

THE CONFERENCE BOARD



2026 Corporate Communications & Brand Summit

March 5 – 6, 2026
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at The Brooklyn Bridge
Brooklyn, NY

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Corporate Communications & Brand Summit

March 5 – 6, 2026

Brooklyn, NY

DAY ONE Thursday, March 5, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Registration and Networking Breakfast

8:30 am – 8:40 am

Welcome and Introductions

Ivan Pollard, Conference Chair and Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board

8:40 am – 9:00 am

Networking and Cross Pollination

We will kick off our event by meeting one another to share our top priorities and the biggest challenges we are tackling in 2026.

9:05 am – 9:35 am

Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It: The Communicator's Role in 2026

For corporate communicators, this is a time of massive change: technological, economic, political, demographic and more. How is the function changing in response, and what can we expect in 2026? In this conversation, we will discuss the changes, the challenges and opportunities ahead, and the strategies and tools needed to address them.

Damon Jones, Chief Communications Officer, Procter & Gamble

Moderator: **Ivan Pollard**, Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board

9:35 am – 10:05 am

From Underdog to AI Powerhouse: The Reinvention Blueprint of a Global Brand

How does a \$2 billion market cap company transform into a \$350 billion+ industry leader in a decade? And how does a once-overlooked brand evolve into one of the world's foremost AI innovators? In this session, Ruth Cotter shares AMD's transformation journey and the critical role of clear purpose, disciplined storytelling, and a modern communications strategy in reshaping the company's culture, brand, and market perception during a period of unprecedented technological change. As AI rewrites the rules across industries and communications, Ruth explores the connection between leadership, authenticity, and narrative, and how each underpins trust and sustainable growth.

Ruth Cotter, Senior Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer, **AMD**

10:05 am – 10:20 am

Time Machine: Brainstorming the Future

Attendees at each table will co-create and share two statements: first, a one-sentence assessment of the biggest changes they have seen in the communications function since 2022; and second, a prediction of the biggest changes in the communications function they expect to see by 2030.

10:20 am – 10:50 am

What the CEO Wants From You

The role of the Chief Communications Officer as a strategic business adviser continues to grow in importance, especially in the volatile environments we are currently experiencing. In this session, leaders will discuss how to establish and build on these relationships, and what fellow C-Suite members and the Board need to hear from communications leaders in 2026.

10:50 am – 11:10 am

Networking Break

11:10 am – 11:20 am

When Change Is Constant, Internal Communications Becomes Strategy

Throughout the event, we will be featuring new research from The Conference Board on key challenges and opportunities facing communicators today. In our first segment, we will look at research on the business impact of internal communications, and how to make change communications effective in a period of constant transformation.

Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Director, Marketing & Communications Research,
The Conference Board

11:20 am – 11:50 am

Creating a Cultural North Star: How to Internalize Your Brand's Biggest Promise

A brand re-launch is more than a marketing event—it's a chance to redefine culture. This fireside chat will explore how Colgate-Palmolive strategically transformed its external consumer promise, "Reimagine a Healthier Future for All," into an internal employee promise. We'll discuss how operationalizing the brand through pillars like wellness, inclusion, and purpose-driven work can unify, energize, and provide a clear cultural "North Star" for your entire workforce. Join us to learn how to move your brand from the billboard to the breakroom.

Dana Bolden, Chief Communications Officer, **Colgate-Palmolive**

Moderator: **Denise Dahlhoff, PhD**, Director, Marketing & Communications Research,
The Conference Board

11:50 am – 12:15 pm

How to Move with the Speed and Power of Social Media in 2026

Social media is one of the most potent channels to build your corporate narrative, to engage your stakeholders, and to shape your reputation. But it is also one of the hardest to manage. With the speed, scale, volume, and formats of the modern video-first social media platforms, how do you find real-time actionable insights that keep you always in the conversation and always on the narrative track?

Ofer Familier, CEO and co-Founder, **Dig**

Moderator: **Ivan Pollard**, Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board

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12:15 pm – 1:20 pm

Networking Lunch

1:20 pm – 1:50 pm Concurrent Session 1A

Communicating in the Places Where the Work Actually Happens

Communications leaders across sectors tackle how to reach those who are not spending their days in front of a screen: front-line workers, who may be in a factory, in the field, or in a storefront, and operating under time and customer pressures. How are communicators connecting with those who, in many cases, will represent the face of a company for its customers?

