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Interview with 2019 Gold Quill Award winner Lise Michaud

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Expert advice, Member spotlight • by **Sada Reddy**

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On présente
Introducing

Lise Michaud
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CEO and Founder of IC Kollektiv, **Lise Michaud** has over 25 years' experience in senior communication roles across the public and private sectors in Canada. Her experience covers internal, external and change communication, media relations, journalism and social media. She served as VP Communications on the Board of IABC's Montreal Chapter from 2016 – 2017.

Lise was on the fence about submitting her ground-breaking “Disrupting the Function of IC – A Global Perspective” e-book for IABC's 2019 Gold Quill award. After consulting with some trusted advisors, she decided to enter. She ended up winning an Award of Excellence in the Publications category. IABC Montreal spoke to Lise about her winning project, her research process and advice she has for others who are wondering if they should submit a project.

What is IC Kollektiv?

IC Kollektiv is a non-profit whose mission is to develop and freely share content that includes insights, advice and other relevant information for communications practitioners around the world. We were founded in 2017 and the “Disrupting the Function of IC – A Global Perspective” e-book was our first publication.

What is “Disrupting the Function of IC – A Global Perspective” about?

With the increasing challenges of technology and the convergence and integration of communication disciplines – internal, external and even marketing – and the ongoing need for employee engagement

and advocacy, I felt there was need to look at the profession as it is now and try to see what lies ahead for IC practitioners. To do this, the team decided on eight questions centering on the following topics, which would become the eight chapters of the book:

- Changes and challenges impacting the IC profession
- Skills and knowledge that will drive IC going forward
- Impact of technology and the role IC should play
- The need for IC professionals to see themselves as leaders
- What employee advocacy means for IC professionals
- Blurred lines between internal and external communication functions
- Approaches for IC to work with other disciplines
- The future of the IC profession

What process did you use to get input from so many global communication professionals?

I looked for experts for each topic and chapter who would be willing to answer one of the eight questions. It was important to have the perspective of people with different professional backgrounds and from different parts of world. I did not want experts saying the same thing about a topic because there never is just one response to a particulate challenge or issue.

Each prospective expert was contacted individually by email, or LinkedIn, in cases where I did not have their contact information. I explained the intent of the project to each of them and asked if they were willing to participate. I initially approached 25 professionals, all of whom agreed to participate. This 100% participation rate was a pleasant surprise for me because neither I nor IC Kollektif were known in the industry at the time. The intent of the study appealed to the respondents; it was something that had not been done before. Finally, we had 30 respondents who each provided approximately 1500 words for one question of their choice.

I was honoured to have Anne Gregory [Professor of Corporate Communication at University of Huddersfield and Immediate Past Chair, Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management] write the Forward for the book.

All respondents took a risk in contributing to the book as Lise and IC Kollektif were unknowns when the project started. They had to associate their work and their name to an outcome or result that was unfamiliar to them. They did not know it would be packaged or promoted. The final book could have helped or damaged their reputation.

What was the timeline of the project?

I approached the first expert in 2015. The e-book was launched by Anne Gregory and Global Alliance at their annual conference in New York on June 12, 2017. This was the first time Global Alliance had supported an external project.

How did you get from there to the 2019 Golden Quill award?

Submitting the e-book for an award was not the plan; I had never done that before. I realized that if I wanted to submit, I would need to do it soon or risk missing the deadline. I was not sure if I had a chance of winning but decided to go for it. If I won...great. When I submitted, I had already moved onto another project.

In order to submit the e-book for the Gold Quill, I had to answer questions such as what the project was about, its objective, why the project was conducted, key audiences, results, key messages and resources used to complete the project. I turned in the e-book and comments published on social media about the book as part of my submission.

And now?

The e-book was released to great success and is still being downloaded almost every day. Even though it was published in 2017, it is still relevant today; in fact, one the comments of a 2019 Golden

Quill evaluator was that the challenges outlined in the book are still very real today. The book will have a long shelf life. It has been made part of certain professional organizations' curriculum whose members get CEU credits towards maintaining their accreditation. It is also used by university teachers as a textbook and reference.

Do you have any advice for those thinking of submitting their work?

Be concise. Each question as a word limit. Some of the evaluators said they did not really understand what the project was about until they actually looked at the e-book. What seemed obvious to me, was not clear to Gold Quill evaluators. Brief and crisp answers are important.

I also advise prospective submitters to highlight anything that makes the project stand out like a different approach or tool used. The process of submitting work for a Golden Quill is not difficult and I wished I had done it earlier and encourage IABC members to submit their work.

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