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We are so back?
Tech comms in turbulent times

A report by Headland

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A foreword from Tom Bage, Partner at Headland

There's never been a better or a harder time to work in tech communications. Which other sector is going to save the world, or end it? Rescue our economies, or destroy them? Reimagine our working lives, or make them obsolete?

The dawning of the AI age has thrown the crucial role of tech communications into sharp relief. So during an era like no other, the team at Headland set out to capture the paradoxes, challenges and opportunities encountered by some of the sector's best PR professionals - and share their lessons with the rest of the ecosystem.

Based on over 30 in-depth interviews of industry leaders (as well as top tier UK journalists) this report shows how technology's domination of public, stakeholder and opinion-former consciousness is ramping up the pressure - and rewards - for the comms teams guarding tech's reputation. It shines a light on the craft skills required to navigate a world of soaring hype but falling trust, and explains how today's founders and CEOs increasingly save a seat for communications at the top table.

We wanted to say thanks to the clients, contacts and media who were so generous with their time and insights as we put together this report. We hope you like it - and enjoy the ride in 2024.

Introduction

It's been a bumpy 18 months for technology companies, with their employees, investors and customers all exposed to an uncertain macroeconomic backdrop. High interest rates and energy costs have contributed to a cost-of-living crisis that's rocked consumer confidence in economies across the world, while an explosion of AI innovation which promises to upend large parts of the economy have sent stock prices, private valuations and industry confidence on a rollercoaster ride.

At Headland, we live and breathe technology - and are privileged to advise some of the most innovative companies on the planet. Our new report explores the challenges faced by those in tech communications over this unusual period and shares the lessons professionals can learn to equip them for an exciting 2024.

We've seen technology companies of all sizes - many of which aggressively expanded workforces due to a surge of growth and cheap money during the pandemic – retrench and restructure. This put large parts of the investment community and IPO market into a deep freeze.

2023 was also the year tech hit the reset button after the Covid boom - with the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and WeWork's fall into bankruptcy just two of the moments marking a very public change from the post-financial crash era of low interest rates, abundant capital and ballooning valuations. The beginning of 2024 has seen more tech layoffs, albeit on a smaller scale, indicating we're in for a prolonged period of uncertainty.

It's not just hiring and growth trajectories that are being recast. Regulators around the globe have been sharpening their focus on tech's impact across our economies and societies. From the UK's Online Safety Act and the EU's Digital Services Act to antitrust hearings in the US, tech is contending with a whole new level of political scrutiny as we enter an election year for around half of the world's population.

Yet as we kick off 2024, we're seeing shoots of recovery, even amid continued uncertainty. One of the driving forces behind this is the advent of generative AI, which has given the entire sector a shot in the arm and put technology front-of-mind for companies across all parts of the economy. In tandem we've seen investor confidence beginning to rebound - especially among those who were fast to embed the new AI into their business models - as well as more VCs starting to write cheques again. Arm, Instacart and Klayivo went public with qualified success.

Whisper it quietly: in 2024, tech could be on the way back.

All of this has daily implications for the sector's communications professionals. From a macro perspective, the number of adults who believe technology is a force for bad has increased 2% year-on-year, with one in five (20%) in the UK taking this view. Less than half (42%) believe tech is a force for good, which is consistent with last year.[1]

> **"Your culture is often forged in your darkest moments, not in your best moments... sometimes constraints breed creativity."**

On a company level, tech PRs have been balancing the need to tell an optimistic story about the future, against a realistic explanation of the present. There are still concerns around data protection, privacy and online safety - and political and societal unease about what nascent technologies like generative AI could mean for all of our working lives and beyond. But there is also a sense among many that the post-Covid economic reset will drive an explosion of creativity and innovation which will reshape the tech sector for the coming decade.

As Brian Chesky, founder and CEO of Airbnb said about running a tech firm in difficult times: "Your culture is often forged in your darkest moments, not in your best moments... sometimes constraints breed creativity."

As one of the main ways businesses can reach and engage their stakeholders, tech comms is in the spotlight more than ever. Increasingly, comms teams are having to engage a wider pool of perspectives within their organisation - collaborating deeply with product, go-to-market, engineering, legal, finance and sustainability teams - in order to bring a sense of cohesion to complex businesses operating at breakneck speed. "They need to be agile and resilient - just like the very companies they represent," one comms leader told us.

