



# **The Role of Professional Communicators in the Year 2025**

**A Scenario Report for the  
Swedish Public Relations Association**

**11 October, 2000**

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# 1. The Assignment

## 1.1 Background and objective

On October 19, 2000, the Swedish Public Relations Association celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. In connection with this celebration, the association wished to not only look back, but also ahead. The association gave Kairos Future AB the task of helping to build a few scenarios for the future regarding the future role of professional communicators. The scenarios were to illuminate future challenges and opportunities for professional communicators. Kairos has been involved with analysis of the surrounding world, scenario planning and strategy work since 1993, and is among the leading companies in terms of a comprehensive view of issues concerning the future. In this assignment, Kairos' consultants acted as process-leaders and were responsible for guiding the Public Relations Association in the work toward creating scenarios. Kairos would also bring its general competence in the aspect of future into the work. Together with the association, the fundamental issue was formulated:

**How will the role of the professional communicator change in the next 25 years?**

This report comments the central features in this process as well as the result of the work, both in terms of trends and scenarios.

## 2. Method and process

### 2.1 About scenario planning

Attempting to depict an image of future conditions for professional communicators in Sweden may seem doubtful. Today, everyone is well aware that forecasts and predictions regarding the future are more often erroneous than correct.

Opinions differ widely in terms of what can happen during a time span, even as long as 25 years. Surely, when looking back at the previous century we can see that a great deal has happened, even in periods as short as a decade. As recently as the late 1980's, not many people could have predicted that the Soviet Empire would have ceased to exist within less than ten years. In the mid-1990's, several leaders within the IT industry doubted that the Internet would survive even the next three year. Reality, as we know, proved to be something totally different. At the same time, we, as human beings, are presumably just like we were thousands of years ago.

The objective in regard to building scenarios is not primarily to point out exactly what is going to happen, but rather to increase our awareness that the future may develop along several different lines.

The scenario-technique has developed primarily since the 1940's and been refined by, among others, Royal Dutch/Shell<sup>1</sup> in their strategic planning. Owing to its scenario planning, Shell was able to prepare for the oil crisis of 1973 as well as the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990 and Electrolux could similarly prepare

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for the unfortunate environmental repercussions of its own actions. Shell and Electrolux did not know this was going to happen but they knew it could happen.

Kairos has, in the same way, helped companies, organisations, authorities and departments of state to prepare themselves for the future with the help of analyses of the surrounding world and scenarios. Some epoch-making work was carried out for Skara, Götene and Lidköping who required help in structuring its future-project – and which resulted in, *Framtid i Samverkan*<sup>2</sup> (A Future With Co-operation) Other significant work has been Morgondagens Dagstidning (Tomorrow's Daily News) for the newspaper publisher, Morgondagens Tjänstesektor (Tomorrow's Service Sector) and Morgondagens Industrisektor (Tomorrow's Industry Sector) for the AMU-Group. IT och nationalstaten (IT and the Nation-State) for the IT Commission<sup>3</sup> and Futures for sustainable energy for Columbia's Department of Energy<sup>4</sup>.

A scenario planning process is a well-structured way to create images of the future. Thanks to its innate flexibility it is possible to conduct everything from a very superficial process in one afternoon to an extremely in-depth process for up to a year (as in the case of Columbia).

## 2.2 The process

The work was conducted in the form of seminars during four days in September, 2000, together with members of the Swedish Public Relations Association<sup>5</sup>. The size of the group varied from 8 to 12 people. The guidelines for scenario planning consist of involving key people in the scenario process and focusing on external information and external perspectives.

The fundamental method for scenario work is the TAIDA-method developed by Kairos Future. TAIDA stands for the following:

- **Tracking** - looking back, inward, outward and ahead!
- **Analysing** - what does this mean to us? Creating scenarios.
- **Imaging** - image of objective, what do we want to be?
- **Deciding** - What do we need to develop in order to be able to deal with feasible and desirable futures?
- **Acting** - what are the initial steps?

During this process, the focus of the work has been to track and analyse changes in the surrounding world and on creating scenarios.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Schwartz, P. *The art of the long view* (1991), or Heijden, K.v.d. *Scenarios. The art of strategic conversation.* (1996) or Lindgren, M. *Scenarioplanering (Planning Scenarios)* (1996)

<sup>2</sup> Lindgren, M. (1997). *Framtid i Samverkan (A Future With Co-operation)*

<sup>3</sup> Florén, P. and M. Lindgren (1998). *IT och nationalstaten. (IT and the Nation-State)* SOU 1998:58

<sup>4</sup> see <http://www.upme.gov.co/futuros/futuros.html>

<sup>5</sup> Participants: **Johan Ahlgren** Regional Social Insurance Office, **Kristin Blom**, Nacka Municipality, **Johan Bobert**, Hill and Knowlton Sweden AB, **Malin Engstedt**, Malin Engstedt Information and Illustration, **Annika Ewers**, Electrolux IT Solutions Inc., **Susanne Krutrök**, Scandinavian Leisure Group, **Rickard Naring**, Hewlett-Packard Sweden Inc., **Åsa Sjöblom**, Adcore, **Kicki Strandh**, Ntech Inc., **Gunilla Strömberg**, Department of Energy, **Margaretha Sjöberg**, the Swedish Public Relations Association, **Britt-Inger Bärman**, Project.

## 2.3 Tracking trends

### Method box: Trends

Trend inventory and world analysis is all about getting a bird's-eye view and identifying trends worldwide and locally, which could affect the issue at hand. Trends are patterns in current development, which may serve as a platform for discussion surrounding the future.



The surrounding world is the world, which the participant cannot directly affect. Changes in the surrounding world could have a substantial effect on their own operations. The local world is the sphere or platform where the organisation acts as the central participant. The participant has an influence, although it is limited and there are others with greater influence. The inner-world in the diagram above includes the participant's own organisation. Here, the participant has great influence while the inner world is affected by changes in the surrounding world as well as the local world.

The initial step in the process is to do a broad trend inventory. When the trends have been identified, their significance has to be ranked and those with the greatest influence on the issues in the particular time-perspective are selected. It is also important to pose the question of what the driving force behind the trend is, as well as what can be expected in regard to the long-range consequences of the trend.

At the first seminar on September 4, the participants were introduced to the work process and scenario method. The main focus was on finding the relevant changes (trends) that were decisively significant to the issue.

The participants identified a number of trends which, towards the end of the day, were reduced to ten certain trends and nine uncertain ones. On this occasion a participant analysis was begun as well, whose objective it was to identify all the

### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025

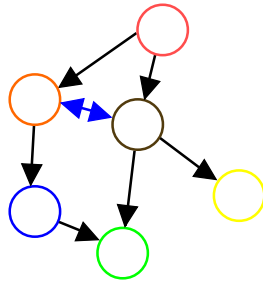
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participants that could potentially affect the role of the professional communicator in the future<sup>6</sup>.

## 2.4 Causal connections

### Method box: Causal connections

Observable trends are often dependent on one another. One method used to see how different trends affect one another is the cross-impact analysis. This analysis not only conveys an image of the interplay between trends but also identifies those which are dependant and those which are independent (those that are driven by other variables and those that are the driving force). By conducting a cross-impact analysis, the identification of key trends becomes more reliable. The analysis consists of giving points to each trend on the basis of the degree to which it drives each of the other trends.



In a so-called, causal diagram (illustration above) the strongest connection is subsequently indicated. A chart is thereby created showing the relation of dependency between the trends in the future landscape.

At the following meeting on September 14, a cross-impact analysis<sup>7</sup> was carried out from which was produced a causal diagram illustrating the connections between the trends. A cross-impact analysis contributes in helping the group to create a mutual standpoint and understanding of the inner dependency between the trends. The work proceeded with an in-depth study of the participant-analysis from the first meeting.

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<sup>6</sup> See supplement 1, participant-analysis.

<sup>7</sup> See supplement 3

## 2.5 Time axis – the certain development

### Method box: Time axis

In order to create a scenario of the future, it is essential to understand what can take place between now and the period of time that the scenario is to depict. Some courses of events are described based on the "certain" trends that have been identified. These are positioned on an axis stretching over the time period in question. The positions are based on assessments regarding the force of the trend, speed and relation of dependency to the other trends.



