

Wonks and War Rooms

S01 E07 - Authenticity with Kevin Parent from Ottawa Public Health

Episode Transcript

Elizabeth 0:03

Welcome to [Wonks and War Rooms](#), where pol[itical] comm[unication] theory meets on the ground strategy. I'm your host [Elizabeth Dubois](#), and today we're talking about authenticity on social media with Kevin. Kevin, can you introduce yourself please?

Kevin 0:15

My name is [Kevin Parent](#). I am the social media lead with [Ottawa Public Health](#), which is a fancy way of saying that I oversee the [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and *spoiler* soon to be [TikTok](#) accounts of Ottawa Public Health. We are proudly—if I'm permitted to [humblebrag](#)—on Twitter, we're the most followed local public health unit in North America. We have more followers than the public health units in Chicago, LA, New York, Toronto, Vancouver, anybody. On Facebook, we're number two, behind New York, so we give them that one. But that's what I do. It's just a matter of trying to get health messaging out there amongst the [noise](#) of social media—and that's my job.

Elizabeth 0:55

So I came across your guys' work because the [Twitter account](#) is just excellent.

[musical sting plays]

Kevin 1:03

[reading from [this Twitter post](#), dated July 14, 2020] “The idea that COVID-19 is a global conspiracy involving every nurse, doctor, paramedic, hospital, health unit, and government on earth shows a rather optimistic view towards project management. P.S.: misinformation is out there.”

[musical sting plays]

Elizabeth 1:18

[This is from September 9th](#): “Due credit to some of the Twitter accounts we see, writing 37 replies a day seems hard. And we can't even imagine how difficult it must be to do a family tree with a last name like 23768259. Kudos. P.S.: Misinformation is out there. Be sure to get your info from reliable sources. Winky face.”

Kevin 1:40

That's one of my favourite things we've ever written.

[musical sting plays]

[reading from [this Twitter post](#), dated August 18, 2020] “The shame about this tweet is that many of you will read it hoping that if you keep reading long enough, you'll arrive at some sort of fun conclusion. But in fact, you've come all this way in this tweet just to be reminded that vaccines work.”

[musical sting plays]

Elizabeth 1:54

Like so funny. So on point and so real. Which actually brings me to the concept that I wanted to talk about today, which is this idea of [authenticity](#). Have you heard of the idea of authenticity within strategic communications before?

Kevin 2:09

Yeah, absolutely. From my side of it, a lot of what we do, we use things like transparency, empathy, authenticity—[those are] kind of the core pillars of [crisis communications](#). Big major thinkers on that: the late and wonderful [John Rainford](#), or [Peter Sandman](#). They'll always tell you about the importance of being authentic and human and empathetic when communicating during a crisis. Which, I'm not sure if you're aware: [we are in one](#). So that's what we do!

Elizabeth 2:37

You know, I was aware of that! I have heard about this little pandemic thing that's happening...

Kevin 2:42

Yeah, yeah—it's just a small little thing that has occupied all of our time.

Elizabeth 2:46

Just tiny, tiny. Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about what authenticity means from that perspective? How do you think about authenticity?

Kevin 2:56

For us it's about, I guess, the way I like to put it is: for us, it's about being human. It's about remembering that we are—not only are we talking to real people on the other end

of all those accounts, but it's also reminding people that the individuals writing these messages are human.

The easiest way to run that through for us would just be, you know... we're asking a lot of the public. We are asking the public to change their behavior, we're asking them to change the way they live, we're asking them to give up a lot of the things they love. And we're asking them to do all that in the name of protecting our community as a whole. And it's exceptionally important that we acknowledge how difficult that is. That we be genuine and we be real with people. And it's not just "do this" and "do that", and that's that. It's acknowledging in the messaging, "Yes, we know this is difficult. None of us wanted this, we are sorry that you have to go through it. We don't even want to be the ones telling you to do this. But we have to." And acknowledging that difficulty and being genuine and human.

Elizabeth 4:03

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, this idea of being genuine and human. Definitely. We see that within the [political communication literature](#) as well, when we talk about authenticity, because obviously you're coming from the crisis comms perspective, which is slightly different bodies of literature when we're in this kind of academic world. But that idea of being genuine and having some sort of human connection definitely plays out in pol[itical] comm also.

We also talk a little bit about, well: how do you make yourself seem human, particularly when you're running an account that is an organizational account?

