

# JOY

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ADVANCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND  
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT  
VOLUME 5

**JOY: USING STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION TO  
IMPROVE WELL-BEING  
AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
SUCCESS**

EDITED BY

**ANA TKALAC VERČIĆ**

*University of Zagreb, Croatia*

**RALPH TENCH**

*Leeds Beckett University, UK*

**SABINE EINWILLER**

*University of Vienna, Austria*



United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-241-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-240-6 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-242-0 (Epub)

ISSN: 2398-3914 (Series)



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Environmental  
standard  
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985  
ISO 14001



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Mark Badham** (PhD) is Postdoctoral Researcher in Corporate Communication at Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics in Finland. His research focuses on distinct roles news media outlets adopt in mass communication processes, particularly to better understand phenomenon involving power struggles between organizations, activists and their respective publics. This research extends to crisis communication, agenda-building and other mass communication-related research focused on how organizations engage with news media in online and offline environments to reach stakeholders. Prior to entering into a full-time academic career, he worked in public relations roles for politicians, political parties and NGOs in Australia.

**Dajana Barbić** is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb, University of Zagreb. She teaches 'Personal Finance', 'Public Finance' and 'Monetary Policy' at the Department of Finance. She defended her doctoral dissertation in the field of personal finance 'Linking financial literacy with the successfulness in managing personal finances'. She is one of the founders and director of the Institute for Financial literacy and responsible financial consumption where she actively participates in the programmes of financial education. She is an active researcher in many projects including international project 'Financial literacy and socialization of children as consumers'.

**Célia Belim** is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lisbon (ISCSP-ULisboa), lecturing on Communication Sciences (CC)'s scientific area since 2000. Currently, she is executive coordinator of the graduate degree of the referred scientific area. She has a PhD on CC. She coordinates projects, such as 'Communicate health' and 'Agendas and communication'. Since 2000, she has participated in several conferences, and publishes in her fields of interest, such as health communication, having published, by invitation from Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. She has received four academic awards.

**Jana Brockhaus**, MA, is Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Chair of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany, and has been a visiting research student at Lund University, Sweden. Her research interests include professionalization of strategic communication, management concepts, and employee engagement. In her master thesis, she examines the internal perception and positioning of communication departments in corporations and analyses the expectations of internal stakeholders.

**Laura Dicke, MA**, is a Public Relations Assistant at Fraunhofer IFAM in Dresden, Germany. In 2020, she finished her master's degree in Communication Management at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany. Her academic interests lie in challenges and opportunities of strategic communication for organizations, employee engagement and financial communication. Her master's thesis explores the challenges of strategic employer branding in start-ups.

**Sabine Einwiller** is a Professor of Public Relations Research at the Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Austria, where she heads the Corporate Communication Research Group. Since 2018 she is the Head of the Austrian Public Relations Ethics Council and serves as the Austrian representative of the European Communication Monitor. In 2019/2020 she headed the Scientific Committee of EUPRERA. Sabine Einwiller has published about 40 articles in international peer-reviewed journals and is co-editor of the Handbook of Employee Communication (Springer Gabler, in German). In her research, she is mainly interested in the effects of corporate communication on stakeholders and in strategic communication management.

**Finn Frandsen** is Professor in the Department of Management at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, Denmark. In 2019, he was appointed Professor II at BI Norwegian Business School, Norway. His primary research interests include organizational crises, crisis management and crisis communication. His most recent books are *Organizational Crisis Communication: A Multivocal Approach* (2017; co-authored with Winni Johansen) and *Crisis Communication (Handbooks of Communication Science HOCS 23, co-edited with Winni Johansen)*. In 2019, Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen served as co-editors of *Big Ideas in Public Relations Research and Practice (Advances in Public Relations and Communication Management, Emerald Publishing)*.

**Patricia Hauck** is a Consultant for strategic communication and change management at FTI Consulting. She finished her master's degree in Communication Management at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany, in 2020. In 2019, she has been a visiting research student at Tallinn University, Estonia. Her research interests focus on innovative methods for strategic communication and employee engagement. Her master's thesis is concerned with the use of microtargeting within corporate communications.

