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Government Communication Forum 2013 Final Report and Recommendations

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His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi

UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah



His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad bin Sultan Al Qasimi Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah





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Introduction

Under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, Sharjah Media Centre launched the inaugural edition of the Government Communication Forum (GCF) in 2012. A first-of-its-kind event, the forum aims to build a platform for better communication between governments and their stakeholders to support the government of Sharjah towards creating a participatory dialogue and to develop government communication mechanisms for the benefit of government institutions in the UAE and the region.

The event witnesses the convergence of local, regional and global media experts along with government thought leaders from all over the world in the emirate of Sharjah. GCF is set as an annual event to benchmark Sharjah's media and communications mandate against global best practices, and aims to bring the latest professional standards of various governments' communication methods to the emirate to develop a collaborative and participatory dialogue with opinion leaders, heads of government institutions, and other officials.

In addition to a series of panel discussions and workshops, the forum highlights Sharjah Media Centre and its role in developing and overseeing best practices in the field of media relations and communications for government institutions. Additionally, the annual forum, held under the generic theme "Every voice makes a difference", concludes its sessions with an accumulation of a myriad of media and communications related academic knowledge.

Government Communication Forum {GCF} 2013

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, the second edition of GCF was organised by Sharjah Media Centre. The event was held from February 24-25, 2013 at the Expo Centre Sharjah under the theme "Effective Communication.. Unified Message".

GCF 2013 highlighted the necessity to change the rules and methods of government communication. The event also underscored the need to demonstrate flexibility when communicating with people, given the turmoil witnessed by the world in general, and the Arab world in particular.

Among the most prominent guests that GCF 2013 hosted are Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey; Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations; Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, UAE's Minister of Foreign Trade; Amre Moussa, former Secretary-General of the Arab League; Andrew Young, politician and human rights activist; Jim Messina, campaign manager for US President Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign; Colleen Harris, former Press Secretary to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry; Gordon Johndroe, Deputy Assistant to former US President George W. Bush, deputy Press Secretary and a spokesman for the United States National Security Council; and Martin Luther King III, human rights advocate and community activist.

More than 40 local, regional, and international speakers and moderators shared their perspectives at the event, which focused on the need to elevate the concept of government communication from 'talking to the public' to 'communicating with the public'.

In addition to a series of panel discussions and workshops, GCF 2013 spotlit the great efforts exerted by Sharjah Media Centre for the purpose of developing government communication mechanisms and principles for the benefit of government institutions in Sharjah, the UAE, the wider Arab region and the public.

Attracting an elite group of senior government officials and media professionals from all over the world, GCF 2013 effectively highlighted the latest professional standards in government communication and provided a valuable platform for developing a collaborative and participatory dialogue.

GCF Structure

GCF Structure

Panel Discussions

GCF 2013 included a number of panel discussions that highlighted the necessity to elevate the concept of government communication from 'talking to the public' to 'communicating with the public' and the need to demonstrate flexibility when communicating with people.

Sessions on the first day revolved around the theme 'Have the rules of government communication changed?' examining the basic structure of typical government communication units across the world including approaches that are centred around: observation, listening, engagement, communication and connection.

Sessions on the second day of the Government Communication Forum focused on the best practices in government communication practised worldwide. The sessions sought to identify steps that contribute to building successful government communication units in terms of organisational structure, trained personnel, workflows, organisation and implementation strategy, and developing agendas for governmental events.

The Green Seat

The second Government Communication Forum instituted a 'Green Seat' that nominated one student per panel discussion to represent the Emirati youth and provide feedback or share perspectives at the conclusion of each session during the two-day event.

The 'Green Seat' initiative takes its root from Sharjah Media Centre's vision to engage UAE's youth, which represents the largest segment of the society in the emirates and enjoys the highest integration in government bodies across the country, in decision making processes. The implementation of the Green Seat helps identify trends among the country's youth and their opinions on discussed topics. It also allows policy-makers to use the indicators as reference points for exploring solutions that address community issues in the context of government communication.

Interview Sessions

Introduced in 2013, the interview sessions are regarded a crucial component of the Government Communication Forum. The one-on-one interviews seek to highlight the pioneering role of eminent personalities in politics and government communication in the Arab world and beyond.

Workshops

Two accompanying workshops aim at training participants on the practical skills that are required in daily work to achieve results and the overall vision of the organisation.

Headlined by communication experts from around the world, the workshops additionally spotlight the key elements that need to be incorporated in the structure of government communications and important factors that governments must consider when communicating with their people. The workshops also seek to identify the main cornerstones that contribute to the success of government communications worldwide, and in the Arab region in particular.

Speakers are primarily chosen for their extensive contribution to promoting communication among governments, as well as between governments and their people. During the interviews, speakers share their defining personal and professional perspectives, and highlight best practices in government communication to allow participants to gain from their experiences.



His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, inaugurated the second edition of the Government Communication Forum in the presence of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkish Prime Minister; His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah; Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations; Amre Moussa, former Secretary-General of the Arab League; Andrew Young, former US Ambassador to the United States and His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Centre.

The opening ceremony attracted some 2,000 registered participants, in addition to more than 500 eminent political and media personalities and 42 speakers from countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab, and foreign countries. Following the ceremony, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, attended the first interview session, which was introduced in 2013 for the purpose of discussing the best practices n government communication based on personal experiences.







Sharjah has undertaken the mission of constituting a real platform to promote dialogue between the governments and their people through sharing best practices in government communication and disseminate interest and benefit from the experiences of the entire world in the field of communication, so that the communication between its departments becomes more effective, leading to its address being more harmonious.

Let's share, communicate, discuss, learn and cooperate. The world today is in need of openness, discussion, communication and more importantly optimism. So, public satisfaction is not an easy task that can be achieved all of a sudden or with a click of a button, as we have no magic wand that can assure easing difficult tasks and change perceptions and concepts associated with the methods of dialogue and communication. In contrast, we have a strong will to disseminate the best practices in the sector of government communication, which has now become a necessity of which can be perceived in light of the changes that are taking place in all parts of the world.

I avail myself of this opportunity to initiate the first steps of sharing the best practices during the forum and briefly outline the experience of the Emirate of Sharjah in the development of government communication methods. We have put the task of upgrading the standards of government communication in the emirate of Sharjah to execution, driven by a clear vision that will contribute to raise the level of communication between all government departments and its multi-faction public, training human cadres in departments of Government Communication in the emirate of Sharjah to enhance and develop their performance using a style that keeps pace with the changes occurring in the world. Furthermore to invest in young human potentials and encourage engagement in government communication, as our choice is to provide a platform for the development of methods and channels of communication with the people, as we have no choice but to work and race against time to achieve the desired aspirations.

Recommendations

- The need for openness, discussion, communication and, most importantly, optimism is • increasing.

Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi

Chairman of Sharjah Media Centre

We have gathered today from different nationalities, cultures, languages and religions to share our visions and take earnest steps towards action and change, as well as to learn from the best practices in the field of government communication from around the world.

• Means of communication will not play their real role if they lack credibility.

• Interaction is needed to provide the information necessary for making strong decisions that represent a feature of democracy.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Prime Minister of Turkey

We are living in an era where communication changes the world radically. Obviously, as communication reshapes human relations, social life, economy and trade, it shapes politics and governments as well. Almost in every part of the world, politicians using communication tools accurately, efficiently and properly might be favoured in public votings.

As you know, Turkey consists of 81 separate provinces. In Turkey, the westernmost city is 2,050 km far away from the easternmost city. Both as the leader of a political party, and as the Prime Minister, I had opportunities to visit Turkey's 81 provinces many times. During the election campaigns, in 45 days we reached 70 provinces, and organised meetings in each and every province. Every time we went to a province, we were embraced by crowds exceeding squares' capacity, with great enthusiasm. Although we were using technology and communication tools intensively, language, namely speaking, had always been the primary communication tool for us. Here, I would like to specifically underline a very important point ... communication is not a matter of just tools, and even language, but it is an activity which is and should be performed by the heart.

Yes, any communication that does not involve the heart or sincerity would be lacking in essence. A word can only be considered communication if it travels from heart to heart, not only from ear to ear. The success of our Government lies in its inclusion of the heart and sincerity in all means of communication. In our conversations with people and nations, we have always spoken with the language of heart, mind and sincerity. Whichever means of communication we use, we have adopted telling the truth as a guiding and unravelling principle. Our understanding of communication is based on a fundamental principle: "Believers why are you talking about things you have not done? It is a grave sin for Allah to say things that you have not done..."

