

# Reshaping Strategic Corporate Communication Practices in the Digital Era: The Role of AI-Driven

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed how organizations manage communication, with artificial intelligence (AI) emerging as a powerful enabler of change. Applications such as chatbots, natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics are increasingly integrated into organizational practices. However, while much of the existing research emphasizes AI's role in marketing communication and customer engagement, its wider strategic impact on corporate communication remains underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by conceptualizing AI not merely as a technological tool, but as a structural driver that redefines how organizations design and execute communication strategies. Guided by established frameworks such as Excellence Theory and Situational Crisis Communication Theory, this study critically reviews emerging literature to highlight three key areas where AI is reshaping communication: (1) intelligent internal communication systems that personalize employee engagement and foster organizational culture; (2) predictive crisis monitoring and rapid response mechanisms that strengthen resilience and reputation management; and (3) stakeholder relationship management that enhances transparency and trust through data-driven insights. The proposed conceptual framework positions AI as a transformative force in achieving communication effectiveness, while also recognizing potential risks such as ethical dilemmas, reduced authenticity, and overdependence on automation. By synthesizing perspectives from communication theory and technological innovation, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on the future of corporate communication. It underscores the importance of adopting AI responsibly, ensuring that technological progress is balanced with ethical considerations to safeguard organizational legitimacy and strengthen stakeholder trust in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Strategic Communication, Corporate Communication, Digital Transformation, Stakeholder Trust

## INTRODUCTION

The rise of the digital era has fundamentally reshaped how organizations communicate with both internal and external stakeholders. Among the many innovations driving this transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most disruptive forces. AI applications such as chatbots, natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics are no longer confined to experimental use but have become deeply embedded in organizational practices. These technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for improving efficiency, personalizing engagement, and enhancing real-time decision making in communication processes. Despite growing attention, most existing research on AI organizational contexts tend to focus narrowly on its role in marketing communication and customer relationship management

(Huang & Rust, 2021; Chatterjee et al., 2023). While these are important areas, such as emphasis overlooks the broader strategic implications of AI for corporate communication, particularly in areas such as internal communication, crisis management and stakeholder trust. This limited focus creates a significant research gap; how does AI function not only as technological tool but as a structural enabler that redefines the very nature of communication strategies. This paper responds to the gap by advancing a conceptual framework that positions AI as a transformative driver of strategic corporate communication. By drawing on established theories specifically, Excellence Theory and Situational Crisis Communication Theory it examines how AI is reshaping communication strategies at a structural level. Three domains are highlighted as critical to this transformation which are intelligent communication systems, predictive crisis management and stakeholder relationship management.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

The integration of AI into organizational communication has become a prominent theme in recent studies. AI technologies are widely used to enhance communication efficiency and effectiveness. Much of literature, however, has focused on marketing communication, particularly in customer engagement, service automation, and brand interaction (Huang & Rust, 2021). Studies by Chateerjee et al., (2023) highlighted how AI supports organizations in delivering personalized content, predicting consumer needs, and fostering stronger customer relationships. Beyond marketing, AI is also gaining attention in other communication domains. Internal communication research notes AI's potential to personalize employee engagement, streamline updates, and strengthen workplace culture (Guzman & Lewis, 2020). Similarly, crisis communication studies highlight AI's capacity to monitor digital platforms, detect early signs of reputation threats, and support rapid response strategies (Van De Meer & Jin, 2020). Another emerging strand of research explores AI's impact on stakeholder trust, focusing on issues of transparency, ethical use of data, and authenticity (Floridi & Cowls, 2019). Despite these advances, the literature remains fragmented. Existing analyses tend to adopt a technological or operational perspective, emphasizing efficiency over strategy. Few studies explicitly connect AI adoption to established communication theories or explore its structural implications for communication effectiveness. This gap provides the foundation for the present study, which develops a conceptual framework for understanding AI as a structure enabler of strategic corporate communication.

### 2. Theoretical Underpinning

The AI as a structural enabler of strategic corporate communication can be understood through established theories related to strategic corporate communication in the organization.