Kim Diehr, Senior Manager, Employee Engagement and Communications, **BorgWarner**

Kay Luna, Senior Communications Manager, Global Internal Communications,
John Deere

Lisa McCormick Lavery, Head of Internal Engagement, **CSL**

Moderator: **Jan Botz**, Program Director, Internal Communications Council,
The Conference Board

1:20 pm – 1:50 pm Concurrent Session 1B

Reputation as Schrödinger's Cat: How to Open the Box and Understand What You Find

Effective communication requires effective measurement. But what should be measured to best understand current beliefs, whether a message connected, and what if any change it sparked? What tools and procedures produce accurate, actionable metrics? In this conversation, communications leaders will share how they are measuring beliefs and message impact, and what tools are making a difference.

1:55 pm – 2:25 pm Concurrent Session 2A

Are People Still Needed? How We Are Using AI in Content Creation Today

We will explore using AI in content creation right now, discussing efficiency, factchecking, personalization, and risk mitigation. We will also hear from the audience about their experiences and answer questions.

Bill Walsh, SVP, Integrated Communications, **AARP**

Moderator: **Ivan Pollard**, Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board

1:55 pm – 2:25 pm Concurrent Session 2B

Case Study: Getting the Chemistry Right - Why Industry Reputation Still Matters and How To Move It

In this case study on the American Chemistry Council, we will explore the continuing importance of industry reputation, from local to national environments; the “surround sound” effect of ACC campaigns; the tools used to measure impact; and how to use this data in deciding when to pivot and when to stay the course in any communications or public affairs campaign.

Sarah Scruggs Brandt, Vice President, Communications & Public Affairs,
American Chemistry Council

2:25 pm – 2:45 pm

Networking Break

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

Speed Debates

What is your most controversial opinion on the future of communications? What are the best arguments for it, and against it? In this interactive exercise, we seek to open minds and create connections by asking attendees to debate with their neighbors several thorny propositions – and then switch sides after 60 seconds. Each topic will be revealed immediately before the debate.

3:00 pm – 3:35 pm

Prepare To Be Amazed: Are Your Crisis Communications Plans Ready for What's Ahead?

For the past several years we have described the environment as one of “unprecedented change” – and yet each year has beat the previous one in its levels of disruption. Have organizations' crisis communications plans kept up? External and internal comms and public affairs leaders discuss strategies for making crisis communication preparations more resilient and ready for the previously unimaginable.

Jason Alderman, Chief Communication Officer, **SmartNews**

Cheryl Fenelle Dixon, Former Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, **nobilia**

Amalia Stanton, Senior Vice President, Chief Strategic Communications & Marketing Officer, **Memorial Hermann Health System**

Moderator: **Elena French**, Program Director, Corporate Communications Strategy Council, **The Conference Board**

3:35 pm – 3:45 pm

How Does AI Decide What to Say About You?

Gain insights from The Conference Board's research on how AI is reshaping corporate reputation building and shifting the importance of key human skills.

Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Director, Marketing & Communications Research, **The Conference Board**

3:50 pm – 4:20 pm

Marketing the News: How The New York Times Still Prevails in the Days of Diminished Attention

For millions, *The New York Times* is a daily ritual that helps them tap into their life's passions, and is crucial to determining truth in an increasingly chaotic world. By 2025, The New York Times's subscriber base had increased to over 12 million subscribers, solidifying the success of its essential subscription strategy and digital transformation. As Chief Brand and Communications Officer of The New York Times Company and Publisher of Wirecutter, David Rubin joins us today to share insights on advancing this iconic brand, as *The New York Times* continues to navigate successfully through massive disruptions in technology, media, politics and more.

David Rubin, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, **The New York Times Company**

Moderator: **Ivan Pollard**, Center Leader, Marketing & Communications, **The Conference Board**

4:25 pm – 4:55 pm

How Wikipedia’s Openness Fights Misinformation and Disinformation

Let us take a moment to consider something we take for granted that is, in fact, astonishing: In January 2001, a site was launched with the utopian goal of creating “a world where every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge,” by way of a free encyclopedia edited entirely by volunteers—and anyone could volunteer. Wikipedia celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. It’s now the largest and arguably one of the most trusted reference works in the world. It is the backbone of information on the internet, used by search engines, voice assistants and generative AI tools to serve up instant information. Yet to continue its mission it must respond to global trends, from new technologies and information consumption habits to increased polarization and misinformation affecting the information ecosystem as a whole. In this talk and fireside chat with Anusha Alikhan, Chief Communications Officer of the Wikimedia Foundation, we will explore how Wikipedia continues to remain relevant and win trust—and what other organizations can learn from its experiences.

