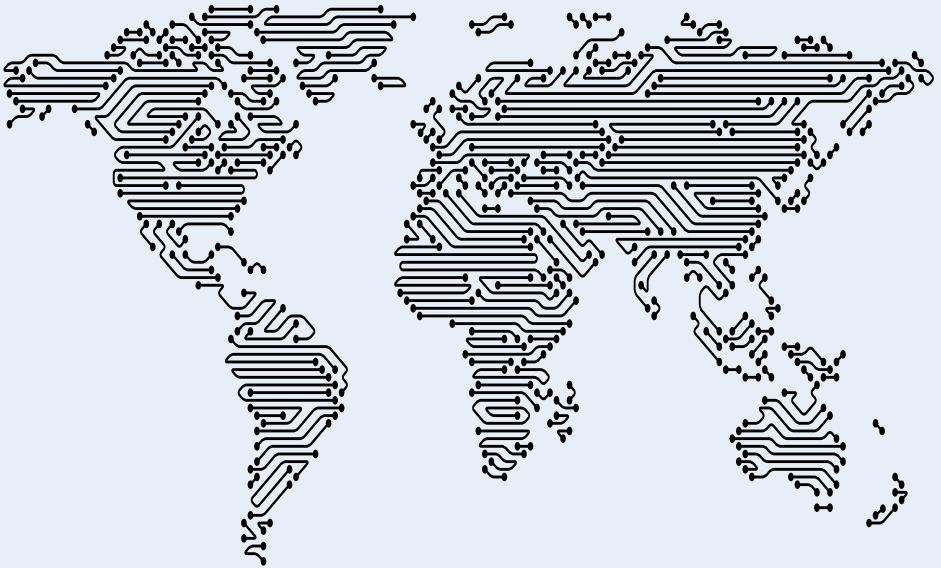


## Global strategy: local voice

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A guide to country manager  
communications



## Is this you?

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Alain from Paris was recently appointed by a multinational banking and finance group as the executive responsible for Africa.

He regularly breakfasts with a major client and takes mid-morning coffee with a trade union representative before having lunch with a politician or regulator.

He can spend the evening talking about key industry trends with a regional correspondent of the *Financial Times* or *The Economist*, or discussing his firm's impact with a local reporter.

Every so often, when he is not delivering the numbers or enhancing the reputation of the business, he gets to put his kids to bed.

Men like Alain understand that their professional success owes everything to being a local hero.

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Such success comes from inspiring operational teams, encouraging topline growth, sustaining margins, and managing challenges along the way. Get it right, and the results can be impressive as the market understands and recognises the importance of this local success in how it builds the business. Get it wrong, and share prices can dive when seemingly innocuous issues rapidly criss-cross global news-wires, damaging the reputation of an organisation and its valuation.

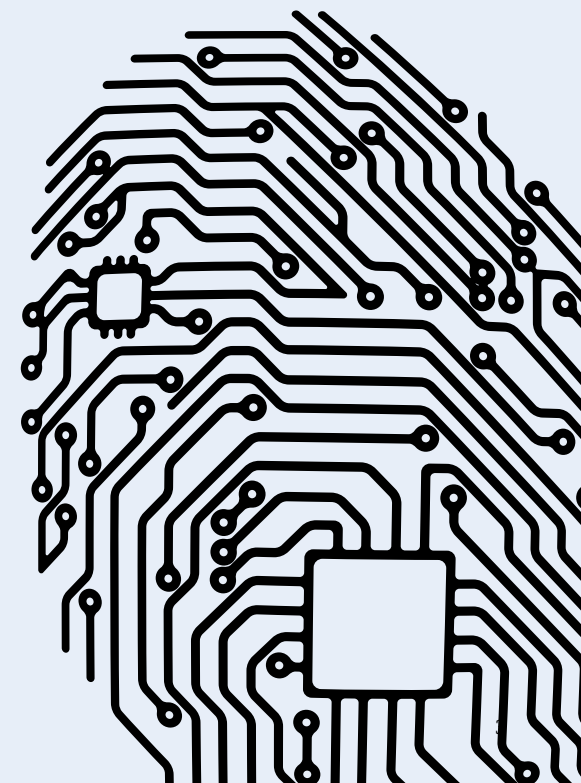
### **Enhance your reputation**

For leaders and managers like Alain, having the knowledge and skills to make decisions quickly and to communicate effectively has never been more important. In the past, the running of a national or regional office may have seemed removed from the action of global HQ. No more. Today, the valuation of many multinationals is directly related to the perceived success of their international operations, in particular their emerging market activities.