It is our responsibility to tell the truth, raise our voice against injustice and correct it. The fact that we are raising our voice over global problems is disturbing some. Nevertheless, when the children are losing their lives in Palestine, we are not turning a blind eye or going to be like those who are keeping silent. We will not keep silent when every day in Syria innocent babies, women and people are massively murdered. We are not going to keep quiet about Syria's ruthless dictator who condoned those powers occupying its own territory for decades yet massacring his own people without mercy. We will not keep silent in the face of hunger in Somalia, poverty in Myanmar, misery in Afghanistan and discord in Iraq. An eye that does not see Palestine, Gaza or Jerusalem in flames is blind. A tongue that does not speak out for Syria, the blood spilled in there is mute.

Any communication that does not take into account discrimination based on ethnicity, language, religion, race or sect, when dealing with poverty, deprivation or all forms of injustice in the world is incomplete. Any communication where the means of communication start mastering people, rather than people mastering them, is no communication at all. We have to save people from becoming slaves of those means of communication and make those gadgets the real servants of the people.

Recommendations

- and citizens closer
- •
- requirements

I hope that this Forum in Sharjah will be an important opportunity towards including the heart in communication. I also hope that God will ensure that a real communication between governments and their people, and between states, and between brothers and friends, be fully established. I would like to express my gratitude above all to H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi and to everyone and all participants of this Forum.

- For the Government Communication Forum to be a way of communicating and bringing governments
- Improve ways of government-public communication and focus on direct connection
- Adopt credibility, transparency and telling the truth in government-public communication
- Consider humanity in government-public communication and understand citizens' various needs and



Kofi Annan

The future needs to be built on three pillars: Peace and security, equitability and development, and the rule of law that upholds human rights.

communicating effectively.

Our interconnected world is constantly changing. Now is the time to seize new opportunities and face big challenges. Worryingly, the scale and complexity of these challenges, whether climate change, social conflicts, civil wars or terrorism, seem to have outgrown our political institutions or financial frameworks.

are necessary.

Citizens would like to see their leaders take a long-term view on things, to be included in the decision making process.

Citizens feel that they are excluded from decision-making and that political regimes are unaccountable and do not respond to their concerns. In recent years, these challenges have spawned the desire for radical change and popular movements around the world.

Recommendations

- the world is facing.

Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Effective communication, cooperation and trust are the key factors in tackling the changes the world is facing. Rarely have we seen times when the level of trust between the governments and citizens has been so low. And this is ironical, living as we are in a world that is so wired through myriad forms of devices and technology, where the desire for information is insatiable, we are still not

Political leaders have struggled to keep pace with the flow of problems and this has fuelled anger and frustration with the people who feel some leaders are reluctant to take difficult decisions that

• Effective communication, cooperation and trust are the key factors in tackling the changes

• Now is the time to seize new opportunities and face big challenges.

• Citizens would like to see their leaders take a long-term view on different subjects.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi

UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah

Sharjah is honoured to host a galaxy of decision-makers who use their conscience in taking decisions. We watched them and listened to what they said. They made us feel proud of the stances they adopted. I do not want to enumerate those stances, for you were well-acquainted with them during the past years. For a very long time, Sharjah has taught cultural communication. In late 1976, the Afro-Arab Symposium was held in Sharjah, resulting in numerous decisions, including cultural communication between African and Arab countries.

It was decided to establish a cultural centre for communication and I was honoured to be its honorary president. Over two years of research and communication with African institutions in all African countries to find a way of cultural communication, I came out with a conclusion that African countries rely, in their cultures, on the codes of conduct that distinguish groups in treaties and communication, which is known as Ethnography. When I intensified the communication, I found out that Western countries greatly impacted those African countries, as the Western colonialism was well established in them, and I was therefore compelled to look into communication with the West to be able to communicate with African countries.

Through studying the European or say the Western culture, I found that there is another way of culture which depends on innovations, heritage, cultural benefits, books, music, theatre and movies. Hence, I would not have had any communication tool here in Sharjah unless I had created those elements from the culture of my country. In April 1979, there was a meeting with a group of young people in Africa Hall, where I declared that it was time to put an end to the revolution of concrete in the country and replace it with a cultural revolution. I told the youth that I had a plan with which I would surprise everybody, namely Sharjah Cultural Project, which began at that time.

Communication with the West began. I bore in mind Gandhi's theorem: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." We, in turn, did not take everything that came from the West, but we added the extras we needed, initiating communication and Sharjah's cultural development.

1997 for the th We were happ believe we may that period, we which caused and the intern Metropolitan J its weight, to p speaker hailing That blow did with Western of folkloric dance of those cound dance with us greatest appro However, while the West, the s abolition of cu not based on die of starvati However, a gli that caused gl a sigh of relief culture with lo We brought co festivals, theat very lucky and

The UNESCO was in constant communication with us, watching our movement throughout those



years, and subsequently decided to adopt Sharjah as the cultural capital of the Arab world in the year 1997 for the third year after Egypt and Tunisia.

We were happy about that decision and the partnership and communication with the UNESCO. I believe we managed to establish part of that communication with the Arab world. Suddenly, during that period, we were subdued to painful blows, the first of which was the September 11, 2001 attack, which caused the clash of civilisations and terrorism to go beyond the walls of the United Nations and the international will, manifested in defamation, killings and colonisation. Participating in the Metropolitan Museum, Sharjah was at the same place, and the same time, of the attacks, with all of its weight, to prove that we did not hide or back off, but were present and heard the event-opening speaker hailing Sharjah in the opening speech.

That blow did not last for long as the offender's strength faded. We continued our communication with Western cities, held festivals in every European country and exhibited our tradition with creative folkloric dances. I watched that and was keen to personally participate in it. I saw the inhabitants of those countries wear our traditional costumes and women out there dress like our women and dance with us with their utmost feeling of love and fraternity. Such was our approach, one of the greatest approaches we have realised in the so-called communication.

However, while we were in that era, boasting the culture that enabled us to reach the ears and cities of the West, the second blow took place. This blow, which, in my culture, took the form of globalisation, abolition of culture and jumping the walls of UNESCO, left us puzzled. The abolition of culture was not based on empty decisions, but linked to trade and threats. You either abolish your culture or die of starvation. That meant the shattering of the tools I was using for cultural communication. However, a glimmer of hope emanated from France and the cultural exception speech was the blow that caused globalisation to stagger and be distanced by other countries. Consequently, we breathed a sigh of relief and helped the UNESCO, which then took over its position and responsibilities, furnish culture with love and brotherhood.

We brought culture to an era I called "the beautiful era", when we had all kinds of technical support, festivals, theatres, libraries, book fairs and schools from primary to secondary education. We were very lucky and proud of what we achieved. I met with a group of writers and reminded them of their responsibilities toward their homelands and countries, describing the writer who bears the causes of his nation and people as "the committed author".

Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

Topics

- Do governments keep pace with the needs and interests of the public?
- What is the role of intelligent media monitoring in providing accurate reports and analysis for ensuring a rapid response to urgent issues?
- What can governments do to listen effectively to the voice of the public and reach out to the broadest segment of people? What is the role of polls and social media in facilitating governments to listen consistently?
- What other tools and mechanisms can be used to listen more closely to the people?
- How do Arab leaders communicate with the public? Is their TV communication effective? (Methods and platforms of communication and engagement currently adopted by governments and leaders)
- What can governments do to participate and communicate more proficient with the public? How can it leverage the traditional methods of communication that offered positive outcomes?

In the midst of strategic changes taking place in the world today, effective communication between governments and their people has been proven to be crucial. Believing that it is important to communicate with the people is the first step in successful government communication. In addition to proactively identifying the needs and problems that bother people, understanding their concerns, and listening to them, it is essential to engage with them to communicate the government's points of view and reach a win-win situation for both sides.

The first session sought to identify the best communication strategies adopted by governments worldwide, and discussed the viability of applying these models in the Arab world. Aiming to identify ways to forecast future possibilities by observing everyday happenings in the street, the session highlighted effective tools to listen to the public and communicate with them extensively.

