

Programme

CommsFest 2021: Connecting housing's comms community

Throughout February 2021

Sponsored by Hough Bellis Communications

Communications has never been so necessary!

Everyone has an opinion on how messages should – or shouldn't – be put across.

But those of us who have steered our organisations to speak with clarity, empathy and timeliness throughout the Covid-19 pandemic will have enhanced the reputation of our brands and built a new, deeper relationship with our audiences.

It's been a tough year and we know you're probably feeling exhausted.

CommsFest 2021 is a chance for you to get off the treadmill for a few hours each week and recharge your batteries.

Throughout the month we'll be hosting sessions that give you a chance to reflect, to learn and to refresh including:

- A series of masterclasses to explore the latest best practice in key areas of comms
- Presentations, panel debates and expert analysis on the future of our industry from those inside and outside of the sector
- A chance for people from different organisations to meet up and share their comms challenges over a brew and a cake.

So come and join us, connect with friends, and get set for the year ahead. You've earned it!

And if you're joining us let know using #CommsFest21 on Twitter.

Monday 1 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Redefining the role of communications, public relations and marcomms: The Dublin Conversations – a better map and toolkit to survive and thrive
Speaker: Andy Green – international lecturer and founding member of the Dublin Conversations

Andy Green is pioneering new thinking and practical tools to transform communications, comms and public relations.

He lives and breathes transformative communications, generating creativity, storytelling and social capital. Winner of the CIPR UK-wide '*Outstanding PR Practitioner of the Year*' award, author of seven books translated into eight languages. He lectures at five universities.

Andy has worked around the world, from Austria to Australia, for leading blue-chip brands and major public bodies.

In this session Andy will be talking about the [Dublin Conversations](#) which is a global community of professionals who are redefining a new era in comms, advertising and public relations and looking to accelerate changes in the creative industries.

The group is co-creating a new roadmap and toolkit to tackle the challenge of a society where people cannot talk to each other, work together, or trust one another.

Thursday 4 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Social media masterclass: what's next for social media?
Helen Reynolds, founder of Comms Creatives

When it came into being social media was something new and exciting, the next big thing for communications. But where does it go now? We've got Helen Reynolds to give her expert opinion on the future of social media.

Friday 5 February 2021

10:00-11:00 The CommsFest Un-Conference

Grab a brew and a cake and join one of our un-conference rooms for a chance to chat with people across social housing's comms community about the challenges you are facing.

Each room will be led by a member of the comms community who will facilitate an open, relaxed and honest discussion about a key comms issues – from internal comms to Freedom of Information.

Tuesday 9th February 2021

- 10:00-11:00 Comms and leadership: What has Covid taught us about the role of communications within our organisations?**
Hayley James, assistant director of communications, engagement and campaigns at Great Manchester Combined Authority
More speakers to be announced

Whilst communications have always been important, the past year has highlighted just how essential good communication is to the success of any housing organisation. This panel discussion will take a look at what we know now, and how this alters the future of our comms teams.

Thursday 11 February 2021

- 10:00-11:00 Crisis Communications Masterclass: The lifespan of a crisis**
Amanda Coleman, author of Crisis Communications Strategies: How to Prepare in Advance, Respond Effectively and Recover in Full

Does a crisis just arrive and then disappear? Are there different types of crisis and different stages? Amanda Coleman, crisis communication specialist, will talk through understanding the crises that exist and what phases a crisis can move through before it reaches recovery and beyond.

She will use her own experiences as well as other case studies from around the world to highlight essential learning. The session will conclude with some points on the actions that can be taken now to make sure that you are in the past position for whatever the future may hold.

Tuesday 16 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Communications and diversity: understanding and tackling unconscious bias
Mark Hudson, head of early talent – News UK
More speakers to be announced

Thursday 18 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Masterclass: Influence and change: delivering successful campaigns
Ben Powell, campaigns organiser at Nautilus International
More speakers to be announced

Tuesday 23 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Panel discussion: Power without responsibility: what's the future of the media and is it really losing its relevance?
Tom Rostance, BBC Sport
Mark Lawrence, Editor of The Governor and former editor of 24 Housing
More speakers to be announced

Thursday 25 February 2021

10:00-11:00 Masterclass: will 2021 be the year that video kills the press release? -
Ben Horrigan – digital video producer and founder of Studio 91 Media

Friday 26 February 2021

10:00-11:00 The CommsFest Un-Conference

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