#### 2.1 Excellence Theory

Excellence Theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) emphasizes two-way symmetrical communication as the hallmark of effective and ethical organizational communication. It highlights the importance of transparency, dialogue, and mutual benefit in fostering long term stakeholder relationships. Applied to AI, this theory provides a framework for evaluating whether AI technologies enhance genuine stakeholder dialogue or risk eroding authenticity. While AI-driven personalization can strengthen engagement, excessive automation may undermine the human dimensions of communication, thereby challenging the principles of Excellence Theory.

## 2.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

SCCT by Coombs, (2007) provides a framework for understanding effective organizational responses to

crises. It emphasizes matching communication strategies with the type of crisis, organizational responsibility and stakeholder perceptions. AI enhances crisis management by enabling predictive monitoring and real responses through tools such as sentiment analysis. However, automated responses risk appearing impersonal, potentially undermining empathy and credibility both central to SCCT. Hence, AI should be positioned as supportive tool that complements, rather than replaces, human led crisis communication.

## 2.3 Integration Value

Together, Excellence Theory and SCCT provide complementary insights; the former emphasizes relational and ethical communication, while the later focuses on situational appropriateness in crises. By grounding AI adoption in these theories, organizations can ensure that technological integration strengthens, rather than weakens, strategic corporate communication.

## 3. Balancing Opportunities and Challenges

The integration of AI into strategic corporate communication creates a paradox which offers unprecedented opportunities for efficiency and personalization while simultaneously introducing new risks to authenticity, ethics and trust. A balanced approach is required where AI enhances communication processes without undermining core principles of transparency, empathy and inclusivity. Hence, further research should investigate how organizations negotiate this balance across different industries and cultural contexts. There is a need for scholars to explore how established communication theories can be adapted or extended to incorporate AI as a central component of organizational communication strategies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper conceptualizes AI as a structural enabler of strategic corporate communication. The proposed framework (Figure 1) identifies three domains where AI exerts significant influence: internal communication, crisis management, and stakeholder trust. AI is not merely a supplementary tool but a transformative enabler that reshapes the logic of strategic communication. The integration of AI introduces new opportunities for enhancing communication efficiency and accuracy, while also posing critical challenges related to ethics, authenticity, and trust. To conceptualize these dynamics, this section discusses three domains where AI-driven platforms exert significant influence.

### Intelligent Internal Communication

Internal communication is essential to fostering engagement, alignment, and organizational culture (Cornelissen, 2020). AI-powered platforms such as virtual assistant, sentiment analysis tools, can support employees by delivering tailored messages, automating routine inquiries, and detecting patterns of disengagement. In hybrid and remote workplaces, these systems enable personalized and interactive communication that fosters inclusivity and continuous engagement. However, scholars caution that excessive reliance on AI risks diminishing the human dimension of communication, which remains critical for building trust and authenticity (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). Therefore, the challenge lies in integrating AI tools in a way that complements, rather than replaces, human communication within organizations.

## Crisis Response and Reputation Management

Crisis communication theory particularly SCCT emphasizes the importance of timely and context-appropriate responses. AI enhances this process through predictive analytics, real-time monitoring, and automated alert systems. Organizations can identify emerging risks in social media, analyse stakeholder sentiment, and craft response strategies with unprecedented speed. Yet, an overdependence on AI generated insights may raise questions about accountability and ethical decision making. Automated crisis responses risk appearing impersonal or even inappropriate if not carefully managed. This highlights the need for human AI partnership in crisis communication, where AI provides data driven insights while human communicators ensure empathy and contextual appropriateness.

## Stakeholder Trust and Relationship Management

Trust is a cornerstone of corporate communication and organizational legitimacy. AI can enhance trust-building by providing personalized stakeholder engagement, transparent data visualization, and predictive analysis of stakeholder expectations. For instance, visual tools like *TrustScapes* help organizations capture and reflect stakeholders' concerns around data protection, algorithmic bias, and online safety, fostering transparency and collective understanding Ito-Jaeger et al. (2023). Similarly, frameworks designed for managing stakeholder expectations especially in AI deployment underscore trustworthiness through clarity and alignment of anticipations (Kinney et al., 2024).