Session 1

Rawan Al Damen

Rawan Al Damen's works include a series of documentaries on Al Jazeera, including 'Pioneers' on Arab women leaders, 'Al Nakba' that received several Arab and international awards and has been translated into seven languages, 'Owners of the Land' on the Palestinians of 1948, 'The Bitter Peace', 'The Road to Jan 25' and 'Red Card to the President'. She is also the author of three books 'Palestinian Children in Old Days', 'History in the Memory of Children' and 'Our Schools in the Court of Justice'.

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Today, the focus is more on the message and the words used to convey it. The relationship between the government and the public is a partnership and misunderstandings are inevitable. For enhancing this relationship, it is crucial that communication is two-way where 65 per cent of the conversation stems from the public. Close attention must also be paid to non-verbal expressions and other external factors that drive public opinion. Officials must take proactive steps to overcome the challenge of inadequate exchange and build bridges with the public.

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Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

Producer and Director, Programmes Department, Al Jazeera

Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

Raed Bargawi

Editor-in-Chief, Al Khaleej Newspaper

Joining Al Khaleej in 1985, Raed Bargawi has held several high profile roles such as Deputy Managing Editor, Head of the Economic Section and Editor of the Business Section. In addition to leading editorial teams to preeminent regional and global conferences, Bargawi has delivered incisive sessions at thought-leadership events. A weekly columnist on economic issues, Barqawi's body of work includes specialised studies in the economic field.

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Experiences vary from region to region. In the UAE, for instance, for years, communication between the government and the public was done through councils or the Majlis, where people gathered and could raise issues directly with the rulers. Today, the birth of new tools such as social media has completely transformed the way we communicate. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, there are over three million Twitter users conveying their opinions every day. Governments cannot ignore these channels, they must embrace them and respond to the people's concerns, be it via social or traditional media.





Session 1

Gilbert Doumit

Holding over 20 years of experience in facilitating policy innovation, public management reforms, political development and participatory leadership, systems and communities, Gilbert Doumit assists ministries, parliaments and political parties in the Arab world on issues related to governance, media, education, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and administrative decentralisation. A renowned trainer with an experiential and dynamic approach, he has conducted workshops for more than 5,000 leaders and managers in over 10 countries in the last three years alone.

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Social media is interactive unlike traditional media such as newspapers. This allows individuals to react to certain pieces of information. News can be transmitted to thousands of other people along with one's own opinion. The message, therefore, becomes more personal and the sender can take ownership. With the increase in the usage of new tools of communications, the need to find that essential link between the public and the government has never been greater. It is important that governments focus on developing policies that make use of these tools while involving the public in their decisions. They must come up with new strategies that involve the people in drafting the constitution. 77



Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

Adviser and Director of Beyond Reform and Development

Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

Ghassan Hajjar

Managing Editor of Lebanese daily Al-Nahar

Ghassan Hajjar serves as managing editor of Al-Nahar daily newspaper since mid-2009. He additionally oversees the Al-Nahar Training and Research Centre. A professor of media in the Faculty of Advertising and Media at the Antonin University, and the Faculty of Information and Documentation at the Lebanese University, Hajjar previously worked as secretary-editor of news and political programmes at Al Jadeed TV.

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Governments represent the people and it is their duty to convey the complete and correct message. They cannot afford to withhold information, however bad the news may be. It is the responsibility of the governments to be whiter than white; only then will the bar of transparency be raised.





Session 1

Moderator | Nima Abu Warda Broadcast journalist at BBC World

Abu Wardeh is a bilingual broadcast journalist specialising in Arab issues. She presents BBC World's weekly business and finance programs, Middle East Business Report (MEBR) and was part of the team that set up the programme. Earlier, she was a regular guest on BBC Radio 4's Four Corners addressing Arab matters, and BBC World's Dateline London as a regional expert. She has also reported, produced and presented programmes for Al Jazeera and Dubai's Business Channel.

Recommendations

- constitution.



Government and People: Perspectives for Mutual Engagement

• Officials must take proactive steps to overcome the challenge of inadequate exchange and build bridges with the public.

• Governments are required to embrace new communication tools and respond to people's concerns, be it via social or traditional media.

• Governments must come up with new strategies that involve the public in drafting the

Live Interview – Amre Moussa and Andrew Young

The first interview session was attended by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey; and Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah. During the session, which was moderated by Najwa Qassem, presenter on Al Arabiya Channel; Amre Moussa, Former Secretary-General of the Arab League; and Andrew Young, politician and human rights activist, outlined their personal and professional experiences.

Also attending the interview session were Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, a host of senior politicians, journalists and intellectuals from all over the world and directors of government entities in the UAE and the region, as well as communication and media professionals and students.

Session 2

Amre Moussa Former Secretary-General of the Arab League

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A lack of adequate, effective communication between the government and the people in the Arab world is just one of the many reasons behind the revolutionary changes in the region. Gone are the days when governments were able to monopolise communications channels. We have witnessed a watershed moment in the Arab world, and while the momentum for change may be slow, it will never stop. Countries in the region may progress at different speeds, but orientation is the same: the abolishment of dictatorship and despotism. Hence, leaders must wake up and respond to the significance of communication in the 21st century, while we remain aware to sensitivities of culture and heritage. "





Live Interview – Amre Moussa and Andrew Young

Live Interview – Amre Moussa and Andrew Young

Andrew Young

Former US Ambassador to the United Nations and Human Rights Activist

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While society is keen to see reform, it must also be remembered that rarely can solutions emerge immediately. It is important to maintain reasonable expectations and understand that nothing worthwhile can be achieved by violence. Rather, we need to hear clear voices of reason that point the way through transformation. One important aspect is to build the economy, since unemployment is the heart of many social ills. And for employment to occur, we need to foster a business environment and entrepreneurship, which can only take root when conditions are stable.

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Session 2

Moderator | Najwa Qassem Media person at Al Arabiya TV

Najwa Qassem is the host and co-producer of 'The Weekend', a popular two-hour show that has enjoyed a six-year run wrapping up major events of the week. She additionally anchors the daily 'Hadath Al Youm' that simultaneously airs on Al Arabiya and Al Arabiya Al Hadath.

Recommendations





Live Interview – Amre Moussa and Andrew Young

• Communication has become easier and non-traditional and governments are required to use modern technology in communication.

• Communication is done by respecting the prevailing values and the power of the masses.

Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

Topics

- What can governments do to instil and promote a culture of proactive communication?
- Do government bodies, institutions and ministries have sufficient strategic communication programmes?
- What are the most important strategies that could be adopted by governments to ensure internal harmony and provide a unified government agenda and message?
- · What are the tools that can be adopted to ensure effective communication between various government departments?
- How can the unified communication message and agenda of the government be supported through government communication networks?

The third session of the GCF's first day saw major debates where participants gave valuable insights into the strategies and tools necessary to achieve effective communication within government entities.

The session defined strategies that depend on proactive communication and used international expertise to determine the best ways to achieve effective communication between government entities. Additionally, it identified problems facing Arab government authorities in terms of strategic planning.

Session 3

Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

HE Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi is the first woman in the UAE to hold a ministerial position upon appointing her as Minister of Economy in November 2004. She held a number of positions, including Dubai Branch Manager of General Authority of Specialised Information; Senior Manager of Information technology Management at Dubai Ports Authority; Head of the Executive Team at Dubai e-Government, the person in charge of implementing initiatives of Dubai e-Government in the public sector.

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With the number of channels for communication available today, governments cannot afford to be complacent. Officials have to be straightforward and sincere in delivery. These tools help serve their communication targets effectively. It is for the government to ensure that the community is able to convey its problems. And, it is the role of the government to remain aware of these social changes and new tools, adopt a proactive approach and seek to resolve the people's concerns. 77



HE Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi UAE Minister of Foreign Trade

Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

HE Maha Al Khatib

Former Jordanian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities and former member of the House of the Senate

Maha Al Khatib is a leading expert in organisational restructuring, public policies and strategic planning with 30 years of experience in the public, private, and civic sectors. Jordan's former minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Khatib has served as a member of the Senate. Earlier, she was Director General of the Jordan River Foundation and adviser to Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. Her former capacities have included the roles of Director for Jordan's Public Sector Reform Programme and National Programme Director for the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

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When it comes to communicating with the public, if officials do not have a crystal clear message that reflects the vision of the government and the role of the citizen, communication becomes futile. The truth is that we live in a society where the public is not actively involved in decision making. As a result, there is a lack of awareness and confidence in the government. Citizens do not trust the message because they do not understand what is being done in their favour. There is an urgent need to stimulate the role of the citizen and build a relationship with them. 77



Session 3

Gordon Johndroe Former spokesman for the United States National Security Council and former White House deputy press secretary

Gordon Johndroe is a Vice President in APCO Worldwide's Washington, D.C. office, focusing on corporate communications, media relations and government affairs. Johndroe most recently served as spokesman for the National Security Council (NSC) and White House Deputy Press Secretary, where he provided strategic communication advice, coordinated interagency public affairs and was responsible for communicating the position of the U.S. government on national security issues.

