

November/December 2018

Find your way by taking the strategic path

By Sue Horner

Communicators have a path to choose, says **Dan Tisch**, APR, CPRS Fellow and president and CEO of [Argyle Public Relationships](#). Are we going to be tacticians or strategists?

At a professional development session hosted by PIC and IABC/Toronto in November, Dan pointed out that “The path to being a strategist means thinking differently.” Communicators often talk about *informing*, *announcing*, *sending* and *presenting*. Dan says instead we should be *asking*, *listening* and *seeking feedback*.

The idea of *many speaking but few listening* is one of seven trends he said are driving change in communication and PR today. The others: the importance of reputation; the risks of empowered consumers; the rise in content supply over demand; “news deserts” filled with fake news; the decline in trust; and the rise in artificial intelligence.

To step up and join executives in developing strategy, use these seven habits of highly effective strategists:

1. Ask ‘why.’
2. Go deeper in your analysis.
3. Turn analysis into insight.
4. Ask ‘why not’ and ‘what if’ (think laterally).
5. Bring the outside in, not just the inside out. Be the guide who leads collaboration.
6. Have the courage to speak the truth.
7. Measure yourself through business/organizational goals.

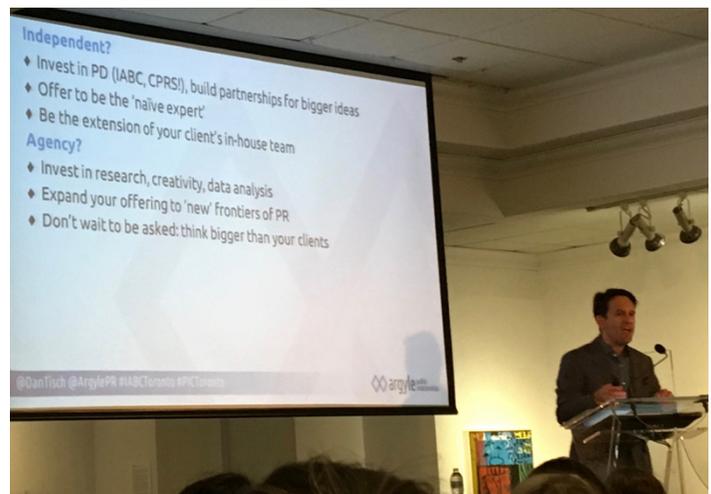
Dan advised investing in our presentation, strategic and analytical skills; helping our clients get better at listening; facilitating relationships to build trust; and aligning communication with purpose and values. Build relationships at multiple levels of your company or client organizations and improve the view of what you can do. Measure, measure, measure. And take these steps to transition to a strategist:

For independents:

- Invest in professional development (IABC, CPRS); build partnerships for bigger ideas.
- Offer to be the “naïve expert” (ask the “dumb” questions).
- Be the extension of your client’s in-house team.

For agencies:

- Invest in research, creativity and data analysis.
- Expand your offering to “new” frontiers of PR.
- Don’t wait to be asked; think bigger than your clients.



For in-house communicators:

- Align your PD plan to support being a strategist.
- Be the convener of communication collaboration.
- Teach your executives about best practices and global trends.

Extra tactics for those at a junior level:

- Look for opportunities to sit in on media training and new business research.
- Put up your hand and offer to help.

“Many organizations think they only need PR and communication in a crisis,” Dan added, quoting a company that said “We’ll let you know if we need PR this year.” “The smart ones know they need a strategy to strengthen their performance and reputation.”

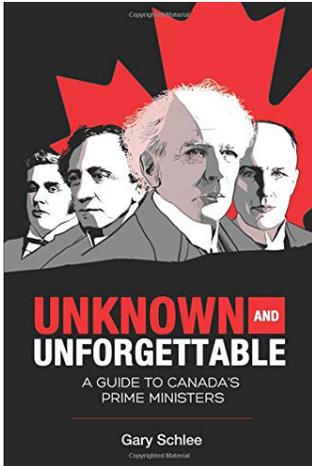
Smart communicators likewise know they need to take a strategic path to strengthen their performance and reputation. Are you in?



Sue Horner is a writer, principal of Get It Write and co-chair of communications for PIC.



