



An unfiltered look at what's percolating now

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

FREE SPEECH IS UNDER PRESSURE AFTER CHARLIE KIRK'S ASSASSINATION.

The September 10 assassination of Charlie Kirk, the 31-year-old conservative activist and co-founder of Turning Point USA, set off a chain reaction that few communicators could have fully anticipated. The nationally known figure who mixed politics, faith and youth outreach, was shot while speaking at Utah Valley University. In the days that followed, [The Washington Post](#), [Fortune](#) and many others documented how dozens of U.S. employees were swiftly fired or suspended over social posts — from dark jokes to nuanced critiques. High-profile cases included airlines, universities and tech firms, and even sparked federal calls to “name and shame” those criticizing Kirk, [Axios](#) reported.

The incident was uniquely American in its politics and First Amendment debate, yet the implications reach far beyond U.S. borders. Wherever companies operate, social platforms collapse the distance between personal and professional identity. Posts that feel private can instantly become corporate issues — whether the topic is violence, politics or cultural flashpoints. [Business Insider](#) reported that Disney's temporary suspension of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* triggered a rare bipartisan backlash, illustrating how threats to free expression can quickly magnify a brand crisis and travel well beyond national politics. Meanwhile [Bloomberg](#) shared Gap Inc.'s “[Let's Be the Bridge](#)” statement, encouraging constructive dialogue.

As [PRWeek](#) noted, even companies with robust crisis plans admitted they hadn't scenario-planned for an event of this kind. Meanwhile [Ragan](#) highlighted that the tragedy has accelerated employer efforts to clarify expectations for online conduct, urging leaders to communicate policies as a cultural norm rather than a punitive rule.

Bottom line: In an age when the personal is professional, social media blurs the line between individual voice and organizational reputation. Every organization needs clear, visible social media and conduct policies that set expectations inside and outside the workplace, plus a framework for when to speak or stay silent, and readiness drills for politically charged crises. Above all, consistency matters: values, not viral pressure, should guide the message.

CLIMATE WEEK PUT ACTION IN THE SPOTLIGHT, LASTING PROGRESS WILL HINGE ON WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

Climate Week in New York City once served as a powerful gathering to align agendas, forge commitment and signal momentum toward climate goals. In 2025, it remains a major convening moment — [Reuters](#) reported more than 1,000 events scheduled across the city, marking a record year. In parallel, U.N. climate leadership pressed nations to translate pledges into practical action, **(cont.)**

(Cont.) as highlighted by another [Reuters](#) piece, with Simon Stiell urging that “this new era of climate action must be about bringing our process closer to the real economy.” Yet the coverage and commentary reflect a growing tension: the promotional energy of the moment sometimes overshadows the harder work that must follow. Media voices have dialed up this critique, warning that the call to match promises with deeds is urgent and unmet. [Harvard Business Review](#) raised the question: “Are companies actually scaling back their climate commitments?,” arguing the optics of retreat may be misleading, but underscoring the risk that market actors assume silence or modest adjustments equal real de-emphasis. In parallel, [Sustainability Magazine](#) and [Forbes](#) flagged an overemphasis on carbon capture, business showpieces and a diffusion of focus across thousands of side events.

Bottom line: “I see Climate Week’s value in sparking dialogue, but real progress will depend on what happens after the headlines fade. That tension captures how the event’s purpose has shifted. Organizations and brands in sustainability should treat event weeks as catalysts, not endpoints. That means using them to galvanize investment, deepen partnerships, and build accountability systems that persist long past the press releases. If Climate Week can evolve to be less about appearances and more about action, it can still play a vital role,” explained [Joseph Giumarra](#), VP, Media Relations at HAVAS Red.

REDDIT IS REWRITING THE AI SEARCH PLAYBOOK — BRANDS THAT IGNORE IT RISKS DISAPPEARING FROM DISCOVERY.