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Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

Coordination between governments and making sure all ministries and government officials are working under a coordinated policy is crucial. It is impossible to have a unified message if the government itself is not unified.

Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

Noora Al Kaabi

CEO of Twofour54

Noora Al Kaabi is the Chief Executive Officer of twofour54 (Abu Dhabi Media Zone Authority), an Abu Dhabi Government initiative aimed at developing sustainable local media and creative industries for the UAE and wider region. Al Kaabi is also a member of the Federal National Council (FNC) of the UAE and sits on the board of Abu Dhabi Media Company, Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, ImageNation and the Abu Dhabi Sports Council.

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Once the basics of public communication are established and understood, it will be easier for governments to take a leading role in communicating with the public. Realising the importance of public opinion, governments have now started operating through new media channels. It is imperative for government departments to stay on top of new tools used by the people to communicate; this will ensure they remain connected and avoid lagging behind. 77



Moderator |Turki Al Dakhil

Turki Abdullah Al-Dakhil is a senior Saudi journalist and broadcaster. He studied at the University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud, Faculty of Theology. He was born in Riyadh in 1973. Al-Dakhil's journalism career began in 1989, first as an amateur then as a professional. He worked for numerous national and international newspapers, most recently for the much respected Al-Hayat newspaper.

Recommendations

- role of the citizen.
- to communicate.





Government Communication Network: Effective Communication Towards Unified Speech

Anchor of Al-Arabiya Interview Programme "Edaat"

• Officials have to be straightforward and sincere in delivery.

• There is an urgent need to stimulate the role of the citizens and build a relationship with them. • Officials must have a crystal clear message that reflects the vision of the government and the

• It is impossible to have a unified message if the government itself is not unified. • It is imperative for government departments to stay on top of new tools used by the people



Communication in Election Campaigns - International Case Study

The session focused on the rapid development of information technology across the world. It also concentrated on the revolution brought about by the methods of government-public communication and the extent to which these methods are accepted by the public in general and youth in particular. Highlighting communication principles for electoral campaigns, the session analysed the electoral campaign of US President Barack Obama in 2012. It scrutinised the backstage preparations and dynamics involved in electoral campaigns. It also looked into communication strategies and innovative ways of using communication that played a pivotal role in Obama's re-election for his second term. Additionally, the session examined the key role of t media in influencing or shaping public opinion.



Jim Messina

The mastermind behind President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign, Jim Messina, with the guidance of technology's foremost leaders, abandoned every step of a traditional presidential campaign and merged technology and politics in a way that was both unpredictable and unprecedented. He served as Deputy Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2011, where he was integral to the passage of the landmark health care and economic stimulus bills.

" 77





Communication in Election Campaigns - International Case Study

Campaign Manager for Obama's 2012 Re-election Campaign

Technology has completely revolutionised the way people communicate; hence, government communications need to reflect prevailing trends. The basics for government communications are clarity in messaging, speed in communicating it, and making sure it gets delivered where the people are. You will find that social media is able to deliver on all three criteria.

Communication in Election Campaigns - International Case Study

Colleen Harris

Former Press Secretary to Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry

Colleen Harris held senior communication positions with both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister before being appointed Communications Secretary to HRH the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry. She handled media relations for the Prince of Wales during some of the Royal Family's most high profile and sensitive years and was responsible for the strategy to 'introduce' Princes William and Harry to the public.

"

Leaders need to be clear on their vision and strategy, because then their messages will be easily understood by their audiences, reinforcing public trust and confidence. On the other hand, it is important to remember that vision and strategy often relate to the longer term, which takes time to achieve. This needs to be understood, because today's world often calls for quick answers, sometimes at the cost of long-term interests. A balanced approach – one that satisfies the demands of both short and long terms – will ensure that disappointment and bigger problems are kept at bay.

"



Session 4

Communication in Election Campaigns - International Case Study

Moderator

Randa Habib has spent more than 25 years as a war correspondent and a prolific journalist covering political and economic developments in the MENA region. Currently the director of AFP Foundation for the MENA region, she earlier headed the AFP office in Amman, Jordan, and covered developments in Iraq and other politically volatile zones. Her work saw her meet and interview the ruling families and prominent leaders in the region.

Recommendations

- Government communications need to reflect prevailing trends.
- The basics for government communications are clarity in messaging, speed in communicating it, and making sure it gets delivered where the people are.



Moderator | Randa Habib

Director, Agence France Presse (AFP) Foundation in the Middle East and North Africa

Day 2 - Opening Speech



Osama Samra

those elements together.

We have worked hard to ensure the Sharjah Government Communication Forum operates with a clear direction, and during the course of a year we have transformed it into a progressive platform that addresses the complex issues at the heart of public dialogue. It brings together prime ministers, secretary-generals, Sheikhs, heads of state, government officials, decision-makers, thought leaders, media and communication experts from across the world to discuss, share and form ideas.

A commitment to finding solutions to critical issues through discussion and interaction at all levels is the mandate of this forum. In continuation of our endeavour to promote the importance of good government communication, we will honour innovators in this field at the inaugural Sharjah Government Communication Award in September.

Let us share the insight we gained yesterday, with the aim of achieving more today. The goal of effective, open communication between a government and its people relies on your commitment to this process.

Recommendations

Director of Sharjah Media Centre

Yesterday, we met in this room, to identify new ideas to help us achieve further progress in improving methods of communication between governments and their public.

We recognised that we share the same experiences, we have areas of common interest and we share a vision for the future of effective government communication. It is the aim of this event to bring

Today, we highlight new issues that will help stimulate our collective sense of observation and our ability to listen, interact and initiate conversations that allow us to develop effective communication strategies. As one of the fortunate few who had the pleasure of operating behind the scenes to bring this forum to life, I have been overwhelmed by the depth of dialogue, the willingness to explore and the ideas and visions that have brought this event to life.

Designed to stimulate creativity, honour achievements and encourage professionals in regional government communications, this award further strengthens our pledge to support best practice.

We embark on day two of this forum, armed with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, to make steady progress in the field of government communication.

• Adopt the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, in activating the language of common dialogue between officials and members of the community

• Solidify the link between the media and public sector to achieve objectives that serve the interests of members of the community

• Stimulate creativity, disseminate best practices and support anything that would improve the mechanisms of government communication

Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Topics

- What are the different models of government communication structures used today? (Demonstration of different communication structures, what worked, what did not work)
- What are the resources required to sustain effective communication?
- How are governments communicating in the absence of trained personnel?
- How can international best practices be adapted to local government communication environment?

The session sought to examine the existence of an ideal government communication structure and identify ways to replicate this model. Additionally, the session looked to conclude if governments can develop special models for their government communication units to achieve their objectives of communicating with the public. In addition to identifying Arab governments that originally have strategic and effective government communication units, the session aimed to determine if governments that lack such structures would succeed in transitioning towards the effective government communication models.

Session 1

Ziyad Baroud

Ziad Baroud is a legal adviser to several United Nations agencies located in Lebanon. In addition to serving as a member of the committee responsible for updating laws in the Ministry of Justice, Baroud is President of Special Commission for administrative decentralisation in the country. He was invited by the French Foreign Ministry to participate in the meetings of the Lebanese dialogue in France. Baroud also observed the municipal elections in 2004 and the parliamentary elections in 2005, leading a group of 1,350 observers. A lecturer at the University of Saint Joseph, Baroud has authored legal publications, articles and lectures.

"

The lack of a solid structure as well as limited, sustainable and systematic processes have resulted in the difficulty to institutionalise communications within Arab governments. It is important to take into consideration that each government department is different and there is a need to customise responses according to public demand to effectively meet their needs. This stability can be achieved only through a political decision. "



Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Lawyer and Lebanon's former Minister of Interior and Municipalities

Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Jihad Al Khazen

Writer and Journalist at Al Hayat Newspaper

Jihad Al Khazen has served as the editor of leading news publications including Reuters and Daily Star in Beirut, Lebanon and the Arab News in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The first editor-in-chief of Asharq Al Awsat newspaper in London, he held the same position at the Al Hayat newspaper for more than 10 years. He has also authored a large body of work, which includes his latest book 'The Neo-Conservatives and Christian Zionists'.