After identifying and analysing the trends, the examination of the possible developments up until the year, 2025 began. The anticipated development and direction of the trends as well as probable and decisive events were placed on a time axis extending to the year, 2025.

At the third seminar on September 22, emphasis was placed on continuing the work with the time axis, which had begun during the previous session, and starting the scenario work.

## 2.6 Scenarios

### Method box: Scenarios

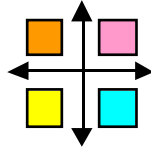
A scenario is not a forecast - a relatively predictable projection into the future. A scenario is not a vision, i.e., a desired future. A scenario is a qualified answer to the question, "What could conceivably happen?" or "What happens if...?". Thus, the scenario differs from both prognosis as well as vision, both of which have a tendency to conceal risks. The scenario form provides us with the possibility to deal with the risks. Thinking in scenarios helps us comprehend development's logic, driving force, key participants and our own possibility to influence. Furthermore scenario planning is an effective instrument to help us sharpen strategies, lay down plans for the unexpected and keep our eyes focused in the right direction as well as on the right issues. Some examples of the differences between forecasts and scenarios are as follows:

<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
Describes a probable future through single causal connections	Describes possible, conceivable overall picture
Indicates sure connections	A reasoning approach, accepting uncertainties.
Conceals risks	Illustrates risks
Detailed	Comprehensive
Static	Describes systems and connections
Quantitative	Qualitative
We need in order to make decisions	We need in order to understand what we are making decisions about.

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Thus, the objective with scenarios is not primarily to point out exactly what is going to happen. But rather to increase our awareness that the future could develop in various directions and through this, increase our readiness to act on the unexpected.

What distinguishes the scenarios from one another is the development within two areas in which great uncertainties prevail. These uncertainties form an axis in a, so-called, scenario cross. One extreme is depicted in each end of the axis. The effects of the extremes are analysed and are most often depicted in the form of a scenario in each corner. The certain development is in the background.



The differences between the scenarios are illustrated in a schematic comparison. Furthermore they are made even more vivid in the form of future stories dated 2025 from the various "worlds" represented in each respective scenario. Observe that each and every world described is a possible future development. One of these worlds could be a reality in the year 2025. However, it is just as likely that we will see a combination of several of them. Or something else, that we would have found inconceivable in the year 2000. The purpose of the scenarios is to create a readiness to act on the unexpected and sometimes inconceivable.

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At the third seminar, the foundation was laid for the initial experimentation with various scenario crosses. The group worked with the different uncertain trends, polarised them and used them as a basis for creating scenario axes. At the end of the day, the group had produced a scenario cross and described the characteristics of each respective scenario. This was accomplished by reflecting on the role of the professional communicator in these four different worlds.

At the final seminar on September 27, the scenarios were to be studied in-depth, described and given names. The uncertainties that had been selected were analysed once again. It was essential that the uncertainty be named in a manner that created an immediate understanding of the implications surrounding the scenario cross. After a brief discussion we were able to further clarify the significance of the respective polarities.

The scenarios were scrutinised in three different groups that were allowed to choose their own scenario with which to work. One of the scenarios was not chosen by any group. Kairos' recommendation here was to exclude that scenario and proceed with the remaining three. There is no end in itself to work with four scenarios. However, the important thing is to work with more than two scenarios so as to avoid creating a Utopia or a desirable vision or an undesirable one. More than two scenarios will provide more varied images of future worlds and is therefore more favourable to use as a basis for decision-making and as a ground for understanding.

Accordingly, the groups arrived at three scenarios, which will be described in part 4, "Scenarios 2025" Kairos has further elaborated on the scenarios as well as their background.

### 3. Analysis

Credible and realistic images of the future must be based on fundamental currents and changes in society and these are referred to as meta-trends. Kairos has compiled the most important currents, which in the long term will have an effect on the future. These forces are, so-called, push-forces since they push us in a specific direction, whether we like it or not. These currents reinforce the trends that were established during the seminars and can be found in section, “3.2 Trends identified by participants”.

#### 3.1 Assumptions on currents in society.

Significant currents in society can at times be difficult to define not least due to the fact that we live with them on an everyday basis. Many of the currents presented below may seem obvious, which is something positive because it gives us an indication that two important criteria have been fulfilled: Clarity and a long-term view.

The currents should be featured in different ways, depending on the established time perspective. More often than not, the short perspective requires more precision while the longer places greater demands on the imagination.

Two limitations exist regarding currents and these are presented below. These limitations recur in all studies of the future. First, the fact that they have their basis in the present means that a great deal could happen in the next 25 years. Second, many currents that haven't been taken into account could gain great significance. The first limitation, as in this case, can be handled with help of vivid scenario descriptions, which will add openness to the discussion and allow creativity and imagination to step in when the uncertainties become too great. The other limitation can be remedied in part, through knowledge of what currents are significant and also by evaluating and analysing currents using a well defined set of issues. Here, the latter limitation was dealt with by allowing the trends of the particular arena to take over when the currents seemed too generic and by providing a well-defined set of issues to go by.

- **Displacement of the feeling of belonging**

Up until now, the nation, region or village have been the supporting units for our identity. “Feeling at home” has been synonymous with a location. In recent years, however, this has changed as people travel more and various types of communication make it possible for them to maintain contact over great distances. The fact that more and more young people travel abroad for greater periods of time and even remain abroad after completing their studies is a reflection of this development, which we find creeping up on us. World citizens, who just one generation ago consisted of a small group of people, are increasing in numbers. More and more often people are not returning home because they long for their roots. They simply want to visit their friends. The feeling of belonging is shifting from having its basis in places where certain people are found, to having its basis on people who occasionally find themselves in certain places.

- **We are all consumers and the consumer is all**

Today the most explicit demonstration of power people can exercise is consumption. They choose what they want to consume and are becoming more aware that their consumption is also connected to their values. By consuming from selected companies or suppliers, they are benefiting certain participants and boycotting others. When they are dissatisfied with something they choose a new supplier.

Two clichés utilised in marketing today are namely, that modern economy has made the customer king and that people, to an increasingly greater extent, identify themselves with their consumption. This may sound commonplace, however, these assumptions could give rise to several consequences in regard to how people will consume and what demands they will make.

- **Modern forms of organisations**

Trade union developments during the previous century advocated for co-determination on the job. This has certainly taken root amongst employees working in modern organisations. These organisations are characterised by platitude, independence, flexibility and good possibilities for co-determination. Completely new organisations have also emerged in recent years, such as the virtual organisation and the network organisation.

Never before has Taylor's organisational model seemed more foreign and never before has the bottom-up perspective instead of top-down, gained so much space.

- **IT-ifying**

Soon, information technology will have affected just about every conceivable area. People are given greater opportunities to communicate with one another. The new technology is reducing the difficulties regarding geographic distance as well as time shifts and the amount of information is being limited. On the other hand, IT is more than simply new ways of doing the same thing as before. We have an entirely new arena in the shape of the Internet with rules that differ in many aspects from those in physical reality.

Today there are few people who haven't heard of the Internet and for many, e-mail is the most common means of communication. As far as the Internet, major changes are still taking place. We're moving from a "location" in which to find information to a "location" in which to carry out business or order products and services.

Perhaps in the future, we will act and live in a "virtual" life.

- **The post-industrial dilemma**

An evident consequence of modern society is that products are becoming less and less expensive while certain services are becoming more expensive, especially those services involved in the encounter between two people. The service and consultant industries are growing in relation to the production industry and the actual work is moving toward increasingly less utilisation of the hands and a greater use of the brain. It is unlikely that this development will subside. It will probably continue into the future.

- **Aging population**

The nativity rate in developing countries is dropping, or has stabilised and people are living considerably longer. Thus, the elderly are rapidly outnumbering the young. Should this development continue into the future, there will considerably fewer people supporting a greater number than in the past since a smaller proportion of the population will be of productive age.

The discussion involving what will happen when the large groups of people born during the post-war era reach retirement age is presently in its infancy. A few diffuse proposals exist indicating everything from raising the retirement age to opening the borders for immigrants. It is clear, however, that something will have to be done in the next decade to check this dilemma.

