

Essential skills to excel at a communications role

NAZMUL HOSSAIN

At 8.43 AM, a message flashes up on a phone that has already been vibrating all morning. A customer has posted a shaky video of smoke drifting across a shop floor. In the comments, people are guessing, blaming, sharing, embellishing. The facts are incomplete, the feeling is loud, and the organisation has a choice to make in public. Say nothing and the story fills the silence. Say the wrong thing and it becomes the story.

Careers in communications are built in moments like this, even when the day job looks calmer from the outside. Behind the press release, the campaign launch, the internal update, the social post and the spokesperson briefing sits a set of skills that combine craft and judgement. You can learn the tools quickly. What takes longer, and what employers notice, is whether you can turn information into understanding, and whether people trust you when it matters.

WRITING THAT RESPECTS THE READER

Writing remains the core currency of communications, regardless of channel. It is not simply a knack for neat phrasing. It is the ability to decide what is true, what is relevant, and what a reader needs first. Traditional news writing reduces that discipline to three essentials: accuracy, brevity and clarity. Miss the first and you lose credibility. Ignore the second and you waste attention. Neglect the third and you force readers to do your work for you.

Good communicators treat accuracy as an everyday habit rather than a crisis response. They check names, numbers, dates, locations, and the meaning of what a source has said, because mistakes spread faster than corrections. They also understand fairness. Even when you are writing for an organisation, your words carry an obligation to the public and to the people affected by what you publish. That means using neutral language when neutrality is required, avoiding inflated claims, and recognising what you do not yet know.

Clarity is not about making things simplistic. It is about making them usable. Plain English helps because it assumes the reader is busy, distracted, and possibly anxious, and it does not punish them for it. Shorter sentences, active voice, and verb-led phrasing create momentum and reduce the chances of misunderstanding. The difference between "a decision was made regarding implementation" and "we decided to implement" is not stylistic trivia. It is the difference between a message that lands and one that slides off the page.

There is also a subtler writing skill that matters in communications: register.

You need to sound like a human being without sounding casual when the moment demands care. You need to be formal without becoming foggy. The best writers can shift tone for an internal staff note, a regulator update, a customer apology, and a fundraising appeal, while still sounding consistent. That ability comes from paying attention to audience and purpose, and from reading widely enough to develop an ear for what works.

STORY SENSE, STRUCTURE AND THE ABILITY TO HOLD ATTENTION

Communications professionals sometimes flinch at the word "story", as if it implies spin. But story, at its best, is simply structure: what is happening, why it matters, and what should happen next. A feature writer learns early that a piece must grab attention, keep it, and leave an impression. That same arc applies to comms, whether you are writing a

decide what happens next.

LISTENING, REPORTING AND THE HABIT OF GETTING IT RIGHT

Many early career communicators focus on outputs: the newsletter, the press release, the post. Senior communicators focus on inputs: what is actually happening, what people believe is happening, and what evidence supports either view. That is reporting, even when you do not call it that. You are gathering information, verifying it, deciding what is material, and presenting it in a form that others can use.

Listening is part of that, and it is more than politeness in meetings. It includes stakeholder interviews that draw out what a senior leader is reluctant to say plainly. It includes reading the mood of staff channels, community groups and comment threads, and distinguishing a loud minority from a genuine shift in

misunderstand, and what will they do with the information.

Judgement is the skill that sits underneath. It shows up when you decide that a technically correct line is still misleading in context. It shows up when you choose to publish a partial update because silence would fuel speculation, while being explicit about what you are still confirming. It shows up when you know when to push back on a senior figure who wants a slogan rather than an answer.

This is where ethical instincts become career defining. The temptation in communications is always to polish. The craft is learning how to be clear and persuasive without being slippery. Trust, once lost, is difficult to regain, and communications teams are often the first to feel the consequences of shortcuts taken elsewhere.

COLLABORATION, CONFIDENCE AND THE ABILITY TO KEEP LEARNING

Communications is a team sport played across departments. You will work with policy, product, HR, legal, operations, designers, videographers, analysts and executives, often with competing priorities and time pressures. Collaboration is not about being agreeable. It is about making progress without losing precision. It includes project management, briefing well, keeping deadlines realistic, and being able to say, calmly, that a message cannot go out yet because it is not accurate enough.

Confidence matters, too, but it should be the quiet kind, grounded in preparation. It is the confidence to ask basic questions, to admit when you do not know something, and to revise a draft without taking it personally. Strong communicators rewrite. They proofread. They read their work aloud. They respect punctuation because it shapes meaning. They aim for plain language not because they cannot write elegantly, but because clarity is a form of respect.

Most of all, communications careers belong to the curious. Industries shift, platforms change, and audiences develop new expectations. The people who thrive are the ones who keep learning how to listen better, write sharper, and think more clearly about the consequences of what they publish.

