



# Blue Swift Consulting's Alyssa Cox Discusses Leadership Branding for IABC DC

by Eli Natinsky | May 3, 2023 | Chapter Updates, Events, Learn



Your leadership brand is an ad for why people should buy what you have to offer, advised **Alyssa Cox of Blue Swift Consulting** during IABC DC Metro's **"Establishing a Leadership Brand"** on April 19. During the gathering, the first of the chapter's two-part leadership series, she discussed the key dimensions of a leadership brand. Guests also completed a guided exercise to craft their leadership statement.

"Memorializing your brand in words makes you accountable to that brand," Alyssa said, adding, "If you articulate what you mean to do, you're

## Categories

Chapter Updates

DEI

Events

Featured

Learn

Members

Newsletter

Uncategorized

Volunteer

## Recent Posts

Blue Swift Consulting's Alyssa Cox Discusses Leadership Branding for IABC DC

May Newsletter – So Many Ways

much more likely to actually do things that way.”

### Here’s an overview of the webinar:

**1) Define your leadership brand:** Alyssa noted the importance of being intentional. Everyday, multiple times a day, we have opportunities to be deliberate about how we behave and how we’re perceived. Intentionality shapes your reputation, as well as people’s perception of your brand.

Alyssa shared an anecdote about her former supervisor who advised that she learn who she was as a leader. He said: “If you don’t figure it out, other people will figure it out for you — and you may not like what they decide.”

### 2) Reputation vs. brand:

**A. Reputation** is what people *see* you do. It’s the narrative that *other people* craft about you.

Ask anyone who’s worked with you, and they’re going to have some kind of opinion about who you are and what you’re like. Your reputation is what people say, or don’t say, when they’re asked to describe you. Reputation is about other people’s observations, experiences, and perceptions of you. “Another way to think about your reputation is as a form of organizational equity,” Alyssa said.

**B. Brand** is what you *mean* to do. It’s the narrative *you* craft about yourself.

When it comes to leadership, you need to define your brand in terms of value. It’s both what you value, and how you drive that value for others.

As far as driving value in a team or organization setting, your leadership brand and your personal brand may be slightly different. They should be congruent, but they will speak to different aspects. When we talk about a leadership brand, it’s about how you drive value through others in a professional environment, as opposed to a broader personal brand that

to Connect

April

Newsletter –

Get Involved!

IABC DC Hosts

Truth in

Common’s

Deanna Troust

for Talk on

Misinformatio

n

March

Newsletter –

Members

Matter!

Archives

May 2023

April 2023

March 2023

February 2023

January 2023

December

2022

October 2022

September

2022

August 2022

July 2022

June 2022

May 2022

April 2022

you may take into your interactions with your family, friends, and social settings. However, these elements should correspond as they are both based on your values.

### **3) Your leadership brand is made up of three components:**

**A) What you work on:** This is basically what you do for a living. This portion of your leadership statement is intended not to be a summary of your work to-do list (eg, write press releases, lead an internal comms teams, etc.), but it's about the worth you bring. Who is your customer, and what value do you drive for them as a communicator?

**B) How you work with others:** You can lead subordinates, peers, superiors, clients, and customers, and it comes down to values when we talk about how we work with others. Some sample words that might characterize your merits are: educate, listen, consistent, and innovative. These traits reflect your leadership style.

**C) How you define success:** This is an audience's objective reason to buy from you. You are selling yourself to your boss and your boss's bosses to promote you from within the company. Or maybe you're selling yourself to a new employer, asking them to hire you. Or you might run your own communications firm, and you're conveying to your clients why they should buy from you today and purchase more tomorrow.

Further, increasing revenue is how you define success. It's about how you influence KPIs (key performance indicators) for your firm, customers, and company. One of the functions your leadership brand is doing is serving as a pitch to others to invest in you. It could be whether your subordinates invest their time to collaborate cross-functionally, or whether your boss and your boss's bosses agree to invest time and energy to promote you or give you new and different responsibilities. "Money is a common language that we use to evaluate the relative merit of dissimilar investment opportunities," Alyssa said.

### **Sample metrics for communications professionals might be:**

- **External communications:** If you work in public relations, you might look at the number of pickups of press releases by various media outlets.

March 2022

February 2022

January 2022

December

2021

November

2021

October 2021

August 2021

June 2021

May 2021

These public perception metrics could have a positive impact on share price or revenue.