- **Changes in values**

Values in the Western nations have gone through a secularisation and religion and faith are becoming more and more separated from legislature and common ethics. A solid core of values appears to be shared by many and a majority of nations in the world have adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights. These general principles indicate a large consensus among people in the world regarding the broad outline for basic human values.

There are widely differing opinions regarding ethics and morals in what was previously an homogenous society. This diversity is of course the result of a growing cultural variety. Another large gap that has emerged in the post-war era exists between world relativists (who believe that there is no right or wrong) and world positivists (who believe there is a right or wrong). Although most people in their everyday life don't think in these terms, this distinction is actually quite tangible. It dictates what people regard as right or wrong and what they believe others should regard as right or wrong.

- **Growing internationalisation**

The world has shrunk. Not in size, perhaps, but in our conception of it. On a global level, national economies have grown considerably more dependent on the international arena. News reports supply events from the whole world. People travel more than ever, and the fact that young people stay abroad for longer periods of time is more a rule than an exception. The same stores and brands can be found in both Stockholm and Kuala Lumpur. English has become accepted as a world language for business and social interaction. The list of phenomena pointing in this direction goes on forever, and there is no indication that internationalisation will regress within the foreseeable future.

- **Changing our conception of knowledge in society**

While general knowledge is growing amongst people and many are well informed within their specialities and on broader issues, the knowledge gap is once again widening for the more vulnerable groups in society. A society, which a hundred years ago had few educated people and many with no education at all, was changed through general education. Due to this many people acquired a sound basic knowledge.

In today's society, more people than ever are well educated yet at the same time vulnerable groups are not being reached by general education. At one time society consisted of a privileged minority and a vulnerable majority. Today we have a society with many privileged and few vulnerable. It is becoming increasingly evident that knowledge today is decisive and necessary, although not the sole requirement for success within widely differing fields.

- **The power of the media is constantly growing**

The media has come to gain an almost monopoly-like relationship in regard to information aimed at people. Practically all the information people receive comes from various channels, and these are the media. In the absence of personal experience, people in an increasingly advanced and complex society will naturally be compelled to rely on second-hand information via information channels.

By virtue of its numerous channels, the media has a greater impact than ever on public debate. It is often worthwhile to question whether or not a great deal of what is, or is not being done (in both the private as well as the public sector) is only to appease the media.

Another dimension that makes the media so extremely powerful is of course the advantage gained in interpretation. Journalists choose to write about certain things from a certain perspective and present the information in a certain manner. Consequently, the media initiates the discussions then either keeps them alive or nips them in the bud.

- **The death of the ideologies**

The death of the ideologies has been proclaimed on many occasions and although this may be questioned it is quite clear that politics is moving towards single issues rather than a common ideology. To this day Utopia has not been actualised. Furthermore, the spirit of our times holds a strong scepticism towards consummate ideals of happiness. Instead, we place pragmatism on a pedestal. Politics is moving away from the role of ideologist, toward the role of expert. Generally speaking, it can be said that people are focusing a great deal less on ideologies and more on factual matters.

Research findings indicate that one reason participation in the elections between 1992-98 dropped by 10 % – which is the biggest drop since the emergence of democracy at the turn of the century – is the dissolution of norms in society – i.e., secularisation. People, to an increasing extent, feel less like Social Democrats, or members of the Liberal Party, according to Uppsala researchers, Jan Teorell and Anders Westholm (2/7/00-DN), and very few are prepared to wholeheartedly embrace a party platform in its entirety.

### **3.2 Trends identified by participants**

In the section above we have become acquainted with the most important and deep-rooted currents in society, which will have an impact on our future world. Building scenarios requires a stable and well-made foundation, which is achieved through identifying changes and describing the directions and area of the change.

One criteria in scenario planning is, as mentioned earlier, the involvement of key figures in the process. The key figures in this project have been today's professional communicators. During the seminars, the participants themselves, identified a number of important trends which affect issues concerning the future role of the professional communicator. Additional trends identified by members of the Swedish Public Relations Association were also incorporated into the analysis work<sup>8</sup>. Some of the trends mentioned below may be repetitions of those above but they are nonetheless essential to understanding the foundations of the scenarios.

#### **1. Increased flow of information**

The flow of information continues to increase with additional channels and media. Globalisation and technical development are powerful driving forces.

#### **2. Increased individualisation**

Individual demands are growing stronger and there is an increasingly greater assortment available in everything from toothpaste to automobiles. The development of the trend is uncertain yet determining, and therefore constitutes one of the scenario axes.

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<sup>8</sup> For additional trends, see supplement 2.

### **3. Fundamental weakening of today's political systems**

Democracy is at a cross-roads. Swedish election participation is dropping, as is involvement in political organisations. Points at issue are becoming less and less interesting.

### **4. New, powerful institutions are created – power is spreading**

New institutions are created to accommodate the needs of individuals and groups that the older institutions have not provided.

### **5. Increased number of channels**

The number of channels is increasing, including new types of media and technique, first and foremost, digitalisation.

### **6. Reputation capital gaining significance**

Companies are monitoring soft value results as well as economic. Issues regarding image are becoming more significant as are the brand, staff competence and other non-material values. The development of the trend is uncertain, nonetheless determining, and therefore constitutes one of the scenario axes.

### **7. Continued rapid development of technique**

Today's rapid development, especially in computer technique, continues at the same pace.

### **8. Global homogenising and local diversity**

Lifestyles and values tend to spread globally. We wear the same designer labels, eat the same types of food and utilise the same media. Thus, on a local level, there is a growing diversity in lifestyles as well as ethnicity. The development of the trend is uncertain, nonetheless determining, and therefore constitutes one of the scenario axes.

### **9. Level of education rising**

A greater focus on constant competence upgrading leads to an increased awareness and a higher educational level of the recipient. As consumers, we become more and more “educated” but also more and more particular. The development of the trend is uncertain.

## **10. Increasing internationalisation**

Increasing internationalisation/globalisation requires altered perspectives and new bases for strategic communication work. We are on the brink of change in society, which will affect labour, social community and values within the educational system, public administration, industry as well as research and development.

## **11. Increasing urbanisation**

More and more people relocate to metropolitan areas.

## **12. “Downshifting” turning into popular movement**

Stepped up demands and a feeling of time shortage makes some people wish to live a simpler life. The question of being constantly connected or having the chance to live a more relaxing life is arising for many people. Downshifting applies to material standards and tempo, e.g., choosing a smaller living space, fewer material things, less technology, or even changing profession or career path. The impact of the trend is uncertain.

## **13. Increasing power of spirituality**

The pursuit of meaning and balance increases in a rapidly changing world. The perception that material success does not lead to spiritual gratification is growing stronger and therefore we look inward instead of outward. The impact of the trend is uncertain.

## **14. The return of story-telling**

A diminishing significance of the media/channel is instigating a return to focusing on the actual message and the role of the spoken word. We have a longing for meaningfulness and significance. Stories create a sort of emotional context providing us with a sense of affinity, which in turn lessens our feeling of complexity.

## **15. The role of the professional communicator is integrated into other activities**

Information and communication are becoming increasingly important and more and more people become their own “professional communicators” and are carrying out the task previously handled by the professional communicator.

## **Post-industrial dilemma (Kairo's amendment)**

The post-industrial dilemma, or Baumol's disease. An evident outcome of modern society is that products are becoming less expensive to produce while other services are becoming more expensive, primarily those involving the encounter between two people. The service and consultant industries are growing in relation to the production industry and the process is moving

toward less and less use of the hands and greater use of the brain. It is unlikely that this trend will cease, but rather continue into the future.

### Increased competition (Kairo's amendment)

Globalisation, deregulation, maturing lines of business, increased development costs, shorter product cycles and additional channels create hyper-competition. The development of alliances is one way of controlling competition.

### 3.3 Causal analysis

The final number of trends turned out to be 15. Four of these were considered, so called, strategic uncertainties, i.e., their development was highly uncertain but of decisive significance to the issues.

The cross-impact analysis<sup>9</sup> indicates a relatively complex connection between the trends. The differences between the trends were comparatively minor. Both in terms of their role as a catalyst/driver as well as a dependent trend. This indicates that the world of professional communicators is characterised by a number of interacting factors that cannot easily be simplified or refined.

