ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MSC

PAYAL PATEL

Coombs, W. T. (2014). Crisis Management and Communications. *Institute for Public Relations*.

When planning and preparing for crisis, organizations should consider crafting a thorough crisis communications plan, identifying a crisis management team with predetermined roles, and providing media training for designated spokespeople. Per crisis expert, Dr. W. Timothy Coombs, managers should also be mindful of best practices for digital communications during a crisis. While social media has certainly heightened the need for rapid response, organizations must not compromise strategy as it is critical to successfully diffusing a crisis and achieving a favorable outcome. Perhaps the most valuable information I gathered from this piece was the theory of attribution and how it impacts the crisis communications strategy.

My current organization is very vulnerable to threats of crisis given its high profile, the volume of regular visitors and the number of issues that could occur at any given moment. The theory of attribution is helpful in determining what type of crisis response is necessary based on the level of attribution the organization may be experiencing in that moment.

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to assess complex organizational environments and achieve communication goals.

Coombs, W. T. (2016). How to Communicate Effectively During Operational and Reputation Crises. *Institute for Public Relations*.

There are two types of crises to take into consideration in the planning and preparation stage: operational crises and reputational crises. While operational crises are commonly anticipated by crisis managers, reputational crises can potentially be more difficult to plan and prepare for due to their unpredictable nature and the level of on-the-spot, judgement-based decisions required to navigate them successfully. It is becoming increasingly critical for crisis managers to determine the potential impact and reaction of an organization's stakeholders and communicate effectively during reputational crises, especially given the fast-paced and highly-reactive state of digital communications. What I found most helpful in this piece is Coombs' distinction between reputational crisis and paracrisis. By understanding what type of crisis it actually is, a manager is more likely to successfully mitigate risks and determine the most effective method of response.

This article challenged me to revise the crisis communications plan my team and I had originally drafted for my organization, which places a strong emphasis on operational crisis. While planning and preparing for operational crisis is still paramount, I have realized that an effective crisis communications plan should consist of an integrated approach that also takes reputational crisis and paracrisis into account.

Learning Outcome: Address complex challenges by collaboratively leading teams across disciplines, distances, and sectors.

Fathi, S. (2018, October 3). The 5 C's of Mastering Media Interviews. *PR Daily*. Retrieved from https://www.prdaily.com/the-5-cs-of-mastering-media-interviews.

How organizational spokespeople conduct themselves during media interviews is as critical as the crisis, itself. It can potentially improve or worsen a situation depending on the presentation and delivery of the interview. The 5 C's – conviction, conversation, composure, confidence and color – are vital traits and characteristics of a good media interview, and when used effectively, can influence audiences in a favorable way. I especially found value in the author's emphasis on the power of storytelling and how using anecdotes and visualization techniques can make an interview successful.

As the primary spokesperson for my organization, I have found that the best media interviews are the ones during which I am calm and poised, yet confident in my tone and the subject matter. Furthermore, when I am able to successfully illustrate the message and relate to the audience, I tend create the most impact during an interview. I often coach senior executives and other subject matter experts within my organization with the same principles in mind. The 5 C's offer a solid guide for interview presentation that I plan to incorporate in future media trainings.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Howd, J. (2015, June 3). How to Handle a Q&A Session. *Management Issues*. Retrieved from https://www.management-issues.com/opinion/6752/how-to-handle-a-qa-session.

Q&A sessions with media and other stakeholders are often a dreaded form of communication, especially amidst a crisis. However, when handled tactfully and with ample preparation, it can be leveraged to achieve a positive outcome for an organization. It can be an opportunity to control the narrative and influence the thoughts and perceptions of audiences.

My key takeaway from this article is that spokespeople must really know their audiences and understand their intent in a Q&A. Often times while preparing for press conferences, my focus is on getting the key messaging across; and while that is important, consideration must also be given to what the audience wants to know and anticipating what information they might need to complete their story. Combining this preparation with strong delivery tactics can turn a Q&A session into an effective strategy during a crisis.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Grant, A. (2014, October 3). The 3-Step Process to Answering Even the Toughest Questions. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from https://www.fastcompany.com/3036559/the-3-step-process-to-answering-even-the-toughest-question.

Tough questions are inevitable during a crisis. How they are addressed can either advance an organization's goals and objectives or derail and potentially damage its reputation. The "ABC" approach – align, bridge, categorize – can be useful in navigating tough questions by helping manage panic and jumbled thoughts in the heat of the moment and clearing a path to deliver a strong, coherent answer with ease and impact.

I recently applied this approach while addressing a tough question during a press conference about safety and security measures following a violent incident at my organization. By first leveling with the reporter on public concerns (align), suggesting that appropriate measures are in place to alleviate concerns moving forward (bridge), and providing high-level examples of those measures (categorize), I was able to convey a clear message and offer an effective response that satisfied the reporter, without compromising my organization's reputation.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Goudreau, J. (2016, January 16). A Harvard psychologist says people judge you based on 2 criteria when they first meet you. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com/harvard-psychologist-amy-cuddy-how-people-judge-you-2016-1.

