

February 2019

Your monthly OAT

By Sharon Aschaiek

Did you know oats are a superfood that boost brainpower? As I did last issue, I'd like to serve up my own version to help you be a better communicator: **Opportunity, Article, Tip.**

Opportunity: Each year, IABC holds a [world conference](#) that covers the key trends, challenges, solutions and opportunities pertaining to the communications profession. This year's conference is taking place in Vancouver from June 9-12. Why am I bringing it up now? Because the deadline to get the discounted early-bird rate is March 6.

Article: Every year at this time, Super Bowl commercials give

communicators new food for thought on what it takes to engage audiences' hearts and minds. This [Washington Post](#) article offers its take on the 10 best ads, and explains how they make an impact by making us laugh or feel nostalgic, highlighting our shared global humanity, and even triggering sensory euphoria. They inspire fresh thinking on what constitutes effective marketing communications.

Tip: *Forbes* recently published an article that may resonate with communicators who support senior executives: [Five Tips Leaders Can Use to Communicate Better](#). My favourite tip from the article is about speaking from within,

or being honest. Too often, organizational leaders fall into the trap of communicating in an overly formal and reserved way. Speaking more authentically and sharing some of your humanity helps leaders build rapport and trust with employees, which strengthens their loyalty to the organization.



Sharon Aschaiek is principal of Higher Ed Communications, chair of PIC and vp of special interest groups, IABC/Toronto.



Welcome New Member

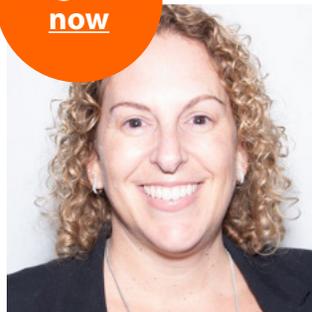
CATHY COWAN

Cowan & Company
Communications
Toronto
416-462-8773

[Email](#)
[Website](#)
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Named IABC/Toronto's Boutique Agency of the Year four times (!), Cowan & Company collaborates with premium lifestyle brands to create results-driven media relations, influencer marketing, special events, social philanthropy and sponsored content communications programs that exceed expectations.

Register
now



JODI ECHAKOWITZ



CYRUS MAIVALWALA



CAROLYN CAMILLERI

Writers, your contributions are welcome: Want to recap a meeting or do other writing for The Buzz? Contact [Sue Horner](#).

How to Outsource and Expand Your Communication Business

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 6:30 P.M. TO 9 P.M.

Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St., M4Y 2V5

Read more on [page 4](#)



PIC PERSONALITY:

Meet Lynne Olver

By Sue Horner



LYNNE OLVER is a senior communications consultant and a former business reporter. She advises clients in the financial services and investment sectors on business communication, including annual reporting, internal and external communications, financial and investment communications, issues and risk management, strategic planning, writing and editing. Learn more on her [website](#) and on [LinkedIn](#), call 705-932-0165 or send an [email](#).

When did you launch your independent business and how did it come about?
May 2013. I had been in journalism for about 15 years, then worked for a large pension plan in Toronto for about five years. Then my partner and I decided to move east of the GTA. Rather than commuting, I thought communications consulting and writing and editing could be done remotely, from anywhere.

When I launched my business, my former employer became a client and has been

one for a number of years. Other clients came through word of mouth. I appreciate the huge good fortune that is!

What do you enjoy most about being an indie?

Like many freelancers, I love the flexibility. By that I mean shifting my time as required; I can run errands mid-week and work on weekends, for example.

The variety is also wonderful. I have a short attention span, so working with different clients on different projects is perfect for me. And I enjoy the diversity in subject matter and time commitment, from a couple of weeks to a few months or longer.

What don't you like about being an indie?

Not much! I don't enjoy the paperwork, like invoicing, tracking hours and organizing materials for taxes. But for the most part, I like the independent life. I like being away from the office environment, where it's easy to get drawn into long, unproductive meetings. When I want to chat with someone, it's easy to pick up the phone.

How long have you been a PIC member and what value do you get from your membership?