Based on over 30 in-depth interviews with leading global comms professionals (most of which have asked to remain anonymous in order to provide frank commentary) and top tier UK tech and business journalists, this report unpacks many of those challenges, and provides recommendations as we look further into 2024.

[1]YouGov Profiles (January 2024)

1. Maintaining relevance globally and locally, as the tech industry falls and rises again

To understand how we've got to where we are today, we have to look back on a cycle that started around two years ago. In 2022, the 10 top tech stocks lost a combined $4.6 trillion in market cap – resulting in over 150,000 tech layoffs in the US alone,[2] along with thousands more in the UK and Europe.

"Communicating job losses is naturally a tough exercise, in no small part because of the subject matter at hand," according to a senior comms manager at a global tech consultancy. "While it's always terrible news for your people, it may be seen differently by the market, investors and wider stakeholders. Such news is always a litmus test of your reputation. If you can manage bad news well, you can be faster to resurface and offset some of that impact in the long-term."

Thinking long-term isn't always an easy task, especially earlier last year when it was clear that parts of the tech sector were reeling and in need of a change of approach. Investors were questioning the value of their portfolio companies, employees were looking over their shoulders and commentators were talking of an industry that had reaped the benefits of a global pandemic but was facing a painful correction. For the first time, many tech companies were struggling to communicate relevance, and some have been grappling with this since.

[2]Seeking Alpha (December 2022)

"Relevance is probably the key word for this discussion," said the head of EMEA comms at a global SaaS company that enables collaboration. "The impact of our company was felt everywhere, and we've had to pivot since to stay relevant in a post-Covid world. We needed to shift our image of a pandemic winner - overrun by success but limited by that context - into something real today".

That relevancy extends beyond the product suite as well. "We made mistakes in how and what we communicated in the past," she added. "We took a US-led, global approach to comms without enabling key local stakeholders or properly applying messages to the market." This sometimes resulted in the tone of comms not feeling quite right, she said.

One UK-based comms leader at a global sharing economy company put it like this: "We're in a global metropolitan bubble, where London, San Francisco and other major cities operate in hubs, creating an echo chamber that doesn't always resonate outside. It is always a mistake for anyone in comms to assume what works in London's tech hub will hold the same relevance in places like Swansea. This isn't just a matter of geography; it's about understanding the distinct needs and contexts of different communities."

"For comms practitioners, this is brilliant news," she added. Tech firms are still learning the importance of localisation and relevance – and they often turn to comms to help understand new markets and cultures. It gives us a seat at the table."

> **If you can manage bad news well, you can be faster to resurface and offset some of that impact in the long-term.**

A global data company we spoke to took a progressive approach to its comms function – deciding its UK office shouldn't report so rigidly into a global headquarters, freeing the local team to follow a successful (but higher-risk) approach: "Our culture is by design flat, innovative and unstructured – and with that comes tension, of course – but what you don't have is a centralisation of power as such, which allows us to move," he said.

"The flip side of that is you don't have a structure to fully make decisions and allocate tasks, which gives you an increased chance of executional risk but more freedom to take those risks." Those in comms who "have an appetite for risk" are the ones more likely to address problems head on.

Growth in tech companies often goes hand-in-glove with rapid internationalisation - but being able to assess risk requires a deep understanding of local context. Being cognisant of local market nuances (and weaving them in throughout discussions with media and investors) is a crucial part of rooting a global firm in its markets, buying a higher level of licence to operate from sceptical journalists and stakeholders.

As one head of comms at a global philanthropy platform put it, "the external context we're operating in has moved rapidly. It wasn't that long ago we thought that, for example, the e-commerce landscape had changed forever. Unwinding that thinking requires agility - and you need comms people that are plugged in and reactive to that changing environment. And let's be real, comms can do that in a way a business' three-year brand marketing strategy often can't."

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2. Rising above the 'boom and bust'

Off of the back of 2021's record-breaking year for IPOs (with businesses' public offerings raising a total of $594 billion that year) , questions inevitably followed about the tech industry's ability to maintain that breakneck speed of growth. Yet few saw how quickly and how deeply the downturn would start to impact the sector.

