

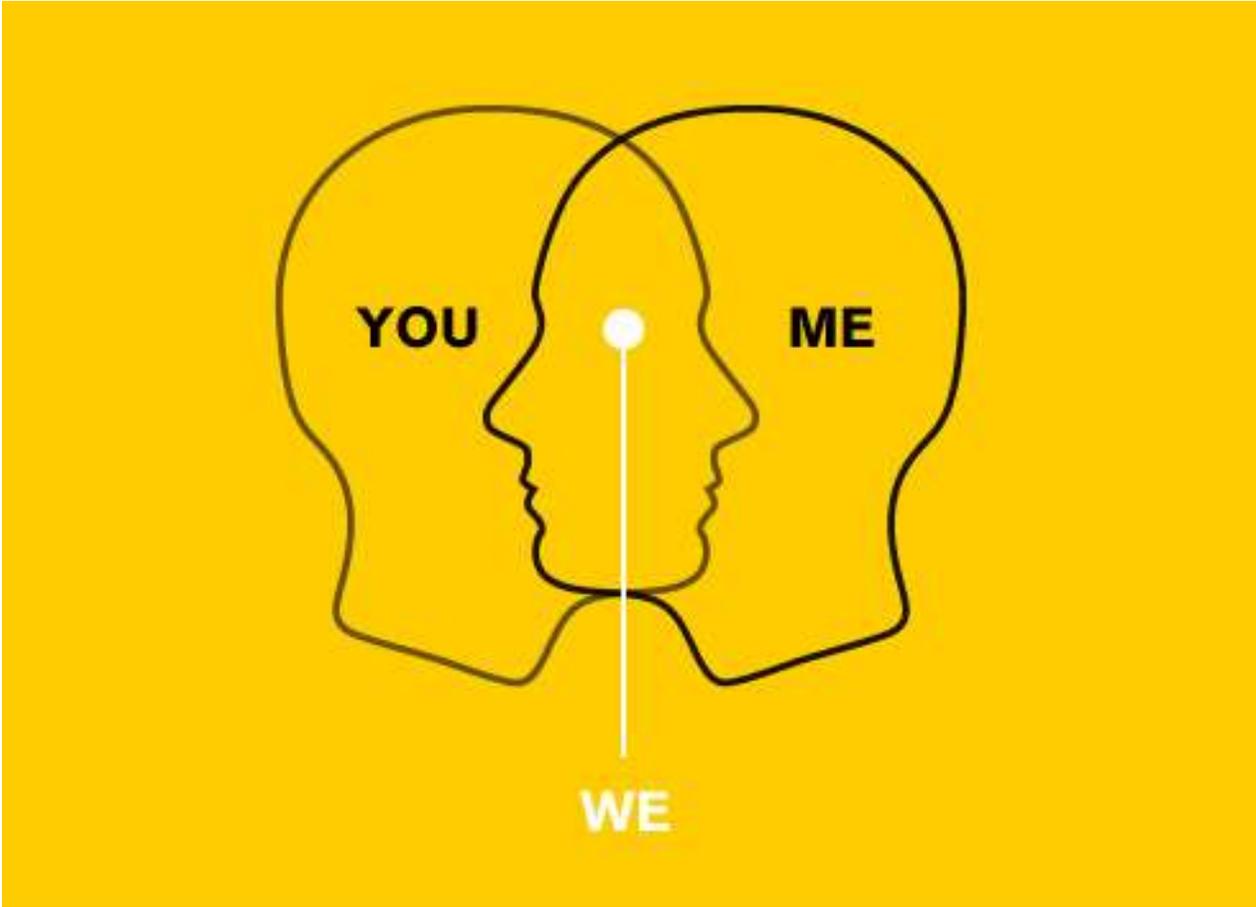
Listening as a key to brand management

Jacqueline Lambiase, Ph.D., Professor of Strategic Communication
Director, Certified Public Communicator Program
TCU Bob Schieffer College of Communication

Goal for the session

- Build understanding about how to create a listening architecture that plays a key role in an organization's reputation and brand management.
- Key questions
 - How does your organization listen to stakeholders, and what should happen next?
 - How might you build a robust system of listening that's connected with brand management, boosting your organization's reputation?

Start with why



There is no “them” —
there is only “us.”

How does your organization listen?

Please place some responses in the chat!



Usual listening suspects

- Might be called feedback, input, meetings, complaints—be sure to upgrade your language to include listening.
- Call centers, front-line/public-facing employees, managers who handle complaints that have escalated, meetings, email, social media platforms, elected officials, internal stakeholders who understand the core mission of your organization, and more.
- The word “listening” should be a foundation of any engagement plan, project, or activity that you create for external and internal stakeholders.

Audit the ways that your organization currently attends to and prioritizes listening

- Who has listening as part of their job descriptions?
- Who should have listening as part of their job descriptions?
- How do you onboard new employees to become good listeners?
- How do you train current employees to do this? How do you incentivize this?
- Where is crucial listening already occurring? Where should it be?
- Who is “rounding up” listening from all places, seeing patterns, and solving problems?
- Who is or could be your organization’s listener in chief?

We spend a lot of time developing outbound channels, but we should redirect resources to developing and using inbound channels.

The list of your inbound channels should be as long or longer than your outbound.

No new resources may be coming in,
so shift away from communication to
customer experiences as a builder of
trust, linkages, and solutions.

