# Businesses must prioritise communication skills to thrive in 2026, experts warn



As businesses prepare for 2026, experts are stressing the imperative for organisations to prioritise communication skills as a critical competitive advantage amid an evolving, AI-driven workplace landscape. Body Talk, a leading communication and presentation skills training provider based in London, predicts that 2026 will mark a pivotal moment when such human skills become essential rather than optional for business success.

Body Talk’s extensive experience training over 120,000 professionals across 46 countries underpins their view that effective communication distinguishes thriving businesses from those struggling to adapt. Their multidisciplinary team, drawn from broadcasting, journalism, theatre, and psychology, identifies a "perfect storm" shaping the workplace: permanent hybrid working, AI transforming routine tasks, and heightened demands to persuade, inspire, and connect in human ways remain paramount. As Body Talk’s Head of Training, Alina Jenkins, explains, those businesses recognising and investing in these human skills now will secure a significant edge.

The firm's analysis highlights five key drivers making communication skills crucial in 2026. First, the "AI Paradox" means that as artificial intelligence assumes routine functions, uniquely human aptitudes like empathy, presence, and persuasion gain even greater value. Second, the "Authenticity Premium" reflects growing scepticism towards AI-generated content, increasing demand for genuine, confident human communication to build trust. Third, the "Hybrid Communication Challenge" mandates mastering both physical presence and virtual impact for split office-remote teams—a dual skill still elusive in many workplaces. Fourth, an escalating attention crisis from information overload makes concise, compelling communication a leadership differentiator. Lastly, with growing "Stakeholder Scrutiny," transparent, confident communication from leadership is essential to inspire investor, employee, and customer confidence amid economic uncertainties.

Body Talk notes rising client demand for 2026 communication training, with enquiries up 40% year-on-year particularly from technology, financial services and professional sectors. The firm asserts communicative competence is a strategic business imperative that directly influences outcomes, whether in CEO presentations, sales pitches, or managerial feedback conversations. Their bespoke training blends techniques from theatre, broadcasting, and proven corporate communications, aiming for authentic, high-impact styles with measurable results.

Supporting the business case, recent studies show companies with strong communicators enjoy 50% lower employee turnover and are 4.5 times likelier to retain top talent. Skilled presenters in client-facing roles can boost conversion rates by up to 30%. Jenkins emphasises the ripple effect of communication mastery, enhancing meeting engagement, idea pitching, and corporate representation.

Despite economic pressures forcing scrutiny of training spend, Body Talk stresses uncertain times actually heighten the value of communication investment. Clear strategy communication, inspiring leadership amid anxiety, and effective client engagement become vital competitive differentiators. They recommend companies audit communication abilities, prioritise high-impact roles, embed skills development in leadership pathways, and measure communication effectiveness as a business metric. This strategic approach differentiates those succeeding in 2026.

Broader industry insights confirm the urgency of these themes. Labour market data reveals communication remains the most in-demand skill globally, appearing in over a quarter of new job postings, underscoring its cross-sector importance. The rise of hybrid and remote work—already involving over half of US employees and common across 90 countries—intensifies the need for adept virtual and intercultural communication. Research from professional development institutions highlights effective communication as essential for pitching innovations, leading sustainability initiatives, and securing investor confidence.

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of AI in communication tech presents both opportunities and challenges. AI-driven tools now handle the majority of customer interactions, raising customer satisfaction for many firms. The global market for AI communication technology is projected to grow strongly, with many firms investing to personalise interactions. However, as Cornell University’s AI workplace communications programme illustrates, integrating AI effectively requires mastering authentic human delivery and strategic message design.

Taken together, these developments reinforce Body Talk’s core message: the future workplace will reward those who excel in human communication—empathy, clarity, authenticity, presence—complemented but not replaced by AI. Businesses finalising 2026 budgets face a strategic choice: invest in these indispensable people skills or risk falling behind competitors who harness communication excellence as a critical asset.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive), [[4]](https://ecornell.cornell.edu/certificates/ai/ai-skills-for-workplace-communications/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive), [[2]](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/importance-of-business-communication)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive), [[5]](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/mastering-1-skill-why-communication-leads-global-job-market-nicolas-s09ff), [[7]](https://www.learnlight.com/en/articles/the-changing-face-of-the-workplace-why-communication-skills-are-a-must/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive), [[4]](https://ecornell.cornell.edu/certificates/ai/ai-skills-for-workplace-communications/), [[6]](https://wifitalents.com/ai-in-the-communication-industry-statistics/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive), [[5]](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/mastering-1-skill-why-communication-leads-global-job-market-nicolas-s09ff), [[6]](https://wifitalents.com/ai-in-the-communication-industry-statistics/), [[7]](https://www.learnlight.com/en/articles/the-changing-face-of-the-workplace-why-communication-skills-are-a-must/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://markets.financialcontent.com/stocks/article/kisspr-2025-10-20-body-talk-predicts-2026-will-be-the-year-businesses-must-invest-in-communication-skills-to-stay-competitive> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/importance-of-business-communication> - Effective communication is crucial in business for conveying clear messages about strategy, customer service, and branding. It builds rapport among employees and managers, fostering teamwork and collaboration. Good communicators are vital to a business's profit margin and reputation, as they help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts, improve customer service, and promote creativity and innovation. Additionally, strong communication skills can advance individual career prospects by increasing confidence in business settings and building a strong professional network.
3. <https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/articles/2023/08/the-power-of-communication> - Clear and effective communication is essential for business leaders, especially those promoting sustainability initiatives or launching new enterprises. The Center for Professionalism and Communications at American University helps students learn to communicate ideas succinctly and persuasively, preparing them for pitch competitions, workshops on design thinking and innovation, and service projects. These skills are vital for explaining the benefits of sustainability measures or seeking investors for new ventures.
4. <https://ecornell.cornell.edu/certificates/ai/ai-skills-for-workplace-communications/> - As generative AI reshapes workplace practices, presenters face new opportunities and challenges. This course provides practical frameworks for using AI as a strategic planning partner in presentation development, preparing professionals to leverage AI's capabilities thoughtfully while maintaining message quality and authentic delivery. It includes a year of free access to the AI Symposium, featuring live virtual sessions with Cornell faculty and experts to explore today's most pressing topics.
5. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/mastering-1-skill-why-communication-leads-global-job-market-nicolas-s09ff> - Communication remains the most sought-after skill globally, appearing in 25.5% of new job postings. This underscores its role as a core competency across industries. The article also highlights shifts in remote work trends and the evolving demand for skills in the job market, emphasizing the importance of effective communication in adapting to these changes.
6. <https://wifitalents.com/ai-in-the-communication-industry-statistics/> - AI is significantly impacting the communication industry, with 72% of communication professionals believing AI will significantly affect their industry in the next five years. AI-driven chatbots handle approximately 85% of customer interactions, and 65% of companies using AI in communication have seen an improvement in customer satisfaction scores. The global AI in communication market is expected to reach $2.3 billion by 2026, expanding at a CAGR of 32%. Additionally, 68% of communication firms are investing in AI to personalize customer interactions.
7. <https://www.learnlight.com/en/articles/the-changing-face-of-the-workplace-why-communication-skills-are-a-must/> - The traditional workplace is undergoing a transformation with the rise of flexible working arrangements. In the U.S., 53% of employees now work in a hybrid setup, and 27% are fully remote. This shift has made effective communication skills essential for success, as organizations navigate virtual meetings, cross-cultural teams, and digital collaboration tools. A survey covering 90 countries found that 89% of employees 'at least occasionally' complete projects with teams dispersed around the world, making effective communication more crucial than ever.