In the end, the job is deceptively simple to describe. Find out what is going on. Decide what matters. Explain it in a way people can understand and trust. Do that consistently, and you build a career that lasts.

Nazmul Hossain is a seasoned journalist and a public relations professional based out of Dhaka. Reach him at nazmulhc@gmail.com.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

case study, a CEO email, or a campaign landing page.

Structure is a career skill because it forces prioritisation. In a crisis statement, the first lines should address what people most urgently need to know. In a campaign, the opening should make a promise to the reader and then deliver on it. In an internal change programme, the message should anticipate the questions people will ask in the corridor and answer them before they become rumours. Knowing how to build that shape is part craft and part empathy, and it improves with practice, editing, and the willingness to cut your favourite line if it slows the reader down.

Good endings matter, too. People remember the last thing they read, and they often act on it. A strong finish can clarify next steps, reinforce reassurance, or invite engagement, while staying honest about uncertainty. A weak ending simply fades out, leaving the audience to

sentiment. It includes the discipline to ask one more question when something sounds neat but does not quite make sense.

With listening comes synthesis. Communicators are often handed competing versions of reality: legal caution, operational detail, leadership ambition, customer frustration. Your value is the ability to turn that into a single narrative that is accurate, fair, and comprehensible, without pretending tensions do not exist. When you can do that well, you become the person people rely on when the organisation is under strain.

STRATEGIC THINKING AND JUDGEMENT UNDER PRESSURE

Communications is not just language. It is decision making about timing, channels, and risk. Strategy can sound grand, but it often comes down to a few practical questions: who needs to know, what do they need to know now, what might they



IMAGE: REUTERS

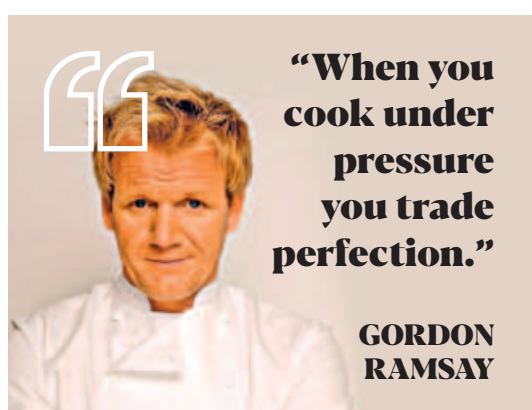
Nvidia to make 'huge' investment in OpenAI: CEO Huang

NEXT STEP DESK

Nvidia plans to make what its chief executive, Jensen Huang, described as a "huge" investment in OpenAI, signalling continued backing for the ChatGPT maker. Speaking to reporters in Taipei on January 31, Nvidia CEO Huang rejected suggestions that he was unhappy with OpenAI, calling such claims "nonsense".

"We are going to make a huge investment in OpenAI," Huang said. He said Nvidia would take part in OpenAI's next funding round and that the investment would likely be the largest the chipmaker has ever made, though he ruled out a figure close to \$100 billion. In September 2025, Nvidia announced that it was considering investing up to \$100 billion in OpenAI.

In January 2026, the Wall Street Journal reported that Huang had privately questioned OpenAI's business discipline and highlighted increasing competition from rivals, including Alphabet's Google and the AI start-up Anthropic.



"When you cook under pressure you trade perfection."

GORDON RAMSAY

The Gen Z guide to making sense of money at work

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Money at work is rarely just about a paycheck. It shapes mobility, confidence, autonomy, and the kind of life that feels possible. It influences where we live, how we move through cities, what we say yes to, and how much space we feel allowed to take up. Despite this, workplace money remains poorly explained, and conversations around pay often feel awkward, opaque, or emotionally loaded. Making sense of money at work often involves understanding how value is measured, how time converts into income, how energy relates to reward, and how lifestyle expectations quietly shape financial pressure.

YOUR SALARY IS A SIGNAL, NOT A SCORE

A salary communicates information. It reflects how a role is valued within a specific organisation, industry, and moment in time. Treating salary as a signal rather than a score allows distance from emotional attachment to numbers. Early career pay often represents potential, learning capacity, and structural constraints rather than personal capability. Reading salary as data creates perspective. Different industries price skills differently. Certain roles scale faster. Some organisations prioritise stability while others prioritise acceleration. Observing these patterns builds financial literacy. It encourages comparison between roles and trajectories rather than between individuals. Over time, the direction of growth matters more than the starting figure. This mindset supports confidence without entitlement as money becomes contextual rather than personal.