In September, several stories spotlighted a surprising shift: Reddit is no longer just a fringe platform in the social media mix but rapidly becoming central to how AI-driven searches find and cite information. According to [The Times of India](#), Reddit now accounts for 40.1% of all citations in large language model (LLM)-related searches — outranking Wikipedia, YouTube, and even Google itself. [Entrepreneur](#) emphasized that Reddit is one of the key sources brands must be cited in to show up prominently in AI search results; its licensing of data to firms like OpenAI and Google has helped drive this rise in citation power. Meanwhile [Ad Age](#) reported that brands are reassessing Reddit’s role in their comms ecosystems — not just as a community hub but as a place that shapes how AI understands, surfaces and contextualizes their content. And, companion [Ad Age](#) piece spotlighted how companies like American Eagle, Mars and Kraft Heinz are investing in targeted ads and conversation-driven creative to strengthen AI recognition and drive measurable results. [Forbes](#) also joined in, urging that Reddit marketing might be the next big play, both for visibility within AI’s content ecosystem and for connecting with niche but active audiences in authentic ways. All told, the coverage makes it clear: the interplay between Reddit content and AI search/citation mechanics is forcing brands to think differently about where they appear — not just what they say, but whose voices (forums, subreddits or user-generated content, for example) are helping define their signals in the AI knowledge graph.

Bottom line: If your brand wants to stay visible in the AI-search era, you need to prioritize being cited (well) in Reddit threads, engage authentically in subreddits that matter to your category, track how your brand is surfaced via AI tools, and ensure presence and accuracy there. In practice, that means allocating resources to monitor Reddit-based sentiment and content, creating content or feedback loops that generate useful UGC, and ensuring your owned content is structured, answer-ready and aligns with the kinds of questions AI is likely to pull from Reddit or similar sources. Brands that don’t adapt risk being invisible in AI-powered discovery — even if they dominate traditional SEO.

AUTHENTICITY WINS AS EMPLOYEE VOICES NOW OUTSHINE BRANDS ON LINKEDIN.

Over the past month, LinkedIn has rolled out multiple shifts that are already reshaping what brand communications look like on the platform — and what CCOs and CMOs need to be doing to keep up. Among the biggest signals: [PR Daily](#) showed content shared by employees gets eight times more engagement than content from corporate brand pages, suggesting that authentic human voices now outperform polished logos. [Social Media Today](#) reported that LinkedIn is adding “Saves” and “Sends” to its engagement metrics in content insights, letting brands see not just who sees or likes a post, but who bookmarks it and who shares it privately — stronger indicators of content people want to revisit or pass along. Other supporting metrics added this year include “Profile viewers from post” and “Followers gained from post,” providing deeper insights into the content that not only resonates but drives people to want to connect. [Forbes](#) and [Social Media Today](#) further demonstrated that posting cadence matters: posting 2-5 times per week boosts impressions, and going higher ramps up reach even more.

“The past 30 days mark a turning point: metrics are shifting from surface-level engagement to signals of deeper influence, storytelling is moving from top-down brand broadcasting toward peer-level human voice, and frequency and authenticity are being rewarded by LinkedIn’s algorithm in ways that favor sustained, distributed participation over episodic campaigns,” explained [Colten Gill](#), Account Director, Social & Content at HAVAS Red. “The brands that will win are the ones that can most successfully lean into their employees’ passion as a way to not only amplify but energize conversations around the company.”

Bottom line: People are the engine of brand influence on LinkedIn. To stay relevant and trusted, brands need to invest in employee and executive advocacy, equip people to post more frequently (but meaningfully), track “bookmark” and “private share” engagement, and loosen the reins on brand voice enough to let authentic human imperfection come through.

LEADERSHIP STORYTELLING IS EVOLVING FROM POLISHED NARRATIVES TO LIVED SIGNALS.

The latest leadership coverage shows storytelling isn’t going away — but it is changing. In [Forbes](#) shared out storytelling basics every leader needs, from conversation-grabbing hooks and “crazy good” questions to the IRS (intriguing beginning, riveting middle, satisfying end) framework for speeches and everyday one-on-one moments. A related [Forbes](#) piece illustrated how sharing personal stories builds trust and helps teams navigate change, arguing that leaders who reveal their own journeys invite employees to bring their whole selves to work. [Entrepreneur](#) echoed that view, noting that most disengaged employees aren’t exhausted but disconnected — and storytelling at every stage of the employee journey can rebuild engagement. Meanwhile [Ragan](#) spotlighted how Microsoft blends leadership and employee voices, so that culture is defined not by a single corporate tale but by a network of authentic stories and measurable actions. Together, these perspectives point to a next era in leadership communications: less about perfect speeches and more about visible consistency between what leaders say and what they do.

Bottom line: For communicators, leadership storytelling now means more than crafting inspiring keynotes. It requires helping executives uncover personal truths, train for conversational storytelling and — equally important — audit the daily signals their choices send. In a noisy, skeptical world, actions and authentic microstories will carry more weight than any single narrative arc