement" by her peers in the communication industry. But when asked about these titles, Angela Sinickas, ABC, says she sees herself more as an evangelist who is passionate about helping people do measurement. Sinickas was recently awarded the prestigious IABC



Angela Sinickas: "It is no longer enough for communicators to say that their programs were well received."

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- 10 July** *Teleseminar:* Breaking Through the Noise; How to Engage Employees Through Effective Communication
- 22 July** *Web seminar:* The Sting of the Webswarm: When Crisis Communication Meets the Internet
- 14 August** *Teleseminar:* 10 Ways to Socialize Your Intranet
- 3-16 September** *Online seminar:* Strategic Planning
- 2-3 October** *Conference (Chicago):* Business Writing Conference
- 16-17 October** *Conference (Vancouver, British Columbia):* Communicating Social Responsibility Conference
- 23-24 October** *Conference (Toronto):* Communication Management & Measurement in Complex Environments Conference
- 6-7 November** *Conference (Chicago):* Employee Communication Conference
- 12-13 November** *Conference (Brussels, Belgium):* Communicating Social Responsibility Conference
- IABC Regional Conferences**
 - 21-23 September** Pacific Plains Region Conference (Seattle)
 - 28-30 September** Southern Region Conference (Denver, Colorado)
 - 12-14 October** Heritage Region Conference (Hartford, Connecticut)
 - 14-16 October** African Regional Conference (Cape Town, South Africa)

For more information about these and other events, go to www.iabc.com/education.

asked me to write a mission statement for the organization. I had never written one before, so I looked in the IABC member directory, thinking one of the larger companies was sure to have a mission statement. Sure enough, I immediately received help from several members around the world. Since then, there have been numerous occasions when I've reached out to the IABC community and shared ideas with peers in the field. On a personal level, many people started out as friends; some became clients. I've developed deep relationships with many friends I met through IABC and have even attended their weddings and their children's weddings.

AV: You've been working with companies on communication measurement since the mid-'80s. What are some of the changes you've seen over the years?

AS: Companies were open to adopting measurement then; today they are expecting it. It is no longer enough for communicators to say that their programs were well received. Companies want to see specific performance metrics that support this. Leaders are saying, "Show me the numbers." What is important, though, is what

Fellow Award for 2008. The Fellow Award is the highest honor the association can bestow on an individual, and acknowledges outstanding leadership, professional accomplishment and service to IABC and the profession. Sinickas spoke with *CW* contributing editor Archana Verma about her involvement with IABC and her passion for communication measurement.

Archana Verma: You've been associated with IABC for nearly 30 years. How has your involvement contributed to your career?

Angela Sinickas: My professional involvement with IABC started when a company president

communicators choose to measure. It is pointless to measure an activity without measuring the outcome of the activity and how it improves something or changes behavior.

AV: What are some trends in communication measurement?

AS: Return on investment and social media are hot topics in communication measurement. Unfortunately, with the latter, people are still measuring activities—e.g., how many readers a blog has, etc. They are not yet connecting this with outcomes or changes in behavior.

AV: How can communicators get support for measurement from leadership?

AS: I'll give *CW* readers the same advice I did when I wrote my first article for this publication in 1983. Become familiar with the company's strategic plan and business goals, and determine what is important to leaders. Look for opportunities where your company's bottom line can be enhanced by effective communication and measurement.

AV: How can you isolate the impact of a specific communication program on a business outcome when there may be many departments in an organization working toward the same goal?

from our readers

Trust, indeed

I write in regard to the story headlined "A Matter of Trust" in your March–April 2008 issue. I take issue with a group that I am a member of giving employers pointers on how to switch from defined benefit to defined contribution pension plans. There are all kinds of other sources where employers can find this information; we don't need to offer it.

I was an employee many years ago when my employer switched from a good defined benefit plan to a much inferior contribution plan. I saw many of my more elderly fellow workers having to work long after they would have under the defined benefit plan because they simply hadn't made the "correct" investment decisions to enable them to retire at the age their predecessors had managed to. Some died soon after they did retire.

