

CUP OF CORPORATE COMMS

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



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

EARTH DAY 2026 RAISES THE BAR ON SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATION.

Earth Day 2026 landed differently. Now that sustainability is seen as a real-world business issue tied to infrastructure, economics, supply chains and community impact, it's fitting that this year the moment was less about announcing what's next and more about demonstrating what's already underway.

Pattie Sullivan, SVP at HAVAS Red U.S., outlines the new standard clearly in a recent **CommPRO** byline: The strongest sustainability stories today, she said, are specific, grounded and honest. Where brands falter is when bold promises and vague language outpace real-world action. Where they succeed is in transparency — openly acknowledging what's been achieved, what still needs work and how today's actions connect to longer-term goals. Sustainability, she explains, is a journey, and audiences increasingly expect brands to communicate it that way. Across contributors to that article, several themes emerge consistently: Trust has become the central metric of sustainability communication. Clarity beats scale. Evidence outperforms aspiration. And stories rooted in lived experience and measurable outcomes land more credibly than polished Earth Day messaging without much substance.

Bottom Line: Earth Day remains a powerful anchor moment for communicators and marketers, but only when it reflects year-round action. The standard has matured. And the brands that get it right are the ones treating sustainability communication with the same rigor they bring to the work itself.



THE CELEBRITY CURATOR IS ON THE RISE AS CULTURE SHIFTS FROM CREATION TO CURATION.

When Dua Lipa was announced as curator of the 2026 London Literature Festival, she wasn't stepping outside her lane so much as extending it, explains **Bayley Kite**, client partner at HAVAS Red U.K., in a recent **Red Hot Take** on LinkedIn. The pop star brought her taste-making authority and audience into one of the U.K.'s most established cultural institutions. Weeks earlier, the **BBC** covered how Harry Styles stepped into a similar role at Meltdown, the world's longest-running artist-curated festival, shaping an 11-day multi-arts program through personal influence rather than traditional programming logic.

As Bayley underscores, these partnerships signal a broader cultural shift in how influence works. Once defined by reach, influence now belongs to those who have the credibility to step into the role of cultural editor and connector. In turn, celebrity fandoms act as early adopters, offering brands access to hyper-relevant, highly engaged communities. This works so well because, in an era of infinite content and fractured attention, audiences are less hungry for choice and more hungry for trusted guides. Together, these moves reflect what Bayley describes as the mainstream rise of "considered curation."



Bottom Line: For brand communicators and marketers, the shift is in moving from endorsement to authorship. The most effective partnerships will ask celebrities to shape and curate meaningful cultural experiences that feel editorially sound and emotionally resonant. Brands that embrace curation as a strategic capability will earn relevance, depth and cultural permission.

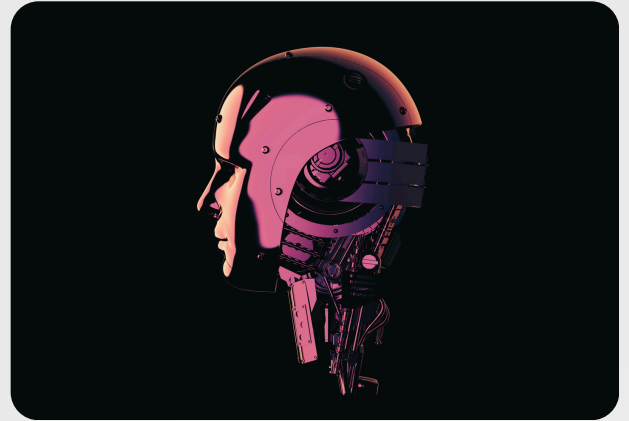
WELCOME TO PR'S "TERMINATOR ERA," WHERE AUDIENCES ARE HALF HUMAN, HALF MACHINE.



Public relations is undergoing a fundamental upgrade. As **Shane Russell**, CEO of HAVAS Red Australia, asserts in a recent **B&T** byline, we're fast approaching a reality where the primary audience for brand communication is no longer always human. AI agents are increasingly researching, negotiating, filtering and deciding on our behalf, often before a human ever sees a message.

