



Gather around

We provide you with the latest developments and practical recommendations on corporate reporting, digital initiatives and sustainability.



Richard Costa
Consultancy Director at Gather

richardc@gather.london

Welcome, everyone

This issue of Gather Around examines the pitfalls of corporate jargon and how even LLMs are put off by vague, generic, or overly promotional language. Clear communication is now more important than ever. What you say and how you say it are crucial for building trust with both people and algorithms. Achieving clarity and authority enhances authenticity and your reputation

with stakeholders, especially when AI mediates interactions. We welcome your feedback, even if you're ChatGPT.

Our Reporting Intelligence pages are a treasure trove of insightful reads. We've done the hard work so that you can stay informed without the hassle.

Enjoy,
Richard Costa



Optimising outplacement potential and how corporate speak kills trust

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We are engaging a saturated audience. To stand out and foster trust, we need to be clear and direct. So, why do we replace plain English with inflated corporate-speak?



How to get your content indexed by LLMs

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Search has changed, so should your digital strategy. LLM-generated search responses are based on the clarity and authority of the sources. How does AI understand your website?



Reporting intelligence

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This month, we explore the FRC's corporate reporting review, increasing sustainability pressure despite regulatory delays (including the EU's CSRD), new California climate mandates, and the launch of the ISO biodiversity standard.



Gather news

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We're delighted to share that one of our clients at Gather has been shortlisted for two awards at this year's Chartered Governance Institute Awards 2025. Workspace have also been named by PwC in the top 10 of the FTSE 350 for climate reporting.

Optimising outplacement potential and how corporate speak kills trust

Corporate websites, reports, and even LinkedIn posts are the natural habitat of a corporate communicator. We are engaging a saturated audience.



Our corporate communications update:

To stand out and foster trust, we need to be clear and direct. So, why do we replace plain English with inflated corporate-speak? “Let’s ideate.” “We’re optimising our outplacement potential.” Translation: “We’re thinking about it” – and “we’re firing people”. Jargon might seem clever, but it doesn’t build trust – it buries it.

Where it comes from (and why we keep using it)

Corporate jargon didn’t appear out of nowhere. Its roots go back to the military, where precise shorthand saved time – and sometimes lives. “Roger that.” “Copy.” “On mission.”

These words built unity, clarity, and identity under pressure. When businesses adopted military discipline and structure in the 20th century, they also borrowed the language. Soon, “strategic alignment” replaced “agreement,” and “mission-critical” replaced “urgent.” Jargon evolved as a cultural signal – a way to show belonging, expertise, and confidence. However, over time, it stopped serving clarity and began fudging truths.



By **Richard Costa**
Consultancy Director at Gather

richardc@gather.london

Optimising outplacement potential and how corporate speak kills trust continued

“Let’s ideate on that” – when smart-sounding isn’t smart

“Ideation” sounds clever, but it’s just thinking with extra syllables. The problem? When we use words that obscure meaning, listeners subconsciously lose trust. Over-complicating simple ideas makes you sound like you’re hiding behind language instead of leading with clarity.

Impactful and other empty calories of language

“Impactful” is the business equivalent of a motivational poster – vague, loud, and ultimately meaningless. A CEO once bragged about “the most impactful operation in corporate history.” What he meant: “the biggest acquisition we’ve ever made”. Clean, short, clear. Vagueness doesn’t inspire confidence; it signals spin. Clarity, not cleverness, earns respect.

“Firing? No, transforming!” – the trust trap of corporate euphemisms

Corporate euphemisms are the modern armour of leadership. “Right-sizing.” “Restructuring.” “Optimising outplacement potential.” They sound strategic, but they read as defensive. People don’t want polished language; they want straight talk. Honesty stings less than spin in the long run.

“Stay in your swim lane” – how jargon builds walls

“Swim lane.” “Move the needle.” “Bleeding edge.” These phrases once created shared shorthand. Now they create distance. Jargon can unite insiders – but it also excludes outsiders. Used too often, it turns collaboration into territory and performance into pretence.

“Leveraging core competencies” – where we go from here

We use jargon because it feels safe. It signals intelligence, experience, and group membership. But over time, it erodes credibility.

To shift the culture:

- Ask yourself why. Does that term add clarity or just ego?
- Prioritise understanding. Your goal isn’t to impress; it’s to connect.
- Speak like a human. If it sounds weird out loud, it probably is.

Corporate jargon is the linguistic equivalent of fast food – it’s quick, addictive, and ultimately unsatisfying. Trust thrives on honesty and simplicity. So, the next time you’re tempted to “circle back,” say “let’s talk again.” Your audience – and your credibility – will thank you.