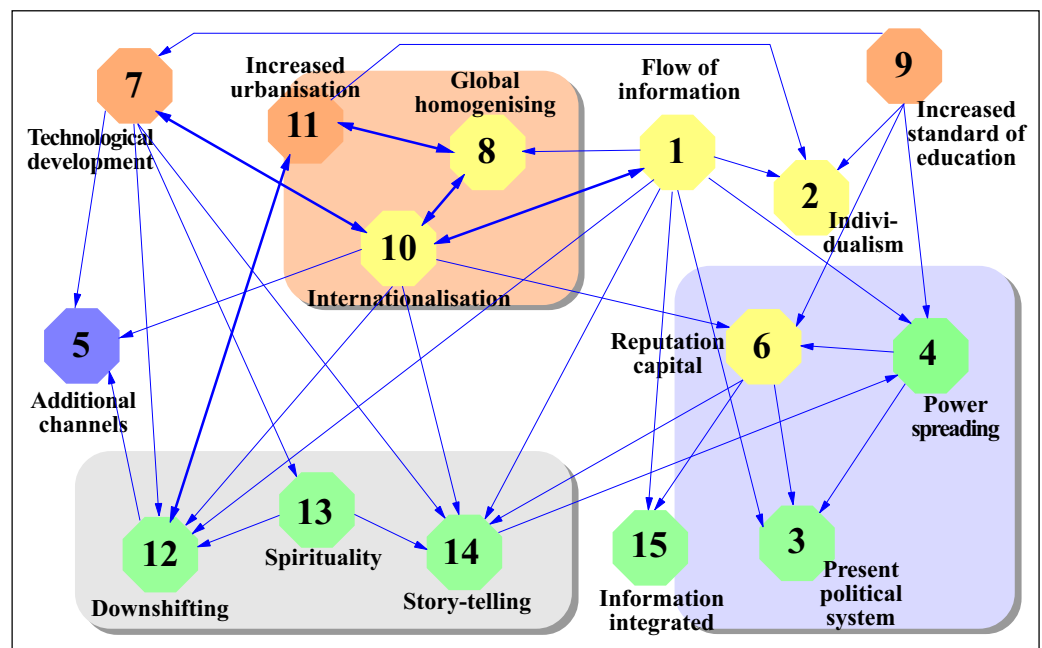


Figure 1. Causal loop-diagram indicates relation between trends.

<sup>9</sup> See supplement 3, cross-impact analysis

The causal loop diagram, a means with which to visualise the cross-impact analysis, provided the above image of driving forces and dependencies. The complex relationship of dependency between the trends and how these are arranged are clearly illustrated here.

The red = dependent (driving)

The green = independent (driving)

The yellow = link variables

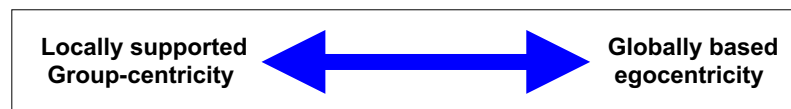
The blue = autonomous (independent)

A few clusters are noticeable in the diagram. One concerns globalisation and internationalisation (orange). Another deals with power and power shifting, (blue) and the third cluster can be construed as a type of counter-reaction (grey).

### 3.4 The continuation of the scenarios

The scenarios are based on two fundamental uncertainties concerning the future role of the professional communicator. Several other uncertainties, as well, could naturally have formed the basis of the scenarios. The fact that the group particularly chose the two shown below can be explained in the following way. First, these two uncertainties were perceived as having been highly central in forming the role of the professional communicator. Second, the scenarios that could be created with these two uncertainties were considered as both exciting and challenging.

The first uncertainty attempts to capture how people's values could develop in the next 25 years. We chose to focus in particular on whether or not people would choose to identify themselves with a physical location or if shared values, interests and lifestyles could form global sub-cultures.



*Figure 2. The first uncertainty and its two poles*

In the left-hand pole we came up with the alternative; “Locally supported group-centricity”. In this particular future, people have chosen to establish themselves in a physical location. Obviously people still travel and many reside for long stretches in places other than where they have their ties. Thanks to technology, they are still able to experience being a part of the local complex. As time goes on, deeper relationships emerge with others who have chosen the same geographical location.

More and more people choose to purchase products manufactured locally or by companies with local ties. A likely force in this development is a profound feeling of a fundamental rootlessness among people caused by their extensive travelling. A rootlessness that can be remedied to a great extent by choosing a permanent “home base”.

In the right-hand pole we have the alternative, “Globally based egocentricity”. The idea is that people here increasingly choose to relate to others with similar values and tastes and who enjoy the same music and have similar recreational interests. Since we are free to wander in and out of these groups, it is unlikely that any sort of deep relationships will result out of these encounters. The choice of group is nearly

entirely dependent on the individual's immediate desire. This by no means implies that it is impossible for the individual to have a moral attitude. It just means that the attitude is entirely the choice of the individual.

The other uncertainty describes two possible lines of development surrounding the trust capital between companies and their customers. The one polarity implies that the customer's focus is on the company's product. Who the manufacturer is or how it was made is secondary, either because we don't care or, because in 25 years we will have such favourable international legislation that companies couldn't possibly have extremely bad working conditions. One important reason for this development could, be, e.g., that companies claiming to be eminently moral are in reality as bad or even worse than other companies.

In the other polarity we have a future where the customer focus is on the manufacturer. The products are perhaps considered to be equal in quality, or this may be irrelevant. The important thing is that the company represents the right values. A driving force here could be that consumers, especially women, are beginning to realise and exercise their power as consumers.



*Figure 3. The other uncertainty and its two poles.*

By combining these two uncertainties we come up with the basis for the differences between the two scenarios. See figure 4.

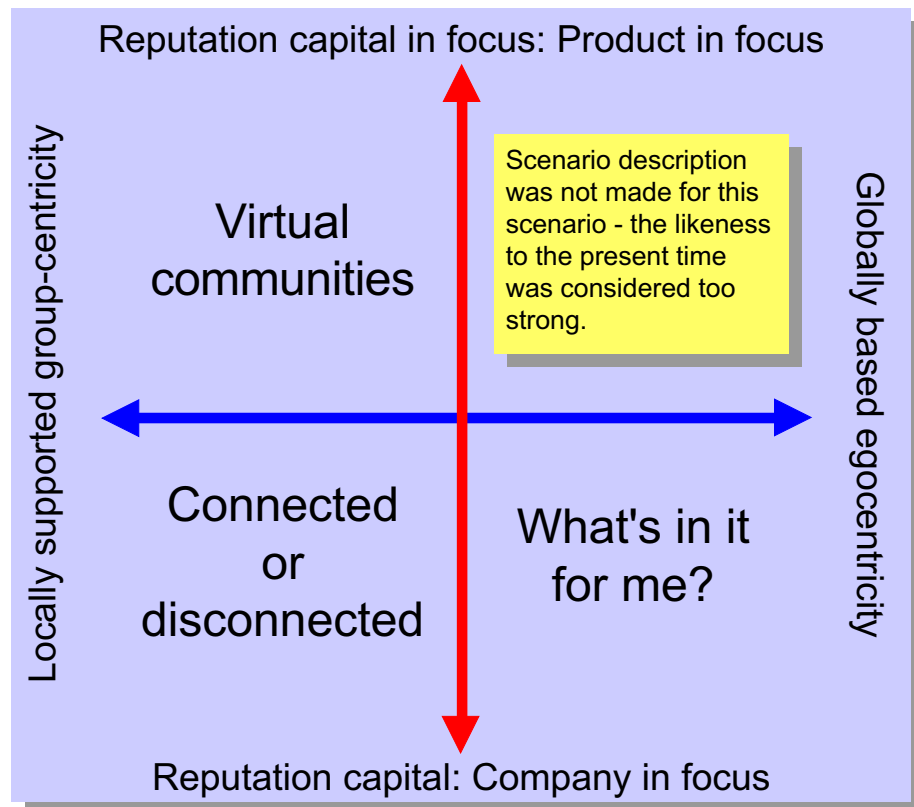


Figure 4. The scenario cross that forms the basis for the scenarios.

