



BUILDING A CAREER IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

AND USING COMMUNICATION TO BUILD YOUR CAREER



JENNIFER CRUZ

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION
PROFESSIONAL

01.

My time at UCSB. The classes I took, and the work I did.

02.

My timeline since graduation, aka how I used comm to get promoted 3 times in 4 years.

03.

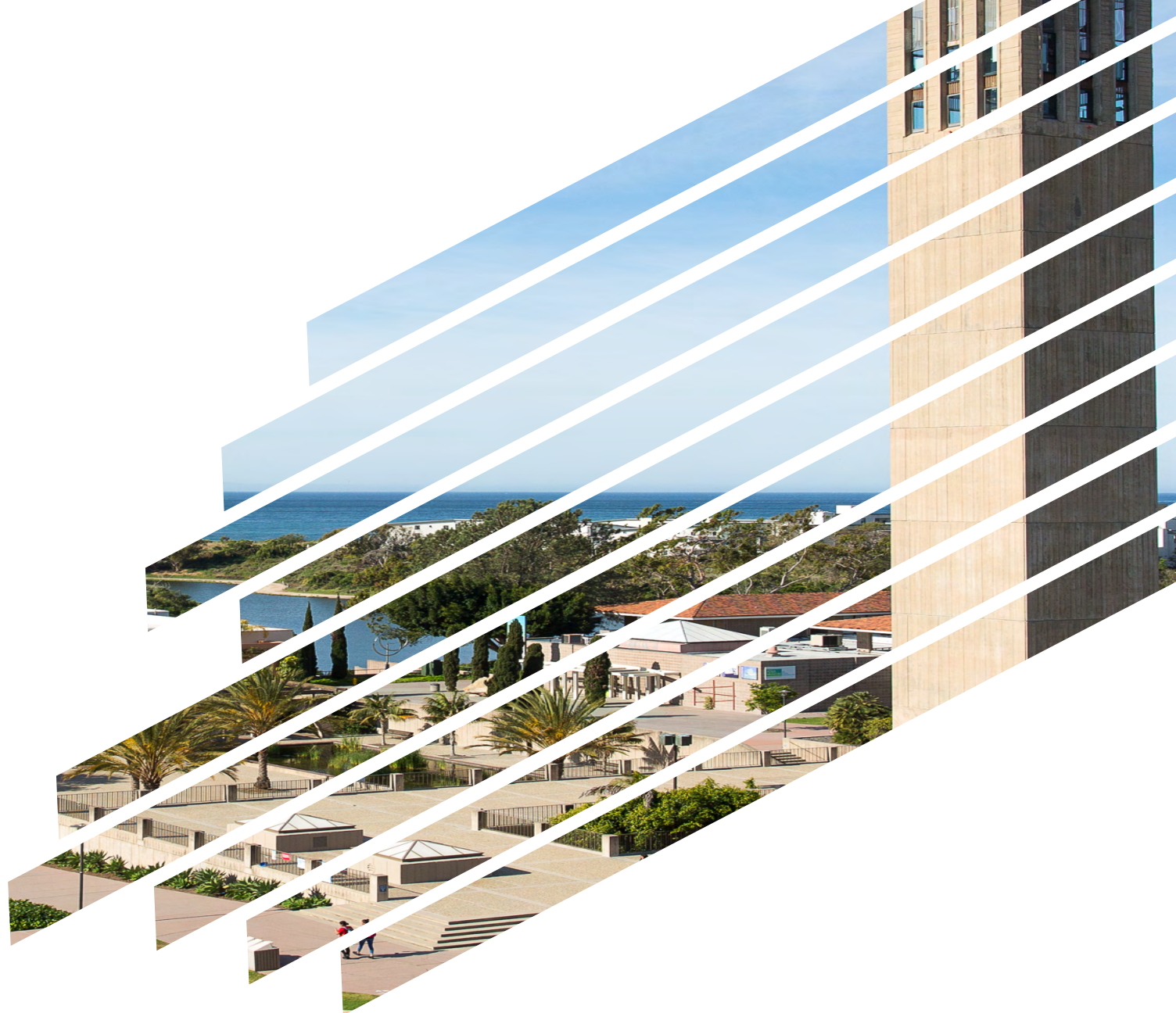
What I do now! Corp Comm is a broad discipline, and every company in every industry needs it.

