

# **Communicating with Robots, Connecting to People**

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# Introduction

Let's begin with a moment that may, in hindsight, define this era: the presence of AI leaders at a U.S. presidential inauguration. Just a few years ago, this would have seemed unthinkable. But today, AI is not only a technological trend—it is a geopolitical force.

Simultaneously, the scale of AI infrastructure is reaching new heights. Consider Elon Musk's xAI data center, Colossus, which houses 100,000 NVIDIA H100 chips, each costing approximately \$25,000. That's \$2.5 billion in processors alone. The total facility cost? Between \$3–4 billion for just the first phase. Once complete, it will double in size, with energy requirements rivaling small cities. This scale of investment signifies a broader truth: AI will fundamentally change how organizations operate—and how they communicate.

The implications for corporate communications are enormous. Systems like Grok-3, GPT-4, and Claude Opus are capable of interpreting, generating, and distributing information at speeds and volumes beyond human comprehension. As Dario Amodei (CEO of Anthropic) warned at Davos:

“Right now, I am more confident than I've ever been that we are very close to powerful AI capabilities. I mean in the next two to three years we get to AI systems that are better than almost all humans at almost all tasks.”

We are no longer debating *if* AI will transform communications—but *how*. The following five predictions outline what's coming next for corporate communications professionals.

## What Will Not Change in the Next 10 Years

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos once posed a question that deserves more attention:

*“What's not going to change in the next 10 years?”*

He argued that understanding what will remain constant is often more important than predicting what will change. This principle holds true for corporate communications.

While the tools we use and the timelines we operate on will transform dramatically in the age of AI, the *purpose* of our work remains the same:

- To build trust through dialogue and transparency
- To deepen mutual understanding with stakeholders
- To maintain license to operate in a volatile world
- To shape perception, drive credibility, and influence behavior

The methods may evolve. The speed, scale, and sophistication of our craft will be redefined. But the *mission* endures.

This is the lens through which we offer five predictions for the future of our function—not as speculation, but as a framework for navigating what’s next while staying anchored in what matters most.

# Prediction #1: The Rise of Synthetic Stakeholders

By the mid-2030s, a profound shift in trust will reshape the corporate communications landscape. Stakeholders will place their primary faith not in institutions, media outlets, or brand messaging—but in their personal AI agents. These intelligent digital advisors will become their most trusted source of information, filtering, verifying, and interpreting corporate content with levels of scrutiny, speed, and personalization that far exceed human capacity.

## Synthetic stakeholders

These *synthetic stakeholders*—advanced, personalized AI agents—will fundamentally alter how corporate narratives are received and understood. Traditional human stakeholders—journalists, investors, employees, regulators, and customers—will increasingly rely on these agents as their primary interface with organizations. No longer passive filters or aggregators, these AI systems will analyze, negotiate, and even decide on behalf of their human counterparts. The trust people place in their synthetic stakeholders will surpass that once granted to even the most reputable brands or news organizations.

This shift is already underway. According to Pangram Labs, over 7% of global news articles published on July 1, 2024, were AI-generated. Major outlets are embracing this trend: Bloomberg's Cyborg now generates nearly a third of its content; the Associated Press has scaled automated earnings coverage from 400 to 3,700 companies; The Washington Post's Heliograf and Norway's NTB are churning out structured-data-driven journalism at scale. Meanwhile, AI trading systems parse and act on disclosures in milliseconds—well before human investors even register the information.

## Death of the single narrative

This acceleration comes with an equally dramatic consequence: the death of the single narrative. The shared reality once shaped by mainstream media will splinter into millions of micro-narratives. Each synthetic stakeholder will tailor content to the individual it serves—based on personal histories, preferences, biases, and risk profiles. No two stakeholders will receive the same version of a story.

Corporate communicators will face an unprecedented challenge: managing message consistency across parallel, AI-mediated realities. They will no longer control how their messages are framed. AI algorithms will determine which details are highlighted, which angles resonate, and which interpretations are shown to which stakeholder. The communicators' task will shift from storytelling to *story steering*—ensuring coherence, transparency, and trust across a fragmented ecosystem of intelligent agents.

In this new reality, AI systems become the gatekeepers of credibility. Tools like TrueMedia.org and emerging fact-checking models from OpenAI and Meta will autonomously cross-reference company statements with regulatory filings, historical data, and third-party reports to assess narrative integrity. As MIT CSAIL's 2024 research into *AI-Mediated Communication* shows, stakeholders are more influenced by how their AI interprets a message than by the raw content itself.