Harvard psychologist, Amy Cuddy, has conducted extensive research related to first impressions and what people tend to evaluate upon a first encounter with an individual. The research boils down to two core values: trust and respect – which can also be characterized, respectively, as warmth and competence. The goal is to project both in order to make a good first impression. However, what may surprise many is that warmth is valued far more than competence. Only after earning one's trust can you earn one's respect. I find this revelation to be especially valuable when it comes to public speaking or communicating in a position of leadership. People must feel as though they can trust an individual in order to ultimately perceive that person as a respected leader or subject matter expert.

As I look to strengthen my own leadership skills and further develop my expertise in strategic communications and crisis management, I will be keeping these core values in mind. This understanding will also come in handy as I coach and train other leaders in public speaking and presentation as part of my role.

Disposition: Iteratively develop inter-professional leadership competencies.

Kennedy, G. A. (2007). *Aristotle: On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (pp. 1–23). New York: Oxford University Press.

Rhetoric is more than just a buzzword; it is a form of communication used to influence and compel audiences to think, feel or act a certain way. When used effectively, rhetoric can be a powerful tool of persuasion for communicators. One of the key takeaways from this reading is Aristotle's framework for constructing a persuasive speech as a speaker and/or analyzing discourse as an audience member by truly understanding the principles of rhetoric.

What I appreciate the most about Aristotle's teachings of rhetoric is that it offers an insightful breakdown of the core elements of an effective speech or text and provides a roadmap to ultimately influencing the audience's thoughts, perceptions and actions. The three values I keep in mind while preparing myself or others for presentations are: establishing trustworthiness of the speaker or author; laying out a logical argument within the text of the speech; and creating an emotional effect on the audience or reader.

Learning Outcome: Apply communication-centered scholarship to strengthen communication effectiveness.

Timms, J. H. H., & Botsman, R. (2014, December). Understanding "New Power". *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2014/12/understanding-new-power.

As new generations of working professionals continue to enter and dominate the workforce, traditional organizational structures and power dynamics are being challenged by internal and external stakeholders. Values, such as open-source collaboration, crowd sharing and radical transparency, are becoming more prevalent over institutionalism, confidentiality and models of hierarchy and authority. Research shows that organizations that are embracing "new power" models and values are resonating better with their stakeholders. This article demonstrates how organizations can harness that shift in energy to achieve business goals and objectives.

I found the concepts outlined in this article to be very insightful and applicable to my current workplace, which is in the process of shifting from "old power" to "new power" values upon its recent transition from a government-operated entity to an independent non-profit organization. It's been a very slow and challenging process as it is a century-old institution with a longstanding history of "old power" dynamics. However, this article challenged me to thoroughly evaluate my organization's current state and think of ways I can incorporate new communications strategies and collaboration-based work in my role to help move the needle more quickly.

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to assess complex organizational environments and achieve communication goals.

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016, July). Spotlight on Building a Diverse Organization: Why Diversity Programs Fail and What Works Better. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail.

The concept of diversity programs have been rapidly and ubiquitously spreading across organizations over the past decade or so with the rise of women and minority-based movements. However, even the organizations with the best intentions of creating a diverse working culture fall short of meeting that goal due to programs that simply do not work. I have witnessed this firsthand and have wondered if there is a better way to go about it; this article addresses that by providing tactics and initiatives that have been proven effective and are backed by significant research and data.

Based on what I uncovered in this article, my hope is to propose alternative solutions to my organization. Instead of mandatory DEI and bias trainings that have minimal impact on employees and hiring practices that have resulted in tokenism, perhaps we can shift our attention to authentic engagement through mentorship programs, contact and exposure to diverse groups through cross trainings, and social accountability via proactive task forces.

Disposition: Utilize communication to embrace complexity and difference.

Wrench, J. S. (2008). *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication: A Hands-on Approach* (pp. 13–16). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

While many may not make an immediate correlation between science and communication, there is indeed a science to communication. Epistemology, which can be described as a way of knowing, is central to that idea. To take it a step further, there are three main methods "of knowing" in communication scholarship: quantitative/scientific, qualitative/interpretive and rhetorical/critical. This particular text focuses on the quantitative/scientific approach to research.

What I found most interesting was the six distinctions between common knowledge and scientific knowledge and how they impact what our understanding of knowledge is and how it is gained. This is helpful in day-to-day interactions because often times, common opinions can be misconstrued as scientific facts. It is important for us as communicators to clarify the message for audiences, using carefully vetted data to depict a more accurate story.

Learning Outcome: Apply communication-centered scholarship to strengthen communication effectiveness.

Redman, T. C. (2013, November 29). How to Start Thinking Like a Data Scientist. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2013/11/how-to-start-thinking-like-a-data-scientist.

Data science is applicable to practically every job and industry in this day and age. While we all may not be data scientists, thinking like one is quickly becoming a highly valued and sought-after skill set, regardless of the profession. This article breaks down how one can apply data science to even the most basic problem and address it by gathering appropriate insights.

What I appreciated the most about the article is the guided exercise, which can be applied to almost any thought or problem. As I challenge myself to think more critically in my work, I also found value in the idea of challenging certain problematic processes by asking why it is so and gathering data to determine opportunities for efficiencies.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Frick, W. (2014, May 19). An Introduction to Data-Driven Decisions for Managers Who Don't Like Math. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2014/05/an-introduction-to-data-driven-decisions-for-managers-who-dont-like-math.