04.

A few takeaway tips.

01 MY TIME AT UCSB

As a first-gen, non-traditional,
transfer student: it was hard. But
I use nearly everything I learned.



UCSB CLASS LIST



What about them
I still use to my advantage

PERSUASION

- Understanding the different ways ppl make decisions
- The importance of audience analysis before starting
- Gain and loss framing uses

COMM AND POWER

- How to use comm to level (or strategically reinforce) power imbalances
- Navigating corporate politics

RISK COMM

- How to minimize/repair reputational damage
- Best comm practices during times of crisis

STATISTICS/ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS

- COLLECT AND USE DATA
- Regression analyses never go out of style
- How to properly craft survey questions, and pick the right sample groups

COMM AND HEALTH PROMOTION

- Tailoring an entire campaign for a specific audience
 - Developing all creative materials (with as many free resources as possible)

COMM AND ORG CULTURE

- Identifying leadership styles, and how to work with them
- The importance of both top-down and bottom-up cultures at a company
- Rituals, Artifacts, Legends, Language – comm affects them all

WORK WORK WORK

Get experience
anywhere you can.

Internships, on-campus jobs, volunteer work, off-campus jobs, all can be used to your advantage when applying.



ON CAMPUS

Social Media for Comm Dept

Marketing for Summer Sessions



OFF CAMPUS

Bank teller to personal banker

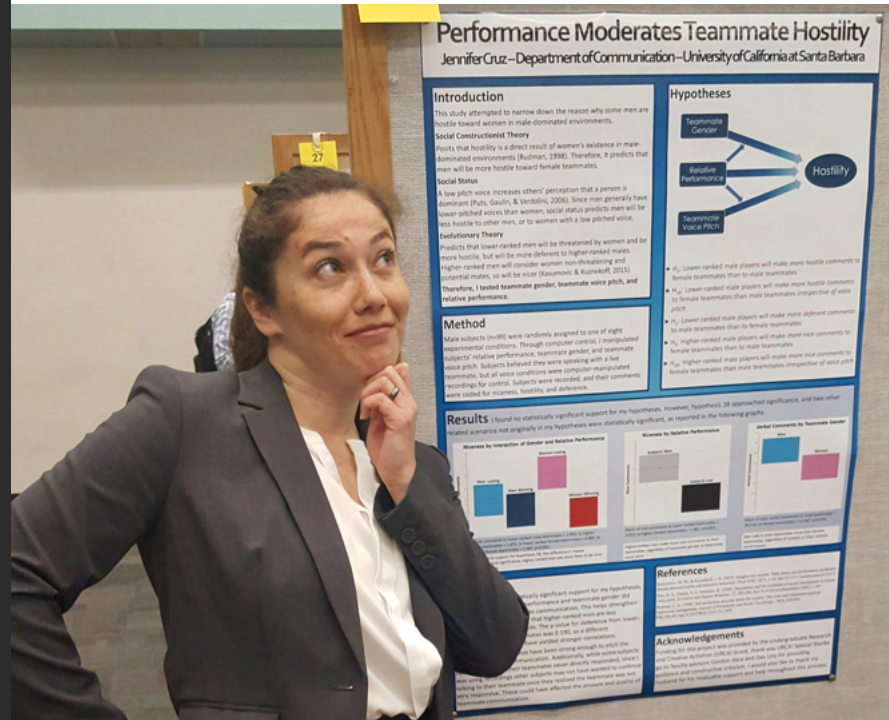
Customer Contact Representative

Comm Intern for non-profit

MY COMM THESIS

DATA: NOM NOM NOM

Is it 100% necessary? Maybe not.
But I learned even more statistics,
how to perfect a short pitch, and
how to write a research paper, all by
having people play Frogger. The
money I won also paid for my
graduation regalia.



MODERATORS TO
MALE-TO-FEMALE
DIRECTED
TEAMMATE
HOSTILITY

02 TIMELINE SINCE UCSB



2016 ○

JENNIFER CRUZ
Oh crap, now what?

GETTING HIRED

I was able to land interviews for data analyst, marketing coordinator, and corporate comm positions. I tailored my resume to highlight the skills they were most interested in.



