

InterActions Peer Review

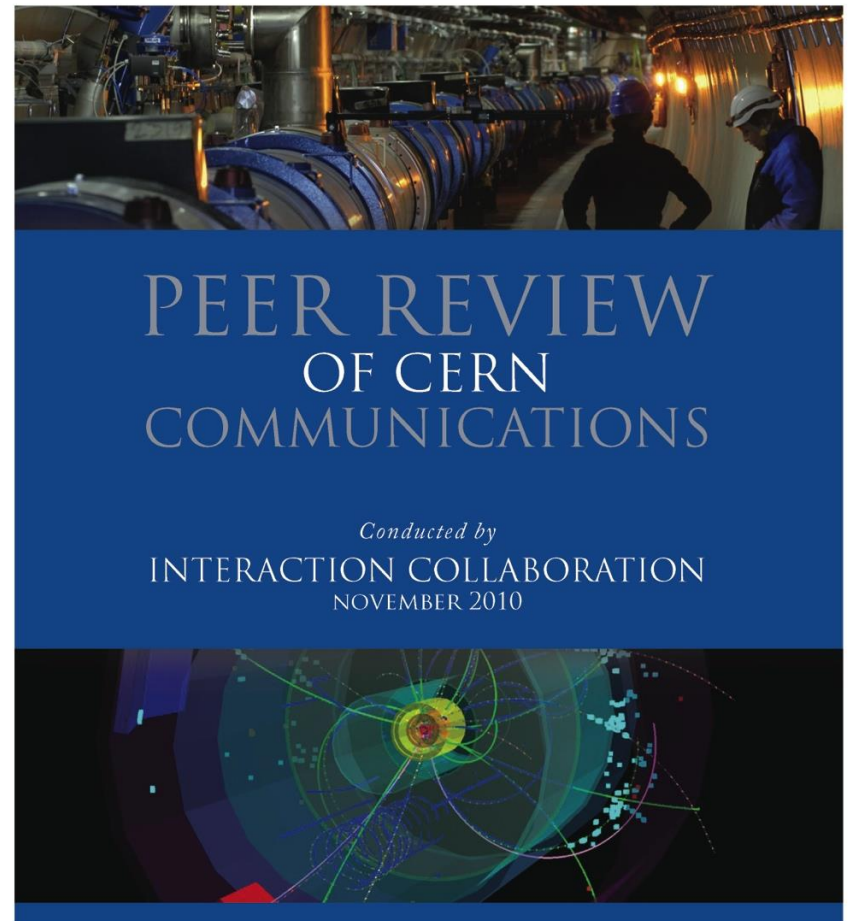
Improving science communication

Christian Mrotzek

Joint EPPCN and InterActions Meeting at CERN
Geneva, 6 November 2014

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- About the InterActions Collaboration
- Why do they hold Peer Reviews?
- The evaluation process
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 - What do the results/reports look like?
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About the InterActions Collaboration

- > international group of representatives in charge of communication for major pp labs in their country
- > CERN, DESY, Fermilab, STFC, SLAC, KEK, Triumpf,...
- > our mission: “To support the international science of particle physics and to set visible footprints for peaceful collaboration across all borders.”
- > 2 collaboration meetings each year at a pp lab
- > outcomes:
 - global coordination of comms activities (e.g. press releases)
 - building an important and strong expert network
 - strategic communication planning
 - website www.interactions.org
 - worldwide activities (e.g. photowalks)
- > report to ICFA every year



InterActions Peer Review (1/2)

- > decision in 2008 to review communications activities of InterActions members conducted by comms professionals
- > goals
 - evaluation of effectiveness of selected communication aspects
 - Focus on strategic communications
 - strengthen the relationship between comms teams and their management
- > 1 review each year
- > final report should be published on www.interactions.org
- > report of results on next collaboration meeting



InterActions Peer Review (2/2)

- > the review is free of charge, but...
 - the lab pays all travel costs,
 - is in charge of the travel organization,
 - makes all the necessary meeting rooms available
 - delivers all relevant materials for the reviewers
- > the reviewers have to concentrate on the review
 - for 3 days
 - 8-24 o'clock
- > After we published the first final report on the web, lots of non-InterActions member showed interest in being reviewed (e.g. universities)



InterActions Peer Review

REVIEW PROCESS

6 months before the review

- > Lab management sends an official charge letter to the InterActions collaboration
 - Review topics have to be specified here
- > InterActions collaboration...
 - recommends a chair for the review panel (member of the relevant scientific community)
 - nominates 6 experts of the InterActions collaboration for the review
 - recommends possible dates for the review
- > The reviewed lab can also nominate 1 or 2 experts
- > Lab management sends an official invitation letters to the chair and the experts
- > Lab starts to prepare the review and collect relevant material...
 - Strategy and annual goal-setting
 - Media statistics of the last years
 - Brochures
 - ...