## Erosion

Traditional media's authority will continue to erode, as AI-generated content floods the ecosystem with hyper-realistic, yet sometimes unverifiable, narratives. AI-powered influencers and corporate AI personas will bypass human journalists, engaging directly with stakeholder agents and creating alternative channels of trust. Financial markets, regulatory bodies, and public opinion will all operate at machine speed.

Organizations that fail to adapt risk being excluded from these AI-driven decision loops—losing control over their narrative, brand relevance, and even stock valuation. Success will require mastering not just AI-savvy storytelling but also:

- Developing AI-readable narrative structures and metadata
- Monitoring synthetic media manipulation and deepfakes that could distort executive messaging
- Forming cross-functional alliances across communications, legal, policy, and data ethics teams

In this fragmented, fast-moving world, the challenge won't be crafting the perfect message—it will be staying credible when machines are the arbiters of truth. Companies must become *multi-dimensional storytellers*, ensuring that authenticity, transparency, and coherence survive across infinite, personalized, AI-curated realities.

## Prediction #2: From Mass Communication to Mass Conversations

The broadcast era of corporate messaging is ending. For decades, communication was a one-to-many monologue—static, impersonal, and designed for mass consumption. AI is about to dismantle that paradigm, replacing it with something radically different: *millions of simultaneous, intelligent conversations*.

### **Welcome to the age of mass conversations.**

By the mid-2030s, organizations will no longer speak *at* stakeholders. They will engage *with* them—through highly personalized, AI-mediated dialogues that are emotionally intelligent, context-aware, and globally scalable. This transformation marks more than a leap in personalization—it is the dawn of conversational intelligence.

Imagine a world where:

- Investors don't receive generic quarterly updates, but personalized insights tailored to their individual risk appetite, portfolio behavior, and sentiment shifts—crafted in real time.
- Employees experience leadership communication as a responsive, empathetic dialogue that evolves with their career trajectory, wellbeing, and engagement level.
- Customers engage with brands through messages shaped by psychographics, emotional state, and moment-specific needs—feeling seen, heard, and understood at every touchpoint.

## Generative avatars

This shift is already underway. AI-native tools like Salesforce Einstein GPT and Adobe Firefly are enabling real-time, context-sensitive content generation at scale. CEOs are beginning to host global town halls with generative avatars, delivering messages simultaneously in dozens of languages. These aren't static translations—they're culturally adapted, emotionally resonant conversations engineered for local precision and global coherence.

AI will obliterate traditional communication barriers—of language, time zone, even emotional nuance. Autonomous AI relationship managers will learn from every interaction, predict the best moment and manner for engagement, and continuously adapt tone and content to maintain trust. A CEO's announcement could land in Tokyo, São Paulo, and Stockholm simultaneously—each version distinct, yet unmistakably on-brand.

## Architect of organizational relationships

By the 2030s, AI will become more than a tool—it will be the *architect of organizational relationships*. Emotional recognition capabilities—interpreting tone, facial expression, and word choice—will allow AI to mirror the nuance of skilled human communicators. Stanford and DeepMind's 2024 research confirms that large language models are rapidly approaching human-level performance in affective inference and contextual adaptation.

This revolution will redefine the role of the corporate communicator. Their job will no longer be to craft a single perfect message, but to:

- Define adaptive narrative models that evolve with audience needs
- Supervise tone calibration algorithms to ensure brand consistency at scale
- Conduct ethical oversight and engagement audits across millions of micro-interactions

The net result is a new form of *distributed intimacy*—where every stakeholder feels as though the organization is speaking directly to them, in their language, on their terms. Corporate communication will no longer be about managing stakeholder relations from a



distance—it will be about cultivating meaningful, real-time relationships powered by intelligent systems.

This isn't just a technological upgrade. It's a fundamental reimagining of how organizations connect with people. Mass conversations will replace mass communication, ushering in a more empathetic, responsive, and intelligent era of engagement—one where the message is not just sent, but truly received.

## Prediction #3: From Reactive to Predictive Communications

We are entering the age of *narrative forecasting*—a fundamental shift from reacting to events, to anticipating and shaping them. In the 2030s, corporate communication will evolve from a response function into a forward-looking intelligence system. Organizations will no longer wait for reputational risks or stakeholder sentiment to surface. Instead, they will deploy AI to detect, model, and mitigate challenges before they ever materialize.

### Seeing Around Corners

The broadcast model is already outdated. What's next is *anticipatory communication*—a new paradigm where AI acts as a strategic partner, continuously scanning for narrative shifts, sentiment drifts, and emerging risks. These systems won't just analyze trends. They'll simulate futures.