Whether we realize it or not, most of our decisions are based on data. We constantly use, analyze, interpret and reference data to make everyday choices, no matter how big or small. Prior to framing it in this perspective, I typically associated data with math – a subject that has always been my Achilles heel. However, as this article suggests, data is a key element of the decision-making process in any job function and can contribute to the enhancement of one's judgement.

I have come to realize that one of the most critical pieces of the data analysis process is asking the right questions. How a question is framed at the beginning will have a direct impact on the results produced at the end. Now when I attempt to make a decision related to how to best communicate to certain audiences and stakeholders, I give careful thought and consideration to the type of questions I am asking and how they are positioned in order to arrive at the best decision and/or solution.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Treadwell, D. (2013). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry* (pp. 138–153). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

While we may not be able to conduct research on the entire human population due to size and other limitless variables, we can gather and analyze data from a smaller subset of that group and use it to make a generalization about the overall population. The process of selecting that group is called sampling. In this particular section of the textbook, we learn about the different styles of sampling methods and potential limitations of sampling frames.

Understanding the nuances of sampling methods and their respective limitations is extremely important to the process of data analysis and the outcome of a particular research project. In my work, I often times see demographic-related data from certain events or programs hosted by my organization and am expected to use that to determine the best channels of communication to reach our target audiences in the future. However, it's equally important that my team and I understand the sampling methods and frames that were used to generate that data so that I can also take certain limitations into consideration.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Jones, G. (2015, April 20). How to psychologically interpret website analytics. *Smart Insights*. Retrieved from https://www.smartinsights.com/goal-setting-evaluation/web-analytics-strategy/psychologically-interpret-website-analytics/.

Big data requires big analysis – and the right kind of analysis. Websites, in particular, can be a great source of big data. However, unless they are interpreted correctly, all that substantial data could be meaningless to an organization. As the article suggests, organizations must focus on the psychology of its web visitors by studying certain aspects of site analytics. The goal is to understand what is driving visitors' actions and behaviors while navigating the website. This can be determined through analyzing how visitors ultimately arrived at their web destination or how much time they spent on a particular page. These insights are key revelations.

I regularly dive into my organization's website analytics to gain a better understanding of how and why our visitors navigated the website the way they did and what ultimately led them to the point of sale on the site, which is one of the ultimate courses of action we want them to take. This practice is key in helping us decide what type of information to display more prominently on the homepage and which pages to invest more resources in for SEO purposes.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Davenport, T. H. (2013, January 31). Telling a Story with Data. *Deloitte Review*, (12). Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/deloitte-review/issue-12/telling-a-story-with-data.html.

It is not enough to simply throw data at audiences and assume they will form an ideal narrative that will result in favorable outcomes for an organization. In order for it to have a desirable impact, communicators must find a way to tell a story with data. When done effectively, data-driven storytelling can be powerful and influential in swaying opinions or compelling audiences to take action in support of an organization. One of the highlights in this piece for me is the effectiveness of data visualization and how it can be helpful in putting data results and implications into understandable and relatable context for the audience.

In my work, I recently began incorporating data visualization into certain components of storytelling, which has had a tremendous impact on target audiences. We've noticed more traction and higher engagement in social media posts, e-newsletters and web pages. When executed tactfully, data-driven messages can really resonate with people in a meaningful way.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Scudder, K. (2012, January 3). Be prepared: 10 steps to take now for crisis readiness. *Public Relations Society of America*. Retrieved from http://apps.prsa.org/intelligence/Tactics/Articles/view/9530/1041/Be_prepared_10_steps_to_take_now_for_crisis_readin.

Crises are inevitable, and no organization is immune. Preparation is key in mitigating risks, limiting threats and minimizing the potential damage. In this article, Scudder outlines 10 steps organizations and managers can take well in advance—from assessing all possible crises and identifying key personnel, tools and resources, to conducting media training and staging crisis simulations. These measures can help crisis managers develop a comprehensive plan and increase the organization's chances for a successful post-crisis outcome.

Having navigated several crises throughout my career, I can personally attest to the importance of pre-crisis preparation work. In moments of crisis when time is of the essence and every second is critical, having a thorough plan in place and a team that is well-trained and prepared to manage the issues at hand has made all the difference for my organization. These 10 steps serve as a great checklist to help ensure an optimal level of crisis readiness.

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to assess complex organizational environments and achieve communication goals.

Strandberg, J. M., & Vigsø, O. (2016). Internal crisis communication: An employee perspective on narrative, culture, and sensemaking. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *21*(1), pp. 89–102.

Often times, crisis managers make the mistake of using the same strategies for internal crisis communications as those created for external purposes, expecting them to be equally effective. However, internal crisis communications needs to be developed as a separate strategy to ensure that internal stakeholders are receiving appropriate and sufficient information. What works for the press, social media and the public may not be the same as what works for employees, as Strandberg and Vigsø uncover in this article.

I learned this the hard way after my organization experienced a major crisis in 2019, during which my team and I successfully deployed our external crisis communications strategies as outlined in our pre-drafted crisis plan, but neglected to include specific strategies for internal communications. As a result, we ended up using our external messaging on internal stakeholders, which was not adequate or helpful and led to a lot of flustered and distraught reactions. We have since filled those gaps in our crisis communications plan and have developed strategies to relay imperative information and address internal concerns.