The global head of comms at a leading European fintech certainly felt this. "What's painful for everyone to see is these giant valuation drops - often the consequence of the 'to the moon' attitude. That does no one any favours. So many of these companies had a decent product - but overenthusiasm, hubris and bad timing cost them."

With this came new challenges for many in comms, who were facing severe industry-wide headwinds for the first time. Many leaders we spoke to had to completely redesign their comms strategy, moving from a broadly 'promote-first' to 'protect-first' approach. Shielding a business from the impact of the economic downturn and wider reputation challenges in tech requires deeper cross-functional collaboration across the likes of finance, operations and marketing to ensure lined-up execution across the board. Most welcomed the long-term benefits of this enforced collaboration – even if it wasn't easy at the time.

Several people told us that having to communicate bad news like layoffs with empathy and openness forced deeper discussions and relationship building with leadership, people and HR teams that had simply not existed before. As we have already reflected, how you communicate bad news can have longstanding implications. Indeed, one tech company saw its stock price fall 90% on the day of its IPO, which may have been linked to negative coverage it received after laying off a significant volume of its workforce.

Down rounds and restructures have also prompted companies to reflect on the importance of authentic comms during difficult times, and why following the herd isn't always the safest bet. An entertainment tech comms veteran noted that: "We've reached a point where tech companies have started to mirror each other's comms. Everyone follows the same playbook in relation to announcing layoffs, with a popular tactic being proactively sharing an internal memo with a journalist. Sometimes that's the right thing to do, but sometimes that backfires."

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"There's a danger of copying others because every business, situation and timing is different. It also depends on how you've dealt with media in the past – have you always been open, or more closed? You need to communicate difficult news in a way that seems natural and right for your business."

A senior director of corporate comms at a global data company has seen the same challenge from a different angle. "The proportion of time I spend on protecting versus promoting has changed - but it actually hasn't been about the downturn, it's actually been about growth. Scaling is a bigger factor than the downturn," she said. "We are operating with small teams in a maturing business, so have more issues to deal with. Scaling is the biggest factor affecting our work."

How can a business be bullish about its growth trajectory in the midst of a downturn and prolonged high cost-of-living? Getting the tone right against this backdrop might be seen as a good problem to have but it's no less of a challenge in the moment when under pressure from leadership, investors and possibly even governments looking to tell positive stories.

One head of comms at a UK fintech remarked that "because the general attitude on tech has altered and the hype around fintech has gone away, it has meant we've had to do more to make the most of announcements. Celebrating those moments and building excitement, internally and externally, has meant needing to put even more emphasis on articulating what partnerships mean for us and our customers." So, while some were almost muted in announcing good news, others felt they needed to push harder to break through the gloomy backdrop.

"The last year has been difficult for tech companies and PRs," a reporter at Sifted, the Financial Times' sister publication covering European tech, said. "Startups and PRs are still willing to engage and do comms, but the challenge is that the types of stories are changing, and people are scrambling a little bit to know what to communicate."

"Last year, it was hard as a reporter to find what was really juicy. There were fewer funding rounds, which means we had less of a focus on fundraising, but now more deals seem to be flowing, with VCs spending more cash. But for many journalists, the stories have pivoted from focusing on how much money is being raised, and more on how companies have adapted to challenging times. Founders have had to adjust to not only communicating the good news, but discussing failed projects, business closures, and layoffs. Some great stories have come out of founders who have been through challenging times and can talk honestly about their experiences."

As the comms leader at the philanthropy platform we spoke to said, "while we were streamlining, it was still about telling a positive message where we could – and doing the core things well. Companies need to provide their customers with either joy or help. We can help people get through when things get hard."

Helping customers through comms might sound simplistic, but with stakeholder maps spanning beyond customers across investors, policymakers, media, communities and more, communicating consistently across all of these isn't always as easy - and requires deep collaboration to make it work.

Those businesses with a clear core narrative - and spokespeople with the understanding of how to refine it across each of those stakeholder groups when necessary - can steal reputational advantage by showcasing clarity and maturity at a time when breathless tech hype is falling out of fashion.

