

July 2023



insight  
content  
technology

White paper

# AI: a guide for internal communicators

Sequel Group



# Introduction.

AI is reshaping the communications industry, paving the way for better quality, more accessible human communications by reducing monotonous tasks and expanding creative potential.

A recent Accenture report says that the industries of Information & Communication; Manufacturing; and Financial Services are the three sectors that will see the highest annual growth rates by 2035, thanks to AI.

But they add that this will only happen if organisations adopt a people-first mindset and take quick, bold and responsible steps to apply AI technologies to their business.

In Sequel's work with diverse industries and organisations, clients are increasingly asking for our insight and guidance on the best use of AI tools so that they can then harness its potential to benefit communications, the employee experience, and the business.

This document is designed to be a useful reference guide for internal communicators. It outlines what we believe to be the most relevant and current issues, and we hope it will form the basis of a continuing conversation to understand AI better, its capabilities, and how it can enhance and boost employee engagement and experience.

## Current unregulated approach

The UK Government published a white paper in March 2023 to set out a new approach to regulating AI to build public trust in cutting-edge technologies and make it easier for businesses to innovate, grow and create jobs.

The plan, it says, will help to unleash the benefits of AI, one of 'Five technologies of tomorrow'.

Five principles – including governance, safety, transparency, contestability and fairness – will guide the use of artificial intelligence as part of a new national blueprint for relevant regulators to drive responsible innovation and maintain public trust.

These principles could be a useful framework to help industries to define what best practice means.



### AI and its relevance and impact on internal communication

A recent [Unily report](#) stated that AI and automation innovations stand to solve some of the biggest internal comms challenges.

These include:

- Combating communications overload and cutting through excess noise as the volume of content increases
- Battling for employee attention against other channels, sources, and consumer media and marketing
- Alleviating employees' engagement fatigue while still keeping people updated
- Meeting the growing desire for more personalised, relevant experiences
- Driving organic engagement and human connection in a more digital world of work.

Internal communicators have an opportunity to solve some of these challenges through AI, using the systems and tools in some of the research, summarisation, content creation, delivery and interpretation of information to free up significant time.

We're already using AI tools day-to-day. For instance, some of the Microsoft 365 apps like Teams, SharePoint and To Do have AI functionality built in, to speed up tasks and help you to work more efficiently. The 'designer' function in PowerPoint also gives creative options for slides.

Now is the time to try, fail, learn, scale with AI.

Here we've identified the five key opportunities for IC, that we believe offer communicators the most potential, benefit and value.



## 01

## Content creation.

With tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly and Jasper AI, communicators can spend less time crafting text and more time focused on strategy and creativity.

Using AI tools as the basis or prompts to get you started can help you to come up with stronger content ideas; formulate text with fewer spelling or grammar errors; and make sure that large bodies of work maintain a consistent tone and style.

Communicators can then make better use of their time by fine tuning, polishing and editing that material into the desired, relevant, high-quality content your employees need.

Meanwhile, Natural Language Generation (NLG) takes complex data and uses AI to turn it into easy-to-understand content that sounds like human speech. Common applications of NLG methods include the production of various reports, for example weather reports, or image captions.

And using AI transcription services for meetings, interviews and audio/video recordings represents a huge saving in time, even to get summaries of what AI considers are the key points.

So although AI will likely be responsible for creating much of the content we consume, it will still be viewed as a useful tool rather than a replacement for human creativity.

For example, ChatGPT is great at processing a lot of text very quickly, giving answers based on probability – effectively a prediction based on what it knows, but only up to 2021.

That means that fact checking and content knowledge are still vital.

For instance, AI-generated text can contain bias or misinformation, and be plain wrong so must be carefully checked by experienced humans. The same thing can happen with visual content, such as generating images that aren't diverse.

Another critical point is legality. There are already several lawsuits around copyright infringement from AI use in the US. We need to be cautious of how we publish or share AI-generated content.

## 02

## Personalisation.

AI enhances personalisation every day in the consumer world; the 'Hi Fiona' when you log into a website, the 'you might like' suggested items, your Spotify playlist...