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to assess complex organizational environments and achieve communication goals.

Kim, S., & Choi, S. M. (2016). Congruence Effects in Post-crisis CSR Communication: The Mediating Role of Attribution of Corporate Motives. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *153*(2), pp. 447–463.

While many companies have increasingly begun to adopt and implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives as a regular business practice, this article examines how CSR could specifically play a potential role in post-crisis communication and management. Ultimately, Kim and Choi determine that if an organization decides to use CSR communication to manage a crisis, it may benefit from initiating a CSR activity in a domain related to the crisis. However, if the crisis is accidental, crisis-oriented CSR initiative congruence could carry little to no meaning or significance as a result of low attribution.

Most of the crises I have managed so far have been accidental in nature, so I have not had many opportunities to test this idea. However, this piece prompted me to think about how CSR could be leveraged as part of a company's post-crisis strategy. For example, if an organization's malpractice or oversight of an issue led to an environmental disaster or mishap, it is conceivable that a pro-sustainability initiative could be effective as a post-crisis communication strategy—as long as the initiative appeared to be genuine in execution and is perceived as an authentic, long-term commitment. Based on this insight, CSR is certainly a concept I will keep in my back pocket to potentially integrate as a post-crisis communication strategy in an appropriate situation.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Smith, J. (2013). *Good self, bad self: How to bounce back from a personal crisis* (pp. 243–255). New York, NY: Free Press.

Never underestimate the power of an apology. Through detailed examples of successful and unsuccessful apologies, along with riveting accounts of her own handlings of various clients' crises, Judy Smith demonstrates the art of crafting an effective apology and shares how it can play a crucial role in post-crisis recovery. Perhaps the key takeaway from this passage is the list of six elements that make up a strong apology.

In much of my crisis work, I have had to craft genuine, heartfelt apologies in which every word had to be carefully evaluated to ensure the delivery and reception would stick a satisfactory landing. Furthermore, these apologies often had to be articulated in a way that would not provoke any legal issues or jeopardize the organization's litigation efforts in court. This is not an easy task, and those who underestimate or fail to recognize the importance of delivering a tactful apology often fare worse than they did at the onset of the crisis. The six elements outlined within this book are valuable tenets to keep in mind in order to avoid that pitfall.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Yankelovich, D. (2001). *The magic of dialogue: Transforming conflict into cooperation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Building a successful dialogic model within an organization is critical to its overall progression and lasting success. When used effectively, dialogue has the transformative power to bridge the gap between conflicting parties, arrive at pragmatic solutions through collective input, and ultimately, create a healthy, productive work environment and culture in which all members are operating as a collaborative and cohesive unit. Within the pages of this book, Daniel Yankelovich outlines helpful strategies to establish effective dialogic models and practices to ensure an organization's success.

A couple of the strategies proved to be particularly beneficial to me in helping rectify the "silo effect" that has long existed within my organization. Per Yankelovich, by exposing the organization's "old scripts" to a reality check, challenging the status quo, and encouraging team members to bring their assumptions to light through open discussions, we were able to take the first step towards breaking organizational silos. As a result of our ongoing transparency and regular communications across all disciplines, my organization has managed to move past dialogic dysfunction and made great strides in operating more harmoniously.
Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to assess complex organizational environments and achieve communication goals.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, *28*(1), pp. 21–37.

There are at least three ways in which dialogue can be incorporated into day-to-day public relations: the interpersonal, the mediated, and the organizational. By exercising listening skills, practicing empathy and contextualizing issues within relatable frameworks, public relations practitioners can activate interpersonal dialogue to create common ground with stakeholders and build external relationships. Practitioners can also leverage mediated channels and accessible platforms to engage stakeholders in open and meaningful dialogue. Finally, by creating organizational mechanisms for facilitating dialogue and establishing a procedural approach to raising concerns, public relations professionals will likely be more successful in fostering a community that encourages productive two-way communications.

In my organization, these dialogic approaches have been integrated into our standard internal and external communications practices. For example, we leveraged interpersonal dialogue to address sensitive matters, such as COVID-19 closures and impact. By listening to our stakeholders, responding with empathy and framing the issue within local and global contexts, we were able to appease all parties. We also utilize mediated channels, such as the organization's website and social media platforms to engage in transparent dialogue and address real-time problems. For stakeholders who many have concerns to express on a consistent basis (i.e. on-site business partners, community members, etc.), we have established a regular "town hall" style meeting in which there are an agreed upon set of rules and procedures in place to ensure it is a productive organized forum.

Learning Outcome: Apply communication-centered scholarship to strengthen communication effectiveness.

Loon, R. van & Dijk, G. van (2015). Dialogical Leadership: Dialogue as Condition Zero. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, *12*(3), pp. 62–75.

In a world of increasing interconnectedness and continuous change, dialogical leadership is growing more and more valuable to organizations and society. At the very heart of dialogical leadership is self-awareness and self-reflection. These practices are essential to developing effective and authentic leadership. Furthermore, they are the key to developing a deeper level of understanding and action. This is especially important in moments of crisis. Practicing internal and external dialogue fuels a leader's authentic presence, overall effectiveness and value-based accountability in the ethical meaning.