"

In many countries, governments tend to make promises that exceed their capacity. Governments, as a must, ought to meet the minimum requirement of credibility. Moreover, media channels must be able to portray all sides of the government, not just the positives. Transparency is critical, and, in my opinion, this is not an impossible feat.

"



Session 1

Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Ali Jaber

Ali M. Jaber concurrently serves on the board of Young Arab Leaders (YAL) and the American University of Beirut, School of Architecture and Design, in Beirut, Lebanon. Earlier, he was mandated to set up the Mohammed bin Rashid School of Communication (MBRSC). Previously, he was tasked to lead Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI) and re-launch the group's four national pan-Arab satellite channels. He eventually took over as DMI's Managing Editor. He is currently holding the position as the Group TV Director of MBC, the Arab world's largest satellite broadcaster.

"

Unfortunately, the media in this part of the world is very cautious - and caution is the very restriction in open communication. The change needs to come from the top. The nation needs to have one effective body that is oriented by the genuine wish of the Ruler or Government to understand what the people want. An analysis of the general public sentiment, which can now be assessed through new media tools in real-time, will enable governments to design their message to be more coordinated, consistent and unified. 77



Dean of the Mohammed bin Rashid School of Communications at the AUD and group TV director at MBC

Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Octavia Nasr

Former Executive Producer of CNN World Report and Former Anchor of CNN International's World News

Octavia Nasr is the founder of Bridges Media Consulting; a firm that helps brands, businesses, NGO's, government entities and media organisations synchronise traditional and digital strategies. Based in the USA, Bridges Media Consulting specialises in global and local newsroom management, reporter/ anchor training and social media integration.

"

Governments need to find a way to reach out to the public as an authority that is genuinely interested in resolving problems. When media channels are obligated to paint a positive picture and convey only certain facts, for instance, an opinion is being forced onto the public. Clearly, there is a gap between the government and its people that needs to be bridged. Perhaps the first steps in the right direction is discussing the issues through forums such as these and arriving at sustainable solutions to break that barrier.

77



Session 1

Recommendations

- needs.
- Media channels must be able to portray all sides of the government, not just the positives. • Caution is the very restriction in open communication.



Communication in Arab Governments: Between Real World Challenges and Promising Structure

Moderator | Zeina Al Yazeji

Media person at Dubai TV and Presenter of the Arab Street Show

Zeina Yazji's career includes tenures for renowned regional and international media organisations such as Reuters, Associated Press and CNBC, as well as Al Arabiya TV, with her news show attracting the highest TRPs among the channel's portfolio. She interviewed senior international figures including the late Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority; Laura Bush, former First Lady of the US; Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, as well as key Arab and foreign political leaders and decision makers.

• It is necessary to customise responses according to public demand to effectively meet their

- Governments ought to meet the minimum requirement of credibility.
- Governments need to find a way to reach out to the public as an authority that is genuinely interested in resolving problems.

Session 2 Live Interview – Martin Luther King III

As one of its activities for the second day, GCF 2013 conducted an interview session with the human rights advocate and community activist Martin Luther King III. The session aimed to identify the best practices in government communication based on King's personal experience, and to highlight his most important personal and professional achievements.

Moderated by Mona El-Shatheli, presenter at MBC Egypt channel, the session lasted for 45 minutes and was followed by interactive questions with the audience, which included government representatives, media professionals and university students.



Session 2

Live Interview – Martin Luther King III

Live Interview – Martin Luther King III

Martin Luther King III

Human Rights Advocate and Community Activist

A human rights advocate, community activist and political leader, Martin Luther King III has been actively involved in driving policy initiatives to maintain the fair and equitable treatment of all citizens, at home and abroad. As a commemorative of the 44th anniversary of the assassination of his father, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, he launched the April 4th Revisited: 'Saving Lives, Building Dreams' initiative in 2012, in collaboration with the CDC-funded Prevention Institute as a call-to-action to build peaceful communities. In conjunction with Ambassador Andrew Young and other partners, King co-founded Bounce TV - the first-ever independently owned and operated television network featuring African-Americans. Bounce TV targets viewers who do not have cable television in major cities across the US.

"

Pain is the same anywhere in the world, and oppression, humanitarian oppression, is not linked to any particular place. But how can we overcome the pain and oppression to make a difference to the world? A good leader, no matter which religious group, business institution, civil or political party he belongs to, should use effective communication to learn about his people. Communication using all methods had brought changes achieved by the young generation in Egypt without being led by leaders. I'm so much impressed with the Egyptian revolution, though I believe that in any revolution there should be two parts, one for communication and dialogue with the government and the other part for protesting non-violently. No problem or dispute would be resolved without effective dialogue and effective communication.





Session 2

Moderator | Mona El-Shatheli Presenter at MBC Egypt

Mona El-Shatheli is an Egyptian television hostess most famously known for her work on the show 'Al Ashira Masa'an', which aired on Dream TV. She has recently transferred to MBC Egypt to present the TV show 'Gomla Mofeedah'. Earlier, she worked as a TV reporter for the Arab Radio and Television (ART) channel.

Recommendations

- A good leader should use effective communication to learn about his people. • In any revolution, there should be two parts, one for communication with the government



Live Interview – Martin Luther King III

- and another for protesting non-violently.
- No problem or dispute would be resolved without effective dialogue.

Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

Topics

- What drives government communication agendas?
- What are the main points that should be taken into account when communicating with all government departments?
- · How can we maintain strategic thinking, planning and implementation of government activities?

The session stressed on the importance of matching each step of the strategy with the overall strategy of government communication, making it more than just an action plan ready to be implemented. According to the experts, both tactics and preparations pave the way for implementation.

During the session, the speakers focused on the importance of defining and uniting government communication steps and mechanisms in addition to building new strategic agendas that pave the way for connecting government communication units.

Session 3

Dr. Abdullah Jawdat Rizkallah is the founding member and CEO of Al Risalah Satellite Channel responsible for leading the development and implementation of the channel's strategic plans. He has also played a key role in establishing the Doha-based Al Noor Holding Group, which invests in the film and television industry, leading to his appointment as the group's Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

" "



Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

Dr. Abdullah Jawdat Rizkallah

Founding Member and CEO of Al Risalah Satellite Channel

The process of building a communication plan and strategy will be useless if it does not realise its objective of creating an impact. Therefore, careful attention must be paid to ensure that all government stakeholders are taken into consideration, strategies are elaborated on and the messages are in harmony with the overall vision of the nation.

Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

Maryam bin Fahad

Executive Director of Dubai Press Club (DPC)

Maryam bin Fahad has been Executive Director of Dubai Press Club since 2005, responsible for driving the organisation as a vital networking forum for regional and international media. She is also serving as President of the International Association of Press Clubs (IAPC). Maryam is reputed as one of the most active young media leaders in the UAE through delivering two high visibility projects year after year - the Arab Media Forum and the Arab Journalism Award. Her responsibilities additionally include the supervision of the development of the Arab Media Outlook report - a comprehensive resource on the media landscape in the Arab world.

"

In addition to having a crystal clear vision and messages that reflect reality, it is important to nurture teamwork and professionalism within government departments. However, it is more important to endorse best practices and embed a culture within the organisation than striving to be in the limelight.

"



13-23-01-16 دصـه لـوتاه HESSA LOOTAH

Session 3

Dr. Hessa Lootah

Dr. Hessa Lootah served as head of department of Mass Communications at the UAE University. She also held positions in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, in addition to sitting on the board of the UAE National Media Council and Arab Journalism Award 2010. She teaches a mix of courses including communication research methods.

" Even in our daily lives there needs to be some basis for communication. This is particularly true within government departments; therefore, having a clear idea of the message and an understanding of the tools available to convey the message is crucial. Developing a solid strategy is important for achieving set goals, particularly for governments whose main targets revolve around the building of a nation.

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Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

Associate Professor at UAE University



Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

Zaven Kouyoumdjian

Media Person at Future TV

Zaven Kouyoumdjian is the presenter and producer of the TV show 'A'al Akeed' (Definitely) on Future TV, which combines reality TV and investigative journalism. The show won Kouyoumdjian the Gold Shield Award from the Arab Organisation for Social Responsibility. Kouyoumdjian shot to fame in the Arab world with his TV show 'Sire Wenfatahit', which laid the foundations for addressing social issues through television in the region. He has also contributed to bridging the gap between TV and social media.