Consequently, there is a real and urgent need for country and product managers to be 'on message' and able to enhance the reputation of their business at all times. Bladonmore understands this and has developed a specialist communications programme for senior country and product managers.

### **Boost your communication skills**

The objective is to create global ambassadors locally by using our expertise to boost their communication skills. Organisations including ArcelorMittal, Cable & Wireless, Microsoft and Nokia have used this approach and enjoyed immediate results and benefits. When can we come and talk to you?



## Ideas for the year ahead

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The following eight ideas have been developed by Bladonmore based on our recent experience of developing programmes for some of the world's largest companies. These can be delivered on the ground to your local leaders, their senior teams and supporting communications personnel.

### 1. Create a world-class communications blueprint today, measure its effectiveness tomorrow

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Your corporate communications department will be responsible for setting the strategy and tone of how the business projects itself. Understanding how that works at a local level and translating that into action is your responsibility. This module is focused on creating a world-class blueprint for communications focused on achieving your key local objectives and putting in place an effective measurement system to track the success of your performance.

### 2. Live an international brand locally

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Multinational businesses create effective brands that capture their values and promote their role in society. But are these values truly lived at a local level? What communications initiatives can country managers take to enhance the reputation of the organisation and help translate an international brand for a local market? Bladonmore can deliver a workshop which will equip you with a set of tools focused on ensuring the local operations are truly living the international brand.

### 3. Boost internal communications

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Getting internal communications right is never simple. It demands an understanding of how to connect with the very people who know most about your own organisation. Putting in place an effective internal communications programme is a proven way to enhance the reputation of your business. This programme will boost the profile and reputation of country managers with their local staff.

### 4. Deal effectively with the international media

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There is increasing interest and appetite from the international media in local operations of multinationals. These reporters are heavily influenced by local contacts, local media and NGOs. So country managers need to understand how they operate, and use their relationships with reporters as an opportunity to communicate key messages to promote the agenda and interests of their organisation.

### 5. Develop a client communications content programme

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When was the last time you conducted a holistic audit of your client communications initiatives? Now is a good time to assess whether these are maximising their effectiveness. You may need to update the bank of client case studies or relaunch your customer magazine or newsletter. More likely, you need to increase the volume and impact of your online communications.

### 6. Showcase your community engagement programme

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Create a film to showcase how your corporate social responsibility programme works at a local level. The best international organisations contribute significantly to their local communities and you should not be afraid to highlight this involvement.

### 7. Invite international investors to visit you locally

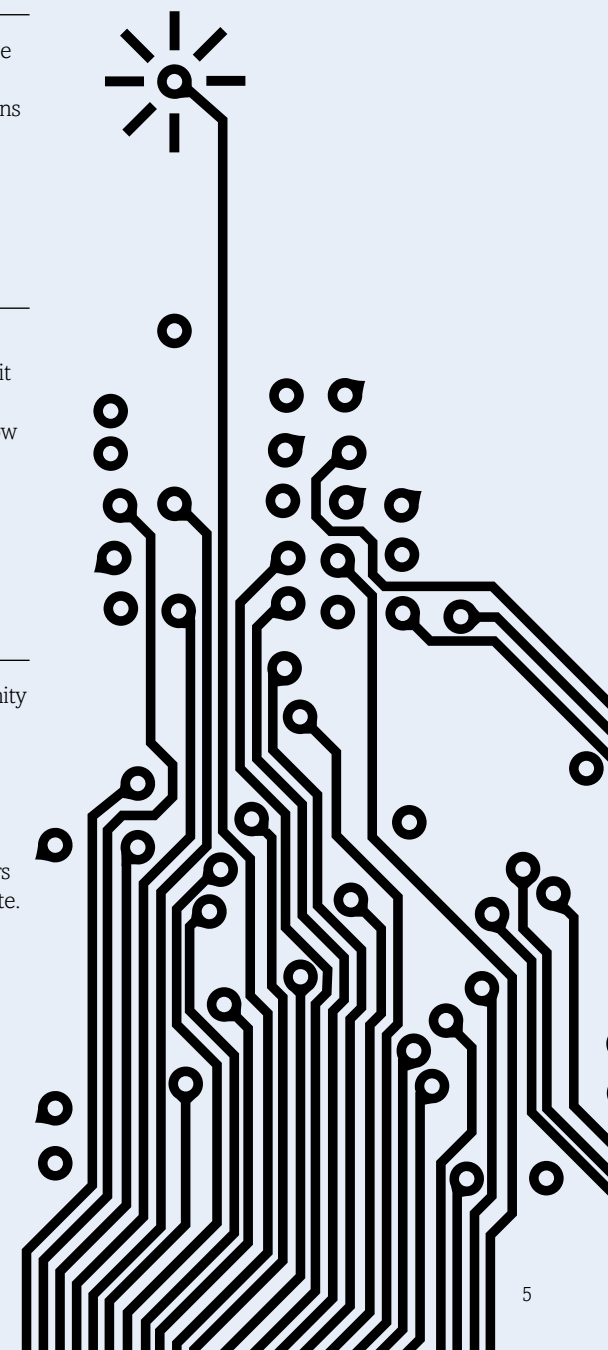
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Work with the IR department to organise an investor day for the buy side to come and visit your local operations. The performance of international operations is fundamental to how multinational businesses are valued today. Get this right and your share price could rise immediately.