3. Building long-term trust

Whether it's the customers businesses serve or procurement of suppliers, trust is built on far more than the delivery of products and services. Today there is increased scrutiny around purpose, ESG credentials, the leadership team and the vision behind the company. Businesses that can demonstrate the long-term sustainability of their business model and ambition of the company (beyond growth) will be the ones that succeed in this new world.

One comms director of a global consumer fintech spoke about the pressure of thinking long-term in a data-driven business. "We are a company obsessed with data but my job is to think about reputation in a multi-year timeframe, not any particular quarter. It can feel quite lonely when the rest of the firm is living from quarter-to-quarter, but having a longer-term view really helps smooth out those peaks and troughs – and aligns me with how my CEO sees the world."

Prioritising a company's long-term reputation is one way to build trust, both in a brand and its business model. While this is key for businesses across all sectors, those in technology feel it especially keenly. In fact, according to YouGov,

> **Just 2% of adults trust a lot in tech companies, with 22% saying they distrust a lot in them.**
> (YouGov Profiles, 2024)

The number of people that distrust tech companies has increased from 51% to 55% between now and a year ago. This is by no means a problem that can be fixed overnight, or with one activation or news announcement.

Do you believe technology is a force for good or bad?
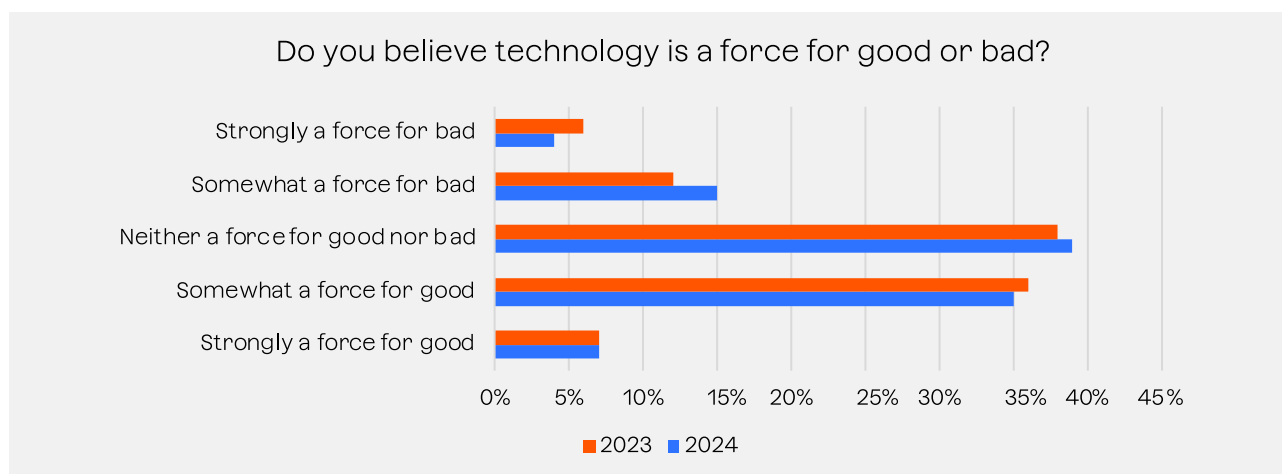
"Now is the time to stop with random product feature launches and to focus on building trust in the fundamentals," the head of comms at one of the European fintechs we spoke to said. "People aren't chasing that growth success story anymore – they're looking for a business that will stand the test of these economic times."

Building that trust over the long-term is a different challenge for businesses depending on the industries they operate in, their size and stage of development. But for everyone in the tech ecosystem, transparency is a key part of the trust toolbox. As you grow and seek trust from stakeholders, you are expected to be open and forthcoming, as the head of comms at a venture capital fund said: "For both investors and founders, it's important for comms to be fast. There is now a greater sense of urgency and accountability, otherwise you may be deemed untrustworthy."

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For scale-ups, fostering trust might be about founders being open about the challenges they have faced and how they addressed them. "It's harder with tech companies to get founders to explore some of these issues because of their backers - they typically don't want to lose face," a business journalist at a national newspaper said. "We want to explore how they've addressed and solved challenges that our readers can learn from. That's what's most interesting - but these examples are quite hard to find," she added.