Obviously many changes will have been made by the year 2025, however, much will have remained the same. A few examples of areas expected to remain relatively unchanged are the following:

- Substantial travelling will continue, both globally and locally.
- Competition will continue to be severe.
- An abundance of products as well as information will be lasting

## 4. Result – scenarios 2025

### 4.1 The time axis

The time axis describes the path up until the year 2025 and is based on the development considered certain. The time axis is the basis for the scenarios, which in turn can be said to constitute on-the-spot accounts of the year 2025.

#### 2008

Technical development constantly provides us with new materials and solutions. In the West we are witnessing the beginning of “wireless everything”, i.e., the Internet,

#### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025

wireless, accessible everywhere, anytime. Many people already have intelligent homes, boats and summer-cottages. The flow of information is enormous. Mediating information, i.e., selecting and tailoring for certain target groups is a new field on the increase.

Individualisation is an escalating concept. Everyone can easily find out how others live, and we are free to imitate whatever lifestyle we like. Groups are formed across geographic boundaries. We become “we” with people all over the world leading similar lives as ourselves. This creates new antagonism between local groups, which gives rise to a growing alarm in society.

The political parties are weakening steadily. Network movements and single-issue movements emerge, pursuing issues on both a local as well as an international level. The same channels are applicable on different levels, from the Stockholm suburb to EU opponents in all of Europe.

Companies are beginning to assume the functions of public institutions, such as health-care, schools, etc. The new participants are competing on a free market, which makes the need for market communication greater. Civil power is replaced with consumer power. We “vote with our wallets” to an increasingly greater degree. Companies have to be credible, good citizens and spend a great deal of its resources on spreading their message.

## **2016**

The Internet has been expanded and is attainable everywhere. Info-mediation is a recognised field. The incessantly increasing urbanisation and exhaustive flow of information is creating stress and forcing people to move to the countryside. “Downshifting” is becoming increasingly common among those who have the ability to choose. A feeling of powerlessness is growing among those unable to keep up. The gaps in society continue to widen.

Corporations are rapidly developing on global markets. English has developed into a universal language spoken by the “elite” in all corners of the world. Fusions result in large organisations, which in turn split up and fuse with others, and so forth. Soft values govern communication since products are growing more and more alike and competition on the global market steadily increases.

Resistance movements against global capitalism are operating in “street parliaments” attempting to influence decision-makers and corporations through demonstrations and boycotting.

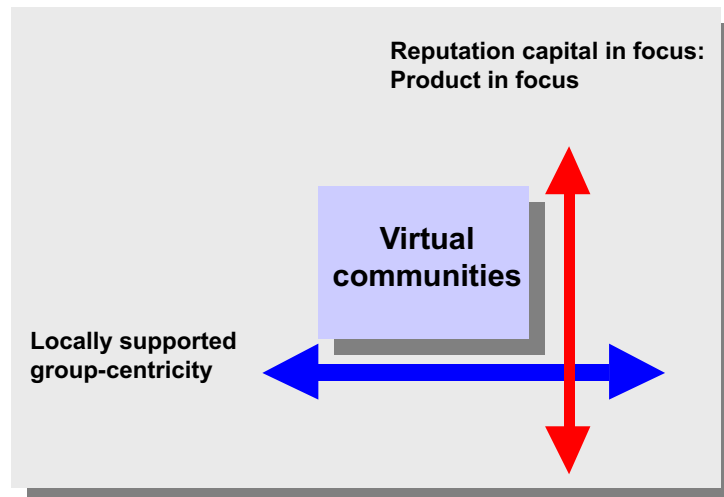
## **2025**

(In Sweden) everyone is using digital services for everything. Electronic services are conducted entirely without human involvement and computers communicate with computers to an ever increasing degree. Information is being screened so efficiently that random-choice functions are built into the systems in order to surprise us occasionally – surprise-on-demand.

A new spirituality becomes a counter force to global individualisation and consumerism. This spirituality is supported by the now powerful global network initiated in the Attac-movement around the turn of the new millennium.

With these images in mind of the certain development up until the year 2025, it is now time to pay a visit to the three different worlds (scenarios) worked out in the project.

### **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**



## 4.2 Virtual communities

The plane is circling round and round over Mälardalen. We're waiting for our turn to land on Skavsta's heavily trafficked, third landing strip. In the meantime, I'm gazing down at Greater Stockholm spreading out beneath me. 25 years have passed since I was last here and a great deal has changed. Especially the people who have chosen a new way to live their lives. It was here in Stockholm where the first, so-called, "virtual communities" were created about 15 years ago.

Up until 25 years ago, I lived in Stockholm and worked as a professional communicator for a large company. Now, I've been working in many other countries, primarily in Asia and I am here today on a formal trend-spotting mission, in order to gain an understanding of, as well as describe, a phenomenon presently spreading around the world.

My first stop is that which today is referred to as "The South End Virtual Parish". This is where it all began. I'm going to meet Sofia, the parish alderwoman who has been part of it longer than anyone. I take the underground to our meeting since private motoring including rental cars has largely been prohibited in the South End.

*Sofia, would you mind telling me how it all began?*

You could pretty much say that it began as early as the 1960's. Many of us born in the 40's shared the experience from 1968 and onward, of a new feeling of community and solidarity. Many young people lived in communes and wanted to create a new world, however, communal living didn't last very long. When the time came to slow down in our careers and our parental responsibility had diminished, the dreams of an alternative lifestyle began to grow anew. By now, however, we had grown a bit more realistic, skipping the more far-out whims and instead explored our way onto new avenues. A lot of young people felt the pursuit of material assets had reached exhaustion. Having more possessions wasn't going to lead to a happier or richer life.

*Then, what happened?*

The leaders in local government saw what was about to happen and were wise enough to support the positive developments. Perhaps in some ways it was due to

### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025

the fact that several politicians with clout were actually involved themselves in what was taking place here in the South End. Concurrent with finding ways to collaborate and making decisions on a local basis, we were delegated more and more responsibility. The exciting thing is that we managed to assume these various areas of responsibility without creating a lot of bureaucracy or formal institutions for decision making.

*What exactly is a virtual community?*

A virtual parish is a geographic location, a village, a town district or something else to which a number of people have chosen to connect. Some reside there permanently while others come and go. Still others live in other places most of their lives, e.g., abroad, but feel they belong in this particular place. The community has always primarily been a social construction. One important reason for the emergence of the virtual communities was that so many people were leading such transient lives. In order to manage living in a global world with the entire earth as your place of work, it is necessary to have a place you can call “home”.

*How do you keep in touch with your community?*

On the one hand, there is a constant flow of information from the community to anyone who wishes to take part in the information. Everything that happens is put on the net, as text, sound or most commonly, video reports. If you want “live” contact you can connect with the numerous cyber cafés in the community. There you can be a virtual guest, talk with other guests, both real and virtual. Most meetings held within the community are held in one of the larger cyber cafés. You can be physically present at these meetings but many people also take part virtually as, so-called, avatars. Since VR technology has developed so rapidly and provides such a vivid feeling of presence today, there isn't much difference between taking part in reality or virtually, except, of course, you can't enjoy the coffee aroma (laughter).

I extend my thank yous and wander off to the next meeting. One of the first international companies to adapt to the virtual parishes was P&M. I've been given an interview with Hanne, their professional communicator.

*How is your way of working affected by the virtual communities?*

In several ways. We can't very well deviate too much from our line of concept, nor is it necessary. It's more about thinking on a local level, adding one or two local products to the ordinary group, choosing the proper tone for the store (both physical and virtual) so people will feel they're inside P&M in the South End and not in any old five and dime store. Then again, 80 or 90 percent of the items sold are part of the global collection. The important thing is to try to create a local feeling and incorporate at least a few local products, colour variations and models. We don't have to try to meet the needs of every customer. Right now it's enough to accommodate the needs of this community.

*What is the biggest difference now in comparison to how things were before?*

The biggest difference is that local companies and stores have been given back an important role. We've also tried various ways of communicating with people here. We considered it a great advantage should this prove to be a way to reach the right people in the future. As it is today, it's nearly impossible to reach the right people with the right message. We've also realised the great value of placing at least one or

## **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**

a few business operations within the most strategic communities. If you can succeed in getting at least a few people to feel that the products have local ties, the chances for creating their much coveted loyalty are good, and this is something everyone strives for.