### 8. Create a video roadshow of your operations for investors who are unable to travel

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Many investors would dearly like the opportunity to attend an investor day but it may not be possible in today's economic climate. International travel might be off the agenda, so instead produce a video roadshow that highlights the strengths and opportunities of your local operations for international investors to download from your global and local website.



## Our proven expertise

### ArcelorMittal

Global HQ: Luxembourg & London

The world's largest steel producer wanted to develop a global communications programme – delivered at a local level – as part of a strategy to consolidate and grow its market share. Programme content included video messages from Mr Lakshmi Mittal and other members of the board, bespoke content and the development of communications blueprints that worked in sync with the corporate communications centre.

Programmes delivered: Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, India, Mexico, South Africa, US, Ukraine.

### Cable & Wireless

Global HQ: London

The FTSE 350 telecoms business sought to develop a programme focused on boosting the communications skills of country managers operating in a number of strategically important markets. A programme was developed focusing on boosting the skills of the local CEOs to harness their core abilities and to strengthen their ability to be effective local ambassadors.

Programmes delivered: Caribbean, Macau.

### BNY Mellon

Global HQ: New York

BNY Mellon has a strong culture focused on core values. As the company undertakes a growth strategy throughout markets in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, it wanted to provide its country managers with the opportunity to polish their communications skills to increase their effectiveness. Country managers from across Europe and the Middle East converged on regional centres for the programmes, providing an opportunity to raise their confidence levels and learn together.

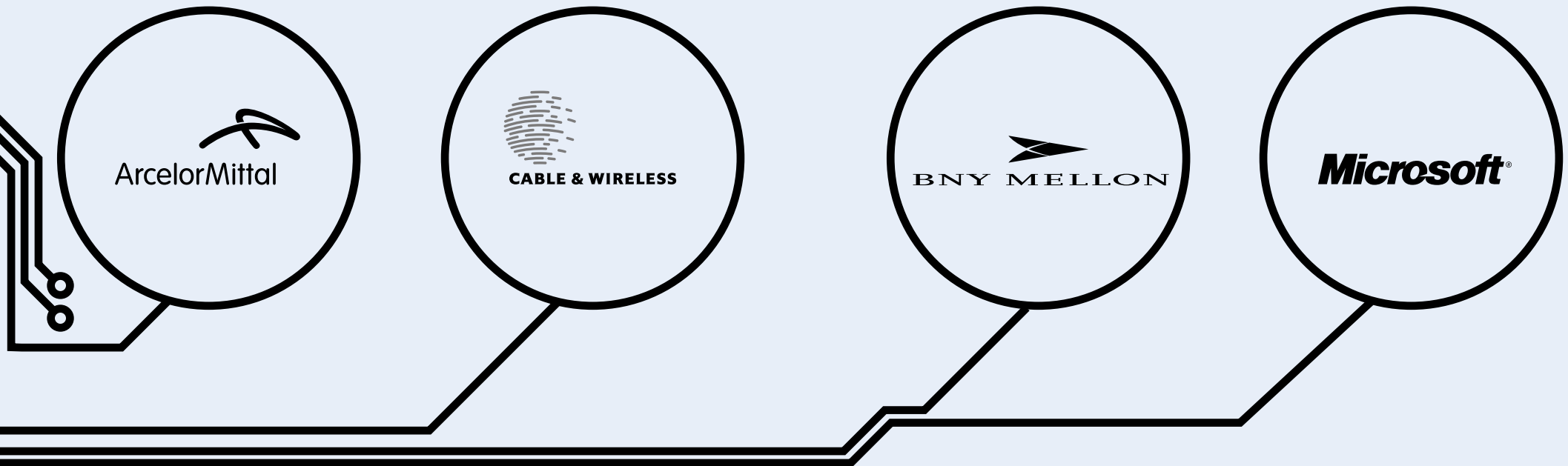
Programmes delivered: UK, UAE.

