

# THE BUZZ

YOUR SOURCE FOR EVERYTHING INDIE.



Hello <<First Name>>,

Hope you enjoy the latest edition of *The Buzz*!

## A message from PIC chair Sharon Aschaiek

Opportunity. As self-employed communicators, it's what we all want and need to stay in business. Being able to identify and seize the right opportunities is what allows us to grow and thrive as independents.

In my 14 years as an indie, few opportunities have been as valuable to my business as strategic volunteering.

My first gig was with the Toronto chapter of the Professional Writers Association of Canada, where over the course of nine years, I helped in such roles as VP of professional development, blog editor and treasurer. (I have a great story about being a word woman in a numbers role – ask me about it sometime!)

Volunteering for PWAC/Toronto helped me establish and develop my freelance writing business by connecting with key leaders in the field and staying current on communication trends and issues. I also built up my network of writers, and over the years, we have shared work leads with each other.

As my business shifted into communications for the higher education sector, I moved on to volunteering for IABC/Toronto, an association that better fit my career. Since 2012, I have shared my insights and time in a variety of positions for the Professional Independent Communicators executive as well as the IABC/Toronto board.

Volunteering for IABC/Toronto has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. The top highlight has been collaborating with creative, talented and committed communicators to develop relevant programming and resources for our members and other local communicators. As well, I've learned an incredible amount about the art, craft and business of professional communication, plus made many valuable business contacts. I'm convinced I wouldn't have benefited to this extent if I had been less engaged with the chapter.

If you're looking to take your communications business to the next level through volunteering, consider joining the PIC executive. The following positions on the 2018-19 executive are open:

- Co-director of communications (joint position with current director **Sue Horner**)
- Co-director of programming (looking for two volunteers to share the position)
- Director of membership

The new executive takes effect on July 1, which leaves enough time for those interested to get up to speed on their chosen role. Contact me to learn more about these positions!

Continued success,



**Sharon Aschaiek**  
Chair, Professional Independent Communicators (PIC)  
Vice President, Special Interest Groups, IABC/Toronto  
[toronto-sig@iabc.to](mailto:toronto-sig@iabc.to)

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### Quick Links

- [PIC on the web](#)
- [PIC on LinkedIn](#)
- [@PICToronto](#) on Twitter
- Get a copy of [The Independent Life](#)
- [IABC/Toronto](#)
- PIC email: [toronto-pic@iabc.to](mailto:toronto-pic@iabc.to)

### Newsletter archives

- Find back issues of *The Buzz* from Jan. 2010 to Aug. 2016 [here](#).
- [Join Our Mailing List!](#)

### We want your talents!

Interested in writing, editing or contributing ideas for PIC's *The Buzz* or IABC/Toronto's *Communicator*? We'd love your help. [Let us know!](#)

### PIC Executive

Contact any of us with questions, comments and ideas for speakers or topics:

Chair: [Sharon Aschaiek](#)  
Past Chair: [Donna Papacosta](#)  
Communications: [Sue Horner](#)  
Membership: [Melika Ramkissoon](#)  
Programming: [John Bromley](#), [ABC](#)  
Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)

## April 3 recap: Creating a corporate video? Here's how to crush it

Just the word "video" in email subject lines boosts open rates, as **Cyrus Mavalwala**, ABC, told PIC members and friends at our April 3 event. Using video makes it 10 times more likely people will share or comment on your posts. Video increases the chances you'll end up on page one of search results.

"The most powerful form of communication is face-to-face, but that doesn't scale," Cyrus told the group.

Video does. It can step in for face-to-face, sharing the emotion and reaching many people. It helps you tell a better and more personal story. Video is also great for feedback. It lets you see how many people watched it, or where drop-off rates show a problem.

Here are the main points I took away from the presentation:

#### 1. Start with a strategy

As with any communication, always ask, "Why are we doing this?" Understand your business objectives and your target audience and tie your strategy to them. What do you want the viewer to know, think or do? What void does the video fill? Once you have the video, how are you going to market it? Where will it be hosted? How else can you use and reuse it? How will you evaluate and measure the video's performance?

#### 2. Focus on content

Remember that viewers are comparing your efforts to amazing, entertaining content elsewhere. For example, every week, GoPro posts stunning videos using what it calls "the world's most versatile camera." High-definition and 3D in movies immerse the viewer in the experience. A basic, boring, linear video doesn't stand a chance against that kind of competition, and it's up to us as communicators to prevent a company from producing one.

#### 3. Pay less attention to camera resolution

You *can* make a professional-looking video with a cellphone. Having said that, don't rely on your phone's microphone; spend about \$100 on a decent one that plugs into your phone. Also pay attention to lighting.