Charge Letter

10. Appendix

Appendix A – Charge to the Committee

	ORGANISATION EUROPÉENNE POUR LA RECHERCHE NUCLÉAIRE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH <small>Laboratoire Européen pour la Physique des Particules European Laboratory for Particle Physics</small>
<small>Telephone:</small> Direct + 41 22 767 2300 Secretariat + 41 22 767 4054/1240	Ms Judith JACKSON Office of Communication Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) Mail Station 206 P.O. Box 500 Batavia, IL 60510 USA
<small>Telefax:</small> Direct + 41 22 767 8995 Electronic mail: Rolf.Heuer@cern.ch	
<small>Our reference:</small> DG/2010-188	Geneva, 28 June 2010

Dear Judy,

I would like to invite the InterAction Collaboration to CERN in November to conduct a peer review of our communication function. With particle physics enjoying an unprecedented level of popular interest, it is vital that CERN is ready for the task of communicating our science, not only for CERN's sake, but for all laboratories working in the field. For that reason, I would very much appreciate the views of the InterAction Collaboration on how best to align communication to achieving our shared strategic goals.

For the last few years, our communication has focused on the start-up of the LHC, and we currently enjoy a very large public and media profile. However, now that the LHC is running smoothly, we are keen to ensure that our communication structures are well adapted to maintain and build on that profile, not just for CERN but also for basic science as a whole.

When I took up my mandate, I decided to develop internal communication, local communication and communication at the political level. To this end, I have personally committed much of my time to communication, working closely with the communication group for strategic matters and the education group for education and outreach. Furthermore, I established a new external relations office to take care of communication with political audiences.

I would like the review to focus on our readiness to carry forward our communications and reputation management, looking specifically at the following subject areas:

- Internal communication
- Community relations
- Audio-visual production
- Media relations
- Publications, web and social media
- Political communication
- Education and outreach
- The organizational structure resources and management of communication at CERN

The review will be hosted by CERN, and we will cover travel and accommodation expenses for the review committee. Organizational matters will be handled by Emmanuelle Carrier (+ 41 (0) 22 767 9273, Emmanuelle.Carrier@cern.ch).

I very much look forward to seeing you in November, and to taking this review forward.

Yours sincerely,


Rolf Heuer

2 weeks before the review

> The lab hands over all material to the reviewers

- Strategy
- Annual plan of activities
- Budget plan
- Press and media statistics
- Brochures
- Press releases
- ...
- All material and information are treated confidential.

> Software Basecamp

- Collaboration tool
- Website to download and upload of documents and share information
- Experts can communicate through this tool and share information



The Review (1/2)

Day before review

- > Arrival of reviewers and dinner with lab management

Day 1

- > Open session: Official welcome by lab management
 - Open for all lab staff
 - Lab management addresses expectations
 - Reviewers introduce themselves shortly
- > Panel sessions: Presentations of lab staff or reviewed key tasks

Day 2

- > Review panel discusses presentations from day 1 together
- > In-depth interviews by sub-panels (2 reviewers)
- > Sub-panels write their final reports as Powerpoint presentations



The Review (2/2)

Day 3, morning

- > Panel session: Presentation of all reports, discussion and finalization of reports
- > Final rehearsal

Day 3, afternoon

- > Closing session: Official presentation of the results by the reviewers to...
 - the board of directors
 - all reviewed lab staff
 - interested people

Day 3, late afternoon

- > Reviewers leave the lab
- > **4-6 weeks** after the review: printed final report is sent to lab management; also available online



Lehman Review

- The Peer Review uses the US DoE Lehman process
- 6-8 experts review for 2-3 days specific areas of lab communication
- The review panel presents all results at the 3rd day in an open session
- Results of the review (2 pages for each topic)
 - **Findings**
What have the experts heard, seen, experienced?
What is the situation?
What are the overall conditions, strengths?
 - **Comments**
How do the experts assess the situation?
 - **Recommendations**



Some very important aspects...