"

I find the concept of segmentation very interesting. In advertising, for instance, they call it segment marketing where companies carry out extensive surveys to identify their stakeholders. On this basis, they target those segments that would find their product most useful. Similarly, a comprehensive communications plan should not be limited to certain groups. Dividing the audience into segments to understand individual needs will enable governments to achieve a broader reach.





Session 3

Moderator | George Kordahi Media Person and TV Presenter

George Kordahi received a bachelor's degree in law and political science from the University of Lebanon, but embarked upon a career in journalism and media with the Lebanon state television. Subsequently, he became a journalist at 'Lisan Al Hal' newspaper. In 1979, he joined the Monte Carlo radio station in Paris. This helped him achieve significant popularity that continued till the year 1992, when he became the assistant chief editor of the station. Later, Kordahi became the Editor-In-Chief of 'El Sharg' radio in Paris. The determining move in his life came when he was invited to present the Arabic version of 'Who Wants To Be a Millionaire' on the TV channel MBC1.

Recommendations



Strategic Communication is More Than a Work Plan

• Building a communication plan and strategy will not be of use if it does not create an impact. • It is important to nurture teamwork and professionalism within government departments. • It is crucial to have a clear idea of the message and the tools available to convey it. • A comprehensive communications plan should not be limited to certain groups. • Dividing the audience into segments will enable governments to achieve a broader reach.

Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

The session discussed the mechanisms of communication in Arab governments and highlighted the Government Communication Unit (GCU) in Sharjah as an innovative effort established with a mandate to improve communication between the government and its stakeholders. In addition to walking through the stages of setting up the GCU in Sharjah, the session threw light on the role and functions of the unit in relation to the people of Sharjah.

Session 4

HE Marwan Jassim Al Serkal possesses a sharp understanding of the market and an in-depth insight into the functioning of economies and international legalities and legislation. He is also considered one of the key leaders in Sharjah's growth by virtue of his position as CEO of Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq), CEO of Al Qasba Development Authority, and a former Board Member of the Sharjah Tourism and Development Authority.

" "





Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

HE Marwan Jassim Al Serkal

CEO of Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq)

Journalists are concerned with some basic needs: ease of access to correct information in a timely manner, transparency and quality of the content. The functions of a body similar to the GCU would serve towards such needs, bridging the gap between the requirements of our government and those of journalists. One of the key imperatives is to is to be respectful to journalists, allowing them to ask questions and interacting with them through social media.
Session 4

Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

Sami Al Reyami

Editor-In-Chief of the daily Emarat Al Youm

Sami Al Reyami is Editor-In-Chief of the daily newspaper Emarat Al Youm. He is also the Vice-President of the UAE Journalists Association. A prominent Emirati journalist, he was earlier the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al Bayan newspaper. Commanding a large readership for his focus on social and domestic affairs, Al Reyami has authored two books 'Oyoun Al Kalam' (Words can See) and 'Ka'enat fe Hekayat' (Creatures in Tales).

"

It is important for the journalist to perceive the GCU as a facilitator rather than a barrier. Information and the right to know are a fundamental privilege of the people, rather than of the officials. People would like to see their own problems being discussed and addressed in the media.





Session 4

Ahmad Salem Bosamnoh

Ahmad Salem Bosamnoh is an Emirati media professional. He is a renowned personality in the different arenas of the media field. He joined Sharjah Radio in 1973 as a presenter and an editor, and was assigned in 1986 the mission of establishing Sharjah TV which he then became the manager of. Additionally, he assumed the office of General Manager at Al-Emarat Radio in Abu Dhabi. Bosamnoh was honoured by the League of Arab States as one of the pioneering Arabic media professionals. He became a member of Sharjah's Consultative Council in 2007. Currently, he is a member of the board of directors of Sharjah Media Corporation.

" "



Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

Board Member of Sharjah Media Corporation

Today, the media spectrum of Sharjah is diversifying and this in itself brings about multiple and varied needs. The case of government communications in Sharjah has been a process of insight accumulated through the decades, gathered from local and overseas experiences. The GCU is not a reaction to some event - rather, it is rooted in the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, who had the foresight to see that only the media has the power to catapult the Arab world into the realm of well-rounded progress. The GCU is built on the premise that it needs to serve the expectations of the Sharjah community, and not remain a mere propaganda machine."

Session 4

Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

Mamoun Sbeih

Managing Director of APCO Worldwide MENA

Mamoun Sbeih is specialised in C-suite and senior government advisory and crisis communications, as well as the development and execution of media relations and public relations training courses in both English and Arabic. He managed the launch of JiWin in 2006, which went on to become a leading communication consultancy in the region and was acquired by US-based APCO Worldwide in 2010.

"

We need to shift communications to the interactive mode, taking into account feedback whether positive or negative. Raising awareness is another task. The public deserves to know what the government is doing. The better such tools become, the better the outcomes of government actions.

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Session 4

UAE-national Hassan Yagoob Abdullah Al-Mansouri works as a presenter and programmer at Sharjah TV. He also co-hosts the popular radio programme 'Al Khat Al-Mubasher' (Direct Line), which is live broadcast on Sharjah Radio and TV. In addition, he serves as director of programmes at the Sharjah Holy Quran Radio.

Recommendations



Government Communication in Sharjah - Local Case Study

Moderator | Hassan Yaqoob

Media Person at Sharjah Media Corporation and Presenter of 'Al Khat Al Mubasher'

• Journalists are concerned with some basic needs: ease of access to correct information in a timely manner, transparency and quality of the content.

• It is important for the journalist to perceive the GCU as a facilitator rather than a barrier.

• The GCU needs to serve the expectations of the Sharjah community, and not remain a mere propaganda machine.

• We need to shift communications to an interactive mode.



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GCF 2013 hosted four workshops over the two-day event seeking to equip nearly 380 participants, including young professionals and communications students, with skills in public speaking, social media, government media relations and press conference management.

Public speaking: how to get your message across

Titled 'Public Speaking: how to get your message across', the first workshop highlighted the need for senior officials and spokespeople to present clear and powerful speeches. In the second workshop, titled 'Introduction to Social Media for Communications', participants examined the role of social media in government communications. Showcasing best international practices with local case studies, the workshop covered aspects such as introduction to social media, defining objectives and scope of campaigns, reputation management, monitoring and measurement, and optimisation. The workshop offered insight into how best to leverage social media for shaping public opinion on government initiatives, while enhancing reputation and credibility.



Workshops

Relationship between governmental institutions and the media

The second day of GCF 2013 offered a workshop on the 'Relationship between governmental institutions and the media'. Analysing the complementary relationship between government institutions and the media, the trainers emphasised on the need for government bodies and the media to mutually understand the nature of each other's work for establishing a successful partnership that supports public interest and promotes national identity. The trainers also offered pointers to professionals on the ways to package news, select media houses for disseminating particular news pieces and approach media persons for carrying their messages. Addressing emerging journalists, the experts pointed out the need for media to take on the responsibility of communicating the correct message of the government and accurately highlight changes in regulation for the benefit of the wider community. The final workshop titled 'Holding a press conference' covered best-practice techniques for preparing and managing successful press conferences, from concept to execution. In addition to highlighting the importance of strategic planning and resource preparation, the workshop examined the art of managing the press pack and fielding media questions through realistic roleplays and simulations.



David Hardaker

Head of Media Development, twofour54 tadreeb

David Hardaker is a highly experienced media professional who has worked internationally, particularly in the Middle East and Gulf region. He has a long career as a speechwriter and specialises in clear communication for multinational audiences. In a career which spans more than 25 years, he has worked across all areas of the media, from TV to radio, print to online, as a reporter and as a programme executive. He has won several prestigious national and international journalism awards.

"

Effective public speaking is the key to successful leadership, especially in the government sector where officials need to communicate their messages and engage with the public. Whether it's for informative, persuasive, or entertainment reasons, public speaking is a form of communication, where the presenter has only one chance to deliver the message. Therefore, it's important to keep it simple and easy for the listeners to understand. "



Fahed Hussein

Fahed Hussein has lived and worked in Abu Dhabi for more than 20 years. He is the former Director of Baynounah TV News Centre and has worked as an Editor-In-Chief, Head of Programmes, Deputy Head of News, a writer and reporter at Abu Dhabi TV. Additionally, Fahed is the Founder and former Executive Chief Editor of the local news bulletin at Abu Dhabi TV, the most viewed in the UAE and GCC countries.