**Olaf Hoffjann** is a Professor at the Department of Communication Studies at University of Bamberg, Germany. He studied, inter alia, communication studies in Münster, Germany. From 2006 to 2019 he was Professor of Communication Management at the Mediadesign University for Applied Sciences in Berlin and Professor of Media Management at the Ostfalia University for Applied Sciences in Salzgitter, Germany. He was awarded a PhD for his system-theoretical study of the relationship between PR and journalism. His research interests cover trust in public relations (PR), the reality of PR and public affairs.

**Winni Johansen** is Professor in the Department of Management at Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, Denmark, and adjunct professor at BI Norwegian Business School, Norway. Her primary research interests include organizational crises, crisis management and crisis communication. Her most recent books are *Organizational Crisis Communication: A Multivocal Approach* (2017; co-authored with Finn Frandsen), *International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication* (2018; co-edited with Robert L. Heath) and *Crisis Communication (Handbooks of Communication Science HOCS 23, 2020; co-edited with Finn Frandsen)*. In 2019, Winni Johansen and Finn Frandsen served as co-editors of *Big Ideas in Public Relations Research and Practice (Advances in Public Relations and Communication Management, Emerald Publishing)*.

**Erik Kostelijk** is Associate Professor of Marketing at the Amsterdam School of International Business of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands. He has teaching, research and professional experience in several countries including China, the USA, Lithuania, France, Spain and Italy. Currently, he also works as marketing consultant in the Netherlands. Erik is the designer and author of the Value Compass, the method to assess the influence of values on branding. His book on brand positioning (with K. J. Alsem) won the Dutch award for the marketing study book 2016. The book was published in 2020 in English at Routledge.

**Alla Kushniryk** (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. Her department has been nationally recognized for excellence in public relations education in Canada. She earned a PhD in Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Alla's research and publications centre on organizational communication, digital and social media, and quantitative research methods. She has been engaged in several research projects funded by Communications + Public Relations Foundation, Canadian Public Relations Society and other organizations.

**Danijela Lalić**, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Her research interests include public relations, corporate communications, especially social media, digital and internal communications. She published over 70 scientific and professional publications. Her PR handbook is considered as excellent guide for professionals and students. She was the editor and lead translator of the textbook *Business Communication Today*, published by Pearson Education. Dr Lalić is a member of Serbian PR Association, a member of EUPRERA and a national collaborator for Serbia for the European Communication Monitor.

**Andrea Lučić** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb. She teaches 'Foundations of Marketing' and 'Sustainable marketing and ethics'. She is leading a Croatian Science Foundation research project 'Empowering financial capability of young consumers through

education and behavioural intervention'. She is also a research fellow on 'Strenght2Food: Horizon 2020 – Strengthening European Food Chain Sustainability by Quality and Procurement Policy Activity' project. She is one of the founders of the Institute for Financial Literacy and responsible financial consumption where she actively participates in the programmes of financial education.

**Vibeke Thøis Madsen** is an Assistant Professor in digital and organizational communication, Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Denmark. Her research interests are interactions among organizational members on internal social media and employees as strategic communicators in public relations. She has, for example, studied how employees construct organizational identity on internal social media and the self-censorship strategies they apply when they communicate. Presently, she studies the strategic role and the participatory potential of social intranets in public organizations and develops a framework to understand employees as communicators in organizational contexts.

**Dijana Bojčeta Markoja** is Managing Director of Association of Pension Funds and Pension Insurance Companies with more than 20 years of working experience in financial industry with the main focus on corporate communication and marketing. Her professional and scientific focus is on Financial Literacy, specifically Pension Literacy. She participated in numerous conferences and panel discussions with contributed lectures. DBM has degree in political science and Master Degree in economics – field marketing. She attended IEDC Bled – Business School. At the moment, she is attending the master course in public relations.

**Bojana Milić** is a PhD Candidate and a Scientific Researcher at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences at University of Novi Sad, Serbia. She currently writes her PhD thesis on employee creativity and their innovative behaviour. Her research interests include employee engagement, knowledge management, creativity and social media marketing.

**Natalie Doyle Oldfield** (BA Honours, BPR, MPR) is the author of the book *The Power of Trust: How Top Companies Build, Manage and Protect It*. Four times, Natalie has been named one of the world's Top Thought Leaders in Trust by Trust Across America. A former Chief Marketing Officer and keynote speaker, she publishes business and academic articles.