Kevin 4:40

Well, there's a lot on that one. You know what? A lot of it, I think, comes down to letting your personality show. I can, I think, comfortably say that some of the best accounts that I've seen out there—it's obvious that it's not a team of 20 or 30 people involved in this, it's likely just a couple of individuals. And the personality of those individuals comes out. And that's a lot of what we do.

Traditional, large scale communications—it's broadcasting, it's that classic agrarian word, you know, cast your sheet as far as you can. So you craft a message, you put it out and off it goes, and then you move on to the next message. With us, we often enjoy saying that our job starts when the message goes live, because once that message is out, yes, we broadcasted it, but then we're gonna end up in what's known as [dialogical communication](#), where, you know, we read every single comment, we read every single reply, and we try to respond to them as best we can. And we respond to them in human

ways, in genuine ways. And we will acknowledge people's frustration [and] will often maybe have a little joking back and forth.

You know, we had a sexual health tweet the other day, and somebody, [quote retweeted it, saying](#), "Well, this is fake news, because everybody knows that nobody's ever had sex in Ottawa." So Ottawa Public Health [replied and said](#), "Geez, wait does that mean that the maternity staff of—and we tagged all the major hospitals in the city—can all go home for the day, because there's nothing to do?" And that was just a simple, cheeky little moment. But it's real, it's genuine. You know full well that 20 people didn't come together and make that reply. That was a very genuine, real little human moment. And we try as hard as we can to just have that human, that authentic tone. We speak in plain language; we use plain and simple language as much as possible. And we try to make sure people know that there's a genuine emotion and people that actually care behind the account.

Elizabeth 6:34

Yeah, that's really great. And that example is really, really helpful because it does show [the need] to be able to respond kind of immediately to something that's coming up on social media, because there is this expectation of immediacy. And to be able to do that you can't say, "Every time we get a tweet, we need a team meeting for 20 people to workshop what the best response is." Like, you're just never gonna get anything done if you have to do that every single time.

Kevin 7:01

Exactly. And social media is such a fast-paced environment. And being able to be responsive and keep up with it is something that we're known for. It's something that [we get recognized for](#), and people enjoy it because again, it's playing to the nature of social media, it's living within the world of social media. And as we said: it's so obvious that it's a couple of individuals that are doing it, it gives it that genuine human gentle—as you say authentic—feel. And it's working so far.

Elizabeth 7:29

That's awesome. That's really great. And so, how are you allowed to do that, though? We think of bureaucracies as always needing the 20 person meeting. There's a professor at Carleton University, [Amanda Clark](#), who has done investigations into how in the federal government Twitter accounts are managed, and [she found](#) like a 12 step process to get a tweet approved. How are you allowed to just tweet out quickly, when something shows up?

Kevin 8:02

[Jokes] Having blackmail abilities on all of your higher powers at be is always advisable.

We have a process called the "three sets of eyes". It really just came from a need to allow us to be quick and responsive and not get bogged down in bureaucracy. It helps that we're a small little organization—people are always surprised at how small our communications team is. It's just a small group of individuals. So when something happens that we want to respond to, or even just when crafting our standard messaging, it rarely goes through more than three people. And it's just a matter of—it'll usually be a subject matter expert, and then somebody a little bit higher up the chain. And things get flagged quickly. Things get worked out quickly.

Before COVID, it would be the kind of thing where if something important was happening, it would just be, "Bring three people together in the room and work it out within three, four minutes." Now we'll use things like [Teams](#), but it's that kinda comfortable middle ground of we're making sure that it's not just one person who might not consider a risk properly or whatnot, versus, yes, the traditional corporate communications where it takes forever and ever and ever to get a post out.

And it's incredibly vital in the age of COVID. I mean, my goodness, I've lost track of the amount of times that from Friday to Monday, our messaging changes. You know, the province will hand down new measures and all of a sudden all your key messages have changed completely. So we need to be able to pivot and react to those things as quickly as possible, so as to not leave people wanting for information.

Elizabeth 9:34

Yeah, the idea of [immediacy](#). It's no longer just, "Social media norms *create* this expectation." The actual subject matter very much demands immediacy, because public health guidelines have to change so quickly as new information comes in. And so it becomes, yeah, doubly important.

So it's good that you've got all this experience, making sure that you can react quickly and you've got that small team. I imagine that other comms teams that hadn't already developed those kinds of trust relationships among the team members and that ability to say, "Okay, three is enough, let's go," you know, they might be struggling in the context of a pandemic, where things are changing so fast.

