

CUP OF CORPORATE COMMS

AN **UNFILTERED**
LOOK AT WHAT'S
PERCOLATING NOW



Below are key themes that dominated corporate communications news in May 2026.

PURPOSE IS UNDER PRESSURE TO MOVE FROM BOLD STATEMENTS TO DISCIPLINED PROOF.

Brand purpose is undergoing a structural reset, as the gap between what organizations say and what they do has become impossible to ignore. A **PR Daily** analysis captures the pattern clearly: Across markets, companies are speaking less, vetting more and pulling back from broad social commentary. The instinct is understandable. But silence carries its own cost. Over time, it erodes the sense of connection that purpose is supposed to create.

The deeper issue is credibility. **HR Dive** reports that nearly half of employees say they've worked for organizations that didn't live up to their stated values, and when that disconnect surfaces, trust and retention suffer fast. Values still drive attraction and engagement, but only when embedded in decisions and day-to-day operations, not just in communications.

Most companies don't lose their purpose in a single moment; they slowly betray it. An **HBR IdeaCast** episode makes the case that short-term pressures and governance structures create an imperceptible drift, until a mission-driven organization becomes a sophisticated shell: still talking about values, but structurally disconnected from them.

Bottom line: The mandate is shifting from amplifying purpose to operationalizing it. The question is no longer "what should we say?" but "what are we structured to stand behind?" Brands that treat purpose as a campaign risk irrelevance. Those that treat it as a system of action will earn trust and long-term growth.



IN THE AGE OF AI DISCOVERY, B2B BRAND ADVOCACY BECOMES THE NEW GROWTH ENGINE.



AI-powered discovery is compressing the B2B buyer journey. Answer engines and generative platforms surface information before buyers ever engage with brand-owned channels – meaning visibility now depends on whether a brand is deemed authoritative enough to be cited by AI systems, not just ranked by search engines. As [SmartBrief](#) notes, this shift toward Answer Engine Optimization is forcing B2B marketers to rethink the fundamentals of how they build and distribute content.

That creates a paradox. Content production has never been easier, but differentiation has never been harder. As AI floods the market with optimized content, the signals that stand out aren't controlled messages – they're trusted voices. [The Drum](#) argues that even as AI accelerates automation, human relationships are becoming more, not less, important in B2B decisions. Employees, subject matter experts and customer voices are now the most powerful drivers of credibility and growth.

Most organizations aren't prepared for this. Only a minority of employees can clearly articulate what their company stands for. And in an AI-enabled ecosystem, that gap becomes a multiplier. AI can standardize messaging, but it can't manufacture meaning.

Bottom line: Move from content scale to trust scale. Authority depends on people, not production volume. Invest in internal brand clarity, enable employee advocacy and build content ecosystems designed for both human validation and machine interpretation. The future of B2B growth will be driven by what trusted voices, amplified by AI, say on a brand's behalf.

TO WIN IN AI SEARCH, BRANDS MUST BECOME CITABLE, NOT JUST VISIBLE.

AI search is rewriting the rules of B2B visibility, and the data is striking. [Meltwater's](#) analysis of nearly 9.5 million AI citations shows that LinkedIn has emerged as one of the most frequently cited sources across major AI models for B2B queries. But the more important insight is how authority is actually determined.

75% of LinkedIn citations come from individual profiles, not company pages, and more than half come from accounts with fewer than 10,000 followers. This shows that AI prioritizes expertise over scale. Content format matters just as much: Structured, decision-enabling content (comparisons, how-to guides, clear frameworks) consistently wins over traditional thought leadership. Recency compounds visibility; nearly half of cited content is less than three months old.

Bottom line: The shift is from SEO to AEO (Answer Engine Optimization), from owned media to expert ecosystems. The mandate is to enable credible voices, create answer-ready content and earn citation in the systems shaping decisions. In the AI era, the brands that win will be the sources the machine trusts.

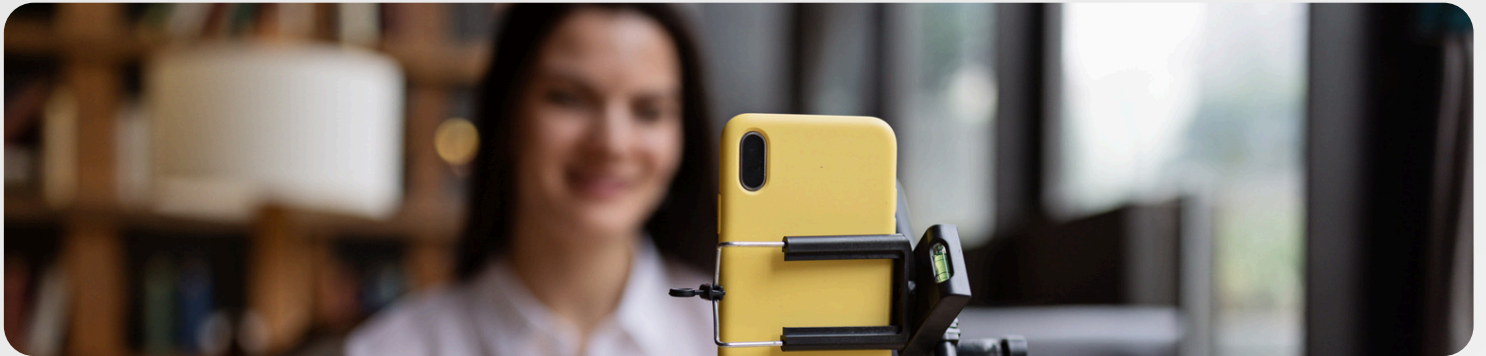


BREAKTHROUGH INTERNAL COMMS IS ABOUT RELEVANCE, NOT REACH.

Internal communications is suffering from disconnect. **Ragan** research shows employees aren't tuning out more messages; they're tuning out messages that feel generic or irrelevant to their actual work.

Consistency is the differentiator. Employees experience communications as one continuous narrative, and when it's fragmented, trust erodes. Format matters too: Employees now expect internal content to feel like what they consume outside work. **Ragan** highlights how creator-led, low-production content consistently outperforms polished corporate messaging because it feels real — a lesson that applies as much to global enterprise comms as to a startup Slack channel.

Bottom line: Deliver fewer, clearer messages. Tie them directly to employee reality. Express them in human, not corporate, terms. Organizations that get all three right will see the difference in the quality of their culture.



AI IS REDEFINING LEADERSHIP AS PRESENCE.



AI is dismantling a core assumption of executive development: that leadership is primarily about what you know and produce. When insights and content can be generated in seconds, that information advantage disappears. What remains — and what AI cannot replicate — is the human dimension: clarity in uncertainty, trust built through consistent behavior, direction given when the path isn't obvious. As **Fast Company** puts it, presence is now the new performance.

The traditional model of quarterly earnings calls and prepared keynotes is giving way to always-on, audience-facing engagement. **Fortune** points to Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff's decision to turn his earnings call into a vodcast — designed to be clipped and distributed — as a signal of where executive communications is heading. At the same time, AI is complicating the picture: As **Earned First** argues, AI CEO avatars are increasingly inevitable, meaning authenticity — not just visibility — becomes the differentiator.

Bottom line: In the AI era, leadership shifts from output to visible, credible presence at scale. Influence depends on how consistently and authentically leaders show up across every moment that matters.

**THANKS FOR READING AND STAY TUNED FOR OUR
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