We have seen in recent history just how critical this type of leadership can be as people and businesses everywhere navigated the global health crisis brought on by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Those who practiced dialogical leadership—rooted in awareness, empathy and authenticity—fared better in the public eye and proved to be more effective in leading groups through the crisis than those who did not practice the core elements of this leadership style. In my organization, we are being mindful of this and adjusting our communications and leadership styles accordingly to better connect and resonate with our stakeholders during such turbulent times.

Disposition: Iteratively develop inter-professional leadership competencies.

Turco, C. (2018). *Conversational firm: Rethinking bureaucracy in the age of social media* (pp. 28–62). Columbia University Press.

As times change, the way businesses operate are being challenged to evolve along with it. Many of the newer generation of professionals entering the workforce no longer value traditional and hierarchal structures within an organization. Rather, values of radical transparency, free-flowing exchange of information and open communication are becoming increasingly important, as Turco points out through her observations at TechCo—an exemplary firm for the modern age. The pages in which the social media marketing company is navigating the unique challenges of establishing open communication within the organization was particularly intriguing to me. I also found it relatable as I contemplate how to help achieve a similar culture at my workplace.

Navy Pier has historically been linked and subjected to government-like culture, which is notorious for formal and hierarchal structures, bureaucratic way of thinking, traditional policies and old-school practices. Using TechCo as a case study and frame of reference, I propose that the Pier should consider adapting open communication practices that encourage employees to share information, ideas and opinions and engage in important organization-wide conversations—perhaps in an open forum format or via online Intranet tools that would allow staff to exercise their “voice rights.” Such avenues for open communication would grant employees the opportunity to raise concerns, while providing a mechanism for those concerns to be shared directly with individuals who possess the “decision rights” within the hierarchy, allowing the organization to keep the integrity of its current structure intact.

Disposition: Be equipped to influence change.

Zaffron, S., & Unruh, G. (2018, July 10). Your Organization is a Network of Conversations. *Sloan Review*. Retrieved from https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/your-organization-is-a-network-of-conversations.

There are three fundamental conversational dimensions within the leadership context to consider for the enhancement of organizational performance. Those dimensions are leadership, managerial and individual. Leadership conversations tend to focus on the long-term vision of an organization, managerial conversations are centered on the short-term outlook of a business, and individual conversations are rooted in present day tasks and projects. In this article, we learn that all three conversational dimensions are essential to an organization's success, and when aligned, they can yield positive results.

With this insight and understanding, I have been giving some thought to how these three conversational dimensions can converge within my own organization. At the senior management level, I find myself right in the middle of the dimensions, allowing me to get clear guidance and direction related to the organizational vision from executives at the leadership level and communicate it down to a team of day-to-day executors at the individual level. With the alignment of long-term, short-term and present day conversations, the organization is in a better position to meet its goals—both, big and small.

Disposition: Iteratively develop inter-professional leadership competencies.

Carli, L. L., & Eagly, A. H. (2016). Women face a labyrinth: an examination of metaphors for women leaders. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *31*(8), pp. 514–527.

With the understanding that metaphors have the power to shape social perceptions and alter attitudes and behaviors, Carli and Eagly explore the various metaphors commonly associated with the challenges and hardships women often face in the workplace. Many people have heard of the "glass ceiling" metaphor, used to describe the resistance women meet in their pursuit of leadership positions. In this piece, we also examine the "sticky floor" metaphor, which characterizes obstacles that women encounter much earlier in their careers. However, we ultimately hone in on "the labyrinth," which suggests that advancement is difficult, but not impossible; finding the center (representing leadership) does require effort and careful navigation, but it can be achieved.

All three metaphors resonated with me, but upon taking a deeper look at "the labyrinth," I was able to draw parallels to my career, from start to present day. As a female who once worked in the male-dominant industry of sports early in my career, I frequently hit dead ends and experienced setbacks that my male counterparts did not. When I was unable to successfully navigate the labyrinth, I eventually charted my own path to leadership in a different industry. While I am still trying to make my way to the center, I am closer than before, and am able to better frame my challenges—and those of other women—by leveraging powerful metaphors that best contextualize the gender disparity and ultimately influence thoughts and behaviors.

Disposition: Utilize communication to embrace complexity and difference.

Riche, N. H., Hurter, C., Diakopoulos, N., & Carpendale, S. (2018). *Data-Driven Storytelling* (pp. 185–209). Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Data-driven storytelling can be described as a form of narrative that is supported by facts, statistics, research and other forms of analysis. The storyteller will often reference data to reinforce a thought or idea and/or get a point across to the audience. Data-driven dialogue may consist of a conversation in which an interlocutor is potentially looking to influence another individual to form a certain opinion or take a specific action, and is using data (i.e. statistics, research studies, etc.) to achieve that goal. Furthermore, as this particular passage of the book suggests, data-driven storytelling is about making complexity accessible.