- **Internal comms:** As far as employee comms, you could gauge your work as it relates to employee satisfaction surveys and employee turnover.

#### **4) A leadership statement might be:**

##### **For (key customer)**

Internal communications department at Company XYZ,.

##### **I drive value by (kind of work you do)**

Delivering interactive multichannel communications programming that helps our organization of 200 people understand the connectivity between what they do on a day-to-day basis and the larger mission of the enterprise.

##### **I drive success through others by (your leadership style)**

Educating, listening, being consistent, and offering innovative ideas and solutions.

##### **I know I'm successful because (how you influence KPIs):**

Employee satisfaction scores have increased and employee turnover has gone down. As a result, less revenue has been spent hiring new workers and this provides cost savings for the organization.

#### **5) After completing your leadership statement:**

**A) Make your statement your own:** Ensure your answers feel real as opposed to what you think you're supposed to say. For each sentence, add personal stories that demonstrate how you live your brand.

**B) Audit your statement:** Once you're happy with your declaration, find people in your life that are going to tell you the truth. Talk to people who know you, such as friends, colleagues, and mentors, who can point out areas where you're not living your brand. You can then identify ways to close those gaps.

**C) Socialize your leadership brand:** Review your resume and LinkedIn profile and update both to line up with your leadership brand. Share your identification and narratives with your customers. Start to get comfortable with self-promotion using the language with which you've aligned. "If nobody knows who you are as a leader, then nobody will think of you as a leader," Alyssa said.

Thank you, Alyssa, for sharing your expertise with our chapter. The second portion of her program will be "**Leading Through Vision**" on May 17 at 12 p.m. ET. Alyssa will explore the importance of setting a vision for your team that speaks to how your group drives progress toward your organization's overarching mission, as well as the role vision setting plays in increasing engagement on your team. The cost is \$10. Click [here](#) to register.

To learn about Alyssa's organization, **Blue Swift Consulting**, and the services it offers — consulting, workshop facilitation, and keynote speaking — visit: [blueswiftconsulting.com](http://blueswiftconsulting.com). You can also email: [info@blueswiftconsulting.com](mailto:info@blueswiftconsulting.com) or call: **919-610-1595**.

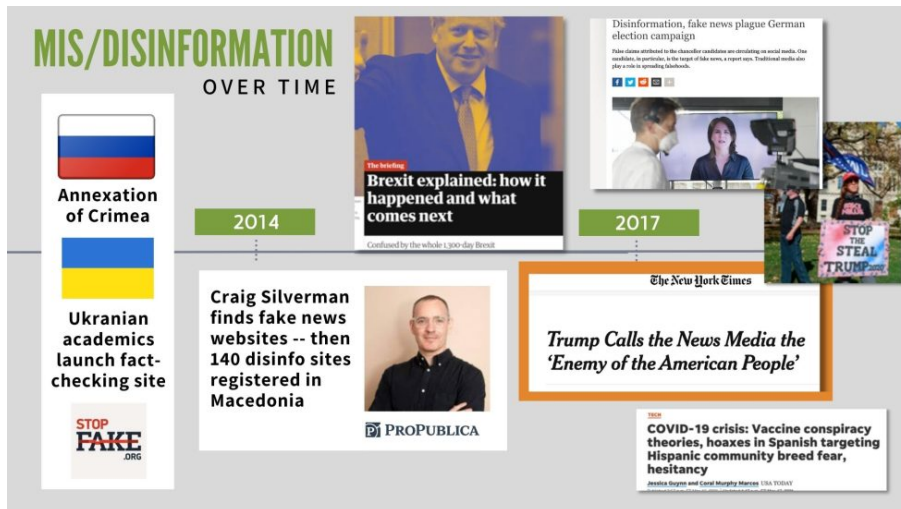


International Association  
of Business Communicators  
DC Metro

Join

# IABC DC Hosts Truth in Common's Deanna Trouost for Talk on Misinformation

by Eli Natinsky | Mar 9, 2023 | Events, Learn



Interpersonal relationships are key to countering false and misleading information, advised **Deanna Trouost**, founder and president of **Truth in Common**, during **IABC DC Metro's "Misinformation: How We Got Here, and What We Can Do About it."** The virtual gathering occurred on February 7.

