

THE TALENT AND GIFT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND language is obviously one of the great differentiators between us and other animals. We have been able to talk in complex ways for tens of thousands of years, if not more, but it is easy to forget that the written word is a quite recent phenomenon. Only just over 5,000 years ago, the Sumerians made written words come to life, pressing cuneiform characters into clay tablets.

We have come a long way in 5,000 years. Today, an average of 23 billion text messages are sent per day, and 350,000 tweets per minute. With such volumes on multiple channels and visual content powering up everywhere, one might expect written or spoken words to have a diminished importance. Actually, we believe the opposite. One of the many great opportunities of the digital world is that we can all become publishers. The power and reach of effective content, written or spoken, has never been greater. In their book, *Everybody's Business*, Brunswick Partners Lucy Parker and Jon Miller defined us as being in the Age of Conversation. We cannot control the conversations going on around us inside or outside our organizations, but we can contribute to, and sometimes shape, those conversations with the power of great and powerful content and how we use our words.

It feels like sound bites, bumper stickers and tweets have the greatest impact. They are more easily shared and re-shared, such as “Make America Great Again.” But most glance off of us. Headlines and sound bites catch our eyes, but well-crafted and thoughtful words can capture our hearts and minds and, in a digital age, they can go further and last longer. As we have exponentially increased our consumption of words and media, it seems we have also sharpened the mental and critical faculties for greater editorial competence. We can discard more of what comes at us as we pick out what we want to fully engage with. The paradigm has moved to pulling content, not pushing it.

The challenge for the corporate world is that we start from a low level of trust – corporate speak, legalese and spin not only fail to deliver, but can even be hugely damaging. Humanity, authenticity and honesty always rule the day. Our CEO and my colleague Neal Wolin, in this edition, quotes Ernest Hemingway, reminding us that the way to approach the task of writing is to “start with one true sentence” – everything else comes from that.

The best words are able not only to communicate a point of view, but to connect and show you see the world the way others see it. Helping clients make their case and make those connections has always been at the heart of what we do at Brunswick.

I hope you enjoy this edition as we celebrate the extraordinary, wonderful and potentially magical power of words.



SIR ALAN PARKER

CHAIRMAN,
BRUNSWICK GROUP

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