- The atmosphere during the review has to be very informal, respectful and appreciative.
- Panel sessions are generally not attended by head of the comms team
 - All people should speak as open as they can
 - All information stay inside the review.
- The review has to be very positive
 - Success should be addressed (Findings)
 - Capabilities should be addressed (Comments)
 - Action items should be prioritized (Recommendations)
- Final results will be reported at the following InterActions meeting
 - This is a great benefit for all InterActions members



InterActions Peer Review

E.G. CERN

Specified topics at CERN review

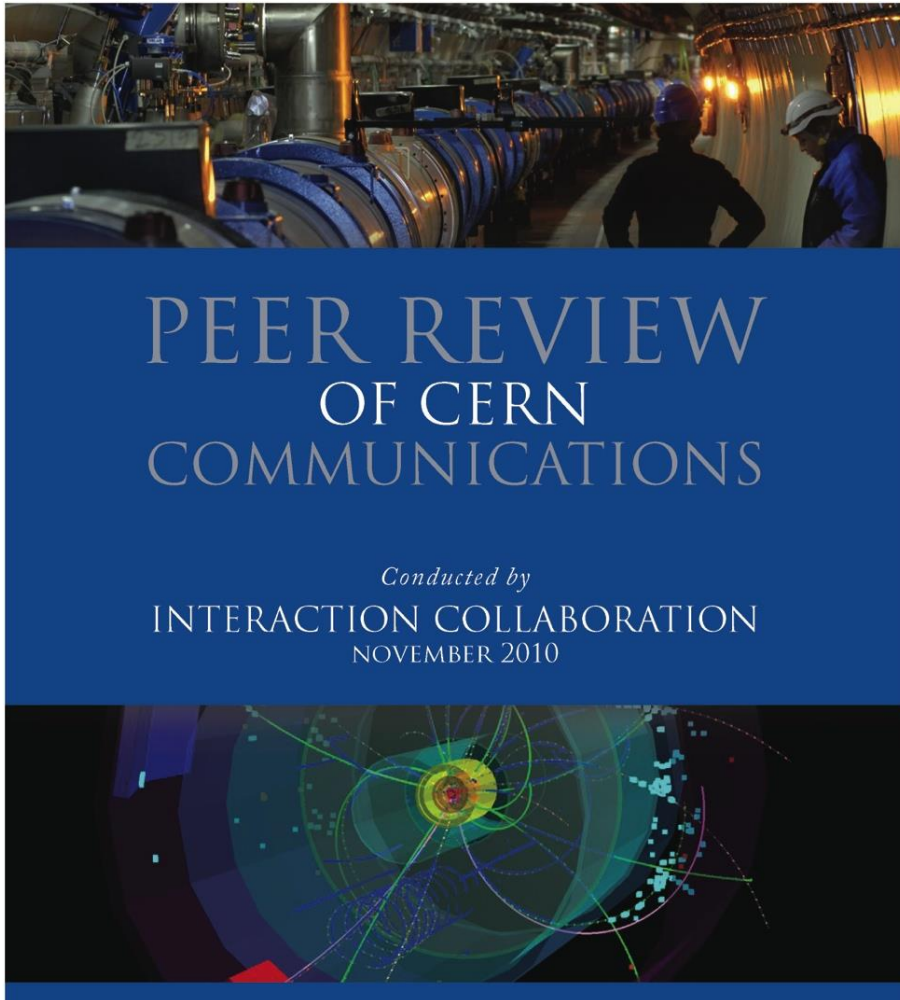


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Findings, Comments, Recommendations

3. Audio-Visual Production

Findings

- The talented Audio-Visual staff produce materials of very high quality.
- The new studio space and equipment will be modern and high quality.
- Separate and competing A/V groups exist.
- Cooperation between the A/V resources is not what it could be.
- Coordination between the A/V groups and the Communication Group is sometimes lacking.
- Some projects seem self directed and may not support the communication strategy.
- The two A/V groups have unclear roles.
- Direct supervision of the A/V groups is lacking
- The CERN Photographer is overloaded with work and has no backup.
- The photo archive of historical images needs to be addressed.

Subcommittee Members

Reidar Hahn, Fermilab
Christian Mrotzek, DESY

Comments

- The two video products 'CERN News' and 'Spotlight on CERN' are well done but are similar products. Other videos also duplicate efforts.
- Others could do low-level photography assignments. For example, VIP visits take up a lot of time.
- The new studio and office space are a good start for sharing resources and increasing cooperation between the two A/V groups.
- The CERN Database Server is not the best place to serve up video programming.
- Big events have proven that the groups can work together.