Hanne has to rush off to the next meeting with a few local designers. It is 2: PM and a press conference in Terinkeby I don't want to miss starts in an hour. Tensta-Rinkeby was designated as a parish in 2015 by the name of Terinkeby. I'm fortunate to be there in good time before the venue becomes packed with curious journalists and professional communicators. The Managing Director of Terinkeby, Katja, also a professional communicator, approaches the podium. Proudly, she looks out at the crowd that has come from all parts of the Western world to hear about the successful concept of Terinkeby.

*Tell us about the development of Terinkeby.*

About 20 years ago, the inhabitants of Tensta and Rinkeby were becoming annoyed at always being singled out in the media and in the minds of others as a problematic suburb. Simultaneously, the number of people moving into Stockholm was growing astronomically, intensifying the need for homes as well as work spaces in Greater Stockholm. None of the established political parties had, around the time of the millennium shift, seriously assimilated the new Swedes in the political agenda. Furthermore, many employers stood in the way of the assimilation.

At this time, Korsetten, (The Corset) which was started in the 1990's by a small group of immigrant women who made various products based on the tradition of their native cultures, was flourishing.

Success came quickly as the market appreciated the global view combined with strong, local ties. The Corset is today called Under-Bodies Franchising and is the community's leading company. Today, Under-Bodies offers a range of products from industries related to provisions, restaurant, textile and clothing, the latter being in the shape of UB with local designers throughout the world.

*How many are living here today?*

1 million inhabitants live in the Terinkeby satellite today. The expansion of the EU in 2015, including Eastern Europe, Russia and Turkey resulted in a substantial relocation from these countries. A great number of different cultures and religions exist in Terinkeby today.

The Board of Integration moved to Terinkeby 15 years ago and, today as you know, in the year 2025 it no longer exists. For Swedes, Terinkeby has come to be an example as well as the "perfect society".

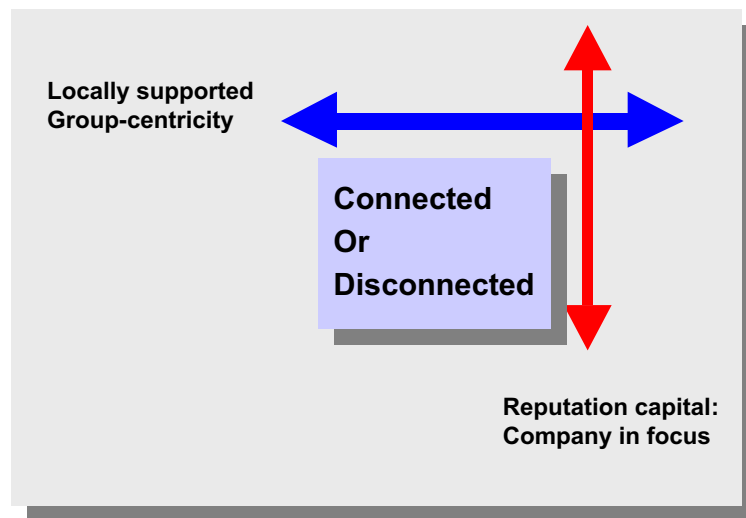
*What strategy have you followed?*

We've been working extensively to counteract all forms of social maladjustment, homelessness and unemployment. We opened our doors to everyone not welcome or unable to afford to stay in the other parishes. We put people to work and focused on helping them realise their intrinsic value and to employ their special know-how. In this way, the family has once again come into focus in Terinkeby. However, the family in Terinkeby is not separate from other community activities. Business life is influenced by the fact that personal relationships are important. The outdoor market is once again a place where personal encounters are in focus. Furthermore, it provides the possibility to feel, test and compare different products.

## **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**

The role of the mediator has been vital in the surveying of societal information on a global level and serving as a link to local society. But also in mediating between different groups of people and national conflicts. We have all the experience we need here, says Katja.

My digital note-taking assistant is blinking, telling me that my flight is one hour delayed. I decide to take the opportunity to explore the outdoor market.



### 4.3 Connected or disconnected

Willa, 16 years old, lives in the Republic of Kungsholmen. Her mother, Anna is an on-line professional communicator at Sony Hospital and is active in Kungsholmen's Community of Values, in the Community of Ethical Digital Co-operation (previously referred to as a local, political interest association). The family is presently going through a crisis since Willa has decided to purchase a one-year prescription of silence, which means cutting the entire home off from digital interaction. Today, Anna's life is completely digitalised. Her profile is public property and she can be constantly reached by everyone, both as a consumer as well as a professional communicator. Previously, Willa's everyday life was connected as well. She used to play "Live Paintball". As long as her friends were in the same "macrocell" in the vicinity of Fridhemsplan, she could be shot down at anytime. She subscribed to music and that which was previously referred to as a cell phone, informed her about what she needed and when. Yesterday, for example when Willa walked past the gym, the cell phone drew the conclusion that since Willa's mother had bought nothing but fast food in the past few weeks and Willa had been spending too much time on movies and games, her health was presently in danger. She should definitely take advantage of the discount being offered this week on the workout class. Willa has had quite enough. Willa's new motto is "It's out to be on and it's on to be out".

"Anna online" is a world citizen, while Willa has experienced the back-alley of a constantly connected society. Willa is beginning to understand what it means to be able to turn off. From having been seen merely as a consumer, she can return to the important things in life: the right to her own time, the right to eliminate "psuedo-experiences". Willa is going to try talking and physical relationships instead. This all feels very new to her and she is extremely excited. Apparently, Willa's minor choice comes with major repercussions. People like Willa are the reason why the local, physical market is commercially practicable. Besides the global digital supply, there is also Kungsholmen's product and service supply. For example, Sony manages all social services and Kungsholmen's moving company makes sure that products and services accommodate the needs and values of the people of Kungsholmen. The companies' product supply is represented locally, however, logistics, sales and other services are carried out on a joint basis with other participants.

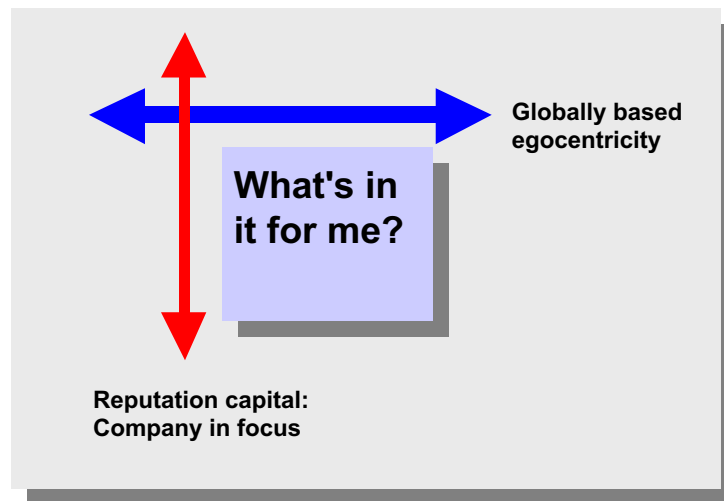
#### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025

The Internet is no longer connected to an apparatus, such as a computer or a cell phone. It encompasses all of society. It can be found in machines, walls and in public places. Everyone can be reached everywhere. An enormous reservoir of information exists, of which a part is always erroneous. Mass communication and mass production as well as the possibility for companies to meet individual needs becomes a paradox. By linking and co-ordinating lifestyles, patterns of consumption and those of geographic movement, companies are able to individualise products and services regardless of time and space. The consequence being that individuals generally become mere consumers. Counteracting this development are people like Willa, who no longer have the energy or the will to take part in the mass supply. She's finding her place in her own neighbourhood and the local community is becoming more important to her.