I've been a member since September 2013, with a brief period when my membership lapsed. PIC has some great resources, like the survey on rates done a few years back.

I've also attended some PIC events and have found them useful. The ability to talk about common issues with other indies is a great benefit.

What advice would you give someone new to independent life?

1. Draft a simple business plan. It's useful from a professional point of view, for getting your own thoughts in order and clarifying what you're going to do and what kind of clients you want to attract. It's also a way to articulate your financial plans, how much you want to earn and what it will take to get there.

2. Get used to the ups and downs. You'll have periods where you're super crazy busy, others where you wonder what you've done. But that's just the nature of being on your own and you have to roll with it. If possible, stash extra funds in a separate account during the good times to see you through the droughts. Don't fret, it will all work out!



PIC members offer a range of talent, from coaching and media relations to video production and writing. Our PIC Personality feature introduces new members and randomly profiles existing members. Let [Sue Horner](#) know if you'd like to be profiled and she'll be in touch to set it up. Sue is a writer, principal of [Get It Write](#) and co-director of communications for PIC.

See you on social media

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members, advance your communications business, discuss business issues and network with PIC on social media:

- Follow us on Twitter at [@pictoronto](#).
- Take part in our LinkedIn group, [IABC Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#) (login required).
- Take part in our [Facebook group](#), Professional Independent Communicators (PIC), part of IABC/Toronto (chapter members only).

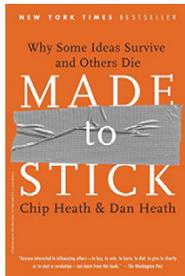


Read up on PIC's history

How did PIC start? What are some early stories and stats? What do members say about us? Read all this and more in *PIC Then and Now*. The booklet marked our 20th anniversary in 2018, and was created by [Cathy Ledden](#), RGD, and her associate, Susan Mosdell, RGD. Download a PDF of the booklet from our [website](#) under Resources.

Old Perhaps, But Still Relevant— Resources for Writers

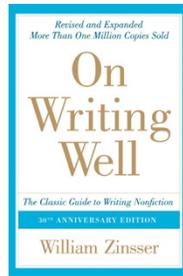
By Pat de Valence



Made To Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

Chip Heath & Dan Heath

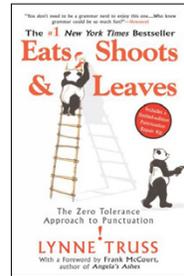
This *New York Times* bestseller was written for a business audience and is, to their point, easy to consume. It has some great ideas about how to structure communication that will stick with the audience and drive action: keep it simple, grab attention through the unexpected, find a way to make an abstract idea concrete, make sure your content is credible, appeal to people's emotions, and deliver your key message in the context of a story. This applies whether your communication is spoken, printed or posted on the web.



On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction

William Zinsser

Zinsser had a writing career that spanned 65 years, starting as a journalist with the *New York Herald* and ending with a weekly blog for the periodical *The American Scholar*. In between, he wrote for many top-tier publications, taught, served as an editor and wrote 18 non-fiction books. His advice on principles, methods and forms for good writing apply today, regardless of whether the communication is a presentation, a web publication or an executive briefing paper. It provides good examples for how to keep it simple, know your audience, and pay attention to the lead and ending. He offers guidance on ensuring good form for writing about various domains—people, places, sports, the arts, and in your work.



Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation Lynne Truss

Having to repeatedly read a sentence or paragraph is a daily occurrence, not just when consuming information on the web, but even when reading the venerable *New York Times*. Punctuation isn't just noise on the page or screen, it conveys additional meaning to what might otherwise be a simple collection of words. A comma tells the reader that this group of things are, well, a group. A semi-colon tells the reader that two ideas or comments are inter-related, amplifying the overall meaning. Punctuation is like windshield wipers—it clarifies the view.



Pat de Valence has 30 years' experience as a business communicator. She's managed many complex C-level projects with a significant change management component to people, process and technology. She is now shifting her focus from program management to communication planning and content development. Pat joined IABC in March 2018.