2017 ○

YEAR 1: GETTING PEOPLE TO WANT TO WORK WITH ME

This was a **very intentional** strategy. As soon as I knew I could do the work, I focused on making sure people *wanted* to work with me. This meant tailoring language to be more deferential to higher-ups, and finding creative ways implement their ideas. Remember: **they do not have your skills.**



2018 ○

YEAR 2: GETTING PEOPLE TO TRUST MY JUDGEMENT

Because they liked working with me, and knew I could do the work, Managing Directors started to come to me (instead of my boss) for help or with general comms requests. That's when I started to offer suggestions on comms strategies. That's also when I got my first promotion.

2019 ○

YEAR 3: GRAD SCHOOL (WHILE WORKING)

This is not for everyone. But I got into a *phenomenal* MBA program, full-time for the fully-employed (bye-bye nights, weekends, and summer), by playing up the stats coursework and strategic skills. This is when Chiefs started knowing me by name, and learned I was serious about being a leader. I was promoted to AVP.



2020 ○

YEAR 4: IT'S GOOD TO BE A VP

In the corporate world, organizational changes can happen every 6 months or so. I learned how to blend in with executives, I offered to help everyone, and I took **copious** notes. When changes happened at the top, no matter who was moving in, they already knew me. Seeing I was close to finishing my MBA, they promoted me to VP (in part to try to keep me).

2021 ○

YEAR 5: PLANNING MY NEXT STEPS

First half of this year, I was just trying to graduate on time. After that, I talked about the fact that I now had an MBA to *every. single. person. at work.* Some people started coming to me for advice, like a mentor. I worked with my own mentor to figure out wtf I was going to do next.



2022 ○

YEAR 6: I NOW RUN THE COMMS TEAM!!!!!!!!!!

My old boss moved divisions. Rather than layer me, the Chief Marketing Officer saw how capable I was, and had me report to her directly. I now run the team, and one of my former managers reports to *me*. I advise comms and employee engagement strategy, and I'm also the voice for multiple Chiefs.

2023 ○

YEAR 7: MORE, MORE, MORE

No one at my company can do what I do, and I want to do more. I still talk about my thesis, comms theories, and other research, when making pitches to Chiefs. They know my ideas are science based and data-driven. If another group is working on a project I want in on, I likely have a good enough relationship with that Chief to ask about it, and have the knowledge to sell them on why I should be involved.

I literally make my own career path. What could be better?!?!



The stories told are my own, and I do not guarantee you will experience the same outcome. But you're in one of the best schools in the world for Comm, so why not you?



WHERE TO NEXT?

Who knows!

03 WHAT I DO

Short answer:
Anything and everything.



Every company has its own idea for what Corp Comm does. Just be flexible, and willing to learn.

For me, the variety keeps the job from getting boring!



