



# Five Communications Resolutions Companies Should Make For 2015

Now that you may be easing up on any personal resolutions set at the start of the year, it is a good time to consider these resolutions for your corporate communications program. As the world contends with challenges and opportunities of the lower cost of oil, GCC countries continue to demonstrate resilience. Despite this, it will be important to ensure that companies have the right plan in place to communicate their successes – as well as any changes if conditions deteriorate. Erica Pettit, Managing Director and Head of Middle East Corporate Communications at FTI Consulting, provides five resolutions for companies' communication programmes in 2015.

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## 1. Check your foundation still matches your end goals.

As with any ongoing activity, sometimes we forget to stop and check that we are still using the right 'map' – this is especially true when we feel like we are moving. Any movement is okay if your New Year's resolution is exercising but forward movement is what is actually important for accomplishing a business goal. So confirm that your foundation is still appropriate for your desired outcomes – your programme objectives still align with your organisation's strategies and objectives, your audiences are still prioritized appropriately and their interests and behaviours are still identified correctly. If you were starting your communication programme today, would you still be doing the same things? Essentially, have you created a unique, impactful platform to protect and enhance the company's enterprise value?

## 2. Focus on what your audience is most interested in.

While you are probably very interested in what your own company has achieved, audiences want to know how your company can be beneficial to them. Your customers will want to learn a lot more about your company's creative solution for their industry's biggest issue than they do about your company's historical timeline. Your partners in government are more interested in how you will create 20% more jobs in their country this year than about initiatives in other markets that have no impact on their homeland. And when communicating to your employees, they certainly are most interested to hear about the direct effect a change in the company's strategy will have on them today rather than what it will mean for other stakeholders in 10 years. Check that your key messaging focuses on what your audience is most interested in.



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## 3. Require rigorous analysis.

Your company's reputation rests on the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders – from investors, employees and the media to customers, policymakers and the broader public. Now that you are developing your messaging to fit each group's specific criteria, don't just guess what their greatest interests are. Deploy analytical tools that are capable of measuring corporate reputation and confidence among these audiences. Whether you are evaluating messaging about entering new markets, attracting employees, raising capital or maintaining credibility in crises, research serves as an independent filter for ensuring unbiased feedback.

## 4. Engender confidence among your target audiences.

To ensure that you are motivating your stakeholders to become advocates for your brand, move beyond a programme's foundation of building a good reputation to engendering confidence. A study conducted by FTI Consulting found that stakeholders are more likely to become advocates for a company if they have confidence in it rather than if they merely perceive it to have a positive reputation. On average, companies have a 30% better chance of achieving desired behaviours if stakeholders are confident than if they say the company has a good reputation. By increasing confidence, our study finds companies can turn stakeholders into advocates, something that a strong reputation alone does not accomplish.

## 5. Align universal best practices with local market understanding to reach the right audiences.

As the expectation for communication between the company and its audiences has evolved, a solid understanding of how, when and why to connect with key audiences is crucial. Because there are unique aspects to each market, check that you have united local knowledge with universal best practices to reach your audiences and achieve your communication and business goals. For example, most communication campaigns focus on communicating with hundreds, maybe thousands, of stakeholders that can directly impact their business. In many cases, a more effective best practice approach is to identify those individuals with the most potential to influence a debate and to engage them on a consistent basis. In order to narrow down to a small list of the most influential stakeholders, a very strong knowledge of the global, regional and local landscape will be required.

With these 'resolutions' in mind, your company will be well positioned to execute a creative and measurable corporate communication programme in 2015, and you will be on your way to building advocates by creating confidence among your most important stakeholders.

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### About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting LLP is a global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organisations protect and enhance enterprise value in an increasingly complex legal, regulatory and economic environment. FTI Consulting professionals, who are located in all major business centres throughout the world, work closely with clients to anticipate, illuminate and overcome complex business challenges in areas such as investigations, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory issues, reputation management and restructuring.

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