However, trust hinges not just on technology but on governance. Ethical AI governance frameworks stress transparency, fairness, accountability, and inclusivity as essential to maintaining public trust (Camilleri, 2023). Empirical evidence supports this: organizations that demonstrate transparency and benevolence in AI practices are perceived as more trustworthy by the public (Jayasekara et al., 2025). Yet, stakeholders may feel manipulated if AI use isn't disclosed. Ethical considerations privacy, explanation, fairness becomes critical. This aligns with the Excellence Theory's emphasis on two-way, mutually understandable communication even in an AI-driven context (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

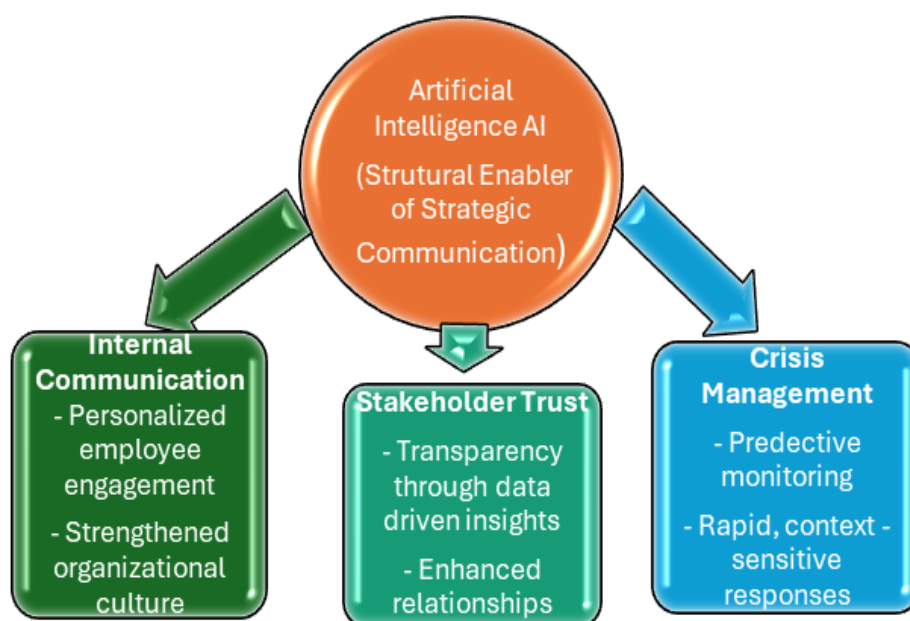


Figure 1 AI as a structural enabler of strategic corporate communication

## CONCLUSION

AI is emerging as a transformative force in strategic corporate communication. While marketing applications of AI are widely studied, its implications for internal communication, crisis response, and stakeholder trust remain underdeveloped in scholarly discourse. This paper contributes a conceptual perspective that frames AI as more than a tool it is a structural enabler reshaping the dynamics of organizational communication. Future research should empirically test the proposed domains, investigate ethical dilemmas, and explore cross-cultural variations in AI-driven communication strategies.

This paper has conceptualized AI as a transformative driver of strategic corporate communication, extending discussion beyond efficiency-based perspectives. Drawing on Excellence Theory and SCCT, it has positioned AI as a structural enabler that reshapes communication across internal communication, crisis management, and stakeholder trust.

From an academic standpoint, the paper contributes by bridging a research gap: moving beyond operational analyses of AI to highlight its structural and theoretical implications. It opens new avenues for empirical research, particularly on how AI influences employee engagement, organizational culture, and stakeholder perceptions of legitimacy.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers recommendations for organizational leaders. AI should complement rather than replace human communicators; its adoption should be guided by ethical safeguards and aligned with organizational values. Communication professionals must also be equipped with new competencies to manage the interface between AI and strategic communication effectively.

In sum, AI holds transformative potential for organizational communication, but its integration must balance innovation with ethical considerations. Responsible adoption will be key to safeguarding legitimacy and strengthening stakeholder trust in the digital era.

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