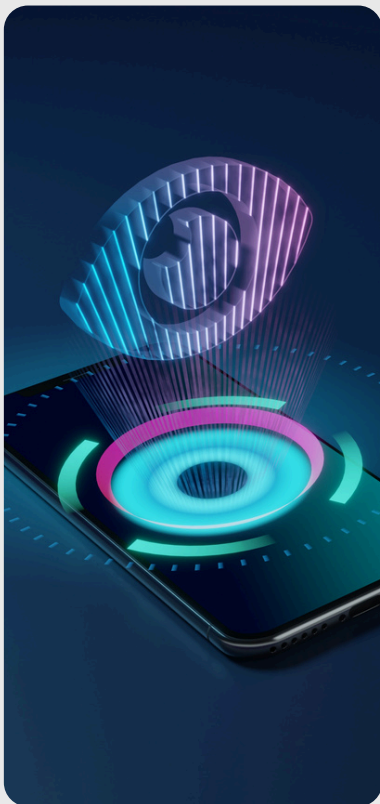
In this emerging “Terminator Era,” Shane makes a provocative but practical point: Our audiences are multiplying, but half of them don’t feel, scroll or admire creativity. Machines privilege clarity over cleverness, structure over poetry, and verification over polish. A beautifully crafted story may never reach a person if an AI agent doesn’t first recognize it as credible, consistent and trustworthy.

What AI systems choose to believe will increasingly define brand visibility, credibility and resilience. This shift fundamentally rewires the PR playbook, making earned media the backbone of reputation and of machine trust.



Bottom Line: The future belongs to communicators who can influence both humans and the systems that advise them, designing messages that perform emotionally and computationally at the same time. To check both boxes, brands must shift from campaign-led storytelling to reputation engineering — prioritizing clarity, consistency, verification and earned authority across every touchpoint. The brands that adapt early will be quoted, recommended and believed because the systems deciding on our behalf will trust them more.

EXECUTIVE VISIBILITY IS EVOLVING FROM SPOTLIGHT TO STEWARDSHIP.



Every company is now effectively a media company and every boss a star, [The Economist](#) observes, whether they actively opt in or not. The proliferation of podcasts, social platforms and direct-to-audience channels has collapsed the distance between leaders and stakeholders, turning visibility from an occasional moment into a continuous state.

Yet visibility for its own sake is proving insufficient and, in some cases, risky. [The New York Times](#) makes clear that while CEOs stepping forward as the “face” of a brand can humanize a turnaround or signal accountability, it also exposes leaders to volatility and misinterpretation when performance, presence or substance fall out of alignment.

That tension underscores a critical reframing explored by [HR Executive](#): Executive presence only works if it’s truly aligned. Employees, investors, customers and increasingly AI systems are less attuned to charisma than they are to consistency: Do decisions match declarations? Does accountability show up under pressure?

Together, these signals point to an evolution in executive communication. Leaders are being asked to become stewards of narrative and trust. The most credible executives show up with purpose, reinforce strategy through lived behavior and understand that presence is established long before the spotlight turns on.

Bottom Line: “In a world where every move is amplified, credibility is built when what leaders say, do and enable line up consistently over time,” says [Linda Descano](#), CFA®, global chief integration and marketing Officer, HAVAS Red. “The most effective executives aren’t performing for the moment; they’re managing trust across every moment that follows.” The mandate for communicators is to ensure leaders have utmost clarity on their role before amplifying a narrative and to ensure substance precedes spotlight.

AUTHENTICITY CAN'T BE AUTOMATED.

While AI is accelerating the marketing and customer experience, a powerful counterforce is emerging: authenticity as the primary differentiator. Connection, it turns out, can't be scaled the way impressions can. The brands breaking through are building trust deliberately — one community, relationship and credible voice at a time. As **Fast Company** notes, scale has become the byproduct of connection rather than the objective.

The data backs this up. A survey of 1,600 U.S. and U.K. consumers found that authentic engagement drives economic outcomes; a significant share say they'll pay more for brands they perceive as genuine, while inauthentic experiences trigger swift abandonment. (**CX Dive**)

Nowhere is this more visible than in AI-enabled experiences. Emplifi's "**Digital Authenticity in the Age of AI**" report finds consumers deeply skeptical of anything hidden, exaggerated or scripted. Trust now hinges on disclosure and corroboration, and consumers increasingly verify claims through reviews, search and peer content, elevating real customer voices above brand-generated messaging.

As **Courtney Myers**, SVP and AI-driven innovation lead for HAVAS Red U.S., puts it: "In the age of AI, authenticity is something customers have to validate. Belief is built across every interaction and when brand promises align with what people experience, everywhere they look."

Bottom Line: Communicators and marketers must align claims across channels, treat customer proof as a core asset, be explicit about how AI is used and design for confidence over conversion speed. In a marketplace shaped by machines, the brands that win are those that feel unmistakably human.



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