### Microsoft

Global HQ: Redmond

Microsoft selected Bladonmore to be its European adviser on the creation of a country manager coaching programme. Working in tandem with Microsoft's US communications agency, Bladonmore delivered a number of programmes to large groups across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. These programmes focused in particular on taking the global messages built at the organisation's Redmond HQ and translating these into effective messages that would work on the ground in far-flung parts of the group's operations.

Programmes delivered: Croatia, France, Hungary, Ireland, South Africa, Turkey, UK.



Bladonmore delivers communications programmes to regional and national CEOs and Country Managers, by applying the following tried and tested approach.

### **Complete a successful diagnostic review**

We conduct these face to face and, whenever possible, use recordings of previous presentations. After identifying strengths and weaknesses in individual performance, we create a programme to make the changes required. Bladonmore also reviews the business plan and the role leadership communications plays in the execution of the plan, and carries out interviews with your colleagues.

### **Develop a personalised programme**

Programmes range from being just a few polishing sessions with an expert communications coach to a tailored programme of behavioural change. Our clients typically experience greatest progress when they receive coaching for specific events, such as results presentations, town-hall gatherings, addresses to staff, conference speeches and interviews with the media.

It takes time to achieve long-lasting change. Short, sharp bursts of highly focused coaching, sustained over a period of time, have proved to be the most effective way of getting the desired outcome. To fit in with the busy schedule of a top executive, individual coaching sessions are often run as a series of 90-minute blocks.

Each coaching session concentrates on developing one particular aspect of performance. For example, one session might be about how to use a script effectively, another on clarity of messaging, and another on techniques for answering difficult questions or handling the media. We recommend using a real presentation as an example during coaching sessions – perhaps last quarter's results or an upcoming analyst meeting. Sessions are recorded on video and a personal DVD is available after each session.

### **Create an ongoing development programme**

An essential reason why Bladonmore's approach is so effective is that we work with individuals to create personal programmes to continue their development. This involves written feedback and an agreed development plan to ensure the positive changes become ingrained and long lasting.

### **Provide 24/7 support**

Bladonmore ensures round-the-clock access to speech writers, messaging experts and media trainers, as required, when preparing for your critical communications.

Jonty Summers, Director of Bladonmore Middle East, moved to Abu Dhabi in June 2009. Mr Summers speaks to us from Bladonmore's office in Abu Dhabi about the challenges and opportunities of representing the business 4,500km from our London head office.

### **Why did Bladonmore target Abu Dhabi?**

Bladonmore has been working in the Gulf region for approximately five years and in Abu Dhabi for the past two years. Eventually, a permanent presence became essential to servicing our growing client base here.

### **What has been the most significant advantage of being based locally?**

This is a market and culture that requires local contact and personal interaction. Since the opening of our office, we have become a local adviser with a global network. I'd like to think our clients have noticed a difference in their interactions with us.

By committing to living and working in Abu Dhabi, we are aligning Bladonmore with the long-term economic plans of Abu Dhabi. It is important that the organisations we work with here know that we are committed to their market.

### **What has been the biggest challenge?**

The number one challenge for anyone relocating to the Gulf is to get accustomed to the culture because it's so different to the Western European market.

I would say that without having an affinity for this region, it would be very hard to be successful.

### **How have you translated Bladonmore's key messages for the local market?**

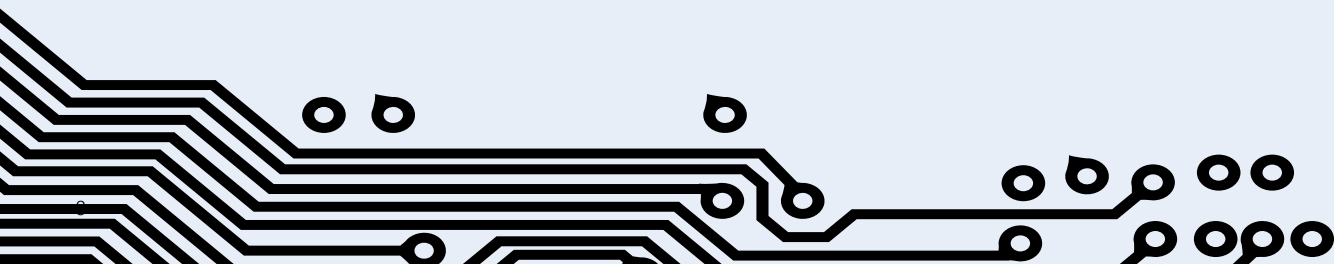
Although Bladonmore's core values – *expertise, enterprise and effectiveness* – remain the same, the work we do and how we are perceived are subtly different.

