

THE CONFERENCE BOARD



2026 Corporate Communications & Brand Summit

March 5 – 6, 2026
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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**

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact aabidi@tcb.org

10:05 am – 10:15 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.

10:15 am – 10:30 am

A Legend Looks Forward

We are honored to welcome Sir Martin Sorrell, Founder and Executive Chairman of the digital advertising and marketing services company S4 Capital, and Founder and CEO of WPP for 33 years. Sir Martin will share his perspective on the questions attendees just considered: the biggest changes in communications in the last five years, and what he expects communications and media to look like in 2030.

Sir Martin Sorrell, Founder and Executive Chairman, **S4 Capital**

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

10:30 am – 10:50 am

Networking Break

10:50 am – 11:20 am

Communications at a Crossroads: Turning Rising Influence into Business Advantage

As volatility, fragmentation, and scrutiny intensify, communications has entered a higher stakes era. Decisions unfold in real time, and leaders increasingly rely on communicators for guidance on when to speak, when to hold back, and when to act. Yet a readiness gap threatens this rising influence. Zeno Group's Clarity 2030 research finds 72% of communications leaders expect greater impact across strategy, growth, and risk, but only 29% feel prepared. What does this crossroads demand? Greater judgement and decisive counsel under pressure, teams built for an AI world, and the ability to move from managers of the message to drivers of strategic growth. Join us as we assess how ready we are.

Jennifer Lowney, Global Head of Communications, **Citi**

Barby Siegel, Global Chief Executive Officer, **Zeno Group**

11:20 am – 11:55 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**, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, US, **The Conference Board**

12:00 pm – 1:15 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

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 2A

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**

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

Beyond the Message: How Corporate Affairs Became the Strategic Engine Behind a Major Business Transformation

Usually, a brand refresh results from a shift in business strategy—but sometimes, a reimagined brand becomes the catalyst for an entirely new strategy. Hear how a forward-thinking corporate affairs function didn't just refresh a masterbrand — it used that transformation to fundamentally rethink how America's largest healthcare education organization competes. By elevating corporate affairs to the center of strategic decision-making, one team turned an unknown house of brands into a unified competitive force, creating a tectonic shift in how the company is viewed in the market.

Megan Noel, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, **Covista**

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

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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 is AI Changing Reputation Building and the Teams Behind It?

Gain insights from The Conference Board's latest research on how AI is transforming reputation management and reshaping team structures, including evolving talent and skills needs, shifts in insourcing and outsourcing, and the integration of agentic AI. Be sure to visit The Conference Board membership table to get an exclusive copy of this report!

Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, US, **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, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, US, **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:

- **Measuring What Actually Shapes Reputation** Travis Day, Chief Revenue Officer, Public Relay & Darren Sleeper, SVP Strategic Partnerships, Public Relay
- **How to Respond When the Backlash Could Be Bots** Molly Dwyer, Director of Insights, PeakMetrics & Jessica Pratt, Director of Marketing & Communications, PeakMetrics
- **Reaching the Offline Workforce** Kay Luna, Senior Communications Manager, John Deere & Maril MacDonald, Founder and CEO, Gagen MacDonald
- **CEO and C-Suite Messaging** Jan Botz, Program Director, Internal Communications Council, The Conference Board & Hannah Seewald, Program Manager, Marketing and Communications Center, The Conference Board
- **Internal Comms and Transformation** Stef Tschida, CEO, Ripplea & Rita Meyerson, Principal Researcher, Human Capital, The Conference Board
- **Battling Misinformation** Jason Alderman, Chief Communication Officer, SmartNews & Tim Wood Powell, President, The Knowledge Agency
- **Avoiding Political Backlash** Dave Armon, Executive Vice Chairman, 3BL & Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, The Conference Board
- **How We're Using AI Now** Vivian Frouxides, Senior Director, Marketing & Communications Center, The Conference Board & Pia Garcia, President, Occula Group
- **Tracking Brand Health** Anusha Alikhan, Chief Communications Officer, Wikimedia Foundation & Jason McGrath, Executive Vice President, Ipsos
- **Crisis Communications** Cheryl Fenelle Dixon, Fmr Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, nobilia & Kim Wix, Executive Director, Corporate Communications, Daiichi Sankyo

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?

Marisabel Muñoz, Senior Vice President of Communications, **Major League Soccer & Soccer United Marketing**

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

10:05 am – 10:15 am

What the World Is Concerned About and What It Means for Communications

In our final research segment, we will share fresh insights from an international survey on which issues US adults and their counterparts in other countries believe will most impact their societies in the near future, and what it means for communications. Be sure to visit The Conference Board membership table to get an exclusive copy of this report!

Denise Dahlhoff, PhD, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, US,
The Conference Board

10:15 am – 10:45 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

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 – 12:05 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**, Head of Research, Marketing & Communications, US,
The Conference Board

12:05 pm – 12:10 pm

Concluding Remarks

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