Imagine this:

- Investor relations teams receive early alerts when an institutional stakeholder begins to exhibit signs of disengagement—based on subtle shifts in tone or portfolio sentiment.
- Internal communicators detect drops in employee morale weeks before a survey confirms it—by analyzing micro-patterns in chat tools and internal forums.
- Public affairs teams predict regulatory friction by monitoring emerging discourse in policy circles, scientific publications, and media ecosystems.

AI won't just help organizations understand what's happening now—it will forecast what *might* happen next, providing a dynamic layer of predictive intelligence.

## **Predictive Intelligence in action**

By 2030, AI systems will run millions of communication simulations in parallel. These models will map stakeholder responses to various scenarios, helping leaders understand the potential consequences of every message *before* it's sent. Predictive models will assess not only reputational risk, but also the probability of trust erosion or reinforcement, misinformation virality, and emotional resonance.

This is already underway. Emerging platforms like Blackbird.AI and Accrete.AI are pioneering narrative intelligence—tracking influence campaigns, deep network chatter, and reputational risk across the open and dark web. Communications leaders are starting to act, not react—predicting virality curves, fatigue patterns, and sentiment contagion.

As these tools evolve, they will integrate inputs from biometric data and neuroscience. Companies like Affectiva and Emotiv are testing brand content against gaze patterns, micro-expressions, and emotional feedback, creating early-stage emotional resonance benchmarks that can inform content before launch.

Traditional communication metrics will become obsolete. In their place: probabilistic narrative maps, trust impact forecasts, and real-time strategy refinements based on AI-generated insights.

## **Ethics and oversight**

But with great foresight comes great responsibility. The rise of predictive communications raises profound ethical questions: Where is the line between persuasion and manipulation? What constitutes informed consent in a world of anticipatory messaging?

The most forward-thinking organizations will respond by building strong AI governance frameworks—ensuring:

- Transparency in data sourcing and model logic
- Explainable AI systems that communicators and regulators can understand

- Opt-in engagement models that respect user autonomy

As prediction becomes power, organizations will need ethical oversight as robust as their technical capabilities. Expect to see the emergence of Chief Narrative Intelligence Officers—senior leaders who blend brand strategy, behavioral science, and predictive analytics into a single, board-level function.

### **A new communication paradigm**

This is more than an upgrade to corporate communications—it's a transformation of its very nature. The future is not about reacting faster. It's about *seeing farther*.

By the 2030s, the most sophisticated organizations will operate with near-clairvoyant precision, turning communication from a broadcast function into a strategic foresight engine. Professionals in this field will evolve from message crafters to *narrative strategists*, interpreting computational forecasts, stress-testing communication plans, and guiding organizations through possible futures.

The future of corporate communication is not about responding to the world—it's about *intelligently anticipating and shaping it*.

## Prediction #4: The Return to Human Authenticity

Jeff Bezos once said, “When thinking about the future, focus on what won’t change.” In the future of corporate communications, one thing will remain constant: the human need for trust. Technology will radically transform *how* we communicate—but the *why* will stay the same. The essential tasks of corporate communications—building reputation, managing relationships, ensuring transparency, and enabling the business—will still hinge on one timeless truth: human connection matters most.

### A synthetic content crisis

By the mid-2030s, generative AI will saturate the digital world with algorithmically produced messages. Content—cheap, abundant, and often meaningless—will flood every channel. This “AI slop,” as it’s increasingly being called, will consist of low-quality, generic content generated at unimaginable scale. Everyone—from individuals to global institutions—will have access to powerful content engines, unleashing an information overload that threatens to drown meaningful communication.

To counter this deluge, AI-powered filters will emerge as ruthless editors of human attention. These systems will pre-sort content based on originality, emotional value, and resonance. Anything that feels synthetic, superficial, or manipulative will be discarded before it even reaches an audience. Attention will become the scarcest—and most precious—currency in communications.

### Craving connection

As this synthetic content flood rises, people will develop what might be called *algorithmic immunity*—an instant resistance to anything that feels artificial. Communications that lack a clear human voice, emotional depth, or ethical clarity will be tuned out. Stakeholders will gravitate toward what feels real.

According to the **Edelman Trust Barometer (2024)**, 73% of people are more likely to trust a message that comes from a person rather than a brand—and that number rises significantly when the person is perceived as emotionally transparent and authentic.