#### 4. Hire a professional

True, Cyrus didn't say this; I am, looking at some of the current and upcoming trends:

- Live streaming (powerful and low-cost)
- Interactive video (great uses for training, coaching, human resources, product demonstrations and much more)
- Personalized video (imagine a video walking an employee through pension investments, or a personal university acceptance letter)
- 360-degree video (created by overlapping cameras in post-production; Travel Alberta and BC Tourism have used this to spark traveller interest)
- Augmented reality (cool, but too expensive for most businesses)
- Virtual reality (expensive, but keep it on your radar).

Cyrus reminded us of the [content marketer's manifesto](#), as stated by [Rand Fishkin](#), founder of SEOMoz: "I [your name] pledge to create something remarkable. Something that people will love, something they will want to share. Something I can be proud of. And if it fails to achieve my marketing goals, I won't give up. I will try again. My failures will be the practice I need to earn future successes and future customers."

Learn more about [Cyrus](#) and [Advantis Communications](#) and see some [examples of interactive video](#).

A version of this article first appeared on [Sue's Red Jacket Diaries blog](#).

Photo credit: Jennifer Amott.

## May 15: What communicators need to know about podcasting in 2018

**Tuesday, May 15, 6:30 to 9 p.m.**  
**Third floor, Mattamy Athletic Centre**  
**50 Carlton Street, Toronto**

Podcasting is hot, and communicators need to know why and how to use audio as part of their outreach to employees, customers and prospects.

In this professional development session, you'll learn about the latest trends in podcasting from [Donna Papacosta](#), who has been producing podcasts since 2005. Find out:

- The latest trends driving the popularity of podcasting (including just-released Canadian stats)
- How communicators are using podcasts today
- How you can get your organization started in podcasting.

Learn more in – what else! – a [podcast message from Donna](#).



Donna is the author of *The Podcast Scripting Book* and co-author of *The Business of Podcasting*. Her client roster includes the Ontario Nurses' Association, Myriad Genetics, Royal LePage, KCI Philanthropy and The Ontario College of Family Physicians. Donna leads workshops and teaches digital strategy and social media at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies.

**Agenda:**

- Registration and networking: 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Presentation and Q&A: 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Post-event networking: 8:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Registration fees:**

- \$15: IABC/Toronto member rate (\$16.95 with HST)
- \$25: Non-member rate (\$28.25 with HST)

CMPs and SCMPs: earn up to five (5) professional development points toward your recertification.

[Register here](#)

## May 10: Spring networking with Westend Communicators

Thursday, May 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Clarkson Mediterranean Bistro

1731 Lakeshore Rd. W., Mississauga

If you're a communicator who works and/or lives west of Toronto, come out and get to know your local peers in the profession at this networking event at Clarkson Mediterranean Bistro in Mississauga. Members and non-members are invited to learn about IABC/Toronto and this group, now called Westend Communicators, and enjoy a casual evening of discussion with other communicators. The event is free to attend; food and drinks are pay-your-own-way.

[Register here](#)

## PIC PERSONALITY: Meet Jacqui d'Eon

By Sue Horner

**Jacqui d'Eon**, P.Eng., ABC, MC, runs JAd'E Communications Ltd., counselling C-suite executives to help them communicate strategically and effectively and deal with issues. Learn more about Jacqui on her [website](#) and [LinkedIn](#), follow her on [Twitter](#) or reach her [by email](#) or phone at 416-598-9350.

**What's your background?**

I'm one of few people in communications who is a chemical engineer by training (Saint Mary's and Dalhousie).

My first 20 years were at Procter & Gamble. After five years as an engineer, I was put in charge of hiring technicians in our labs. I started a community college recruiting program, then ended up becoming the company's national recruiting manager. I worked in HR on compensation and benefits consulting, performance improvement and change management before moving to customer service. I became a spokesperson for the company and that led to crisis management.

I often tell communicators starting out to take a line job. If you've been in operations, you get more respect at the executive table.

**When did you launch your independent business and how did it come about?**

I've done it twice! The first time, P&G had transferred me to the U.S. I decided I didn't want to live there, quit and moved back to start JAd'E Communications.

After five years, one of my clients, Deloitte, hired me as their first chief communications officer. I did that for 10 years before taking a hiatus. I bought an RV and took it on a solo trip across North America.

When I came back, I formed a partnership with a former colleague. She decided to bow out after about four years, so I reinvigorated JAd'E.

**What type of work are you doing now?**

I'm known for my crisis management work and still do a lot of that, as well as communication strategy. But I like to call myself a "C-suite whisperer," and that's where my heart is. It's lonely at the top, and executives need someone who has been there, someone they can trust, to be a sounding board and help get things done.