Natalie advises business owners and leaders on how to increase revenue, trust and loyalty through a scientifically based framework. She is the creator of the Client Trust Index™, an award-winning proprietary diagnostic and a digital program called Becoming a Trusted Advisor.

**Stanislav Orlov** (MEd, MIST) is a Systems Librarian at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Part of his duties includes facilitating seamless access to various e-resources by students, faculty and the larger community. That involves everyday work with journal article databases, e-book platforms, institutional repository, university archive, online citation managers,

etc. He teaches the Intro to Research in Information Age course that focuses on proper ways of finding, evaluating and using information in academia, as well as in everyday life. Stanislav's research interests include Open Education Resources, and Social Media.

**Lars Rademacher**, MA, PhD, is Professor for Public Relations at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and adjunct lecturer & researcher at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Ireland. He serves as Director at the Institute of Communication & Media. Before joining academia, Lars spent more than 15 years as communication consultant and media relations manager working for a number of national and multinational companies including BASF and Volkswagen. His research interests cover public legitimacy, PR ethics, leadership & executive communication, CSR and compliance communication. Since 2017 he is a member and since 2018 the Chairman of the German Public Relations Council.

**Jelena Stanković**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Technical Sciences at University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Her research interest focuses on marketing management, corporate communication, branding and entrepreneurship. She is the author of more than 50 papers published in scientific journals and conferences. She is also one of the translators of the textbook *Business Communication Today*, published by Pearson Education. Dr Stanković is a member of Mensa since 2013.

**Kathrin Stürmer**, MA, is a PhD Candidate at Cork Institute of Technology in cooperation with Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. She has been teaching at Darmstadt UAS since 2018. Before, Kathrin worked in a lobby agency where her research topic 'digital lobbying' arose. She worked at the German Bundestag and currently in the political department of a social media agency. Her research interests cover online, political, strategic communication; lobbying and social media. Kathrin holds a Bachelor's degree in political and media science (University of Regensburg, Germany) and a Master's degree in European and international studies (European Institute Nice, France).

**Professor Ralph Tench** is Director of Research for Leeds Business School and Past President (2017–2020) European Public Relations Research and Education Association. Tench's research involves national and international projects. He has written and edited 26 books; published over 40 academic journal papers; presented worldwide 60+ peer-reviewed papers. Books include the market-leading strategic communication textbook, *Exploring Public Relations*, and recently *Communication Excellence – How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications*, based on the longitudinal, annual European Communication Monitor project (14 years, [www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu)). Tench's research focuses on strategic communication and its impact on societal issues including health, business, social and public policy.

**Cristina Vaz de Almeida** is a Specialist in Health Literacy (HL) and director of a postgraduate course on HL at the Higher Institute of Applied Psychology (ISPA) since 2012. She has a permanent intervention as a lecturer in HL for training

health professionals, at national and international level. Since 2007, she has participated in Portuguese social projects. She has been working for more than 17 years at Lisbon Holy House of Mercy-Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML). She is co-author of the book *Literacia em saúde na prática (Health literacy in practice)* and of various articles and chapters.

**Ana Tkalac Verčić** is a Full Professor of Marketing communications and Public Relations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia. She is a former Fulbright scholar and a recipient of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations diploma. Ana Tkalac Verčić has authored, co-authored and edited numerous books including *Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation* (with B. van Ruler and D. Verčić) and is the author of the first Croatian public relations textbook. She has published more than a 100 papers in various academic journals and serves in various editorial boards such as *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Public Relations Review*. Throughout her career professor Tkalac Verčić has received numerous awards, most recently, GrandPRx, the award for the development of public relations as a profession. She is currently the president of the Croatian Public Relations Association.

**Sophia Charlotte Volk**, MA, is Research Associate and PhD candidate at the Department of Strategic Communication at Leipzig University, Germany. As project leader in the research program 'Value Creating Communication', she co-authored the book *Toolbox Communication Management* (Springer Gabler 2019). Her research interests include corporate communications, communication management, evaluation and measurement, and comparative research. Her research has been published in renowned international journals and awarded several prizes at academic conferences. Her doctoral dissertation examines the state of the art of comparative communication research and generates empirical insights into the collaborative challenges of international research projects.