Anusha Alikhan, Chief Communications Officer, **Wikimedia Foundation**

Moderator: **Denise Dahlhoff**, PhD, Director, Marketing & Communications Research, **The Conference Board**

4:55 pm – 5:00 pm

Day One Recap and Day Two Preview

Ivan Pollard, Conference Chair and Center Leader, Marketing & Communications, **The Conference Board**

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Networking Reception

DAY TWO Friday, March 6, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Networking Breakfast and Registration

8:30 am – 8:40 am

Day Two Opening Remarks

Ivan Pollard, Conference Chair and Center Leader, Marketing & Communications, **The Conference Board**

8:40 am – 9:25 am

Networking Roundtables: Small Group Discussions

Meet new people and learn from their varied perspectives while discussing topics such as leveraging AI effectively; measuring reputation; crisis communication to polarized audiences; building community with dispersed workforces; and more.

9:30 am – 10:00 am

The 2026 World Cup: How Communicators Will Reach Their GOOOOAL!

This summer, an audience of billions will be following the biggest tournament in the world, the quadrennial FIFA World Cup, hosted this year primarily by the United States along with Canada and Mexico. How will the game's top communicators leverage this global stage to impart impressions that will remain with viewers long after the final goal?

Dan Courtemanche, Executive Vice President & Chief Communications Officer,
Major League Soccer

Moderator: **Ivan Pollard**, Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board

10:05 am – 10:15 am

How is the World Feeling This Year?

In our final research segment, we will share fresh insights from an international survey into which issues US adults—and their counterparts in other countries—believe will most shape their societies in the near future.

Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Director, Marketing & Communications Research,
The Conference Board

10:15 am – 10:45 am

Navigating Global Political, Economic, and Regulatory Volatility

In this session, Fluor Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Fay Hoosain will share insights and communication strategies in navigating global political and economic volatility, including when it comes to corporate and statutory reporting requirements that may be in conflict – and provide key takeaways on aligning communications with business interests.

Fay Hoosain, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, **Fluor**

10:45 am – 11:00 am

Networking Break

11:00 am – 11:30 am

United Airlines: The Power of Transparency in Turbulent Times

In our fireside chat with Josh Earnest, we will explore a career that includes serving as White House Press Secretary, NBC political analyst, and now United Airlines' Executive Vice President of Communications and Advertising. We will discuss the power of transparency inside and outside the organization, especially in times of disruption; United Airlines' integrated communications structure and strategy; and more.

Josh Earnest, Executive Vice President of Communications and Advertising,
United Airlines

Moderator: **Kate Bolduan**, Anchor, **CNN**

11:30 am – 11:55 am

Can a Good Deed Go Unpunished in 2026?

It can be challenging to offer a promising vision for the future in times of great disruption and distrust – which can make the messages that do so all the more valued. This conversation will explore how clear, purpose-led communications can build trust in polarized times; provide examples of narratives on innovation and social impact; and consider what it takes for a positive message to engage audiences, and even to spark hope.

Christina Chan, SVP, Corporate Affairs, **Regeneron**

Bill Walsh, SVP, Integrated Communications, **AARP**

Moderator: **Elena French**, Program Director, Corporate Communications Strategy Council,
The Conference Board

11:55 am – 12:25 pm

The Merger No One Announced: Marketing and Communications

What are the advantages or disadvantages of having the CCO and CMO roles in one person? How can teams and processes best be structured to integrate and maximize each function's impact? How will AI or other developments affect the size and budgets of future comms teams? In this conversation, top communications leaders share insights on structuring the comms function and its partnership with marketing.

Heather Graubard, Chief Communications Officer, **ServiceNow**

Kimberly Storin, Chief Marketing Officer, **Zoom**

Wendy Wahl, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, **Guardian Life**

Moderator: **Denise Dahlhoff, PhD**, Director, Marketing & Communications Research,
The Conference Board

12:25 pm – 12:30 pm

Concluding Remarks

Ivan Pollard, Conference Chair and Center Leader, Marketing & Communications,
The Conference Board