Not everyone is good at investing money. When all of the responsibility is placed on employees to manage their retirement, many are left behind.

I know it has become common for employers to make this switch, because it lowers their cost and responsibility for the pension of their employees. But it is still possible to find employers that haven't switched, because it gives their employees a more dignified retirement and actually attracts employees to the company.

I believe an organization like IABC should be promoting good management practices, not showing employers how they can cajole and lie so they can screw many of their workers out of decent retirements simply to save money.

—William R. Allan
Regina, Saskatchewan

AS: You can measure the contribution of a communication program on a business outcome in two basic ways:

1. **Do a pilot test** where communication is the only variable and all the other inputs are the same for all groups.
2. **Measure any change** in behavior by asking the people whose behavior changed to what extent they credit the behavioral

change to the communications they were exposed to.

AV: What are some of the common mistakes that communicators make in measurement?

AS: Nowadays there are several low-cost or free tools to do surveys. It is tempting to use these tools to do quick surveys, but communicators need to be sure that they are asking the right



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questions in the right way. Also, most of these tools give you survey data but rarely provide an analysis of the findings to really understand and interpret the results.



EXCEL Award
winner Bill Marriott

Bill Marriott to receive 2008 EXCEL Award

J.W. (Bill) Marriott Jr., chairman and CEO of Marriott International, has been named the recipient of the 2008 Excellence in Communication Leadership (EXCEL) Award. The EXCEL Award is the highest award given by IABC to a non-member, usually a CEO or managing director, and recognizes individuals who exhibit strong leadership in fostering excellence in

organizational communication.

Marriott's leadership spans more than 50 years, and he has taken the company from a family restaurant business to a global lodging company with about 3,000 properties in 68 countries and territories. Known throughout the industry for his hands-on management style, he has built a highly regarded culture that emphasizes the importance of Marriott's people and recognizes the value they bring to the organization.

"Marriott International has a respected, well-documented communication program, and Bill demonstrates his personal commitment every day, from traditional employee engage-

ment while inspecting 250 Marriott properties each year, to adopting new communication tools such as blogging," says Jay Coleman, ABC, chair of the 2008 EXCEL Award committee.

Marriott was slated to accept the award on Monday, 23 June, at IABC's 2008 International Conference in New York City.



IABC members connect with each other on the eXchange

The IABC eXchange connects the popular WordPress blogging platform with the IABC member database of more than 15,400 communicators. Members are sharing their opinions, experiences and interests with each other via the site.

Create private web sites and grant access to specific members, or create a traditional blog and make it visible to the whole world or to IABC members only. Browse all the current eXchange sites, read recent posts and join the conversation at x.iabc.com.

In memoriam: Alvie Smith

by Roger D'Apris, ABC
Journalist and author Tom Brokaw coined the phrase "the greatest generation" for the cohort that grew up in the U.S. during the hard times of the Depression and went to war as young men, dodging machine gun fire on an exposed Omaha Beach in Normandy, fighting the war in the jungles of the South Pacific and flying combat

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—Maria Bartiromo, Anchor, "The Closing Bell with Maria Bartiromo"

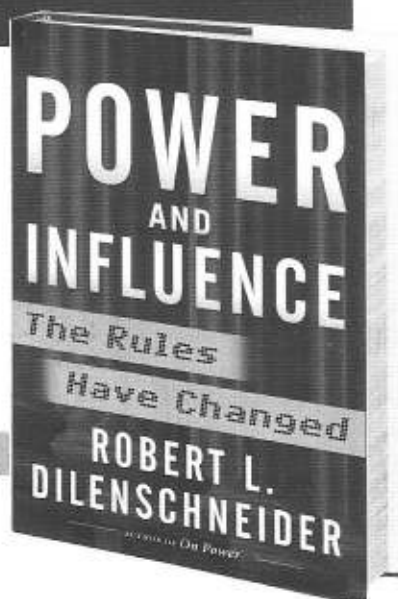
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—Henry Kaufman, President, Kaufman and Co., author of One Money and Markets, A Wall Street Memoir

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