Kevin 10:17

Oh, indeed, indeed. I mean, I have an enormous amount of empathy and respect, even for some of my colleagues that have to do this in the larger scale. Like we just said,

Ottawa's the biggest small town ever, and one of the things that's so lucky for us is that we get to just speak to one community. Ottawa kind of has that personality that encompasses the entire city, and we talk to that. Versus the people that have to do this en masse across an entire country.

But yes, it's incredibly fast moving. We wrote a Twitter thread actually a couple of days back—which P.S.: [threads] are some of my favorite things we do. I love when we get to do those, because they really are a little heart-to-heart moment between us in the city. And I quoted [Ed Yong from the Atlantic](#)—I love reading his stuff. And he had a brilliant quote [in one of his articles](#) where he was talking to a gentleman from Harvard who said that, "We are building an airplane while it's in the air." And that really is what this is like for public health: it is exceptionally fast, the information is flying at you faster than you can imagine. And it's just a matter of reacting to it, figuring out how to disseminate it, and off you go.

Elizabeth 11:27

I wonder how the idea of regularity—so, in pol comm, when we're talking about authenticity, we often talk about there needing to be personal details without personal connection, [and] immediacy (so we've kind of talked about both of those things). And then we talk about regularity: there needs to be some consistency. How has that changed, pre-pandemic to pandemic times? Is there any sort of regular schedule anymore for you? Or is it just constant? Because it's as it's needed?

Kevin 11:55

Yeah. Well, it's consistently inconsistent—it's kind of the thing that we're great at being consistent about. It is, like we said, it's fast moving, it's reactionary. I mean, our social media will always kind of follow that typical workday schedule, in terms of we're rarely posting outside of the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and four in the afternoon. And anything that goes out on the weekend was likely pre-written and pre-scheduled. But the consistency with us just comes from that reliability of when something big happens, you know we'll address it. It's very rare that a major change happens or a major announcement happens without us taking the time to address it.

It's kind of become that expectation where you'll see a provincial or federal announcement, it'll be a big major change and sometimes people might be stressed about it. And you'll see it happen on Twitter, where somebody will be replying to, you know, a CTV News tweet about it saying, "Pretty sure Ottawa Health will be posting about this soon," or, "Hey, I know this is frustrating. I'm just waiting to hear what Ottawa Health has to say." And it's that sort of space that we've become that kind of trusted voice of. We are consistent in the fact that we will do our best to find a way to take

something that might have been out of the blue and catching people off guard and causing stress or confusion and bringing it down and identifying and addressing in a human way.

Elizabeth 13:21

Yeah, that's great. Do you think that your efforts to be this authentic voice are linked to the idea that you are a trusted source? Like, are they necessary for each other?

Kevin 13:31

I think so, yeah. Way back—and goodness, again, this is... I say things like “way back” and it's probably only about two months ago, but this pandemic feels like it's taken 10 years off my life. I used to have a full head of hair. For those people that are listening, you won't know, but [Elizabeth] knows what I'm talking about on video.

So back when mandatory masks were announced, we actually wrote, again, one of our Twitter threads. And we addressed it, [we said](#), “To some of you it may seem like we were saying [back in March and April] that masks aren't needed, and now we're now we're saying they are. And we accept the fact that that has probably been frustrating for you, and we apologize”. We actually wrote: “We're sorry”. But then we went into explaining why, and we went into explaining about how masks were originally [perceived during the beginning of the pandemic]—people thought that they were going to put them on to protect themselves. And that wasn't needed. But then when we finally found out about asymptomatic transmission, it was, “Wear a mask to protect others from you”. So it actually was a different message, but it was addressing that concern, that belief, and owning it.

One of the best things that anybody can ever do when communicating during times of uncertainty is stand up and say “I don't know.” People are way more likely to trust and believe somebody that actually is willing to stand up amongst everybody just throwing out all of their theories about why something [is the way it is] and just be the one that says “I don't know. I don't know, but I'm going to let you know as soon as I find out. We don't know the answer to this, but we will keep you posted as best we can.” And it's that real human genuine character that helps build that trust.

Elizabeth 15:09

Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense. And it connects to some of the [other research](#) that's been done around politicians and political candidates and them [presenting themselves as authentic](#). You know, when you're perceived as being honest about what you stand for, it plays a lot better than when it's perceived that you're saying something just to get votes or just to make money or whatever it is. And so the way you have

described going about laying it out and being like, “Yeah, it's frustrating, we've been trying too”—I think that that plays into that idea of when you're presenting yourself in an honest way, people respond to that, and people want to keep following that and trust that information.