This is the brand connection:

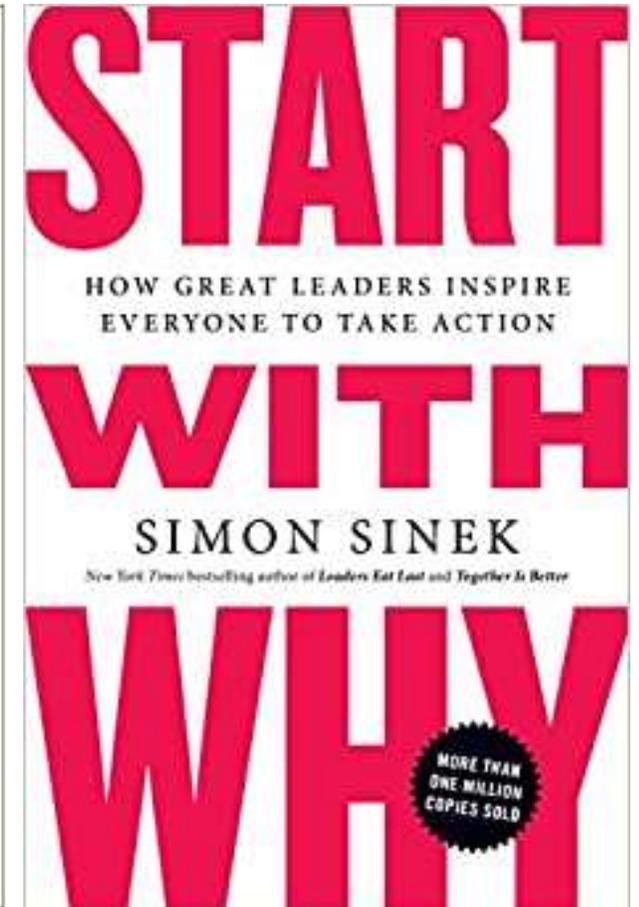
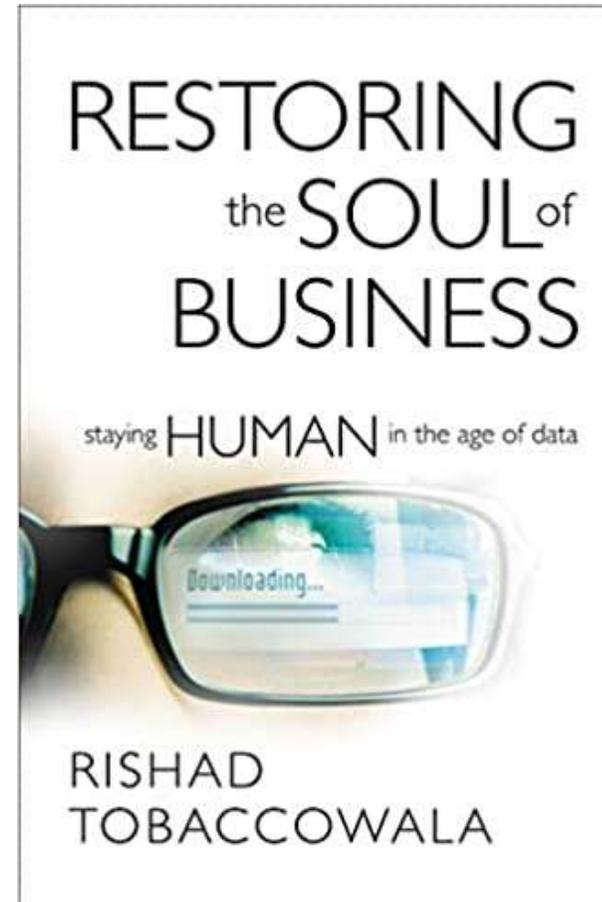
Your brand is in the mind of the customer—not in your own mind, not in your logo, not in your communication packages.

“The future does not fit the
containers of the past.”

Rishad Tobaccowala

Brand management: Connecting your employees & their purpose with your customers

- Experiences over communication (input rather than output)
- Purpose driven (the “why”)
- Employee joy (a Southwest Airlines pilot might tell you the score of a game in flight, based on destination, but a United pilot acts like the game doesn't exist).



Public participation in the public sector is an empty ritual.

... and possibly dangerous.

What is your experience with Stop-Watch listening?

6 ideas for better listening

Phase out

- ✘ • Traditional “town halls”
- ✘ • Voices of usual suspects and trolls, receiving too much attention
- ✘ • Celebrations and state-of-the-utility back-slapping events for elites
- ✘ • One-way digital messaging in toxic spaces online
- ✘ • Communicators **pushing out** content that you’ve always produced
- ✘ • **One 3-minute comment**

Phase in

- ✓ • Trained listeners in breakout rooms
- ✓ • Scientific surveying of residents for representative input
- ✓ • Meeting residents at their own special neighborhood events
- ✓ • Face-to-face discussions and boots on the ground
- ✓ • Communicators as the ears of your city’s administrators
- ✓ • **Shorter but multiple structured inputs**

Three types of listening

- **Compassionate (empathetic) listening**

- (Good for consolation, bad for solutions). You feel marginally better, I'm released from follow-up.

- **Stonewall listening**

- (You talk and I hear you, but I'm not open to change. Called "cataphatic" listening by Dobson, 2014). In history, this is what king's and landowners used to do. It's oppressive and privileged.

- **Zen listening**

- (I am still. I don't talk. You get to take the mic and drive later action. Called "apophatic" listening by Dobson). It means to lay down power and control.

A model

	To Change/Act	Not Going to Change/Act
With Empathy	<p>“So sorry we messed up. We want to do better, with your help, and we will.”</p> <p>Ideal zen Stillness + solutions</p>	<p>“I feel your pain.”</p> <p>Compassionate Just feelings</p>
Without Empathy	<p>“What’s the problem?”</p> <p>Cold zen Complaint dept.</p>	<p>“Someone told me I had to show up here and look interested.”</p> <p>Stonewall Sham</p>

Think of a time when your public-sector agency has used each one of these modes of listening.

Compassionate

Stonewall

Zen