So it follows that these same tools can be harnessed to enhance the employee lifecycle experience – starting from the day a candidate applies for a job, joins the organisation, performance, learning and development, recognition, and then leaving the business.

And machine-learning and intelligent content delivery – putting the right content in front of the right people at the right time, and through the right channel – gives AI great potential in the future of employee comms and engagement.

Personalisation – tailoring an experience or communication based on information a company has learned about an individual – makes smart, relatable content more useful.

The likelihood of an employee engaging with information that feels like it is 'created for them' is far higher than when receiving an 'all staff' communication.

We can also create chatbots that provide instant answers, guidance, or support to employees on various topics (for example, policies, benefits, training) and to create gamified elements that motivate employees to participate in challenges, competitions, or rewards programmes.

AI can also deliver news to target audiences in new and innovative ways using virtual and augmented-reality applications. For example, stakeholders, media and employees can virtually 'go' into a conference room from wherever they're working and experience a conference, briefing or information session.

03

## Quantifying value and impact.

Linked to personalisation, measuring the impact of communication means we can make informed choices about the 'what, how and when' of comms based on data, rather than on opinion.

AI can streamline and analyse large volumes of data, such as employee feedback, surveys, and social media interactions, to identify patterns and insights.

Data-driven algorithms also learn from user behaviour and feedback so that communicators can get under the skin of audience demographics such as location, interaction with online channels, comms channel use and format preferences so that we can optimise and tailor that content.

This data can then be used to report on the success of campaigns and content, give exact insights, to build patterns and trend assessments, to build unique profiles and produce better comms strategies, channels and content.

*The narrative of workplace automation and AI is changing from one of fear – pitting machines against individuals – to opportunity. Humans empowered and augmented by the best in smart technology are key to new value creation for all.”*

**David Bent - Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate at UCL (AOT)**

04

## Sentiment analysis.

Sentiment analysis, or 'opinion mining' is another AI-powered tool that can quickly turn feedback into meaningful and usable communication insights. It can speedily analyse employee feedback for what is positive, neutral or negative, such as survey responses and social posts, and in particular 'free' comments in surveys.

Blending this true, people-driven insight with experienced comms knowledge means that internal communicators can quickly find the trends and patterns which in turn inform communication strategies and behaviour.

## 05

## Trust and transparency.

This is one of the most challenging aspects of AI. Just because the tools are there, how far do we go in using them to enhance our work and make it easier? What are the ethical issues?

A fundamental principle is that employee communications need to be, and to remain, genuine and transparent. AI shouldn't be used as the final output.

Never use AI to produce deepfake content – artificial images, speeches or videos of leaders, for example.

Because if people don't trust the information coming from an organisation, then credibility is lost, and hard to recover.

AI can be a useful tool in taking transcripts and notes in calls, but it needs to be made clear on the call why and when it's being used.

Employees should also know when they're talking to / communicating with AI and when they're talking with a person, for example if you use chatbots internally.

Users also need to understand when generative AI is being used, and what it's used for. For instance, companies can include a sidebar explaining what their AI does, where its training data comes from, and how it can be used. In text chats, AI responses and suggestions can appear in a new, clearly labelled tab, or as an AI participant – as long as it's clear that it's a bot.

Also, if imagery or illustration has been solely created using AI tools like Midjourney, who owns the rights and can it be used externally? For now, answers are still not clear and the recommendation is to use AI for part of the creative process, not the total output.

Generative AI also has a tendency to 'make up' facts based on predicted patterns, rather than on any actual evidence or knowledge. Even AI needs a supervisor, as it's constantly collecting new data, so organisations need to make sure that their AI is not collecting or using personal data in ways that may violate privacy laws or GDPR regulations.

Bias in AI is also an emerging issue, which companies need to be aware of every time they provide training data, for example. Generative AI is only as good as the data it's trained on, which means that if the data is biased, the AI will be too. This needs careful monitoring.

For instance, Amazon recently made headlines for its AI recruiting tool that showed a bias against women. Because the AI was trained to identify patterns in CVs, it identified that a majority of tech resumes came from men – which then led it to erroneously assume that men were better qualified for tech jobs than women.