This can be difficult for founders, especially those who have come from the Silicon Valley tech bubble. Getting out of this attitude can be challenging and requires a more outward-looking approach, as one San Francisco-based head of comms said: "If Musk and Zuckerberg are scheduling a fight, that's not an undercard you want to be on - and having awareness of these conversations should impact how your leadership conduct themselves publicly. Nobody operates in a silo and you're not the centre of the ecosystem. You have to get out of that tech bubble and consume broader news reporting to get a deeper understanding of the lay of the land."

Understanding context is key to trust-building – and extends far beyond investors and business leaders. In the age of AI, deep-fakes and misinformation, many feel tech firms have a responsibility to help moderate content to ensure users remain both safe and aware of the source of what they're seeing or reading. While lawmakers continue to grapple with these complex debates, the media want to hear perspectives from tech leaders on such topics - and careful management is key.

Getting the tone right is crucial, too, especially when communicating good news. "We don't want to come across as cocky or flashy when we're talking about how we use AI, or the next funding round or people being hired," the global head of comms at a sustainable logistics tech company said. "Part of this is balancing stakeholder requirements. Show them the context around us and ask questions like, do we need to issue a press release about this? Is there something else we could do?"

> "Those in marketing and comms should use their positions to keep the business honest. Collaborate. Ask questions. Challenge. Sometimes we have to make things difficult internally in order to avoid the business making the wrong calls. Don't be apologetic about holding people - including yourself - to account."

Many businesses have also struggled to make the inroads they would have hoped for in ESG communications, finding it hard to cut through with stories of real environmental progress. As the national business reporter we spoke to noted: "We get so many pitches about businesses and their sustainability or inclusion initiatives - and when you scratch beneath the surface, many aren't even true. What started with greenwashing has reached the likes of gender and diversity 'washing' now - all of which will only harm trust, should false or exaggerated claims be exposed."

With the table stakes clearly shifting around sustainability commitments, comms leaders must speak truth to power within their business, plotting their progress within the context of their competitors and peers. As the CMO of a circular economy platform put it, "those in marketing and comms should use their positions to keep the business honest. Collaborate. Ask questions. Challenge. Sometimes we have to make things difficult internally in order to avoid the business making the wrong calls. Don't be apologetic about holding people - including yourself - to account."

The success and failure of media relations will often boil down to trust in media relationships, too. As the head of comms at a global venture capital firm said: "It's a competitive media landscape. You have to build personal relationships - otherwise you won't cut through." The entertainment tech comms leader we spoke to agreed, adding that "earning journalists' trust is so important. You have to make every engagement worth their while - always thinking about what to offer and what to follow up with, whether it's a news story or person to introduce them to. Media relations is not something you should throw away as you get more senior - you're a better comms professional for your company if you have trusted, frank and open relationships with media."

4. Educating the media as key stakeholders

As comms professionals, we're comfortable with the idea of communicating messages via the media - however technology business models (especially those on the B2B side) are often complex and require deep understanding of the industry. Yet with budgets tightening and journalists' beats increasingly requiring broader coverage - a tech journalist could cover telecoms, Big Tech, data, AI, consumer, workplace and more, for example - educating media on the role tech companies play within their categories remains important. But this is a challenge that requires a nuanced approach.

The global head of comms at the sustainable logistics tech company we spoke to has run into this issue and it's not a simple one to address. "The media loves to categorise or make big comparisons - putting everyone in a box," she said. "We've been described as the 'new Tesla or Uber' - and this has implications from a reputational perspective. Our challenge is to reinforce the message of who we are and what we're trying to do and why this is important today."

With generative AI entering the fray, this has become even more important. The potential, and dangers, of the technology are being blurred and hyperbolised by industry commentators across the board - leaving gaps for sensible, informed experts to help plug.

How those messages are delivered requires tailoring for the publication and audience. Messages for national/business media need to be elevated beyond that of a trade reporter with a deeper understanding of the space. Creating narratives that cut across both audiences - while maintaining a coherent message and call-to-action - is important.