PAY BANDS TELL YOU MORE THAN OFFER LETTERS

Every role sits inside an invisible pay range. Understanding this changes how salary conversations feel. Pay bands usually reflect seniority, budget ownership, and replacement cost. An offer often lands somewhere within that range based on urgency, negotiation comfort, and internal parity. Learning to ask where a role sits within its band provides clarity. It reveals room for growth without

demanding immediate change. Observing peers at similar levels also offers insight as patterns emerge around experience, tenure, and responsibility. This information supports realistic expectations. It also frames future conversations around progression. Pay bands help separate role value from personal worth as they clarify what movement looks like within the system. This understanding encourages patience and planning.

BENEFITS SHAPE LIFESTYLE MORE THAN PAY SLIPS

Workplace benefits quietly influence everyday



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

life. Health coverage, learning budgets, travel allowances, flexibility, and leave policies affect time, energy, and spending patterns. Two identical salaries create very different realities depending on the benefits attached. Understanding benefits requires imagining daily routines rather than monthly income. Transport support changes commuting costs. Flexible hours reshape energy distribution. Learning allowances influence growth without personal expense. These elements reduce invisible costs and shape sustainability. Benefits also reveal organisational values, because investment in development signals long-term thinking.

INCREMENTS REWARD PATTERNS, NOT MOMENTS

Salary growth often reflects consistency over time. Organisations reward reliability, ownership, and visible contribution rather than isolated excellence. Understanding this pattern reframes expectations around

increments. Tracking work creates leverage. Documenting responsibilities, learning curves, and outcomes builds narrative clarity. Growth conversations become grounded in evidence. Preparation replaces anxiety. Increment cycles usually follow a structure wherein budget timelines, organisational health, and role maturity influence outcomes. Awareness creates patience and realism, while financial clarity develops through understanding timing and process. Viewing increments as structural outcomes encourages long-term thinking and ensures that contributions align with context.

BONUSES FOLLOW LOGIC, EVEN WHEN THEY FEEL RANDOM

Bonuses often appear unpredictable, yet they usually follow internal logic. Performance pools, team targets, company health, and leadership discretion shape outcomes. Understanding what bonuses are tied to clarifies expectations. Some bonuses reward revenue. Others reward retention or completion. Asking what behaviour bonuses encourage reveals intent. However, timing matters too. Bonuses often align with fiscal close or milestone delivery. Observing who receives bonuses and why builds pattern recognition. This insight reduces confusion. Bonuses also reflect risk sharing. Variable pay shifts uncertainty from the organisation to the individual. Understanding this dynamic helps evaluate stability. Bonuses feel clearer when seen as structural tools rather than surprise rewards. This perspective supports planning and reduces emotional attachment.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT



BRAC Bank
Manager/Senior Manager, Digital Loan Underwriting
Deadline: February 7
Eligibility:
Post-graduation/ Graduation preferably in Business Administration, Economics, or Engineering from a reputed university with a satisfactory academic record.
Minimum experience: 6 years

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
Field Officer
Deadline: February 7
Eligibility:
Master's in Geography & Environment, Disaster Management, Development Studies, or Social Science.
Minimum experience: 2 years

World Food Programme
Finance Officer, NOA
Deadline: February 9
Eligibility:
Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent). Education in Finance, Business Administration, Accounting, or any relevant field is preferable.
Minimum experience: 5 years

Bangladesh Army International University of Science and Technology
Lecturer, Mathematics
Deadline: February 15
Eligibility:
Honours and Master's with a major in Physics from a reputed university.
Minimum experience: N/A

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



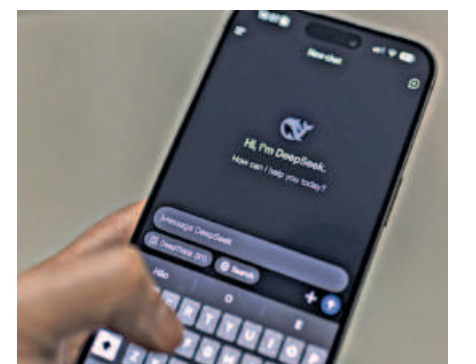


IMAGE: PEXELS

DeepSeek is looking for AI search engineers: report

NEXT STEP DESK

Chinese AI company DeepSeek is planning to launch an AI search engine and develop more automated software, according to a report by Bloomberg News. The plans were reportedly revealed in multiple job adverts from the company this month.

According to Bloomberg, DeepSeek is seeking to hire specialists to build a search engine that supports multiple languages. The planned search tool is multimodal, meaning it can understand and process a range of inputs from text to images and audio. It is also looking for workers to develop AI "agents", which are tools that can perform tasks with little human input, as per the report.

The move signals the company's next big step after the success of its earlier AI model, named R1, according to the report. Other leading AI companies, such as OpenAI and Google, are also investing in similar search and agent technology. DeepSeek's job ads repeated its goal to build advanced artificial general intelligence, or AGI - a type of AI that could match or exceed human ability in many areas.