Deanna explained communications professionals are especially needed in the mis/disinformation space as they are experts in human behavior, information channels, and how news and discussion influences others. Communicators are encouraged to notice people's emotional reactions to

Categories

Chapter

Updates

DEI

Events

Featured

Learn

Members

Newsletter

Uncategorized

Volunteer

Recent Posts

Blue Swift

Consulting's

Alyssa Cox

Discusses

Leadership

Branding for

IABC DC

May

Newsletter –

So Many Ways

information, check sources, and watch and listen to outlets they normally don't consume as a form of market research.

"I believe human-centered approaches are vital or we're not going to turn the ship," she said, adding, "It can't just be on media platforms, on policy makers, on the PhDs — it's on every one of us. We, as communicators, can take a stand for the truth simply by being polite and asking questions. If we can all do that, we'll be in a much better place."

The **Truth in Common** website provides an overview of the nonprofit's goals and objectives: "Truth in Common translates disinformation and social division research into skills people can use at home, at work, and in the community. Through workshops, a newsletter, talks and partnerships, we create safe, brave spaces where people learn about information manipulation, how to access the information they need and feel comfortable talking again — respectfully."

Some additional insights Deanna shared during the event:

**1) Disinformation vs. Misinformation:** Misinformation is false information that spreads innocently without intent to mislead.

Disinformation is the intentional sharing of falsehoods to cause confusion or harm or to make money.

An example of misinformation is the widespread sharing of The Great Replacement theory, a far-right conspiracy that suggests white people are being replaced demographically and culturally with non-white people. This erroneous notion led to deadly violence, as seen in the 2022 mass shooting at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York. An 18-year-old killed ten people, all of whom were Black. The perpetrator cited replacement theory as his motivation for carrying out the attack.

As far as disinformation, Russian President Vladimir Putin used it extensively to justify invading Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022. He also employed it to meddle in U.S. elections, notably the 2016 presidential race.

**2) The 2016 Election Brought Mis/Disinformation to the Forefront:**

Mis/disinformation became a widespread issue in the U.S. after the 2016 election where quality sources of information were being discredited at

to Connect

April

Newsletter –

Get Involved!

IABC DC Hosts

Truth in

Common's

Deanna Troust

for Talk on

Misinformation

n

March

Newsletter –

Members

Matter!

Archives

May 2023

April 2023

March 2023

February 2023

January 2023

December

2022

October 2022

September

2022

August 2022

July 2022

June 2022

May 2022

April 2022

the highest levels, including by former President Donald Trump. Large segments of the American public began to doubt what was being reported in mainstream news outlets, and the distrust has only grown as outlets and reporters continue to fall prey to what Deanna calls the current “trash and attack” culture.

**3) Agreement on Mis/Disinformation:** According to a [2022 Disinformation in Society report issued by the Institute for Public Relations](#), more than two-thirds of Americans on both sides of the political aisle believe mis/disinformation are “major problems” in society.

**4) Mis/Disinformation is an Equity Issue:** A [2022 Latino Anti-Disinformation Lab Poll conducted by Vote Latino](#) reported 66% saw false information about Democrats tampering with ballots. And of those surveyed, 33% said it was “true” or “probably true.” Spanish speakers are often deliberately targeted with misinformation. When people are fed false and misleading information repeatedly, some will eventually come to believe it.

**5) News Deserts Can Lead to Mis/Disinformation:** Many don’t know what’s happening in their community, as local journalism outlets have dried up in recent years. When this happens, citizens may turn to less credible, exclusively national level or social media sources of information — or exist in a news void. Meanwhile, [a study conducted by NYU’s Cybersecurity for Democracy](#) found misinformation on Facebook received six times more clicks than factual news in the months surrounding the 2020 election.

To learn more about **Truth in Common** and its work:

- Visit [truthincommon.org](https://truthincommon.org) for additional information about the initiative and workshop series.
- Sign up for the [Truth in Common newsletter](#) for breaking news from the mis/disinformation space, analysis on disinformation campaigns, tips and stories about civil discourse and more.
- Email Deanna at [dtroust@3storiescomm.com](mailto:dtroust@3storiescomm.com) if you’d like to bring a Truth in Common talk or workshop series to your organization or community group.
- Connect with Deanna on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

March 2022

February 2022

January 2022

December

2021

November

2021

October 2021

August 2021

June 2021

May 2021



Thank you to Deanna for conveying a trove of material. Much appreciation also goes out to the IABC DC Metro board — including [Giuseppe Laviano](#) and [Sue O’Hora](#) — for hosting the event.