

Improve all your key corporate communication skills

Today you need quality content at every touch-point. Simply put: no content, no conversation. Our very experienced team works with your staff on live projects to improve their communication skills and create a knowledge legacy for your organisation.

Tasks and Topics

Communication is our beat. Personal development is our focus. We address four main areas:

- Media skills and media handling;
- Management communications, from core writing skills through internal cascades to public presentation;
- Leadership communications, a comprehensive toolkit closely associated with change management; and
- Crisis and reputation, founded on effective situation handling and risk mitigation.

We design all interventions to meet your HR needs. Our team members each have 30+ years' international experience across both public and private sectors from SME to corporate C-level. Together they blend commercial nous (publishing, PR and business training), rigour (marketing/communications academia) and a powerful dose of healthy scepticism (journalism).

Why Us For You?

Because we:

- know that training is much more than just good fun, boxes ticked and pretty folders collected;
- understand that you need to solve both strategic communications issues - from change programmes and media briefings to motivation – and practical daily challenges like the often-destructive e-mail grind;
- help your colleagues absorb, apply and realise the full potential of training investment; and
- focus on the end-game – developing your team's ability to change key attitudes and behaviours across, and beyond, your organisation.

Before reading on, you might like to learn a little more about us...

Dr. Bill Nichols: Bill is a 30-year marketing and PR specialist. His career combines in-house major agencies and co-building his own firm, exiting successfully by MBO in 2008. A Henley DBA, he leads PR courses and lectures at Bucks New University. His business career includes new media, commercial property and third-sector leadership. bill.nichols@astrophel.co.uk

David Tebbutt: David has been writing for 30+ years in magazines, papers, web and blogs (since 2004) and commercial collateral. He edited his first magazine (Personal Computer World) from 1979 to 1981 and his most recent (Blue and Green Tomorrow) in 2010/2011. His parallel careers include software publishing and training in media skills and business writing. david@tebbo.com

Martin Banks: Martin has been a journalist and technology analyst since 1968, writing for magazines, national and trade newspapers and online. He has also written whitepapers and backgrounders commercially. He currently edits Cloud Services World, and has parallel careers as a technology analyst and media skills trainer. martin.banks@lian-james.com

Creating Value: Sustained Learning

We start with a firm commitment: *no* trivial interventions, *no* quick fixes. Our goal is to deliver sustained learning. And in turn to help your team, and your organisation, to acquire long-term knowledge. We do so via two major innovations:

First, a carefully-honed 360-degree approach. Unlike the traditional and limited single-expert viewpoint – say a PR man’s approach to media handling – we meld our 100-years’ collective experience. This results in multiple perspectives:

- *‘Outside-in’* from the external stakeholder (say analyst or journalist);
- *‘Inside-out’* reflecting (and often challenging) the organisation’s own assumptions about best practice reputation and issue management; and
- *Overarching* to embed concrete results into corporate behaviour.

In summary, it’s a form of *immersion learning*. Your team gets to see, understand and manage all parties’ perspectives and agendas. Such 360-degree vision is a prerequisite for most great business deal-makers. And it’s no different in communications.

Second, we focus on *action learning*. We ensure that, wherever possible, we use your current real-world challenges e.g. upcoming product launch, sensitive issue, sales conference or internal programme. Then we work interactively with your team to generate learning and link it to early practical applications. Finally, we specify a post-event review to complete the learning process and close the loop.

Planning and Delivery

We like to meet first. To chat, consult and understand both the context and the immediate task or pressure point. Typically we:

- focus on working together in small groups of four to six;
- use three-hour sessions (plus breaks);
- work in pairs to create that multiple perspective; and
- add post-event debriefs on progress and development.

If you wish, you can also sign up to our long-term support service. This gives you speedy access to one of the team for ‘how to’ help and guidance.

The world has changed, so have we

Now that the social/digital wave has exploded 30 years of carefully-crafted perceptions management and spin, authenticity is king. You need to know: Is your spokesperson reliable? Trustworthy? Do they ring true? Stand up to a storm in the Twittersphere? We’ll find out.

Our proposition comes replete with silver locks, good humour and a down-to-earth approach. And we guarantee to tell it just exactly *how it is*.