**Gerrit van der Waldt** is Research Professor: Public Governance attached to North-West University, South Africa. He is author and co-author of 34 text books and more than a 100 scholarly articles to date. He has published extensively in the field of governance and policy-related domains and serves on various advisory boards and research committees. He also lectured and conducted research at the Vrije University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and was appointed as global expert by the International Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU) to partake in the design and development of Masters' Programmes for various African countries.

**Magrita N. Wiggill** is Associate Professor at the Department of Strategic Communication at the Helsingborg Campus of Lund University, Sweden. She has published several scholarly articles on strategic communication management in the non-profit sector as well as in a disaster risk context. Her research interests include strategic communication and relationship management, disaster risk communication management, communication and sustainability, and social media.

# INTRODUCTION

As I write the introduction to this latest book in the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) Congress series for Emerald, I cannot help but hold some sense of irony. Our excellent Congress in Zagreb – held during early October 2019 – was another annual celebration of international exchanges of research and new ideas in the scholarship of public relations and strategic communication. The theme of the congress was ‘Joy’. And yet, as I compose these introductory thoughts and reflections for the book, my fellow editors and I are each sitting in our home offices as many of you will have done. All of us experiencing for the first time in our lives an extraordinary, enforced lockdown during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis in the spring of 2020. As such ‘joy’ may not be the first emotion academics and research students think of when reflecting on this challenging period of our lives, but it is perhaps poignant to recall the discussions and debates we held in Zagreb and the fascinating papers we shared during the Congress. Whilst many of the papers touched literally on the issue of joy, others explored related emotions and in some papers the flip or opposing sensations to positivity. In essence the theme of the 2019 Congress is perhaps never more appropriate than in times of stress, international emergency and genuine societal challenge. We need to be able to understand how and where we can sense happiness, well-being, social cohesion, togetherness, appreciation of others and, arguably, attributes of joy.

Even before this exceptional year of 2020, it would have been possible to argue that we are living in an era of societal pessimism. That challenging viewpoint appears only to have been reinforced and heightened by the international experiences of the COVID-19 crisis. As we observe our everyday academic worlds, it is possible to see that everyone potentially has a voice, and in the contemporary climate it is very often used to criticize. Publics see problems and discuss them in multifarious ways and on a plethora of platforms and media outlets. And, in turn, academic research reflects this and often views the world through a negative lens and focuses on difficulties, issues and bad practices. With this meeting of the international public relations and strategic communication research community, it was the ambition of the Congress organizers from the University of Zagreb and the EUPRERA Board to encourage and promote some optimism in both the public discourse and academic research about the discipline.

The conference call proposed that public relations and strategic communication could be used for cultivating a positive environment. This means communicators could accept that one of the biggest competitive advantages in today’s business world is a positive and engaged public. Satisfied participants are at the core of any successful relationship. To succeed in the future, public relations will

have the aim of keeping various stakeholders not only informed, nor even satisfied, but happy. Whether they are employees, customers or business partners, only happy stakeholders will ensure long-term organizational success.

The success of relationships with publics is mostly based on how people are valued and treated, which in turn affects their self-perceptions and level of performance. Both of these elements are correlated with life happiness. So it seems logical that public relations should put additional effort in fostering happiness and joy among their publics and by improving both organizational success and the well-being of people. These were the thoughts and aspirations to encourage academic papers to join in the debate about ‘joy’ and its implications for strategic communication and public relations.

The Zagreb Congress was the 21st to be organized by The European Public Relations Education and Research Association. EUPRERA is an autonomous organization with nearly 500 members from 40 countries interested in advancing academic research and knowledge in strategic communication. Several cross-national and comparative research and education projects are organized by affiliated universities. In order to spread new methodologies and research results, EUPRERA organizes its Annual Congress each autumn in collaboration with a selected university or college in Europe. The organizer of the 2019 Congress was one of my co-editors, Professor Ana Tkalac Verčič, from the University of Zagreb. The Congress attracted 60 full papers, and this book is a selection of the best papers that were not included in the special issue of the *Journal of Communication Management*.

The book is divided into three parts. The following pages provide a summary for each part of the book and a flavour of the chapters within each section.