Kevin 15:57

Absolutely. And I mean, obviously I am not a political scientist, so I have no idea what you're even talking about with politicians that might or might not just run their mouths off and say things that they don't know anything about.... I assume you're just speaking from hypothetical, so I have no idea what you're talking about...

Elizabeth 16:13

[Laughs]

Kevin 16:14

Yeah. Though one of the things that made me think of—again, [that most recent thread we did](#)—the way we worded it was, for lack of a better phrase, it was just kind of a moment of candor. We said, “Listen, we understand that it might seem like we've jumped around. But on the other hand, that's our job.” The wording of the tweet was: “The relentless flow of new information hasn't slowed in seven months, and we've endeavoured to make the best decisions we could based on the best information we had at the time. From your perspective, it might feel like we keep shifting our guidelines. But to be fair, that's what we should be doing. We'd much rather tell you that, based on new evidence, we're shifting from Guidance A to Guidance B, versus stubbornly sticking with Guidance A in the name of being consistent.” And then we talked about [how] that's why the guidelines for self screening and back-to-school have been changing. We said COVID doesn't care that we don't have the time we'd normally need to react, and we're just trying to stay ahead of it.

And I find moments like that are just very... it's that genuine thing of, on one hand: Yes, we know this is frustrating. And yes, we are just trying to make the best decision we can. And yes, the information changes. But on the other hand: we kind of have to politely remind people that that's what you want us doing. You don't want us being the organization that just sits there like the [stick in the mud](#) while everything is changing, especially during a pandemic when the information jumps around from one day to the next.

Elizabeth 17:33

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

So I spend a lot of time thinking about [digital and media literacy](#) in election contexts. And we spend a lot of time thinking about, like, journalists should be explaining how they're getting their information, and how social media is working to create different stories that pop up or disappear. And explaining that to the public because the public is smart enough to know if people take the time to explain it. And I see parallels here with what you guys are doing with those threads of saying, like, "I'm giving you more than just the headline right now, I'm going to explain how we got there, and why we got there, because I trust that you are capable of taking this information on and and making use of it in your life." And that sort of acknowledgement of respect and help towards the learning process seems really important to me.

Kevin 18:25

Oh, absolutely. Especially with COVID, in the COVID lens, it's a part of recognizing the fact that we're in this for the long haul. We're going to be in this situation for quite a while. I mean, I can't speak to the exact numbers, but we got another year of this at least, and we need people to be able to stay with us. And we need people to be able to stay on board with what we're trying to do. And at the end of the day, there's just that...it's just courtesy! If you're going to ask somebody to do something, at least tell them why you're asking them to do it. And, you know, just be genuine with people.

If we were to put out a tweet and say, "All right, effective immediately, we need everybody in Ottawa to take off their left shoe." All right, well, nobody's gonna listen to that. But if we put out a thing saying, "By the way, based on a study that says that left shoes are the most common carriers of the COVID-19 virus and they 100% will kill everybody, please take off your left shoe." It's just a matter of giving people the information to understand *why* you're asking them to do the things they're doing.

Elizabeth 19:28

Yeah, yeah, for sure. For the record: left shoe lovers, it's okay—that was a fictitious example. You can keep your shoes on. [Laughs]

Kevin 19:36

Yeah, absolutely. No problem. Nope. And to any left handed people: I wasn't trying to pick on you and go left. It's totally fine.

Elizabeth 19:44

[Laughs] Okay, so you mentioned [that] you've got a few different social media that you manage right now. We had the fun little tip that Tik Tok is on its way. I'm wondering if authenticity changes across those different platforms or if your approach to how you communicate on those platforms has to change.

Kevin 20:05

Absolutely. The authenticity and the human feel, and the being real and genuine, that is applied across all of our platforms. What changes from one platform to the next is often the tone. We rarely write a tweet the exact same way that we'll write a Facebook post. I mean, it might be if it's something cheeky, it'll be the same joke, but it'll be written in a bit of a different way. It really just has a lot to do with the way that people interact with the platforms.