Punctuation isn't just noise on the page or screen, it conveys additional meaning to what might otherwise be a simple collection of words.

—LYNNE TRUSS

Events of interest

How to Ask for What You're Worth and Get Paid on Time PWAC

Monday, February 25,
7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
Miles Nadal JCC, Room 318,
750 Spadina Ave., Toronto

Why is talking about freelance pay rates and money in general so challenging? In this PWAC seminar, long-time freelancers share advice on how they've set their rates and how they've raised them over the years. Learn more about rates at various publications, approaching money conversations with editors and other clients, getting paid, and finding more lucrative work. [Learn more and register.](#)

Webinars for Writers

Editors Canada's 2019 webinars include Copyediting Live! with Elizabeth d'Anjou (Feb. 21) and Usage Traps and Myths with Frances Peck (April 10). To see the full lineup, visit: <http://training.editors.ca/>

Using Storytelling To Sell Better, Lead Better, Market Better and Impact Better

Canadian Association of Professional Speakers
Monday, March 18,
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Sandman Signature Toronto
Airport Hotel

Research tells us that facts tell, emotions sell. So your ability to make an emotional connection will directly affect the outcome of your success. No matter what your job, you will have far more impact and power of influence if you know how to create an emotional connection with your listener. Open to non-members. [Learn more and register.](#)

April 11: How to Outsource and Expand Your Communication Business

Are you ready to take on larger or more financially lucrative work in your communications practice, but concerned about your ability to manage such projects?

A great option exists between hiring staff and keeping your practice small. Working with subcontractors to get the skills or support you need for larger projects is an ideal way to grow your business at a pace you can manage.

Join IABC/Toronto's Professional Independent Communicators to learn from a panel of accomplished communicators about how they have been able to expand their business through outsourcing.



JODI ECHAKOWITZ is CEO of Boulevard PR, the public relations agency she founded in 2001 to help startups, emerging growth companies and VC firms focused on tech achieve their goals. Under her leadership, Boulevard has grown consistently through referral, is recognized as one of the top B2B tech-focused agencies and is valued as a strategic partner by clients throughout North America.



CYRUS MAVALWALA, ABC, MC, is a communication strategist, trainer and speaker who has been helping organizations achieve business results for more than two decades. He earned international accreditation as an IABC Accredited Business Communicator in 2009 and is one of 60 people in Canada who have been awarded IABC Canada's highest honour and lifetime achievement designation, Master Communicator. Cyrus is founder of Advantis Communications, a boutique communication agency focused on content strategy, creation and activation.



CAROLYN CAMILLERI has been an editor, writer, and copywriter since 1996. Her portfolio runs the gamut from magazine writing and editing (including launching several publications and a long list of articles for consumer and trade magazines) to corporate copywriting, annual reports, proposals, white papers, promotional materials, ghostwriting, social media, and websites. Over the years, she has worked in a variety of ways, including as an in-house employee, on contract, and as part of three collaborative groups.

[Register now](#)

**Thursday, April 11,
6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.**
Central YMCA
20 Grosvenor St.
M4Y 2V5

Registration fees:

\$20 plus HST **\$30** plus HST
IABC/Toronto member rate Non-member rate

Professional Independent Communicators (PIC) is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. [IABC](#) helps people and organizations achieve excellence in corporate communication, PR, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication.

THE BUZZ *The Buzz* informs members about upcoming events, shares professional development tips from past meetings and keeps us connected. Editor this issue: [Pat de Valence](#) | Design: [Deana De Ciccio](#)

Quick links

- [PIC on the web](#)
- [PIC on LinkedIn](#)
- [@PICToronto](#) on Twitter
- Email us: toronto-sig@iabc.to
- [Join our mailing list!](#)
- Get a copy of [The Independent Life](#)
- [IABC/Toronto](#)

PIC executive

Contact any of us with questions, comments and ideas for speakers or topics:

Chair: [Sharon Aschaiek](#)

Past Chair: [Donna Papacosta](#)

Communications: [Sue Horner](#), [Pat de Valence](#)

Membership: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#), [Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: [Bill Smith](#)