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Executive Consultant, twofour54 tadreeb

When delivering a speech, presenters must break down the barrier between them and their audience. This is a principle of one-to-one communication that allows engaging with the audience and sustains public attention. Simplicity of the message and speech intelligibility are important for delivering a lucid and effective speech.

Khaled Akbik

Social Media Manager

Khaled brings over 6 years' experience in systems engineering and social media, coupled with an esteemed reputation as a technology and football influencer in the social media sphere. This experience, together with a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in Business Administration, has equipped Khaled with the necessary skills to lead a regional social media team to success. This is evident in the Effie Award nominated work he produced in the last 12 months, with Pepsi's Kick in the Mix football initiative and Chipsy's Share the Laughter campaigns.

"

Social media is all about listening. In a nutshell, it provides a platform for two-way communication between organisations and the people. Governments are now realising the importance of utilising social media as a tool for engaging with the public and responding in an effective way to address social needs. Today, three out of four global internet users are social media users; 95 percent of companies use LinkedIn as a tool to recruit employees. Social networks have a great impact on the way modern society functions. People's use of social media is growing and becoming more and more widespread and influential.





Workshops

May Alem

Since the inception of tadreeb, May Alem has prepared and provided many high quality public speaking, interviewing, press conference and TV presenting trainings to various local and international satellite channels and television stations as well as consultancy services to a range of clients, including the UAE Ministry of Interior, UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Abu Dhabi Ports Authority and Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

"

We always think that the media and government institutions are two separate entities. Realistically, the two share a symbiotic association. The media has a responsibility to replicate the government messages clearly and accurately. The communication mechanism is as follows: government institutions send certain messages to the public through media, and then the public communicate their opinions and requirements to the government through various media channels. The success of a conference depends on the proactivity of the organiser in inviting the right media as well as the spontaneity and clarity of the spokesperson in responding to the media.



Media and Training Consultant, twofour54 tadreeb



Closing Ceremony

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, witnessed the grand conclusion of the Government Communication Forum 2013 at a distinguished dinner in the Al Majaz Waterfront.

The evening was attended by His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Centre; Her Excellency Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairperson of Sharjah Investment and Development Authority "Shurooq"; Her Excellency Sheikha Hoor bint Sultan Al Qasimi, President of Sharjah Arts Foundation, and His Excellency Sheikh Salem bin Abdul Rahman Al Qasimi, Director of the Office of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah.

Also present at the ceremony were His Excellency Humaid Mohamed Al Hadidi, Major General and Commander-In-Chief of Sharjah Police; His Excellency Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Owais, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Information in Sharjah, and His Excellency Dr. Ghanem Al Hajri, Chairman of the Sharjah International Airport Authority.

His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi honoured the speakers, moderators and sponsors in appreciation of their role in the success of the second Government Communication Forum, which attracted more than 2,500 participants daily. His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Media Centre and the GCF Organising Committee, presented a memento to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi in recognition of his unlimited support to the Government Communication Forum 2013.

Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi

Chairman of Sharjah Media Centre

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During the sessions we attended at the Government Communication Forum 2013, we listened, talked, interacted and communicated. Despite the differences in ideas, experiences and opinions, we unanimously agree that the forum represents a preliminary step towards embedding government communication departments with a modern vision, strategies and mechanisms. At the forum, we succeeded in highlighting our needs as governments and nations to improve communication among us. To complement our joint achievement, we must immediately start working on creating positive change in government communication in the Arab region - as a first step through the creation of initiatives or delivering constructive ideas for establishing enhanced communication mechanisms.

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Registration mode analysis

Mode	No. of visitors
Online	2005
Onsite	1204
Total	3209

38 % 62 % Online

Onsite

Attendance

Attended Did not attend





Pre-registrants attendance analysis

Pre-registrants	No. of visitors
Attended	1296
Did Not Attend	709

Attendance

Day-wise attendance analysis

Day	No. of visitors
Day 1 - 24 th February	1641
Day 2 - 25 th February	859
Total	2500



Day 1 - 24th February

Day 2 - 25th February

Badge category analysis





Visitor VIP

Badge category	No. of visitors
Visitor	1375
Media	195
Guest	108
VIP	425
Police	47
Government	96
Organiser	162
Speaker	92
Total	2500

Top 5 countries with highest participation

Country	No. of visitors
United Arab Emirates	1532
Turkey	210
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	93
Lebanon	70
United Kingdom	57



Attendance

Country-wise analysis

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Country	No. of visitors
Inited Arab Emirates	1532
Turkey	210
ngdom of Saudi Arabia	93
Lebanon	70
United Kingdom	57
Egypt	51
India	43
Jordan	40
Palestine	38
ites States of America	35
Syria	33
Oman	30
Pakistan	29
Kuwait	27
Iraq	21
Morocco	16
Qatar	16
Bahrain	14
Germany	11
Sudan	13
Italy	9
Algeria	9
Mauritania	8
Tunisia	7
France	7
Ireland	7
Libya	6
Spain	5
Singapore	4
Other	59
Total	2500

Region-wise analysis

Region	No. of Visitors
Americas	35
Asia	105
Europe	306
Middle East - GCC	1914
Africa	124
Other	16
Total	2500



Attendance

Na

National (based in UAE) International



National / international visitors

Туре	No. of visitors
ational (based in UAE)	1532
International	968
Total	2500



International media coverage







Scope of media coverage



- United Arab Emirates
- 📕 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- United States of America



Media coverage of GCF 2013 compared to the previous edition

GCF	No. of Clippings
2013	493
2012	264





Clipping distribution by medium







Medium	No. of Clippings
lewspapers	239
ews Websites	349
Television	71
Total	659

Clipping distribution by geographical region

Region	No. of Clippings
Local	299
Regional	268
International	92
Total	659



Top 10 local media covering GCF 2013

Media	No. of Clippings
Al-Khaleej	34
WAM	30
Sharjah TV	28
CNN	24
Zawya	22
Gulf News	21
Al-Bayan	21
Habertakip.com	21
Emarat Al-Youm	19
Al-Ittihad	19





Top 10 non-local media covering GCF

Media	Country	No. of Clippings
Al-Madina	KSA	6
Dar Al-Hayat	Arab Region	5
Al-Hayat	KSA	5
Al-Watan	Kuwait	5
Al-Sharq Al-Awsat	KSA	3
Al-Sharq	Qatar	3
Al-Siyasa	Kuwait	2
Al-Watan	KSA	2
Al-Wasat	Bahrain	2
Al-Quds Al-Arabi	UK	2



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Top 10 websites covering GCF

Website	No. of Clippings
Zawya	22
r Takib (Turkish)	21
/e on Riyadh	18
E Info (Arabic)	17
∕oum Al-Saba'	14
Masrs	14
E Info (English)	10
Sabar	7
hbar Al-Youm	7
Saraya	6

Samples of Print Media Coverage







Samples of Print Media Coverage



The second secon	Adaptation of the second secon	A view for the second of the s	History.
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Even communication concepts need finetuning

SHARJAH FORUM TRIES TO COME UP WITH WORKABLE SOLUTIONS

SHARJAM By JUMANA KHAMIS Shiff Re.

ifficulties to a

<text><text><text><text>



The information needs to be unified and should be presented at a timely fashion there has to be transparency,

Marwan Jasem Al Sarkal | CEOu Sharjah Investmen and Development Authority

cies and it needs to have much anisms to communicate much the public though a builtion cess, he said. Sharing his views, Al Sarkal Miled for building a relation with the media. The in sharing his views, are said and should be presented as a unset fashion – the said and should be presented as a unset fashion – the said. Al Sarkal also underlined the



The government manages public affairs based on specific policies, and it needs to have mechanisms to communicate with the public.

Ahmad Salem Bosmonoh i Board member of Sharfah Media Corpo ration

success of Sharjah's Direct Line programme. 'We were able to talk to people who taits differ-ent problems and help in the solution process," he said.