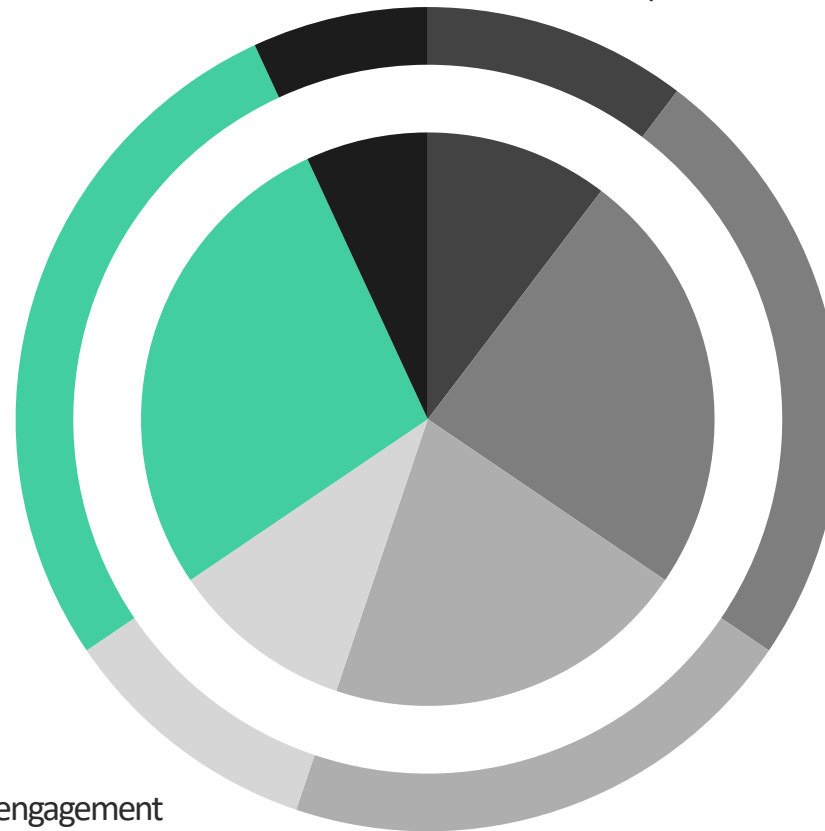
DAY TO DAY

Executive Communications.

Strategy for timeline, frequency, audiences, and which exec should “author” which comm. Writing for various execs; can include emails (to large or small groups), video scripts, talking points, and supporting decks.

Employee Engagement! Even a 3-pt increase in engagement can have a 20% increase in productivity. Engaged employees are up to 4x more productive than disengaged ones. Find creative ways to make people feel connected, and proud to be at the company.

Misc???



Change Management. Initiatives that require behavior change require special treatment. Strategy for channel(s) to use, frequency of comms, and what supporting materials to include/create.

Company News. Some companies send individual emails about each topic, some do employee newsletters, almost all rely on an intranet. My current company does all of the above, plus closed circuit TV segments, video series, and more.

Business Continuity. This includes emergency comms to employees in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, as well as minor facilities updates. My first Subcommittee appointment is in this.

MAY ALSO INCLUDE

These are examples of the work I've done in the past, or what others in my network do, under a Corp Comm umbrella. Your experience may vary.



PR

Drafting and distributing press releases; making connections with editing directors at newspapers and tv stations; submitting info to journals.



TRAINING

Either overseeing instructional designers, or developing the training yourself, for needs such as: New hire onboarding, compliance training, new manager training, soft skills improvement, DEI training, process change/new software training, etc.



CRISIS COMMS

Could include creating the crisis comms policies and procedures, being the official spokesperson for the company or drafting talking points for execs, etc.



INVESTOR RELATIONS

Some orgs have dedicated IR teams, others roll it all up under a Comm department. Privately held companies often have Corp Comm people draft talking points that would normally fall to IR (if, you know, they were publicly traded).



04

MY TIPS



A group of business professionals are seated around a conference table in a meeting room. In the background, a large whiteboard is visible, covered with handwritten notes and diagrams. The text 'TIP 0' is centered above the main title. The word 'GOOD' is highlighted in a teal color. The overall image has a dark, muted color palette with teal accents.

TIP 0

YOU HAVE TO BE GOOD

Nothing else matters if you're not good at your job



TIP 1

TAKE NOTES

For your own use

(unless you want to be the note-taker)



TIP 2

OFFER TO HELP

Find ways to add value to other projects

you'll learn more about the company, and improve your reputation



TIP 3

MANAGE YOUR REPUTATION

It could be worth more than
your degree, your title, or what you've done in the past

The background of the slide is a dark, high-contrast photograph of a person in silhouette standing in a high-rise office, looking out over a dense city skyline. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame. The office interior is dimly lit, with a long table and chairs visible in the foreground. The city skyline is visible through the large windows, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The overall mood is professional and aspirational. There are teal-colored geometric shapes: a large 'V' shape at the top center, and two small triangles in the top-left and top-right corners.

TIP 4

BECOME IRREPLACEABLE

If you learn all that you can
soon enough you'll be the only one who knows how everything works



TIP 5

LEARN WHEN TO SPEAK UP

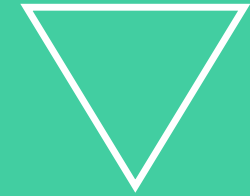
Mind your timing, and the audience,
but if you have a good idea or proof of concept, pitch it!



EFFORT WON'T BETRAY YOU

Apply this to work, personal relationships, personal goals, anything really.

If you remember nothing else, remember this.



ANY
QUESTIONS
?