

CUP OF CORPORATE COMMS

AN **UNFILTERED**
LOOK AT WHAT'S
PERCOLATING NOW



Below are key themes that dominated corporate communications news in March 2026.

Internal comms steps up as the new organizational superpower.

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK UR
SUPER-
POWER
IS?

Internal communication has emerged as one of the most strategically important functions across industries, so why is it so chronically underpowered? According to [Gallagher's 2026 Employee Communications Report](#), 61% of organizations still have no formal strategy around change communication despite ranking it as their most urgent need. This has left employees overwhelmed by message volume and under-informed about what actually matters, wrote [HR Dive](#). This gap is only widening as internal teams face shrinking budgets, small teams and rising pressure to navigate constant transformation.

At the same time, [PRSA](#) reframes internal comms as a superpower when done right — not by producing more content, but by orchestrating alignment, connecting internal influencers, clarifying priorities and ensuring employees deeply understand key decisions rather than just receiving information. In an environment where 3–5% of employees drive 90% of critical conversations, internal comms becomes the force that determines whether strategy is understood, trust is built and change sticks.

Bottom Line: Internal communication is no longer a support function — it's a lever of organizational performance, trust and change readiness. When companies lack structure, employees tune out, burnout accelerates, and leaders lose credibility. But when internal comms is treated as a strategic discipline — grounded in clarity, prioritization, human insight and real-time coordination — it becomes the connective tissue that drives better decisions, faster execution and stronger cultures.

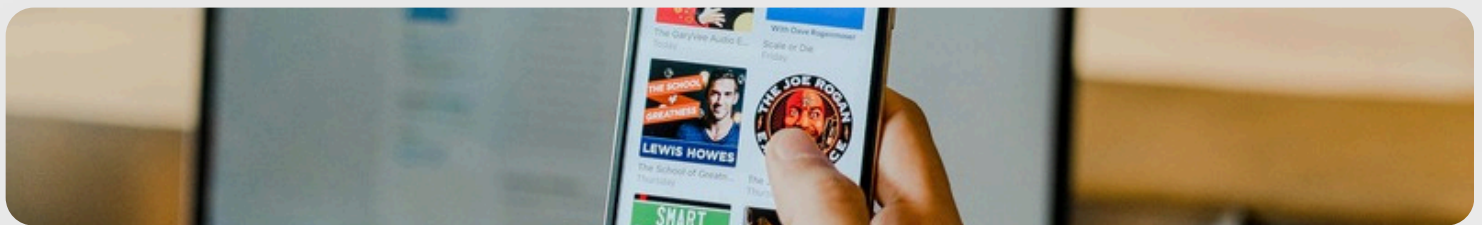
SXSW showed us the future of brand connection — from moments to immersive worlds.

Away from spectacle, toward substance — this year's SXSW signaled a decisive pivot in how brands build connection, reported [PRWeek](#). The brands that resonated weren't those staging splashy photo ops, noted [brandbeat](#), but those creating intentional, participatory, human-centered experiences that attendees could inhabit. Creator-powered storytelling accelerated this shift, with activations built not only for those physically present but for the amplification networks they influence. [BizBash](#) highlighted some standout activations, including the use of applied AI, which is shaping sports fandom, enhancing cultural participation and enabling adaptive environments that deepen emotional resonance. Shall we call it "vibe marketing"? [Fast Company](#) did, urging us to ditch KPIs (gasp!), instead embracing "gut calls, vibes and how anything is going to make someone feel in order for them to buy with their heart, not their heads."

Bottom Line: SXSW 2026 delivered a clear mandate: The future belongs to communicators who can orchestrate intelligent, immersive systems that invite audiences not just to view the brand, but to step inside it and feel something. Trust and attention gravitate toward brands that build cohesive narrative worlds and enable active participation.



Executives are now a media platform, and trust depends on how they show up.



The era of leaders staying behind the curtain is over. Executives have become active media platforms in their own right, shaping corporate reputation through direct visibility, real-time commentary and authentic engagement across LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube and emerging channels. [Chief Executive](#) showed that audiences increasingly trust insights from people, not institutions, because leadership voices travel farther and feel more credible when they reveal real thinking rather than polished talking points. At the same time, [Fast Company](#) made clear that visibility alone is no longer enough; stakeholders reward leaders who pair presence with accountability, clarity and substance. And inside organizations, as [MIT Sloan Management Review](#) noted, visibility has become the new currency of legitimacy, with internal and external audiences granting authority based on how transparently leaders communicate their impact and values.

Bottom Line: In today's transparency-driven environment, it's vital that organizations empower their leaders to communicate directly, consistently and thoughtfully. It is now a strategic trust asset — one that shapes culture, deepens trust, attracts talent and defines how the world understands the business. Silence or superficial content erodes confidence, while authenticity, accountability and demonstrated expertise convert visibility into credibility.

Sustainability still sells, but only when it's clear, human and personally relevant.

Across markets, a clear shift is underway: Consumers are demanding clearer, more human and more personally relevant communication when it comes to sustainability and purpose. In the EU, even as reporting requirements ease, 40% of companies plan to increase their investment in sustainability reporting, per [ESG Dive](#). In the U.S., despite backlash against “woke business,” and rising greenwashing lawsuits ([Law.com](#) wrote), behavior tells a different story: 40% of North American purchases are influenced by social and environmental factors, said [MediaPost](#), cutting across income and political lines. What's key here is clarity: Nearly half of consumers, and 87% of the most values-driven shoppers, walk away from products when sustainability claims are confusing or abstract. Meanwhile, brands that retreat into silence (“greenhushing”) fuel distrust at the very moment when 62% of consumers want more visibility into environmental and social actions, not less. At the same time, [Fast Company](#)'s analysis revealed a broader maturation: Sustainability as a label has become politicized, but purpose — deeply embedded in products, decisions and operations — is emerging as the more durable differentiator, especially as AI accelerates sameness across categories.

Bottom line: Consumers still care about sustainability and ethics, but only when it's tangible. “Me now, not we later” is winning. Brands that translate purpose into real human benefits — think health, safety, durability and transparency — will earn trust and growth. Those that retreat or rely on vague claims risk losing credibility with a broad, politically diverse audience.



AI is rewriting discovery, and earned media is becoming the new reputation infrastructure.

AI has upended the logic of search — synthesizing brand information without ever sending users to a website and shifting discovery away from keywords, rankings and website clicks toward trusted, third-party sources that large language models rely on to generate answers. [Harvard Business Review](#) found that LLMs increasingly replace the multi-step exploration journey with single-response answers, compressing brand visibility and removing the branded touchpoints companies once controlled. And the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that AI-powered search engines now elevate user-generated content, reviews and discussions on platforms like Reddit, G2 and Quora far more than traditional SEO signals. As [Forbes](#) noted, these systems lean heavily on credible, non-paid media, making earned coverage the scaffolding that shapes what AI “knows” and says about a company.

Bottom line: AI has made earned media the foundation of modern online reputation. Unlike paid or owned content, earned media creates the authoritative, third party signals LLMs treat as trustworthy inputs — influencing not clicks, but answers. To win visibility in this new landscape, brands must shift from optimizing for search to engineering for recall: clear language, quotable explanations, original data, expert voices and consistent third-party validation that AI can surface and reuse.