In this landscape, the messages that will cut through the noise will share three traits:

- Emotional depth
- Ethical clarity
- Human voice and vulnerability

### **The human premium**

Research from the Harvard Kennedy School (West et al., 2023) shows that AI content performance declines sharply when emotional intelligence or moral reasoning is required. These are precisely the areas where human communicators will shine. The most effective corporate communication professionals of the future will be those who:

- Humanize executive voices through unscripted storytelling, personal moments, and openness
- Balance automation with surprise, humor, and imperfection—reminding audiences they’re connecting with real people
- Guide the ethical use of synthetic humans—including AI avatars and voice clones—with clear disclosure and moral responsibility

Reputation, in this world, will be built not on scale or polish—but on sincerity.

### **Co-Intelligence: a new symbiosis**

This is not about rejecting AI. Quite the opposite. The future belongs to organizations that master *co-intelligence*: the art of blending artificial intelligence with human authenticity. AI

will handle complexity, scale, and real-time personalization. But only humans can bring the emotional nuance, ethical judgment, and narrative authenticity needed to truly connect.

AI will help us understand sentiment in real time, translate across cultures, and tailor messages for millions. But only humans will know when to pause, to reflect, or to say something imperfect—but true.

### **A new kind of dialogue**

We are entering an era where talking to machines will feel natural—but *being human* will feel radical. Communications professionals will become the custodians of authenticity in a synthetic age. The role will evolve, not disappear. It will require more emotional intelligence, not less. More creativity. More courage. More humanity.

The future of communication is not man *versus* machine—it is man *with* machine. It's a dialogue between data and emotion, between speed and substance, between automation and authenticity.

And in this future, the most powerful messages will be:

- Technologically perfect—but emotionally true
- Crafted by algorithms—but sparked by human insight
- Scaled to millions—but felt by one

This is how organizations will build trust, deepen relationships, and enable business—not despite AI, but through a wiser, more human orchestration of it.

## **Prediction #5: The Emergence of the AI-Native Communications Function**

By 2030, the corporate communications function will be almost unrecognizable. The traditional communicator—armed with a press list and storytelling instinct—will evolve into a strategic orchestrator of AI-powered narratives. Routine content creation will become the domain of machines. The human communicator will step into a more critical role: overseeing, curating, and ethically guiding powerful AI systems that shape organizational reputation in real time.

### **The rise of narrative designers and ethics officers**

A new generation of roles will emerge at the intersection of communication, technology, and ethics. AI Narrative Designers will train models to craft emotionally resonant and context-sensitive messaging. Predictive Strategists will anticipate reputational risks using advanced sentiment and behavioral analytics. Communication Ethicists—AI-savvy guardians of truth and transparency—will ensure that every message remains aligned with core human values and ethical principles.

As communication becomes predictive and ambient—happening through autonomous channels, intelligent agents, and curated feeds—ethical clarity will become non-negotiable. Stakeholders will demand transparency, disclosure, and accountability for AI-generated messages. Just as legal counsel became indispensable in the digital era, AI ethics officers will be critical to brand trust in the AI-native era.

### **The convergence of functions**

The traditional silos between internal comms, public relations, investor relations, and brand strategy will dissolve. In their place, a unified narrative function will emerge, powered by



integrated AI systems that deliver consistent, adaptive messaging across audiences and touchpoints.

These narrative engines will blend data from social platforms, markets, employee sentiment, and stakeholder behavior—crafting messages that respond in real time to shifting contexts. The result: a living, learning reputation system capable of sensing and shaping perception at unprecedented scale.

### **Smaller, smarter teams**

Communication teams will shrink in size but grow in capability. Hyper-specialized units—composed of prompt designers, computational linguists, data scientists, and behavioral psychologists—will replace traditional departments. Human communicators will act as interpreters of cultural nuance, ensuring that AI-generated content remains inclusive, emotionally intelligent, and resonant across languages and contexts.

### **Human oversight in high-stakes moments**

Even in a world of autonomous narratives, high-risk moments—mergers, layoffs, crises—will remain deeply human. AI will assist, not replace, the communicator during these inflection points. Leaders will need voices that are vulnerable, emotionally grounded, and transparent—qualities no algorithm can replicate.

The communicator of the future won't just use AI—they will co-create with it. Success will belong to those who can navigate the intersection of computational intelligence and human truth. The AI-native communicator will pair strategic foresight with ethical fluency, building trust in an era defined by uncertainty and speed.

The future of communications won't be less human. It will demand better humans—more empathetic, more principled, and more prepared than ever to guide machines with wisdom and intent.