## **Part I: Strategic Communication and Organizational Goals**

Not all contingencies named ‘societal development’ add to joy – some have positive some negative effects. Questioning the role of public relations in society and a strategic approach to communication can induce the spreading of positive human and corporate behaviour that contributes to joy. How can public relations contribute to the communication of social change through ethical persuasion and promotion of public interest? Additionally, measuring the effectiveness of communication is vital for understanding its value and for shaping future plans in a way that contributes to greater effectiveness. If joy is a part of successful communication, how can we measure it? Can joy be measured through results and performance indicators and consequently integrated into strategic communication plans? In order to be precise, we need to first define the role of joy and its related constructs in the process of communication.

In his paper ‘Love Wins: A Love Lens Approach to Cultivation of Organization Stakeholder Relationships’, Mark Badham’s chapter draws on the theory of brand love developed in relationship marketing research and the theory of love from psychological research to build a theoretical framework of organization–stakeholder love (OSL) that can be applied to organizational relationships with

publics and stakeholders. Badham argues that OSL is important as it has the potential to contribute to addressing public relations' image problems (e.g. relating to terms such as *spin*, *fake news* and *corporate greenwashing*). It also offers a new love orientation that guides organizations towards a focus on the primacy of stakeholder needs and values, which in turn may shape the way organizations initiate and manage their relationships with stakeholders. The chapter concludes with practical ways OSL can be implemented and offers a research agenda.

Erik Kosteljik takes the view that people decide what is good or bad, or what they should or should not do, based on the values they cherish. Someone's values create the feeling that something is important for him or her, and then motivate him or her to take action. Titled 'Values-Based Communications: A New Impulse to Communication Effectiveness', Kosteljik's chapter explores the use of values in communication and introduces mechanisms through which values can be used to stimulate communication effectiveness.

In 'Outside-In- versus Inside-Out-Content. Introducing a New Approach on the Origins of Contents in Strategic Communication', Olaf Hoffjann introduces the concept of outside-in-content, which facilitates a new perspective in the decoupling of discourse. Outside-in-content encourages decoupling for three reasons: (1) like a lighthouse, it draws attention away from negative issues. (2) As neither-true-nor-false-content, it encourages non-committal and arbitrary strategic communication. (3) If organizations no longer talk about themselves, or do so less frequently, talk and action can also no longer be examined using the standards of tight or loose coupling.

In 'Quantifying Organizational Trust on Twitter: A Communication Perspective', Alla Kushniryk, Stanislav Orlov and Natalie Doyle Oldfield draw on both theoretical and empirical literature on trust and discuss the role of trust in strategic communication. They examine the importance of trust for organizational success, the dimensions of trust and distrust, and discuss quantifiable proxies to measure trust and distrust on social media. They use theoretically driven dimensions of trust and distrust as a framework to examine how Boeing and Airbus use Twitter to communicate with their stakeholders and publics. Two separate lists of words and phrases were created, one for proxies of trust and one for proxies of distrust. In addition, trust building actions that organization can engage in on Twitter were identified: listening and engaging in dialogue by following users, mentioning users in messages, replying to inquiries, providing and encouraging feedback.

## **Part II: Internal and Employee Communication**

Strategic internal communication is a part of the organizational context in which employees are engaged or disengaged, while strategic external communication is an antecedent of a company's image on the market which designates consumer engagement. Both are vital in the digital era in which employees prioritize on fun working environments awakening positive emotions including happiness, joy and

enthusiasm. How can we use communication to attract and preserve engaged employees – employees that believe that working is fun? Are lucrative communication activities such as employer brand communication, innovative organizational communication initiatives and open channels of communication helpful? How can we use communication to secure customer loyalty? Are extensive communications with diverse external stakeholders, especially on social media platforms, the right solution?

In the chapter, ‘Internal Communication and Employee Engagement as the Key Prerequisites of Happiness’, Danijela Lalić, Jelena Stanković and Bojana Milić investigate internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement as prerequisites of employee happiness. The outcomes of their study reveal how organizations can employ an internal communications strategy in order to enhance engagement of their employees and their happiness as the ultimate goal.