Instagram is an animal unto itself; we have an entirely different writing style for Instagram—it's a whole different audience. I mean, we're also a government institution on Instagram, so it's kind of an awkward space for us to be in. Any of us over the age of 30 will remember [that] when Instagram first came out, Instagram was the anti-Facebook. The people that went there went there because they're trying to get off of Facebook. And so Instagram came from that—it came from people who were trying to get away from having their mom and dad and aunts and uncles and government institutions and everything else on the platform.

So we're kind of in that unwelcome space. So we kind of have to... we adjust our messaging accordingly. It's very rarely that there will be a—pardon the phrase—kind of preachy style message on Instagram. Instagram is way more helpful tips and hints and just being kind of fun and engaging in that way, and just trying to play in the space. So yeah, we keep the authenticity and the genuine human feel across all the platforms, but it's adjusted based on the platform.

Elizabeth 21:33

Yeah, that's really interesting and makes a big difference for people as they're developing political communication strategies and government communication strategies. Because you need to think about not only what you're actually able to do on the platform—like you can't create a thread on Instagram, because there is no thread function, right? That's not an option. But on Twitter, it's a core tool that you guys use.

But then I think what you're pointing to, about the expectations and the norms of each platform, and what people are willing to engage with, and want to engage with, when they go to those platforms is really, really crucial. Because this idea of authenticity, yeah, it's about the choices you make and what you're putting out there. But it's also about how you're interacting with the people who are part of your audience on those different platforms, right? Like that connection, you know? And you mentioned earlier, the idea of, in the broadcast era, the way a whole team crafts a strategy versus what you need to do in a social media context. I think that connectivity—that back-and-forth,

that two way communication—is really crucial. And we see that play out very differently depending on what platform we're talking about.

Kevin 22:44

Exactly. It's something we're known for, especially on Facebook. We will have full on conversations and back-and-forths with people in the comments of our Facebook posts. Or even just give somebody a quick little reply, even if it's just with a little gif, acknowledging whatever they said just 'cause. You always have to think about it from their perspective. I mean, for somebody just sitting down having a coffee and all of a sudden they get a notification that a government institution just replied to them on Twitter, or Facebook... The original tweet, [Ottawa Public Health was] speaking to everybody, but now they're speaking to just me. That's an incredible feeling, and it's a great connection.

Elizabeth 23:21

Yeah.

Kevin 23:21

And then the wonderful thing is that it makes people more comfortable with you, and it makes them that much more likely to interact with your message and engage with it and share it. That's our end goal with everything is to get somebody to share it.

When Ottawa Public Health puts a tweet out, it's ours. It's our message, it's got our little logo on our little picture right there. That's an Ottawa Public Health message. But when *you* share it, when Elizabeth Dubois decides to share this—even when you click retweet—you kind of take a bit of an ownership of that message. Now you're looking at your followers and saying, “Hey, *I* want you to see this message. I, Elizabeth, want you to see this message.” So if you're going to take ownership of it, you need to actually be willing to share it and put your name on it, and that has a very big influence on how we write and why we write the way we do.

Elizabeth 24:09

Yeah, that's a really important point. We actually had a previous episode of the podcast where we talked about the idea of a [two step flow of communication and opinion leadership](#) and the idea that personal influence can have a really meaningful impact on whether or not somebody is going to take new information on board and use that to change their opinions or behaviours in some way. And so, I think what you point to of the idea of social media allowing you to piggyback off of that personal influence of other people (when those people trust you) makes a lot of sense and is helpful. It also makes me think of, like, I don't follow you guys on Instagram. Sorry.

Kevin 24:49

[Jokes] Sorry, how do you hang up on [this] function? I don't understand. Is there a button here that I just hang up?

Elizabeth 24:55

[Laughs] No, I disabled that button.

Kevin 24:57

Oh okay, that's fine.

Elizabeth 24:59

I do see a lot of your stuff from Twitter be screencapped and then shared on Instagram, right? Like some of the funniest things—the things that have gone most viral, well, at least Ottawa viral—they end up on Instagram. And you guys probably don't even know about it because people are using that kind of personal influence to be like, "Hey, I saw this. It's great. Friends and followers, you should see this and love it," and not necessarily tagging [Ottawa Public Health] on Instagram, because those expectations of the platform are slightly different.

Kevin 25:34

Mm hmm. Absolutely. We'll get tagged every now and then. Sometimes we'll cheat and do it ourselves. Every now and then we'll actually make an Instagram post that's just a screengrab of a tweet that we liked. And we'll just send it out and try to see if we can double up on the impact, on the reach. You know, because every now and then you'll actually get an exception to the rule: something that works on one platform and also works on the other.