Congratulations to **Meline Beach**, who won the draw for a gift card generously donated by Camp Tech. See a number of the slides Dan used in the [Twitter Moment](#) that recaps Dan’s presentation in tweets.



MEMBER NEWS: Congrats Gary Schlee, ABC, MC

Gary's book was 50+ years in the making, so he's thrilled that *Unknown and Unforgettable: A Guide to Canada's Prime Ministers* is now out.

"Every Prime Minister from Macdonald to Trudeau II is here," Gary says, "and I'll warn you up front that it is a dense 427-page reference of all things 'Prime Minister.'"

At the same time, I think you'll discover plenty of interesting things about our 23 leaders."

The book includes biographical factoids on each leader, as well as brief stories about their significant career milestones and detailed timelines of their lives. Find it on [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca), in print (about \$20) or as an ebook (about \$10).

A message from PIC Chair Sharon Aschaiek

By Sharon Aschaiek

We all need useful resources and bright ideas to keep our communication practices humming along. Here are some I'd like to share.

TIP: Be a "naïve expert." That's what **Dan Tisch** of Argyle PR had to say at our Nov. 7 seminar about how independent communicators can position themselves to clients and reflect their value (see **Sue Horner's** write-up for full details on the event). It's a great reminder that we can and should promote the benefit of objectivity that we bring to organizations and projects as outsiders.

ARTICLE: PIC director of membership **Nkiru Asika** recently wrote a [blog post](#) for The Storyboard on marketing even when busy. Full confession: Nkiru interviewed me for this article. But she

did a great job of capturing information on effective prospecting, and it includes useful insights from two other experienced writers, **Luigi Benetton** and **Sandra Jean-Louis**.

OPPORTUNITY: We all know that volunteering for the communication profession can help you build your business. IABC/Toronto still has open spots on some portfolios. Learn more on the [Volunteer page](#) or contact our VP of Volunteers, [Jess Baria](#).



Sharon Aschaiek is principal of Higher Ed Communications, chair of PIC and vp of special interest groups, IABC/Toronto.

Read up on PIC's history

How did PIC start? What are some early stories and stats? What do members say about us? Read all this and more in *PIC Then and Now*. The booklet marked our 20th anniversary in 2018, and was created by **Cathy Ledden, RGD**, and her associate, Susan Mosdell, RGD. Download a PDF of the booklet from our [website](#) under Resources.

Changes to the PIC online directory due Dec. 27

As a member of PIC, you can promote yourself at no charge on the PIC [online directory](#) on the IABC/Toronto website. You can also use the list to look 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.

We keep a running list of changes (such as new contact information or a link to your LinkedIn profile) and update it with the chapter every quarter. The next deadline to submit a profile or make changes to your existing profile is December 27, 2018.

Send your updates to PIC's director of membership, [Nkiru Asika](#). 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).

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](#), Professional Independent Communicators (PIC), part of IABC/Toronto (chapter members only).

Recent posts include SEO tips, ideas to land your first client and how to say no to “pick your brain” requests.



IABC Toronto Holiday Social December 5

Come out and celebrate with your fellow communicators. Bring your stories, your appetite and your ugliest sweater. Snacks and the first drink compliments of the chapter. You don't need to be a member to attend: come along, bring a friend, and grow your network in the process. You never know who you might meet!

Wednesday, December 5, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Duke of York Pub, 39 Prince Arthur Ave., Toronto

\$25: IABC member rate on or after November 22
\$35: Non-member rate on or after November 22

PIC contributions to *Communicator*

Check out the latest issue of IABC/Toronto's *Communicator*, which has two articles from PIC members reused from the September issue of *The Buzz*. First, PIC President **Sharon Aschaiek** shares an alphabet of tips on successfully running an [independent practice](#). Second, PIC Communications co-chair **Pat de Valence** gives a great [recap of the PIC PD event](#) in September, at which experienced indies provided insight into running a successful independent practice.

[Professional Independent Communicators](#) (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. [IABC](#) helps people and organizations achieve excellence in corporate communication, PR, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication.

THE BUZZ *The Buzz* informs members about upcoming events, shares professional development tips from past meetings and keeps us connected. Editor this issue: [Pat de Valence](#) | Design: [Deana De Ciccio](#)

Quick links

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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](#), [Pat de Valence](#)

Membership: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#), [Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)