At my work, employees started to complain about the elimination of plastic straws in the office, so we engaged in a data-driven dialogue with staff members, referencing numerical facts and data that suggested that the use of plastic straws is detrimental to the environment and is harming marine life. We also shared an infographic in our internal communication that outlined exactly how many straws pollute the planet each year and how many animals were dying annually as a result. This put what originally seemed like a silly matter of inconvenience into a greater context—but more importantly, in a very understandable context—so that employees resonated with the issue and were more inclined to support the straw-free initiative. This is data-driven storytelling and dialogue in action.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Muller, J. Z. (2018). *The tyranny of metrics* (pp. 137–156). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Metric fixation, the belief that data and metrics are the best and/or sole forms of measurement for performance, can be counterproductive for an organization because it does not take other important factors and variables into account, such as creativity, ideation, problem solving, relationship-building, leadership abilities, etc. Relying solely on metrics and rankings to measure success can be detrimental to a work environment and overall culture. To support this idea, Muller references a study that found that this approach resulted in lower productivity, inequity, skepticism, decreased employee engagement, reduced collaboration, damage to morale, and mistrust in leadership.

While I believe my organization does need to take more proactive steps to avoid the common pitfalls of metric fixation, I, as a manager, can at minimum commit to being more mindful of the full picture during the performance evaluation process with my reports. Data and metrics can still be a part of the process, but ideally, managers should take into consideration all the other ways in which an employee may have contributed to the organization's overall success.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Chiasson, T., & Gregory, D. (2014). *Data + Design: A simple introduction to preparing and visualizing information* (pp. 149–159). Seattle, WA: Infoactive.

Effective data visualization consists of emphasis, functionality and appropriateness. When presenting data, we should consider what information we would like to underscore, the type of format or layout that is going to frame that information most efficiently, and how to best support our target narrative and/or tell the story. Data visualization also helps get the point across to audiences more quickly and effectively. Furthermore, the way the data is presented to an audience can offer meaningful context around the most important aspects of a particular topic. I feel like this piece is all about helping put the data into perspective for the audience—and doing it in a way that is most likely to leave an impression and inspire or sway thoughts, opinions and actions.

Throughout most of my career, I have been telling stories mostly through the use of words. However, I am now giving more thought to how data and the visualization of it could augment those stories. For example, in telling the story about my organization's annual attendance and demographic figures, a well-executed visual might go a really long way in leaving a positive impression on our intended audiences (sponsors, donors, supporters, etc.). This notion proved to be valid upon presenting a visual design of the data at a recent meeting, which resulted in positive feedback and a favorable outcome.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Ware, C. (2008). *Visual thinking for design* (pp. 165–182). Amsterdam: Elsevier Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

When designing a visual piece, the creator should consider selecting words, patterns and symbols that are likely to be best processed by the intended audience. This means giving a great deal of thought to who the intended audience is, what type of information is most important to convey to them, and what is the best way to deliver the information in a way that is going to grab their attention, get key messages across, and ultimately, influence their thoughts and/or compel them to take meaningful action. This is true for all types of communication, but is especially paramount for information design.

When I recently created an infographic to relay key data and results from an organization-wide survey on my department's internal communications efforts, I designed the piece with the intended audience in mind. In this case, that audience was the internal staff. Based on the feedback that the employees provided in the survey, I knew exactly what pieces of information was most important to them, what changes they wanted to see, and how they preferred to receive communications from us. This information heavily influenced the design layout, text, icons and other elements of the visual piece.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Cairo, A. (2016). *The truthful art: Data, charts, and maps for communication* (pp. 299–328). Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

With the vast amount of information available at our fingertips these days, fact checking data and visualizations has grown increasingly important, both as designers and information consumers. Referencing the “garbage in, garbage out” metaphor, Cairo warns designers to be vigilant in checking the credibility and methodology of a data set to avoid acquiring poor data that will produce poor results. I always make it a point to try to find additional sources that confirm certain data—a practice I became accustomed to in journalism school and throughout my career. If other sources don't have that data available, it might be worth looking at the original raw data and the approach used to arrive at a particular conclusion. Cairo notes that it's also important for audiences to examine the context and framing of the narrative before taking the data at face value and accepting the implied conclusion.

While researching best practices for crisis management and communication, I checked multiple sources to ensure that the data I was using to create my infographic was the most accurate representation of best practices at the time of retrieval. To ensure my audience would have a fair opportunity to fact check that data, I also listed the websites I extracted the data from at the bottom of the infographic. Citing sources for the data presented within a visualization is not only a responsible practice as a communicator, but it also lends credibility to one’s work.

Learning Outcome: Critically analyze messages.

Rath, T. (2017). *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.

As Tom Roth states in *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, “the key to human development is building on who you already are.” However, in order for us to build on our strengths, we must first understand what they are. This book, along with the enclosed CliftonStrengths® assessment, serve as an extraordinary tool for uncovering our strengths, understanding the value they offer and learning how they can be best leveraged for personal and professional advancement.

My recent CliftonStrengths® assessment revealed the following as my top five strengths: Maximizer, Communication, Futuristic, Woo and Input. These strengths belong to Influencing and Strategic Thinking themes, which indicate that I tend to take charge, speak up and make sure others are heard, while also absorbing and analyzing information that informs better decisions. Upon further evaluation of each of my top strengths, I have a deeper understanding of the areas in which I shine and am able to now maximize those areas to the fullest. This book and my customized report also provided data and information that has helped me gain a better understanding of my blind spots, so that I can fill any gaps with people who may be stronger in the areas in which I am not (i.e. Those with strengths that are dominant in Executing and Relationship Building themes). These are particularly helpful insights to possess as a leader.