Elizabeth 25:50

Yeah. What do you do when people are mean?

Kevin 26:00

[Jokes] Um, I usually cry. I just sit by myself. My office is very dark, they don't let me have light. So I just sit in the dark and cry.

Elizabeth 26:07

That makes sense.

Kevin 26:10

Yeah, yeah. You know what? It's—

Elizabeth 26:12
~Internet~

Kevin 26:12
[Laughs] It's a part of the job. One of the hardest parts about this, especially with an account as well followed as ours—which wasn't supposed to be humblebrag but I'll allow it—is there are just so many comments and replies, and you have to learn to not take it personally, you know? These people are angry or frustrated or upset about whatever the topic is, and they are speaking to the organization and not to the comms person behind it. On Twitter we do a lot of muting—I regularly joke that the only thing more useless than wearing a mask down not covering your nose is Twitter's "report account" button. But we tend to just deal with it and move on. But like we said, it's nothing new.

There was a phenomenal article—it was one of the CBC *From the Archives* stories. It was 1987, it was interviews with people in Western Canada when seatbelts became mandatory. And I kid you not, [the video starts](#) with someone talking about how this is government overreach; he doesn't need the government telling him how to drive. This is dictatorship. He's going to get a note from his doctor saying that he's exempt from it. And take any of those [comments] and plug them into Twitter, and that's what the comments about masks and everything are. And think back to 20 years ago when smoking was banned in bars.

When health officials tell you to change your life to make everything better, it's very common and quite expected for people to push back on it. So it's just sort of part of the job; you take it in stride. Every now and then there'll be an opportunity to educate. So we will reply if somebody is upset about this but the information that they're basing their belief on is incorrect. We'll reply and at least provide them with the accurate information. But for the most part, we kind of let it play out. A lot of times our followers will join in the conversation and things will kind of get worked out on their own—which for us is better because as you said, it's a member of the community doing it. So, it almost has ironically more impact than if Ottawa Public Health wrote the reply themselves.

Elizabeth 28:20
Yeah. All right, last thing: I've got a little quiz for you.

Kevin 28:26
Oh, great. Perfect.

Elizabeth 28:28

This is a short answer question.

Kevin 28:30

Short answer quiz.

Elizabeth 28:32

It's easy. You can do it. We've just—

Kevin 28:33

Okay, for the record, you just pulled that thing that people do when you're playing [Trivial Pursuit](#) where they pick up a question and they're like, "Oh, this is an easy one." And then they read it and nobody knows the answer. And then it's just super awkward. So yeah, yeah, go ahead.

Elizabeth 28:44

[Laughs] Can you explain to me what authenticity is?

Kevin 28:53

To me authenticity is... it's just being real. It's being real. It's being genuine. It's acknowledging that the world is the way it is. It's speaking in a language that people understand. It's speaking directly to your audience. It's acknowledging your audience, acknowledging their opinions, their beliefs, how they feel. It's the difference between sending a tweet out that says, "Masks are mandatory now. Learn more," versus "Yes, we understand that this is frustrating. Yes, we understand that this feels like we've jumped around. Here's the reasoning why. And here's where you can learn more."

It's just being open and authentic. And I used the word I'm describing in my answer, and I don't care.

Elizabeth 29:38

[Laughs] It was almost a perfect answer and then you had to add in "authentic" into your definition of "authentic." Come on.

Kevin 29:46

Listen, you didn't reach out to me for my grammatical skills.

Elizabeth 29:50

That is true. No, that was great! That was a really great summary. And I think that it fits with the general feel of what we think authenticity is. And then what's interesting is [that]

in academic literature people have not really defined it super consistently, which is why that was a short answer question and not a multiple choice question. Because you really do need to be able to describe the feel of it and give examples to be able to explain what [authenticity] is. And I think what's also important is: our expectations for how different accounts will interact with us, and their level of authenticity, shifts over time and has changed. And I think that there was a point when it would be really hard to see any account that wasn't an actual person's name and think of that as exhibiting authenticity. But our expectations have shifted. And I think now Ottawa Public Health's account does very clearly exude authenticity in their posts. And so that shift, I think, is a really interesting one.

All right, that was our episode on the idea of authenticity and how it plays out in public health and crisis communications. If you want to learn more about any of the topics we talked about today, go ahead and check the show notes or head over to polcommtech.ca.

Yes, vaccines work.