



# An unfiltered look at what's percolating now

Below are key themes that dominated corporate communications news in January 2025.

## GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS DEMAND A POLYCRISIS-READY APPROACH.

As outlined in HAVAS Red's [Red Sky Predictions 2025](#), today's business environment remains complex, requiring leaders and communicators to manage headwinds on multiple fronts. The year ahead will test leaders' ability to navigate converging crises—some global, others with distinctly regional impacts. [INSEAD](#) identified five macro trends shaping business and society in 2025, from geopolitical instability and climate crises to inflation, social unrest, and deepening wealth inequality. [Fortune](#) explored how top executives are recalibrating leadership playbooks to stay agile and ethical amid uncertainty, while [The Wall Street Journal](#) emphasized that transparency and integrity are differentiators in today's VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. Meanwhile, [McKinsey](#) outlined how businesses can manage risk, build resilience and find opportunities through scenario-based decision-making.

**Bottom line:** To stay ahead, communicators need an always-on listening strategy — tracking how key issues evolve and ensuring a structured, proactive approach to respond. As highlighted in HAVAS Red's white paper, [Redefining Purpose](#), regardless of the challenge, messages must be contextualized around purpose and clearly connected to risk, resilience and long-term value creation.

## DEI IS AT A CROSSROADS IN THE U.S. AND BEYOND.

The legal and regulatory landscape surrounding DEI in the U.S. is shifting, prompting companies to assess the broader implications for their values, workforce policies, and talent management strategies. As outlined in [Harvard Business Review](#), multinational companies must determine when a regional approach to DEI is appropriate and how to balance compliance with global commitments. [Fast Company](#) reported that federal agencies are rapidly removing DEI-related programs and language, while [Forbes](#) highlighted an increasing number of high-profile companies that scaled back their DEI programs. At the same time, [Financial Times](#) noted that others are refining their approach — ensuring compliance while maintaining inclusive practices under new branding. [Fortune](#) also noted that companies are shifting from broad DEI programs to legally sound approaches focused on merit-based advancement and equal opportunity. Meanwhile [CNN](#) underscored that DEI remains a business imperative, directly tied to innovation, competitiveness and employee engagement.

**Bottom line:** As organizations navigate this complex landscape, communicators and leaders must move beyond reactive adjustments and take a proactive, holistic approach. This means considering the perspectives of employees, investors, and customers, ensuring alignment with corporate values, and developing clear, scenario-based plans for how to address evolving regulations while maintaining a commitment to workplace inclusion. For guidance on shaping a thoughtful stance, [Ragan](#) and [PR News](#) provided insights on navigating these complexities effectively.

## CLIMATE REMAINS A CRITICAL ISSUE, DESPITE SHIFTING PRIORITIES.

While recent corporate discussions have been dominated by DEI and geopolitical uncertainty, climate remains a critical issue with profound economic and societal consequences. A report highlighted by [Grist](#) warned that climate shocks could cause up to a 50% loss in global GDP between 2070 and 2090, underscoring the severe financial risks of inaction. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the world's dependence on fossil fuels as a "Frankenstein's monster," emphasizing the urgent need for a transition to renewable energy. Despite these warnings, [The New York Times](#) reported that this year's discussions in Davos reflected growing reluctance among some executives to double down on climate commitments, with shifting political and economic pressures leading to more cautious approaches. As noted by [Ragan](#), communicators face increasing challenges talking about climate in a way that bridges ideological divides, highlighting the tangible business benefits of sustainability efforts.

**Bottom line:** Climate risk is business risk. Communicators and business leaders must frame climate commitments in terms of their direct impact on operations, energy resiliency, customer demand and growth — moving beyond ideological discussions to focus on tangible business outcomes. Clear, credible and commercially relevant messaging will be key to maintaining stakeholder confidence in an evolving corporate landscape.

## THE SHIFTING SOCIAL LANDSCAPE IS TESTING BRAND LOYALTY.

From platform upheavals to shifting policies, the social media landscape is in flux — forcing brands to rethink their approach to reputation management. [Harvard Business Review](#) explored the potential ripple effects of TikTok's uncertain future, particularly for brands that rely on the platform's hyper-engaged user base. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Meta's free speech policy shift is raising concerns about brand safety, with advertisers weighing the risks of looser content moderation. At the same time, according to another [WSJ](#) piece, Amazon's return to ad spending on X signals a potential reopening of the platform to major brands, despite ongoing concerns about its volatile reputation. [MIT Sloan Management Review](#) underscored how these shifts are making brand management more complex than ever, with businesses needing to balance visibility, risk and consumer trust. And as [PRNews](#) highlighted, in an era of political and social volatility, building brand capital requires thoughtful, values-driven decisions that align with long-term reputation goals.

**Bottom line:** "If the past months have shown us anything," says [Davitha Tiller](#), Head of Social and Integrated Communication, HAVAS Red and HH&Y, "It's that having a diversified social channel presence as well as a contingency channel, content and creator strategy isn't nice-to-have, but business critical."

## PERSONALIZATION AND CULTURE ARE REDEFINING BRAND ENGAGEMENT.

As consumer expectations evolve, brands that fail to tap into cultural moments and deliver personalized experiences risk losing relevance. [\*McKinsey\*](#) explored how the next frontier of personalized marketing requires brands to move beyond demographics — leveraging AI, behavioral data and predictive analytics to create meaningful connections. [\*Ad Age\*](#) highlighted how generational shifts are reshaping marketing strategies, with brands needing to adapt messaging and channels to engage Gen Alpha, Gen Z and beyond. [\*PR Daily\*](#) emphasized the power of lifestyle segmentation, showing how companies can use personalized content strategies to foster stronger employee and consumer engagement. Meanwhile, [\*Content Marketing Institute\*](#) underscored the importance of cultural intelligence in brand storytelling, revealing how brands that authentically align with cultural narratives are more likely to resonate and drive loyalty. As HAVAS Red's [\*Red Sky Predictions 2025\*](#) reinforce, the most successful brands will be those that master the art of blending culture and personalization, making every interaction feel both relevant and meaningful.

**Bottom line:** Brands that embed culture and personalization into their strategies will build deeper, more lasting relationships—whether with consumers or employees.