TI Line work

For full report visit were: guilterwis.com

Social Media

@SharjahMedia 🔰

Sharjah Media Centre's Twitter Page

Description	Number
Tweets sent	875
Tweets per day	291.67
Retweets (of other users)	553
@ User mentions	23
Replies	6
Links per tweet	72
#Hashtags	268
Retweets (by other users)	215 (730x)> 215 users retweeted a total of 730 times





@SharjahMedia mentions



@SharjahMedia 🔰 Sharjah Media Centre's Twitter Page









@ Users most mentioned



Hashtags most used



Most active users

No.	Users	Tweets	Following	Followers	Lists	Interactions
1	@FahadAlShehhi	7,565	1,405	939	1	70
2	@Al7eee9	767	558	433	2	34
3	@_AyeshaAlJanahi	19,635	699	1,165	11	27
4	@galul	94	314	300	2	23
5	@_khuloodalali	18,287	577	1,033	1	23
6	@OashaKhalifa	2,648	157	241	0	18
7	@Yousefaltaweel	2,600	335	508	3	17
8	@khalaf_a_k	20,970	804	1,143	3	14
9	@dauzana	7,345	2,001	761	14	13
10	@Shammabsb	487	57	61	0	12

Tweets - hours of the day

Sharjah Media Centre's Twitter Page







Tweets by volume





Twitter for iPhone (507)
Twitter for Blackberry® (400)
web (380)
Twitter for Android (144)
Twitter for iPad (67)
Twitter for Windows Phone (65)
Mobile Web (M5) (62)
Instagram (51)
UberSocial for BlackBerry (41)
TweetCaster for Android (27)
Facebook (26)
TweetDeck (24)
Mobile Web (M2) (23)
Tweetbot for iOS (18)
Syam (17)
Camera on iOS (7)
Hootsuite (5)
Tweet Button (4)
Keek (4)
OS X (4)
Twitter for Mac (3)
Falcon Pro (3)
Twitter for BlackBerry (3)
Other

Tweets per day

Top languages









Top users mentioned

Mentions Treemap								
	@ozamzam	@DubaiPressClub	@DavidQuin	@Esa	@ @Al7e		@	@
@sharjahmedia			@marwan35	ique	@saqs		@	@
			@MaryamBinFahad		@falsunaidy @FahadAlShehhi		•	@
	@galul	@octavianasr	@omar tanira	asakura uae	@alimouinjaber			@
		@_AyeshaAlJanahi	tar in a	uac	@Ziyad	Baroud	@Etl	har_

Top hashtags used

Hashtag Treemap											
	#sharjah	الدئدارقة#		#Sharjah		#	دث#	حد			
		-		#uae			س#				
منتدى.الاتصال.الحكومي#			#sharjah	#sharjah					ىنتدي#)	#
			#UAE	#UAE #Shj	الإمارات#	#Mar	#gov		#		
				- /		#	#	#			



Top 20 URLs referenced under #GCF2013

No.	URL	No. of Times
1	http://www.albayan.ae/across-the-uae/news-and-reports/2013-02-26-1.1831134	19
2	http://www.emaratalyoum.com/life/four-sides/2013-02-26-1.552781	7
3	http://www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=956237	7
4	http://fb.me/2woSh77ch	6
5	http://fb.me/1zcVzpS1F	6
6	http://fb.me/A9GDnH9s	5
7	http://fb.me/28QLDNyWd	5
8	http://yfrog.com/oerxpffij	5
9	http://instagr.am/p/WG68qAyOHs	5
10	http://instagr.am/p/WKdbG9ihtn	4
11	http://instagr.am/p/WKa1kcQ3UK	4
12	http://fb.me/2OsMfwLEM	4
13	http://fb.me/1wlCth4ID	4
14	http://instagr.am/p/WJJ0foqLA0	4
15	http://tinyurl.com/be3uu6t	4
16	http://gulfnews.com/1.1150574	4
17	http://instagr.am/p/WJ74Mrrp80	3
18	http://instagr.am/p/WKakdEw3UB	3
19	http://www.keek.com/!pl5nbab	3
20	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQBS658X0_g	3

Top 20 user mentions under #GCF2013

No.	User	No. of Times	No.	User	No. of Times
1	@sharjahmedia	658	11	@omartanira	32
2	@ozamzam	103	12	@sakurauae	26
3	@galul	54	13	@ZiyadBaroud	25
4	@DubaiPressClub	48	14	@Esaique	24
5	@Zaven_K	47	15	@Al7eee9	22
6	@octavianasr	42	16	@saqshj	21
7	@_AyeshaAlJanahi	38	17	@FahadAlShehhi	21
8	@DavidQuin2	37	18	@alimouinjaber	19
9	@MaryamBinFahad	35	19	@falsunaidy	19
10	@marwan351	34	20	@Ethar_	17

SharjahMediaCentre 📑



Sharjah Media Centre's Facebook Page



Reach was at a maximum before the event due to large number of Facebook posts



Engagement rates were very high prior to the event date but during the event, most engagement shifted to Twitter as followers wanted live updates



Most engagement was from the UAE, particularly Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and bilingual



Increase in Likes during GCF

SharjahMediaCentre 📑

Sharjah Media Centre's Facebook Page



Final Recommendations

Final Recommendations

Participants in the second edition of GCF, which was held on February 24-25, 2013 in Sharjah, recommended:

- Adopting the vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, to promote convergence, enhance government and media communication and harness the media to serve citizens' needs and requirements.
- Internationalising GCF by changing its title to 'International Government Communication Forum', considering the global presence its second edition achieved and the great attention its debates on government communication received locally, regionally and internationally.
- Using GCF as a starting point for changing government communication concepts embraced internationally, and as a way of communicating and shortening distances between governments and citizens.

In relation to the forum's core values, the participants recommended:

Observe and Listen

- Activating communication by studying feedback on government messages, both positive and negative, and observing the audience's response to them with the aim of elevating the concept of government communication from 'talking to the public' to 'communicating with the public'
- Keeping abreast of the variables that affect the various aspects of citizens' daily and social life by using the latest government communication practices and adapting to them

Interact and Communicate

- Winning citizens' trust by allowing them to participate in decision making processes and adopting policies that are supported by the communication tools required to activate such participation
- Communicating with all segments of the public and establishing the communication channels necessary for each segment

Government Communication Units

Government Communication Strategy



Activating constructive and proactive communication between the government and citizens by opening channels of strategic communication on important issues

• Embracing transparency in dealing with any issue and providing the media with correct information in a timely manner through sending clear and accurate messages that reflect the government's vision and citizens' needs

- Establishing government communication units that are active and able to determine citizens' priorities and communicate with them strategically
- Documenting the role of government communication units in facilitating access to information for the media and public
- Improving communication methods used by government institutions in line with the actual needs and aspirations of their individual audiences

- Aligning government communication strategy with citizens' issues that require immediate and effective communication
- Urging government leaders and officials to work under one vision that is clear to the public



Team Spirit

Through clear-cut objectives and plans, we have been working towards the success of GCF 2013. Feeling the responsibility and desire to give more, we have been keen to establish an example for government communication in the region and come up with a new government communication system beneficial to government entities in Sharjah, the UAE and the Middle East in general. As we put this report into your hands, we assure you that no human work is perfect. Hence, we hope that you excuse any errors that escaped our notice and we promise to continue to offer all possible solutions and methods that would enhance government communication in the region.

Sharjah Media Centre







aled Al Matrooshi and Ahmed Al Bairaq at the GCF venue



urkish Consul General in Dubai











Volunteers at the first meeting of GCF organising committees and working teams





Media personalities Mohd. Khalaf, Mohd. Al Manai, Mohd. Majed Al Suwaidi and Hassan Yaqoob at the poetry evening





Fahad Al Shehhi finalises procedures before guests start arriving at their hotel accommodation

131

Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi listens to a brief on GCF venue preparations





alwa Al Mushairi prepares lists of online registrants



Ahmed Al Bairaq, Head, GCF Media Committee, ensures the arrival of media delegations to their hotel accommodation



Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi follows up logistical preparations







Vorkers put their final touches on the main entrance to Expo entre Sharjah, host of GCF



Omar Zamzam, Maher Kazmouz and Salem Al Khayyal supervise technical preparations



We extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to the partners and sponsors of the Government Communication Forum 2013 for their support and contribution to the success of the forum.

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هانف Tel +971 6 5123456 •••• براق Fax +971 6 5123444 •••• البريد الإلكتروني •••• Email info@sharjahmedia.ae •••• البريد الإلكتروني •••• Fax +971 6 5123444 •••• البندارقة أ. ع. م ص .ب Fax +971 6 5123444 هانف 5123456 www.sharjahmedia.ae