“Over time, jargon stopped serving clarity and began fudging truths”

Get in touch



If you need help to build trust using your corporate communications, please get in touch with Richard Costa, Consultancy Director, richardc@gather.london

How to get your content indexed by LLMs

Search has changed forever.

Users rely on ChatGPT, Copilot, and Google's AI Overviews for fast, curated answers. Previously, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) focused on ranking on Google's first page. Now, to ensure your content is noticed, the goal is to optimise for citation or recommendation by AI tools. It's about your competitive edge: as click-throughs to websites drop and impressions rise, it's a new numbers game.

Our AI update:

This shift has led to AEO or GEO, which aims to make content and brands trustworthy for AI-generated responses, prioritising clarity and authority over keyword density. Traditional SEO optimises content for search engine rankings through keywords, backlinks, meta tags, and digital PR aiming for top placements on Google.

In contrast, AI generates answers based on what it considers reputable sources across the internet. Its focus is on the clarity and quality of content and third-party endorsement. Hence, unlike traditional SEO, LLM visibility is harder to quantify and control than search ranking.

"AI generates answers based on what it considers reputable sources"



By **Julia Scanlon**
Director of Digital

julia@gather.london

How to get your content indexed by LLMs continued

The AEO and GEO landscape

Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO) – sometimes also referred to as GEO (Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) – involves optimising website content to improve AI visibility. It helps with content extraction and citation in AI responses.

According to Deloitte, over 18 million people in the UK use Generative AI, and the use of AI-powered search increased by 66% from May 2023 to May 2024. As adoption grows, AEO becomes essential. Additionally, it structures content for direct answers on platforms like voice assistants and chatbots, focusing on featured snippets and answer boxes for zero-click responses.

You're now pushing your content to AI users, rather than pulling visitors to your site. This field is evolving rapidly, and most SEO, AEO and GEO specialists are working hard to keep up every day.

“You're now pushing your content to AI users, rather than pulling visitors to your site”

Is SEO search dead?

Google still leads the way in terms of driving traffic. Whilst Google's market share in search has dropped below the 90% mark for the first time in a long time it's still the leading driver for traffic – for now.

To understand the scale: Google handles more than 5 trillion searches annually (that's 14 billion per day) and ChatGPT handles about 37.5 million search queries a day, which is about 0.25% of Google's search volume. So, for now, we're still dealing with a David vs. Goliath scenario. However, this is changing daily and the market share war for user search queries is real.

“ChatGPT handles about 37.5 million search queries a day, which is about 0.25% of Google's search volume”

Strategies and LLM techniques for content indexing

While SEO still helps with indexing, there are other techniques and strategies we deploy to get indexed by LLMs. These include third-party platform mentions and endorsements, the type of URL you use, the type of content you publish, your writing style, and even how your content is rendered.

LLMs further favour brand mentions. Creating authoritative content – original data, compelling stories, case studies, expert input – boosts your chances of being cited.

LLMs are about natural language, where real people ask genuine questions. Replace jargon and buzzwords with simple and clear language that your audience would actually type or say aloud.

“Replace jargon and buzzwords with simple and clear language”

So, practically, what can you do to get better visibility for LLMs?

We can help you enhance your AI visibility and strengthen your position. We haven't even touched on structured data and the use of E-E-A-T and it's more than I can cover in one post.

If you're interested in finding out how we're helping our clients shape their content for LLMs, please drop me a line or DM me on LinkedIn and I'd be happy to take you through the latest techniques and best practice.

Julia Scanlon, Digital Director at Gather,
julia@gather.london

Reporting intelligence

The FRC has published its Annual Review of Corporate Reporting



The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has released its Annual Review of Corporate Reporting, revealing that the quality of corporate reporting across FTSE 350 companies has been maintained during the 2024/25 monitoring cycle. The Corporate Reporting Review team reported a reduction in the proportion of reviews resulting in queries and a drop in restatements affecting profit compared to prior years.

Despite the positive trends, challenges remain. Impairment was the most frequent issue raised, alongside difficulties with cash flow statements and inconsistent information between sections of reports. The FRC stresses the importance of robust pre-issuance reviews to address these common problems. They also highlighted an ongoing quality gap between the FTSE 350 and other companies, where the majority of restatements originate. For the 2025/26 season, the FRC encourages companies to improve disclosures on significant judgments and estimates.

PwC survey finds most companies report an increasing pressure for sustainability reporting



A PwC survey reveals that the majority of companies facing CSRD or ISSB disclosure requirements report that pressure from stakeholders to provide sustainability reporting and data has continued to increase, despite regulators in some areas pulling back on mandatory disclosure requirements.