Vibeke Thøis Madsen explores interactions on internal social media (ISM) in a Danish bank in order to understand how communicative leadership is enacted in social media dialogues within an organizational context. The chapter titled ‘Communicative Leadership on Internal Social Media – A way to Employee Engagement?’ identifies three types of communicative leadership: Formal communicative leadership, coconstructed communicative leadership and peer communicative leadership. Madsen argues the findings help us understand leadership as a complex set of interactions in organizational contexts and know that empowering communication on ISM can therefore enhance employee engagement.

The research team of Jana Brockhaus, Laura Dicke, Patricia Hauck and Sophia Charlotte Volk explores corporate ambassadors in their chapter, ‘Employees as Corporate Ambassadors: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceived Benefits and Challenges from Three Perspectives’. The goal of this qualitative study is to analyze the communicative engagement of employees within an organization and explore the expectations towards ambassador communication from three perspectives: the communication department, other departments such as marketing or human resources, and corporate ambassadors themselves. The chapter lays the groundwork for further discussions about corporate ambassadors in the field of corporate communications and outlines directions for future research and implications for practice.

### **Part III: Joyfully Practising Communication**

The world is definitely going through a transition, and strategic communication has to participate in the debate on major issues and help shape values and beliefs of the society as a whole. Through shaping communication, public relations experts help shape core values. Is satisfaction a prerequisite of good communication? What is the role of communication professionals in discussions about a society in transition? What is our professional responsibility? Are we (at least partially) in charge of satisfaction in society? When and why does communication foster health, happiness and well-being?

In 'The Pursuit of Happiness in PR: Joy, Satisfaction & Motivation during working as Communication Manager on Purposeful Cases', Lars Rademacher and Kathrin Stürmer explore the job satisfaction of communication managers. This chapter discusses the connection between a good cause and job satisfaction and the difference it makes when it comes to working in communication management over time. Unlike other studies, the focus in the chapter is on purpose-driven projects as a change in business routine to stay motivated.

If you reach this part of the book and you are not already elated, then after the next chapter you will be. Aarhus colleagues Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen take us on a whirlwind journey across the corporate dance floor in the riveting chapter 'The Dancing CEO: Perspectives on the Leader: Performer, Chief Happiness Officer or Seducer?'. The chapter is a riveting case study about the Danish CEO who suddenly began to dance in front of journalists while singing *Everything is awesome* from the LEGO Movie. Why did he do it? Was it out of spontaneous joy? Or was there a strategy behind his actions? And what were the reactions of the media and LEGO employees? These are questions handsomely answered in this chapter that contributes to a broader understanding of strategic communication and leadership and adds a dramaturgical and multimodal perspective.

In 'Incorporating Cultural Diversity, Nation Building and Social Cohesion When Teaching Communication and Relationship Management', Magrita Nicolene Wiggill and Gerrit Van der Walldt reflect on the necessity of incorporating practical and experiential learning modalities in higher education to prepare communication and relationship management students for engaging others in potentially conflicting socio-cultural heterogeneous settings. The case study illustrates students' general anxiety to engage people from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The authors recommend innovative teaching strategies are developed to foster harmony, tolerance, understanding and cultural sensitivity in communication and relationship management education.

Andrea Lučić, Dajana Barbić and Dijana Bojčeta Markoja develop an interesting case study chapter in 'Using Education As a Strategic Communication Tool – A Case Study of Raising Financial Literacy And Voluntary Pension Fund Promotion'. The chapter has the purpose of showing how purposeful content-based valuable information can be created with the aim of influencing attitudes and behaviours in the field of personal and pension savings. A quantitative study was conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of education on the attitudes and knowledge related to pension fund savings. The results of the quasi-experiment indicate that the education has increased respondents' knowledge and positive attitudes towards retirement savings.

To conclude the book, Cristina Vaz de Almeida and Célia Belim Rodrigues explore health professional's communication competences. The chapter, 'When the Health Professional's Communication Competences Decide Patient's Health: Proposal of a Communication Model' focuses on the impact of health professional's communication competences on patients. The study is a response to the lack of consensus in the literature on what specific and operative communication competences the health professional should perform in clinical encounters

with patients, and how these competences can improve, in the final instance, health and well-being.

I hope you enjoy reading these valuable contributions to our research community and share them with your peers. I look forward to seeing you soon at one of the forthcoming EUPRERA Congresses held every autumn.

Professor Ralph Tench, April 2020