I didn't work for much of 2017, after being diagnosed with breast cancer and working through surgery and treatment. So, I'm really in startup mode again, open for business and doing a lot of networking.

**What do you enjoy most about being an indie?**

The flexibility with my time. The ability to take on projects that interest me. If I don't like the person or the project, I just don't do it. When I do things I love and am good at, I'm energized and do a much better job. Passion shows and the people who hire you can see that.

**What *don't* you like about being an indie?**

When you need business and have to go out and beg for it. And you can't get seduced into taking projects that are soul sucking just because you need the work. If you do that, you're not going to enjoy the experience.

**What advice would you give someone new to independent life?**

You should be building your network before you leave your job so your referral network is strong enough to sustain you through the early years. Have enough experience and a good feel for the talents you have that someone will pay for. In those first years, *who you know* will get you business; in later years, it will be *your work and your reputation*.

**How long have you been an IABC and PIC member? What value do you get from your membership?**

Because I'm an engineer, I joined IABC for its accreditation program when I left my job at P&G in 1998. I earned my ABC and became a real accreditation missionary, serving on the international accreditation council.

I became involved with PIC's predecessor when I was on the Toronto chapter board. I wasn't a member but went to some meetings. I joined PIC after going out on my own in 2011 and became more active, including acting as social media director. My one criticism is it can be too writer-centric; I'd like more focus on running a business and B2B marketing.

Having a network of people I can tap into is useful. Doing this interview reminded me to update my online profile and I encourage others to do the same. It's useful to know what other people do, who you might partner with or where to find expertise you need.

*We count more than 100 members in PIC, offering a range of talent from coaching and media relations to video production and writing. Do you know everyone? Our PIC Personalities feature introduces new members and randomly profiles existing members. Let [Sue Horner](#) know if you'd like to be profiled and she'll be in touch to set it up.*

## Your mission: make the logo boring (Nailed it)

Was "The Weed Store" taken?

For years, beer drinkers in Ontario bought their 12-packs and two-fours at an outlet called Brewers Retail. Unofficially, people called it "the beer store," and The Beer Store it officially became in a rebranding in 1985.



Now the Government of Canada is getting ready for the legalization of cannabis this summer. Each province can decide how they want to sell the product, and Ontario assigned that task to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO). The LCBO will open a sub-chain of stores where consumers can buy cannabis products, and needed a name and logo.

Say hello to the **Ontario Cannabis Store**.

As an [article in Yahoo Finance](#) says, "Twitter is having a field day with the new name and logo." People are joking about the drab, boring look and suggesting that using the product might have helped the creative team.

More likely, the team at ad agency Leo Burnett was told to stifle their creativity. We can guess at their instruction by this comment on the LCBO's [Cannabis Updates website](#): the name is "designed to convey a *safe, simple and approachable* environment for consumers, and agency employees, in a *clear and easily understood* manner."

The LCBO confirmed that it expected to pay Leo Burnett about \$650,000 for the brand and marketing related to the logo. Seems like a lot, doesn't it? But "The name and logo are only one piece of the overall work...[including] the overall brand strategy, brand guidelines and, eventually, the development of the logo and brand name," the [LCBO told the Ottawa Citizen](#).

I found the name and logo a little underwhelming, and asked PIC members for their thoughts.

Graphic designer **Deana De Ciccio** thinks the logo is a good one. "It's well thought out and deliberately simplistic. It definitely meets the objective of a safe and approachable brand."

**Cathy Ledden**, RGD, said a logo acts as a visual anchor. "It needs to be scalable and instantly recognizable and distinct. I believe this new OCS logo does that. The focus is not on the selling of cannabis, but the *control* by the Ontario government. The circle containing the letters OCS suggests control, and the large O is similar in style to the typography of the O in Ontario, which all has a distinct government connection. All on target."

A typographer in a past life, **John Bromley** said there are many variables involved when creating a logo. "I like it. This is a clean airy font and the kerning is perfect. The eye just flows through it. This would have taken quite some time to create."

Others lamented the boring design but recognized "Maybe that's the point," as **Donna Papacosta** said. **Bill Smith** agreed, "I think part of the creative brief was to make the logo as uncool as possible." **Janice Sutton** called the logo forgettable, and noted it "doesn't represent what it is intended to market (which is perhaps the point)." "Forgettable/forgetful is on brand," joked **Nathalie Noël**. "Based on what I imagine the creative brief was, I imagine this met the requirements perfectly," said **Betsy Chaly**.