In response, most companies are increasing investment in their reporting capabilities, with 66% dedicating more resources. A significant number (40%) of companies planning for CSRD will proceed on their original timelines despite potential delays. Companies that have begun reporting overwhelmingly find value beyond compliance. Furthermore, the use of specialised technology, such as data storage, carbon calculation tools, and AI for sustainability reporting, has sharply increased.



Reporting intelligence continued

European businesses back stronger EU sustainability rules



A survey by E3G and YouGov found that the majority of European businesses support retaining stronger EU corporate sustainability and due diligence rules than those proposed under the European Commission's Omnibus simplification plan.

Despite the regulatory burden, most companies believe that becoming more environmentally sustainable improves competitiveness and that the EU should set a global example.

Businesses surveyed favour a lower company size threshold for mandatory reporting, with 70% supporting a threshold of 1,000 employees or less. Those surveyed also supported mandatory transition plans for large companies and believe due diligence should extend beyond just direct business partners, which they viewed as a key source of risk.

California mandates climate disclosure for 4,000+ companies



The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has released a list of over 4,000 companies, including most S&P 500 constituents, that must comply with the state's new climate reporting laws (SB 253 and SB 261).

SB 253 requires companies with over \$1 billion in revenue to report Scope 1, 2, and 3 GHG emissions, starting with Scope 1 and 2 in 2026. SB 261 requires companies with over \$500 million in revenue to disclose climate-related financial risks beginning in January 2026. This mandate extends to over 2,500 out-of-state companies. The list is preliminary, and companies remain responsible for compliance even if they are not explicitly named.

Reporting intelligence continued

EU delays CSRD sustainability rules for non-EU companies



The European Commission has decided to delay the adoption of European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) for non-EU companies under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). This move is part of a 'de-prioritisation' and simplification agenda, designed to lessen administrative burdens and enhance EU competitiveness. The Delegated Act for third-country undertakings, initially scheduled for 2026, will now not be adopted until after October 2027.

This delay aligns with the broader 'Omnibus' initiative, which seeks to significantly reform the CSRD, potentially by raising the employee threshold from 250 to 1,000 and decreasing overall reporting requirements.

Furthermore, the decision follows U.S. pressure and a recent EU-U.S. agreement to mitigate undue restrictions on transatlantic trade caused by the CSRD.

ISO launches global biodiversity standard for organizations



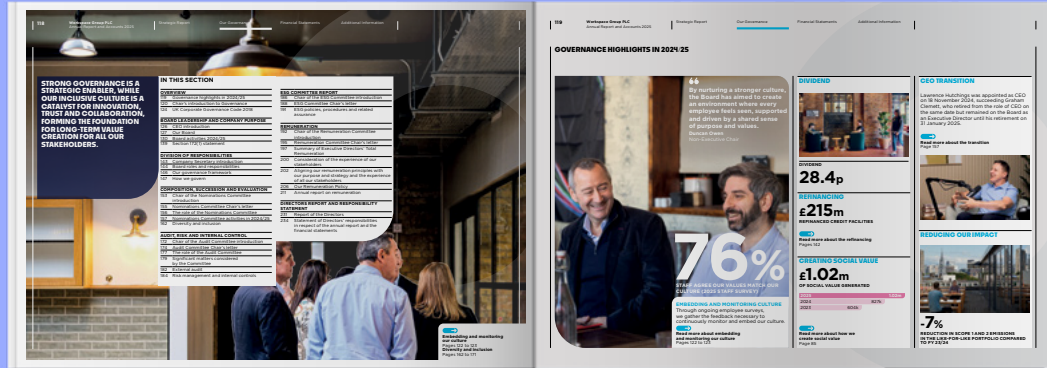
The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has launched 'ISO 17298: Biodiversity for organizations', a new standard to help entities assess and manage their biodiversity impacts and risks. The standard addresses growing pressures and the lack of a common framework, noting that over half of global GDP is dependent on nature. It provides a structured roadmap to embed biodiversity into core governance and risk management, moving beyond simple sustainability reporting.

Developed with input from experts and the TNFD, which based its recommendations on the LEAP approach, the standard aims to harmonise practices. It is interoperable with frameworks like the UN SDGs and will support credible, comparable data production to inform investment and disclosure.

Gather news

We are delighted to announce that Workspace has been shortlisted at the Chartered Governance Institute Awards 2025!

And as of this week, Workspace has been named by PwC in the top 10 of the FTSE 350 for climate reporting!



*Best Governance
Audit disclosure of the year*

Workspace Group PLC
Annual Report 2025

*Best Annual
Report - FTSE250*

Workspace Group PLC
Annual Report 2025



Our shortlisted work



Contact

Please do get in touch,
we'd love to hear from you.

Richard Costa
Consultancy Director

richardc@gather.london

GATHER

Joined-up communications
in a changing world.
Brand. Reporting. Digital. Sustainability.