The senior director of corporate comms at a global data company expands on this: "The tech press do understand what we do pretty well - it is a complicated offering that you can do a lot of things with," she said. "The business press don't understand us - we're really focused on reaching business journalists but it's early days and it's hard to explain to people who are not tech experts." She went on to say that to do so, you need to "associate the business with a topical issue, but then that can have the opposite effect by narrowing the focus on a business with a much broader suite of tools."

Spokespeople therefore need to be able to 'zoom in' to the issue being discussed to provide their viewpoint, while being about to 'zoom out' to incorporate the broader challenge the business is trying to solve. This isn't always a simple task and can require some refinement and training to ensure not to sound too promotional – but when done well it can be incredibly effective.

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5. Navigating the genAI hype cycle

When OpenAI released ChatGPT in November 2022, the tech industry started a paradigm shift that many hope will be comparable to the launch of the iPhone. While AI had already been in use across enterprises for over a decade - think Darktrace's security solutions, HSBC's voice biometrics or Uber's real-time mapping and fee calculations - for the first time it has been put at the fingertips of the public, in an accessible and easy-to-use manner.

What followed was a slew of businesses jumping to declare how they're using generative AI to underscore their position as innovators. Calls for bans, international regulation and more continued to hit the headlines as commentators tried to shape the discussion.

In an over-saturated AI landscape, businesses will need to mix new and innovative use-cases with a clear and direct point of view on external conditions like regulation. Indeed "AI needs the proper guardrails'" became one of *the* phrases of 2023. In fact, by July of last year, and since the launch of ChatGPT, 'AI' and 'guardrails' were mentioned together over 8,000 times in English-speaking media and blogs, by nearly 2,000 different people. This only emphasises the challenges for comms as leaders look for coverage around their latest deployments of the technology or to set themselves apart in the debate.

> By July of last year, and since the launch of ChatGPT, 'AI' and 'guardrails' were mentioned together over 8,000 times in English-speaking media and blogs, by nearly 2,000 different people.

One director of comms across EMEA within a listed SaaS company said: "We've been using AI for years, so we didn't feel the need to react to the generative AI hype cycle just to prove we're an innovative company." This highlights an interesting comms challenge for businesses as they consider deployments of LLMs. Is the use-case interesting enough? Is the deployment

mature enough to deliver on the claims the business wants to make? Is there a risk of appearing to be jumping on the bandwagon?

> " The question that should keep tech PRs up at night is 'how do we make sure that we don't end up being part of an unfulfilled promise of AI?'

Another head of comms at a global cybersecurity company said: "I joined my firm right around the moment ChatGPT exploded into the public eye - and we've gone from 'we just need to be on the train' to 'we need be sitting in the right compartment'. It's been a very rapid shift."

Managing expectation is also crucial. "The question that should keep tech PRs up at night is 'how do we make sure that we don't end up being part of an unfulfilled promise of AI?' The technology is amazing, but the hype is running so far ahead of current products that there will be a correction this year. I just hope it's not too drastic and disappointing."

The UK head of comms at a global data company saw this as an occupational hazard. "We've had AI in our DNA for a long time and our credentials are strong - but the business was sceptical of the tech until the recent LLMs dropped and those models become usable," he said. "So our tone has shifted on it. It wasn't opportunism but there's a chance it could have looked like it. A change of business strategy altered the comms approach - but all of that requires explaining."

The final point ties into the discussion in the previous section. Complex topics, especially ones evolving at the speed of AI, require explanation - and the time to do this isn't something spokespeople and businesses are afforded. The competition is rife, for column inches and closing sales, and the winners and losers of this period are still to be seen - as well as how much longer reports like this are written by humans.

Our recommendations for comms:

1. Forget the tech bubble and tell a story that's grounded in the real world.

It's all too easy to get drawn into the tech press, where the VC money is going and what's being debated on X (formerly known as Twitter). And while that external landscape is key, it is only one piece of the puzzle.What is most important is to continue to ensure the focus remains on the problems your business solves as part of the bigger, macro picture. Regularly asking questions like where does our product or service fit into the broader landscape and why does it matter? What's being reported in the space? Why does the market exist? What's our purpose or mission? How does tour comms strategy ladder up to any of these answers?