Disposition: Iteratively develop inter-professional leadership competencies.

Reichl, R. (2019). *Save me the plums: My gourmet memoir*. New York, NY: Random House.

The staff at *Gourmet* has made for a very interesting case study on how team cognition comes into play within a complex work environment. For as long as Ruth Reichl has been at the helms of the publication, it seems as though each property of team cognition—psychological safety, transactive memory systems and team mental models—has developed successfully within the team, enabling them to function well as a group throughout her tenure at the magazine.

In following Ruth's evolutionary journey as a leader, I became inspired to examine my own path to leadership and ability to lead my team to successfully execute by leveraging team cognition properties. As I guide my team though future tasks and projects, I continue to be mindful of creating a safe space in which members are free and comfortable to take risks, establishing a level of trust that allows us to understand who knows what and efficiently retrieve information from one another, and achieving a cadence in which we are able to coordinate behaviors without communicating. I think I have been able to accomplish this with my immediate department members, but look forward to applying this more broadly to help break down internal silos and move our organization toward operating more collaboratively and cohesively.

Learning Outcome: Address complex challenges by collaboratively leading teams across disciplines, distances, and sectors.

Catmull, E. (2008, September). How Pixar Fosters Collective Creativity. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2008/09/how-pixar-fosters-collective-creativity.

Ed Catmull, president of Pixar, believes that quality people and talent, combined with an environment that truly embraces a culture of community and a peer-driven process for problem solving is the recipe for creative success. He references Pixar's three operating principles, which include the freedom to communicate, a safe environment for sharing ideas, and maintaining a connection to the academic community. These principles ultimately foster a work environment that is conducive to creativity and a sense of community in which people use their collective strengths to innovate and create an original product.

Catmull's philosophy that "good people are more valuable than good ideas" is one that really resonated with me. I am a firm believer that once you have the right people and processes in place, creativity, ideation and innovation are sure to follow. I attribute many of my organization's successes to having a talented team that is able to operate in a safe ideation environment. It is the people and culture that have led to the most creative and unique ideas that have produced high publicity and revenue generating campaigns and events.

Learning Outcome: Address complex challenges by collaboratively leading teams across disciplines, distances, and sectors.

Battilana, J., & Casciaro, T. (2013, July/August). The Network Secrets of Great Change Agents. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2013/07/the-network-secrets-of-great-change-agents.

Successful change management is an art form—one that many leaders struggle to master. Battilana and Casciaro offer a roadmap to leveraging networks to exert influence, transform workplaces and achieve reform. Specifically, they reference two types of networks—bridging and cohesive—that lend unique opportunities to serve as change agents by first understanding our own roles within these networks and how we might be able to forge the right connections to trigger change.

While I believe I have both, a bridging and cohesive network, I would say that I have a predominantly cohesive network in which most people know one another because we work for the same organization. However, in certain scenarios, it may shift to a bridging network in which I become central due to the function of internal communications. As part of my role, all departments and division first share important updates and information with me, and then it is my job to disseminate it across the organization. Given the common knowledge of this practice, many of my coworkers tend to come to me for certain information when needed, even if they know the other members of the network. I believe that in this role, I do have a great opportunity to improve my abilities as a change agent. Because a lot of internal information is relayed to me first and I have strong ties to the executive leadership team (who are our key decision-makers or "influencers"), I have the ability to communicate issues and voice concerns that the leadership may not be aware of or have access to, creating a window of opportunity to influence meaningful change within the organization.

Disposition: Be equipped to influence change.

Eastwood, C. (Director). (2009). *Invictus* [Motion picture on Amazon Prime Video]. United States: Warner Brothers Pictures.

In this epic true story, we witness two leaders from vastly different backgrounds come together to help bridge a divided nation. South African President Nelson Mandela and Springboks Captain François Pienaar each leverage their unique position of power to influence radical change and ultimately, achieve what was once considered impossible: the 1995 Rugby World Cup championship and the reconciliation of "Rainbow Nation." As we hear Mandela recite the *Invictus* poem in the film, the words serve as a powerful and poignant reminder of the challenges encountered by many leaders and the understanding that with great power comes great responsibility. For Mandela and Pienaar, those responsibilities included an unwavering commitment to practicing what is preached and setting an example; having the strength, courage and conviction to make every concerted effort in bridging their respective teams; and using the work of others to inspire greatness.

In the end, and above all odds, both were able to successfully leverage that which was in their control, validating the notion that indeed, “I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.” This led me to challenge my most destructive thoughts as a budding leader that I am perhaps too insignificant or too powerless to make a true difference yet. However, Mandela and Pienaar show us that big changes start with small ones—and perhaps the most important one is to lead by example.

Disposition: Be equipped to influence change.

Ertel, D. (2019, November 27). Getting Past Yes: Negotiating as if Implementation Mattered. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2004/11/getting-past-yes-negotiating-as-if-implementation-mattered.

