

# Why Scaramucci failed

I was going to write a post about how Anthony Scaramucci, the shortest-lived White House Communications Director in history, embodies the problem at the core of the Trump administration's communications failures, and then the "Mooch" got fired after 10 days on the job.

Basically, Scaramucci got fired because he failed at Communications 101. He was bound to fail also because he was not the right person for the job. He had no experience in communications, and his actions showed it. As the wrong person for the job, he got hired by a boss and an administration that don't understand communications fundamentals.

## **The communications person is never the story**

First, Scaramucci failed because he broke the cardinal rule for communications pros: he became the story. As anybody who has worked in public relations/communications knows, the comms person is there to help get the story out. Under no circumstances are you to become the story.

## **You have to know how news reporters work**

Second, Scaramucci did not seem to understand that unless you explicitly state otherwise, everything you say can be quoted. If you have not said something is off the record, it's on the record. Period. Reporters are always looking for quotes. That's what they do.

## **Just because you feel that you are simpatico, does not mean you are pals hanging out at a bar**

Third, Scaramucci made himself look extremely crass and stupid by using obscenities where none were needed. We all curse, but we know that in certain circumstances we don't. Scaramucci also seems to lack imagination—and here it is—an ability to

communicate, in order to convey his thoughts without resorting to obscenities.

### **But the larger problem is a White House that doesn't get it**

In TrumpWorld, it seems communications is *all* about marketing. It's *all* about persuasion. And it's not about sharing information and facts. I don't think this country has ever seen such a fact-averse White House ever.

When you practice communications you are aiming to inform, and yes, to persuade. But persuasion is not something to be done with threats and alternative facts. As I have written before, Sean Spicer (the former communications director/press secretary) thought he was in a fight with the White House press corps. He berated them and belittled them and even refused to provide them with information they requested. He turned the cameras off for briefings, thinking that by cutting off video he would be able to control the narrative. He cherry-picked media outlets to respond to that were sympathetic to the president and would not ask any hard questions.

### **Communications is not a one-way street**

To communicate, you must inform. You can't simply try to force your viewpoint on everyone. We see Trump using Twitter to talk directly to the people. What you don't see is Trump using Twitter to respond to questions from the people. To Trump, communication is a one-way street (sort of how he views loyalty too): push your message out and steamroll anyone who questions it.

**Scaramucci's failure is indicative of a much larger problem that does not seem to have a solution: a White House that does not value real communication.**