How you position these answers will vary depending on who you're talking to, of course. Trade reporters will generally have a deeper understanding of the market and its challenges, for example. They may, however, still require education around your business and product at a deeper level. And every journalist will benefit from a solid overview of the market, the category, your capabilities and roadmap.

Whether talking with a trade, business or national reporter - or other broader stakeholders - the key is to push yourself out of that tech bubble and emphasise the challenge you're addressing or opportunity you're creating. The people benefits should always come first with the technology acting as the enabler.

2. There are opportunities to leverage the AI debate to your advantage - but take a stance or don't do it at all.

Last year's AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park marked the culmination of a year of discussion on the technology, its potential and its risks. The outcomes of that Summit - including the 28-strong country declaration around collaboration between governments - along with the merits and drawbacks of the technology will continue to be debated this year.

Regulation will remain front of mind. The EU AI Act is set to take force and the UK will continue its mission to lead the AI charge with its own measures.

Yet opportunities to join the debate will require a clear stance to cut through the noise, with obvious comms risks such as being seen as opportunistic or reactive when launching AI deployments to market. Only businesses which articulate how they're using the technology to drive demonstrable real-world impact will see real returns across earned media and with stakeholders. Those who can align this with their existing external comms narrative around effective technology deployments will build the most compelling stories.

3. External pressure forced tech comms teams to collaborate more deeply and creatively with colleagues than ever before. PRs who can do this in the upturn will reap outsized benefits.

Trust among technology businesses has taken a hit. From privacy and safety to bias and misinformation, citizens and communities are increasingly sceptical around technology and its role within society.

Growth at all costs feels like an outdated framework and this must be echoed in the way businesses talk about their brand, their stakeholders and the future. Communicating credibility, as well as innovation, is essential in this landscape… and in 2024 credibility does not just mean growth.

For scale-ups, down-rounds will be more common, with the pathway to profitability ever more uncertain, but the focus must be working collaboratively across an organisation. The output of this should be a broader, more grown-up narrative encompassing why the business truly exists and the problem it solves for citizens, communities and businesses.

Reflecting on the power of collaborative thinking, a board member at an entertainment platform said that they were "previously inclined to hiring and building a team of comms specialists, but now there's a hunt for generalists.

Job titles are moving away from being solely corporate, financial, consumer or B2B." This collaborative ethos should be reflected in how your run your comms teams too: "It's a mistake to keep colleagues, agencies, and consultants at arm's length.You need to treat everyone as one team to get the most out of your comms function, particularly if you can't hire more headcount."

Finally, for many comms professionals at tech start-ups and scale-ups, their success is intertwined with their proximity to the CEO. "The comms function is in a very privileged position because you have oversight of everything, you can learn from past mistakes, you know what's coming up, and you can advise the CEO as a result."

"If a CEO sees comms for what it is – not just external reputation, but influencing the whole culture of a company, and as a result, the success or failure of a company - then you'll never have a problem proving your worth."

Authors

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Tom is a Partner at Headland specialising in creative communications and corporate reputation management. Tom advises businesses on every facet of their reputation. He has been lucky enough to work with many of the world's best known tech firms. Before joining Headland, Tom worked in politics and in startups, winning campaigns on challenging political and social issues.

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Having started her career working in-house for a multinational technology consultancy, Lucy works with a wide variety of tech clients across the professional services, telecoms and entertainment sectors. Working across B2B and B2C briefs, she manages both press office functions and thought leadership campaigns to protect and build corporate reputations.

About Headland

Headland is the UK's leading reputation and communications consultancy. Our purpose is to champion collaboration and a wide range of perspectives to build reputations for a thriving world. We believe good reputations give businesses the legitimacy to create the conditions and opportunities to thrive financially, socially, and environmentally, even in challenging times.

We work with some of the most exciting technology companies across the globe, including TikTok, Accenture, Darktrace, Just Eat, Dojo, Northzone, TrueLayer, Turo, Thunes and Dice.

We think that reputations are built on purposeful relationships with all stakeholders, and they happen by design. Through a method and culture of collaboration amongst our experts, we shine a light on all perspectives and help businesses act on those insights. Those actions provide the impetus for powerful communications and give rise to reputations that put our clients in control of their futures.

Headland: The power of collaboration.

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