A successful negotiation entails more than getting to “yes” and closing the deal. In order to ensure that the deal has a strong chance of upholding and benefiting all involved parties, negotiators must move beyond the goal of simply getting participants to agree to the deal and give serious consideration to the execution and long-term success of the deal. In this article, Ertel explains the difference between deal-minded negotiators, who typically do whatever it takes to close the deal—regardless of future implications or consequences—and implementation-minded negotiators, who think about how to best approach the process so that all parties are best set up for success during execution.

The chart within this article, which maps out the assumptions and behaviors of deal-minded and implementation-minded negotiators, was especially helpful to me in framing my thoughts more strategically during future negotiations at work or in personal matters. As I often work to negotiate external agency contracts on behalf of my organization, I think approaching those negotiations with the mindset of defining shared interests and values upfront and engaging other impacted stakeholders throughout the decision-making process are great best practices to adopt to ensure the long-term success of the deal.

Learning Outcome: Address complex challenges by collaboratively leading teams across disciplines, distances, and sectors.

Bergin, T. (2010, June 2). BP CEO apologizes for "thoughtless" oil spill comment (F. Kerry, Ed.). *Reuters.* Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-oil-spill-bp-apology/bp-ceo-apologizes-for-thoughtless-oil-spill-comment-idUSTRE6515NQ20100602.

Words matter—especially in the time of a crisis. BP CEO Tony Hayward learned a painful lesson in the power of language when he callously stated, “I want my life back,” shortly after the company’s oil spill crisis, which led to the tragic death of 11 workers. Hayward is not the first executive to become a victim of thoughtless comments, and he certainly will not be the last.

However, we can all learn an important lesson on the value of words and adequate preparation in delivering thoughtful and elegant messages, especially during hypersensitive moments often associated with crises.

As the old adage goes, practice makes perfect. That is why I implement regular media trainings for myself and my team at Navy Pier. It has become a regular practice for us to think through intended messaging and write out speaking points to help us hone in on what we believe is important to relay to our audiences. We also try to give thought to what it is the audience needs to hear from us, especially in the event of a crisis, and how we might be able to offer comfort and express empathy through our words. This is often followed by mock interviews, which consist of curveball questions, so that our spokespeople are prepared for the worst-case scenarios and can potentially avoid making insensitive comments that may lead to the type of backlash experienced by BP.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Levy, M. (2010). *Accidental genius: Using writing to generate your best ideas, insights, and content* (pp. 13–44). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Levy insists that one of the best ways to inspire ideation and generate insightful content is through freewriting. In his book, Levy outlines six secrets to freewriting that can help individuals overcome their internal editor, whose job is to formulate polished thoughts and focus on the standard rules of grammar and spelling. Often times, that internal editor will limit our creative process and hold us back from producing our best work.

I put this concept to test as a way to help me combat writer's block. I tried each of the six freewriting methods. The technique I found to be most useful was "writing fast and continuously." As someone who tends to overthink while writing, the speed and continuity prevented me from overanalyzing my content. As a former journalist turned PR professional, I am also a stickler for grammar. While that typically bodes well for me when writing press releases or other forms of work-based communication, it may at times stifle my creativity. By writing fast and continuously, I was able to get produce authentic, unfiltered work, which revealed key insights around my subject matter that I probably would not have uncovered as easily if I spent so much time caught up in the nuances of writing and grammar.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Gallo, C. (2014). *Talk like TED: The 9 public-speaking secrets of the world's top minds* (pp. 41–107. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

There is great power in the art of storytelling. Those who are able to successfully master this art are able to plant ideas and emotions into listener's brains and inspire audiences to take meaningful action. In the pages of this book, Gallo uncovers secrets to mastering the art of storytelling, including how to reach people's hearts and minds by leveraging pathos and using body language to earn trust and credibility with an audience.

The excerpt about having a conversation particularly struck a chord with me because often times when I am presenting or serving as a public speaker, I get too caught up in the script or nuances of my message that I tend to forget to engage in a conversation with my audience. They are more likely to buy into what I am saying if I try to connect with them on a personal level than by simply talking at them and throwing meaningless jargon around. I look forward to using the tactics and techniques outlined in this book to further polish my public speaking and presentation skills.

Learning Outcome: Create and deliver elegant messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.

Pearce, T. (2013). *Leading out loud: Inspiring change through authentic communication* (pp. 3–25). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Authentic communicators tend to make the best leaders because they touch on their own personal values and communicate practical solutions from a place of greater substance and meaning. In this riveting passage, Pearce explains how leaders can inspire commitment in others through introspective examination and by communicating a more personal vision of the future based on personal knowledge of the past and realistic experience in the present. This means focusing on personal passion over pleasing others. Those who communicate and lead from their passion will be far more effective in exciting their followers than those who play into performing to others' standards.

I have found this to be true through my own personal experiences. Looking back at times when I've succumbed to the pressure of meeting other people's expectations or desires, I haven't been successful in getting my message across effectively. However, when I connect a message to my core values and communicate with authenticity and passion, I have been able to inspire meaningful change, such as influencing the DEI policies at my workplace as a result of relaying my thoughts, ideas and experiences as a woman of color, who is committed to creating equal opportunities for other women of color.

Disposition: Be equipped to influence change.