The incapacity of world politics to accommodate people's need for human interaction has caused Willa and others like her to seize control of their lives and neighbourhoods. Willa wants to live her life so she chooses to turn off. If individuals cut off the channel for monitoring, the opportunities for companies to individualise their products will be shattered. Thus Willa's choice to buy silence will have great repercussions for the knowledge concerning the lives of Willa and Anna. Those who have turned off must be brought back on-line at all costs. Anna, as a professional communicator and lifestyle mediator is working hard to keep everyone on-line and now her own daughter has betrayed her. Professional communicators are managing a company's trust capital as well as articulating the messages directed toward consumers and citizens. The company's values and trust capital influence consumer behaviour. The global market represents an enormous supply and all products and services are similar and obtainable for everyone. Competitiveness lies in the trust capital and the added value that common values entail. Consumers exercise power by way of the digital world, but also, like Willa, by turning off. By interpreting the needs of the consumer and shifts in values, the professional communicator places demands on the concrete actions of a company, e.g., on the products offered. By extension, the professional communicator is a representative for the consumers and citizens. They strive to make the company optimum by making sure it is concurrent with time. A total consumer orientation.

A fundamental occupational conflict arises between the professional communicator addressing those constantly "on" and the professional communicator who would like to see turning off as an alternative. Accordingly, there is a conflict of interests resulting in two competing groups in the same profession. For example, Anna's best friend Felix, is a lifestyle mediator as well. In his efforts to communicate with individuals who have chosen a disconnected lifestyle, he utilises means to communicate considered traditional, or by some, even old-fashioned. Felix isn't the only one that Anna has to argue with now that Willa has decided to "disconnect".

– Teenage rebellion, thinks a frustrated Anna.



#### 4.4 What's in it for me?

During the scenario work we found a brochure for educational courses from the year 2025.

##### ***Education in global egoism puts focus on ethics***

We offer you a training programme that will help you to face today's multifaceted and hard to please individuals. More and more people are asking themselves more frequently, "What's in it for me?". Affiliation with a global lifestyle is more important than affiliation with a geographic location. This puts a great significance on brands as well as their trust capital. Customers are increasingly more particular and demanding and they expect quality and ethical responsibility from companies and organisations, which in turn, are expected to behave as good world citizens with the right attitude. When quality and design are common characteristics, your only chance for differentiating is to appeal to the recipient through the power of storytelling and ethics.

The mobile marketplace offers the consumer what he wants at the moment - this enables individuals to cross freely over style boundaries. The extremely volatile consumers maintain a firm fundamental style, however, frequently shift between various attributes and are therefore difficult to identify. Companies invest substantial amounts of money monitoring the world, analysing lifestyles and the behaviour of individuals in their efforts to hit the mark. The worst that can happen would be communicating with aware individuals in the wrong language, or offering the wrong products.

Competition is deadly. The companies must have at least one representative for each style "on the inside" in order to be able to act efficiently and hit the mark in the target groups. As you may realise, this creates a complex world difficult to manage and furthermore, the companies' internal world becomes more and more difficult to handle. Paradoxically, diversity is a competitive advantage in our egocentric society. Companies have to keep up constantly. A sound monitoring of the world is a must, both for the consumer and producer – and their eyes are on each other.

##### **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**

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Companies must always send the right signal to the market so as to be perceived as “right” by as many groups as possible. Consumers engage ethics and style mediators to help locate suppliers with the right values and the right label – as we know, the price and quality of a product are no longer means of competition.

The privatisation of the public sector has resulted in a sea of choices. It is imperative for these operations to win the confidence of the customer. For example, regarding homes for the elderly, companies are fighting over the large groups of people born in the middle of the last century. No one is prepared to put their mother – or their heavily taxed money – in just any home for seniors. It must have a good reputation and naturally other residents from the same "interest club" that mom belongs to. Group living has acquired a new meaning. Particularity and precision are the primary characteristics of many of these groups.

### ***Would you like to be a guide to the galaxy?***

The product supply as well as information flow are massive and the channels are countless. The information universe is infinite. Individuals have rationalised their searching and selecting with the help of information mediators and intelligent agents. Companies are even turning to information mediators, both internal and external. The great flow of information is well adapted too; we seldom receive information we don't want. Random-choice functions are built into the systems for anyone occasionally wishing to be surprised, however, these do not provide sufficient stimuli. That is why we know that some people are beginning to go back to less digitalised information. As a professional communicator, you have to be able to reach them as well. You have to be a story-teller and entertainer.

In this society, the professional communicator has an extremely advantageous labour market, but also a cumbersome and highly challenging responsibility as a sort of guide to the galaxy. Our educational programme offers you the best preparation for the challenges facing you as a professional communicator.

The programme is put together in the form of modules and you can create your own unique education based on interests and needs.

### ***Courses***

- round-the-world monitoring, navigation and coolhunting
- rhetoric and the art of story-telling
- anthropology, ethnology and religion
- information mediating and conflict training
- language and personal development
- ethics and brand building
- psychology and leadership
- pedagogy and personal styling
- sociology and global economy
- drama, humour and positive thinking
- trend analysis and statistics

### **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**

- media and the science of communication
- design

***The entrance requirements are tough. You must:***

- feel you are a citizen of the world and have a characteristic lifestyle
- be broadminded, curious and have social competence
- have a sound sensitivity, ethical awareness and dare to take responsibility
- be versatile, creative and entertaining

Interviews and tests for selection by appointment Mon-Wed, between 10 A.M. and 10 P.M. (Attention! No virtual contacts will be accepted in the initial phase) You choose how long and at what pace you wish to study. Examination effected in the form of accomplished and salaried work on the market

## 5. Closing words

This report has described method, background and the scenarios that have been put together to illustrate three possible futures for professional communicators in the year 2025. It is perhaps unlikely that any of the above scenarios will actually take place, instead we may see the realisation of portions of the scenarios. Feel free to use the scenarios as a basis for discussion surrounding the future role of professional communicators. The scenarios could also help you make decisions on which direction to take in the future.

Good luck!!

# Supplement 1

## Participant analysis

An analysis of participants was carried out for the purpose of obtaining a general view of the participants and interested parties that could affect the development of the role of the professional communicator. In addition to naming the participant, the analysis also defines the specific objective of the participant, the means with which the objective could be met as well as the strength of the participant. This creates a basis from which to elucidate the possibilities to affect and which of these possibilities that could affect the professional communicators' development of their role.

The scale below, 1-3 states the following connections: 3=strong, 1=weak

### Politicians

**Objective:** *Common welfare of society. The will and prosperity of the people.*

**Means:** *Legislated law enforcement, general elections and taxes.*

**Strength:** *in theory 3, in practice 1 (uncertainty in group).*

### Professional associations (e.g., the Swedish Public Relations Association)

**Objective:** *Enhancing collective professionalism*

**Means:** *Lobbying, competence upgrading and network.*

**Strength:** *indirect: 2, direct: 3*

### Unions

**Objective:** *Favourable/equal working conditions, represent members.*

**Means:** *Negotiations, strikes and other offensive action.*

**Strength:** *in practice: 0, in theory: 2*

### Technique developers and innovators

**Objective:** *More technique*

**Means:** *Technical expertise, technique is the same as development and success, economy.*

**Strength:** *Year 2000: 3, Year 2025: 1*

### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025

### **Partner network**

*Objective: Increase competition.*

*Means: Unique competence and reputation capital.*

*Strength: in theory and practice: 2*

### **The market**

*Objective: Create added value and fulfil needs.*

*Means: Consumer power and freedom of choice.*

*Strength: in theory: 3, in practice: 2*

### **Other professions**

*Objective: Power and honour.*

*Means: Broader competence and clear identity.*

*Strength: in theory and practice: 2.*

### **Professional communicators themselves**

*Objective: Professional pride, power.*

*Means: Network, moral education and output capacity.*

*Strength: in theory: 3, in practice: 1*

### **Clients of professional communicators**

*Objective: To fulfil business objectives.*

*Means: Money, competence and reputation (= absolute power).*

*Strength: 3*

## **Mass media**

*Objective: Make money, investigate, amuse and provoke.*

*Means: Influence of editorial office, advertisement sales.*

*Strength: Independent image, public contact.*

## **Management groups**

*Objective: Generate profits and economise.*

*Means: Influencing public opinion, internal information and brand.*

*Strength: Power of decision-making.*

## **The Swedish Public Relations Association**

*Objective: Strengthen the role of the professional communicator.*

*Means: Network, education, research, illustrating and clarifying.*

*Strength: Members, legitimacy and competence.*

## **Customers**

*Objective: Consumer benefit.*

*Means: Consumer power (personal financial interest).*

*Strength: Opinion can be influenced by many.*

## **Training programs for professional communicators**

*Objective: Many graduates, high quality.*

*Means: Research and theory development.*

*Strength: Knowledge.*

## **Marketing managers**

*Objective: Sell and generate attention.*

*Means: Budget, advertisement and publicity.*

*Strength: Result driven activity, i.e., easy to measure performance.*

## **Supplement 2**

### **Additional trends**

The Swedish Public Relations Association has contributed with the additional trends below. The significance of the trends has been weighed into the discussion by the working group. The trends are to a certain extent a repetition of already identified trends.