Here, much of our work is based on helping to develop the next generation of leaders for Abu Dhabi through training programmes or generating engaging content to allow nascent but ambitious Abu Dhabi-based organisations communicate with their key audiences.

We also help multinational companies position themselves in the region to ensure their communications are as effective locally as they are internationally.

### **Do you have any advice for other organisations that would like to enhance their reputation in their local markets?**

In the Gulf your personal reputation and integrity are very important. Obviously, it is a prerequisite to be able to deliver great work, but to be successful you have to be perceived by the local market as having a long-term commitment, coupled with an appreciation of the local culture and the way that business is conducted.



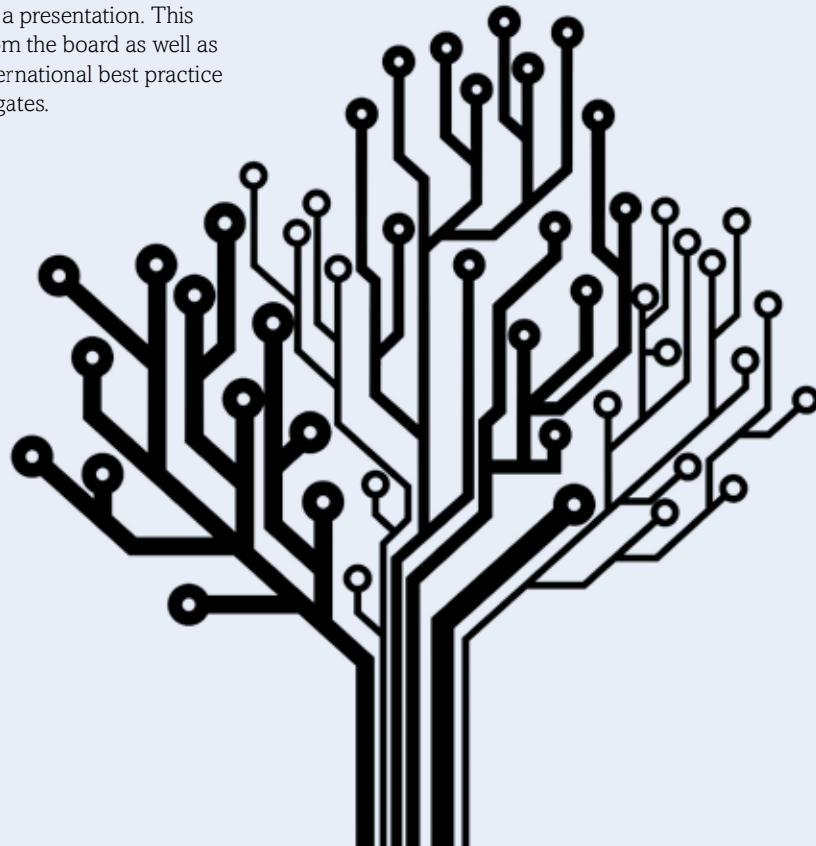
## The interaction and knowledge transfer between HQ and local markets

The question we are regularly asked is "How can you take the expertise of the head office and transfer it directly into the international offices?"

There are a number of techniques that we have developed, but perhaps the most powerful is when we interview corporate leaders, capturing their expertise on video and in print.

This wisdom is then incorporated into a series of deliverables, like DVDs, webcasts, brochures, speeches and presentations. This allows accurate and high-quality transfer of knowledge.

For example, with ArcelorMittal, we have created a standalone guide that includes perspectives from Mr Mittal and four films that are embedded into a presentation. This delivers wisdom from the board as well as perspectives on international best practice directly to the delegates.



“Every country manager needs to understand the importance of our reputation; and live it, breathe it and promote it in everything that we do.”

**Aditya Mittal**

“It is very important for our CEOs to engage and communicate with the local media and stakeholders about the company's objectives and direction.”

**Lakshmi Mittal**

Bladonmore is a trusted communications adviser to organisations, their leaders and executives. From offices in London and Abu Dhabi and drawing on a network of international talent, our publications, films, online work and training modules are used to support internal and external communications programmes for leading organisations.

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