Recommendations

Reorganise A/V:

- The meeting room support and webcast service should remain in the IT department.
- Editorial video productions, photographer and graphic designers should be organised within the Communication Group with a single manager who reports to the head of communications.
- The editorial A/V team should focus on short-term productions that can feed outlets like the Bulletin and press releases in a timely manner. Bigger projects could be outsourced.
- The photographer needs administrative support and backup.

7. Community Relations

Findings

- CERN management and the Communication Group make community relations a priority.
- CERN dedicates one full-time person for community relations.
- Support for CERN in the local community, while positive, is still fragile and could easily be threatened.
- Community relations at CERN focus on transmitting information, and less on dialogue with the community.
- The CERN Director General gives an annual New Year's reception for local and host state officials.
- CERN also has an established and well-known contact person for local community officials (Friedemann Eder).
- CERN-wide communication efforts with the community are not always well coordinated.

Subcommittee members

Christian Mrotzek, DESY
Judith Jackson, Fermilab

Comments

- CERN has made progress in building visibility in the local community. The next step is to reinforce relationships.
- Communication staff seem already to be working near capacity, but the wider CERN staff is a largely untapped resource for community relations.
- The foundation for good community relations is an open and transparent dialogue.
- Scientific organisations tend to fear meaningful participation of the local community in laboratory planning and decision-making.
- Best practices at Fermilab and DESY show that public participation through community advisory boards has great value and few risks or downsides.
- Such a board has the potential to share the workload with the community relations staff member. It can also serve as a coordinating body for CERN-community interactions.

Recommendation

- CERN should pursue establishing a community advisory board with the help of a world-class professional consultant.



Findings, Comments, Recommendations

9. Organisation, Structure and Management

Findings

The Communication Group gave the committee a very positive impression on multiple accounts:

- The Communication Group has a highly skilled, dedicated and committed staff.
- An excellent record in external communication over last few years exists: "The team does great things with the resources they have."
- The speakers consistently presented a clear communication strategy, key messages and goals.
- The personal commitment of the Director General to communication and transparency is obvious. The panel and all the presenters appreciated his dedication.
- CERN has a renewed commitment to community relations, and the committee commends them for it.

Committee members

John Womersley, STFC (Chair)
Anne-Muriel Brouet, Tribune de Genève
Reidar Hahn, Fermilab
Christian Mrotzek, DESY
Judith Jackson, Fermilab
Minna Meriläinen, University of Helsinki
Vanessa Mexner, NIKHEF
Youhei Morita, KEK
Christian Mrotzek, DESY

The committee also heard about a number of issues:

- Internal communication, delegation, workflow and teamwork within the Communication Group
- Coordination among the many groups doing communication
 - "SLOG is too big and meets too infrequently."
- Information flow to and from the experiments
- How much is communication integrated into laboratory management and decision making at all levels?
 - "The Communication Group is treated primarily as the Press Office."
- CERN Central Database Services database technology

Comments

- The situation will change dramatically in the next few years with more of a steady state of LHC operations and a long shutdown in 2013. How will the laboratory maintain a worldwide interest in CERN?
- What actions followed the 2009 internal audit?
- The head of the Communication Group and his staff agree that he can be a bottleneck.

- The Audio/Visual group needs a single manager and consolidation.
- The Communication Group needs to start to evaluate the impact of its communications efforts and seek feedback.
- Things often seem to get done by personal contacts and goodwill rather than clear processes.
- The committee noted that the head of the Communication Group identified coordination as being a greater problem than resource levels.
- However, almost everyone the committee talked to seemed a bit overloaded and stressed.

Recommendations

- The Director General should add the head of the Communication Group to the extended directorate.
- A full-time deputy for the head of the Communication Group should be appointed, who is empowered to take decisions in well-defined areas and act as an overall deputy including as a spokesperson for CERN.
- This person should be given explicit responsibility for improving internal coordination and communication within the group.
- Work on the relationship with the experiments.
- Reconsider membership and frequency of the "SLOG" meeting.



Lessons learned

- > *“If you think you’re not ready for a review, then you should do it.”*
 - Preparation of the review is a very important part of the review.
- > *“Yes, it is work! But it’s worth doing it and it’s also a lot of fun.”*
- > *“It is absolutely fascinating what the reviewers have found out in such a short time.”*
- > Management’s perception of comms teams were strengthened.
- > Management’s perception of the reviewers/experts were strengthened.
- > Re-evaluation after 2 years seems to be very useful.



InterActions Peer Review

**FULL REPORTS ONLINE:
WWW.INTERACTIONS.ORG**