#### **Fewer strategic professional communicators**

Information on a strategic level is to a great extent passed on to various types of leaders - not only to the head of communication.

#### **Internationalisation**

The growing internationalisation/globalisation requires altered perspectives as well as new starting points for strategic communication work. – we are facing a process of change in society that will affect labour, social community and societal values within the educational system, public administration, industry, R&D, etc.

#### **Depopulation of rural areas, overpopulation in metropolitan areas**

#### **Increased specialisation in jobs**

#### **Concentration on metropolitan areas**

#### **More and more people moving to metropolitan areas**

#### **Professional communicators growing in numbers and significance**

The number of formally educated professional communicators will increase and the significance of their work will be given greater value.

#### **Dualism in society**

Dualism in society is growing like an avalanche. More and more people are given the chance to influence on both a financial and political level.

## **Everyone is a communicator**

IT development is bringing communication into focus. From having been about technique, the development is now moving toward CRM (Customer Relationship Marketing), communication and target group adaptation.

## **The role of the professional communicator of trends in the year 2025**

### **The race for relations**

We are witnessing a rapidly accelerating race for relations. Companies are struggling to establish, maintain and strengthen relationships. This takes place in a strategic global arena, where competitors are becoming increasingly aware of the strategic nature of their assets. Companies are also being valued more and more, according to the quality and volume of their relationship portfolios.

### **Collective capitalism**

The value creating process can no longer be defined as enclosed and sequential, where players monopolise different stages in the value chain. For today's companies, innovation is no longer simply an internal concern; it happens at interfaces which are both multidisciplinary and unhindered by organisational boundaries. Companies are being challenged to navigate the paradox of co-operation and competition.

### **Always on – No strings attached?!**

Whereas individuals will have 24-hour access to digital channels wherever they are, individuals themselves are potentially accessible, regardless of time and space. This opportunity is very likely to entail a change of habits for the individual due to new devices and services. However, in tandem with this – and perhaps because of the potentially deep impact on everyday life – a number of concerns have been raised.

### **New Business Launch**

Only the digital can play! Experienced leaders in the economy have recognised the cost-cutting and revenue-generating potential of going digital. But this is not as easy as taking a walk in the park. Apparent chaos, the need for speed of action to seize opportunities and avoid pitfalls, and the sheer multitude of issues cutting across almost the entire organisational fibre – all require wise, resolute and courageous decision-making. Digital change means high pressure.

## **The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025**

### **Surviving on invisible capital**

Vital human capital, perceptions about companies and innovation: today's key assets are often impossible or at least, very difficult to own, manage and measure. In the sense that they are not physical, such assets may be said to be almost nebulous. Nevertheless, in them lies the key to corporate survival, for just how do we manage a factory that is practically invisible?

### **Aggregation and disaggregation**

On the one hand, companies more and more recognise the need to focus, in order to provide goods and services that really stand out in the evolving, global environment. This leads to a disaggregation of products and services. On the other hand, the role of the customer-wise aggregator is also growing in importance. Fast compilation and the launch of offerings are becoming increasingly vital.

### **Doing the right things in the right way**

In the days of "defined business", business innovation was about efficiency – how to do things in the right way. Then speed, complexity and the gold-digger mentality of the Internet economy combined to create a climate where "land-grabbing" and diminishing time for marketing were paramount. The focus changed instead, to the question: what are the right things to do? Are we even in the right industry? Today, companies are experiencing a painful challenge which both questions their existence *and* the way in which they manage that existence. They need to do the right things in the right way.

### **New infomediaries**

The Internet has enabled a new kind of player to emerge – the infomediary. By aggregating and structuring information, bringing buyers and sellers together and facilitating payment, a number of different infomediaries are offering virtual marketplaces on the web. The change is beginning to be felt. Infomediaries are altering previous, traditional trade routes. Power balances are being upset by factors such as price transparency and ease of access to larger markets. Companies are therefore facing dramatic change.

### **Concept export**

From e-trade to Idea-trade! The first local or regional movers on the Internet have recognised that, in many instances, they have products with a large global potential. Teams with expertise gained at regional level can easily be flown in to set up operations in another country. In the Scandinavian region, lack of market volume is forcing new entrepreneurs out into the wider European arena. At the same time, competition for the human capital of these teams is growing.

### **Blending business and being**

Nowadays, companies tend to be more like collective personalities. Commercial players describe themselves in terms of personal traits, whilst the highly valued human capital teams more commonly act and consider themselves as brands. Positioning, profiling and image- building are the norm for today's human capital. Individuals are becoming more sensitive and selective, but less loyal.

### **I think therefore I am**

Companies will not exist in the way we know them today. Rather they will constitute an illusion of attributes such as reputation, knowledge, hype and myth.

### **Double existents, or split personality?**

A while ago every thing was dot.com. The trend today is to be present in real life. In the future neither will do. Companies will have both a physical and a digital life. The key is to integrate them.

### **The stakeholder blur**

Situational aspects characterise the relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders. Employees buy stocks or participate in warrant programs, clients/consumers contribute to the product development process, owners are clients, companies get paid in shares. The stakeholder model as we know it is blurring. People will appear in a wide variety of roles facing the organisation. The transparency created by digitalisation makes the access to information aimed at special target groups a part of a cognitive framework of the company soul.

### **Individuality in a collective framework**

People have a drive to be unique. People want to feel special and therefore treated as the "chosen one". The paradox of having to balance between large scale digital relationships and intimate, adjusted personal dialogue poses an increasing challenge.

## Supplement 3

### Cross Impact-analysis

Below, the cross impact-analysis is shown. During the analysis phase, the working group made an assessment of the degree to which each trend influenced other trends. No influence is indicated with 0 and heavy influence with 3.

	Trend 1	Trend 2	Trend 3	Trend 4	Trend 5	Trend 6	Trend 7	Trend 8	Trend 9	Trend 10	Trend 11	Trend 12	Trend 13	Trend 14	Trend 15	TOTAL Driving
Trend 1	3	3	3	0	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	34
Trend 2	1	3	3	2	3	1	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	33
Trend 3	2	1	3	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	14
Trend 4	3	0	3	2	3	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	1	19
Trend 5	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Trend 6	3	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	3	3	21
Trend 7	2	2	2	0	3	0	2	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	27
Trend 8	1	2	2	3	1	2	0	1	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	27
Trend 9	1	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	29
Trend 10	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	3	2	35
Trend 11	1	3	1	0	1	0	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	0	0	21
Trend 12	2	1	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	13
Trend 13	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	3	0	0	16
Trend 14	2	0	2	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	3	2	16
Trend 15	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	6
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL Dependent</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>324</b>
																<b>21,6</b>

Trend 1 = Increased information flow

Trend 2 = Increased individualisation

Trend 3 = Present political systems fundamentally weakened

Trend 4 = New forceful institutions – power is distributed

Trend 5 = Increased number of channels

Trend 6 = Trust capital gains greater importance

Trend 7 = Continued rapid technique development

Trend 8 = Global homogenisation/local diversity

Trend 9 = Level of education rising

Trend 10 = Increasing internationalisation

Trend 11 = Increasing urbanisation

Trend 12 = “Downshifting” maturing into popular movement

Trend 13 = The power of spirituality increasing

Trend 14 = The return of story telling

Trend 15 = The role of the professional communicator is integrated into Other activities

### The Role of the Professional Communicator in the year 2025