Still, a little personality wouldn't be out of place, don't you think? [CTV News staff](#) call the store's logo "a major departure" from the LCBO's design approach, "which includes a whimsical curlicue and, at one time, was superimposed over a picture of a grapevine." Similarly, a branding campaign for The Beer Store in 2013 put a topper on the B suggesting foam on a glass of beer.

Betsy called both the LCBO and Beer Store logos "simple with a bit of life" and felt the OCS logo could have added a bit of personality, too. **Jane Langille** suggested, "How about a little colour, like green, for example?" and Janice, "Maybe a single leaf somehow incorporated into it?"

As for the cost, Deana and Cathy think \$650,000 is a fair market price.

"To put it in context, the Yukon government just spent \$500K on their new visual identity," Deana pointed out. "LCBO spent the same on a brand refresh in 2014. When broken down, there's a lot of work to cover: brand strategy, market research, development of the name, logo and brand guidelines. The overall brand strategy would have included aligning all the key stakeholders – imagine how many hours in developing the name alone!"

Cathy agreed, "Imagine all the people involved, the organizing, the researching, most likely focus and group testing. The complete brand guidelines include how the logo is applied, typography, colour palette and more – it's similar to designing a new home and probably takes the same time to complete."

Despite all that effort, don't you still expect to hear people say, "I'm going to the weed store?"

*A version of this article first appeared on [Sue's Red Jacket Diaries blog](#).*

## Have your say in the new *Communicator*

An e-newsletter version of [IABC/Toronto's Communicator](#) launched in March. Whether you are an experienced professional or a recent graduate, get yourself heard by contributing:

- **July (writing deadline June 8): The Communications 'Newcomer to Canada' Special**  
Toronto is home to a multitude of skilled newcomers from all over the world. Often, their path to integration into the local job market is not easy. The issue will take a frank look at the challenges that communications newcomers face, and offer practical advice on what they can do to ease their transition into the local industry.

Email your contribution to [editor Jess Barja](#).

## See you on social media

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members, advance your communications business, discuss business issues and network with PIC on social media:

- Follow us on Twitter at [@pictoronto](#).
- Take part in our LinkedIn group, [IABC Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#) (login required)
- Take part in our Facebook group (chapter members only), [Professional Independent Communicators \(PIC\)](#), part of IABC/Toronto.

Recent posts covered video metrics to monitor, Facebook privacy, breaking out of a marketing rut, how to use LinkedIn in your B2B content marketing and more. You are welcome to share interesting or helpful articles or post questions that will help you and other members grow and manage your businesses.

## Take a look at the PIC member list

Who are some of your fellow PIC members? **Jacqui d'Eon** suggests taking a look at the [PIC member list](#) on the IABC/Toronto website.

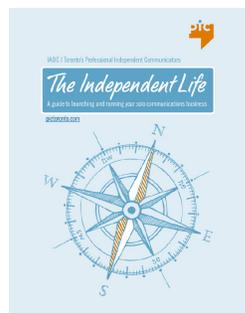
Check for people you might like to meet, or who have complementary skills to your own. You might find someone you can partner with to get new business, or someone who lives nearby.

"I sometimes think we are a collection of introverts, and we operate in silos," Jacqui says. "Having coffee one-on-one can be a good way to learn from and get to know each other."

Not on the list yet, or your information isn't up to date? PIC's director of membership, [Melika Ramkissoon](#), keeps a running list of changes (such as new contact information or links to your LinkedIn profile or website) and updates it with IABC/Toronto every quarter.

For new profiles, send your name, company name, location, email address, telephone number, website URL and a brief description of your business (up to 40 words). The next deadline to submit a profile or make changes to your existing profile is **June 29**.

## Get your copy of *The Independent Life*



PIC has a wonderful resource in our e-book, *The Independent Life*. It shares the wisdom of PIC members with online resources to guide you through the steps in starting your own business, setting up your office, managing your finances, setting fees, marketing and more.

Our thanks to graphic designer **Cathy Ledden, RGD**, for turning the content provided by many PIC members into a handy guide. [Grab your copy](#) as a PDF download or as an e-publication for Kobo or iReader.



PIC is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. *The Buzz* is PIC's e-newsletter, intended to inform independent communicators about our activities, share professional development tips from past meetings and keep us aware of what's going on. Connect with us on the web at [pictoronto.com](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

As the largest chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, IABC/Toronto provides access to products, services, activities and networking opportunities in Toronto and around the world. IABC helps people and organizations achieve excellence in corporate communication, public relations, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication. For more information, visit the [IABC website](#).

[Sue Horner](#)

Editor and Director, Communications — PIC



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