*AI is not about the total automation of content production from start to finish: it is about augmentation to give professionals and creatives the tools to work faster, freeing them up to spend more time on what humans do best.”*

**Professor Charlie Beckett, head of the LSE Journalism-AI research project**

# Next steps?

**To assess and integrate AI, here are a few tips to help you get started:**

- 1. Define your goals and objectives.** What do you hope to achieve by using AI? What are the key areas and the repetitive tasks where it can be used to improve efficiency and productivity?
- 2. Do your research.** Learn as much as you can. There are many AI tools and programs on the market, so it's essential to find those that are right for your needs. Play, test, make, break, learn.
- 3. Create a plan.** Once you've selected your tools and solution, develop a plan for implementing it into your existing workflow.
- 4. Have clear guidelines** about its use within internal comms and the business, the advantages and the potential risks, for example being clear that you will never use artificial images or videos of your people or leaders.
- 5. Be ready to change.** AI can be disruptive, so be prepared to change how you work and potentially your processes to get the best out of it.
- 6. Stay flexible.** Things are changing rapidly in AI, so remain flexible and adaptable to keep up with the latest changes and developments that work best for you.

And a great final bit of advice we read: consider AI as you would an intern. Give clear, strict instructions and heavily monitor and refine the results. Let it do the heavy lifting, but don't cut out the humans, the knowledge, empathy and the skill of internal communicators.

The skills of a communicator and the human element they provide is irreplaceable.

AI can't replace empathy and understanding of the organisation and culture. It can't take the tough decisions in a crisis and isn't authentic – this is what we do as communicators.

Using AI can reinforce the value of internal communication, accelerating the shift from being the broadcasters to being trusted strategic leaders.

*You're not likely to lose your job to AI, at least not yet. But you very well may lose your job to someone who knows how to use it."*

Staffbase CSO and co-founder Frank Wolf



# Matrix of AI use scenarios.

Value proposition	Application of AI	Sample software
Data analysis to create personalised content and experiences	Machine-learning and intelligent content delivery	Salesforce Einstein IBM Watson Adobe Sensei
Automated campaigns to build engagement	Engagement automation	Mailchimp HubSpot Marketo
Content creation	Content-writing bots	Perplexity AI – a powerful search engine that scours the internet to give an answer and displays the source of the information it provides Jasper Copy.ai Articoolo Writesonic ContentBot Chat GPT Grammarly Midjourney – AI art generator Dall-E 2 – takes text prompts and transforms them into computer graphics (images, photos, drawings, paintings, etc.)
Provide insights into employee morale and engagement	Analyse tone and emotional condition	Saga AI – variety of tasks, including meeting notes, product management, UX research, documentation, knowledge management,  MonkeyLearn – word cloud tool Lexalytics – translates text into actionable insights MeaningCloud – text and feedback analysis
Efficient working	Day-to-day work tasks	TimeHero – work management tool Murf – text speech generator Lovo.ai – voice generator and text to speech platform Fireflies – eliminates the need for note taking during a meeting Wordtune read – highlight the most relevant information in lengthy reports and gives you brief summaries next to each passage Todoist – making to do lists Tome – building PPT slides Brain.fm – AI-generated music tool to help you stay focused on tasks

## Resources:

[UK unveils world leading approach to innovation in first artificial intelligence white paper to turbocharge growth - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ai-white-paper)

[How Is AI Shaping The Future Of Internal Communications? \(unily.com\)](https://unily.com/en/ai-shaping-the-future-of-internal-communications)

[The Ethical Concerns for AI in UC - UC Today](#)



# What else can we help you with?

We are Sequel Group, the employee experience agency that's inspiring people to deliver brilliant business performance.

Our influential insight, captivating content and transformational technology engages, empowers and connects your people – to your business and to each other.

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Microsoft 365 // intranets // apps // websites // strategy // measurement // campaigns // social // film // animation // publications



33  
people



100+  
awards



76  
Net Promoter Score



ISO  
certified

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