

## INTERVIEW

# COMMUNICATING THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

Why transparency and credibility bring rewards in a scenario undergoing radical change: an interview with **Massimiliano Paolucci**, Terna's Head of External Relations, Institutional Affairs and Sustainability.

📌 **Terna's communication has chalked up a number of major achievements over the last year: you scored highest in the latest Webranking of 500 European companies and have once again been included in the "Gold" class in our .trust research, in recognition of your ability to combine high levels of transparency and credibility in support of the business. How has this been achieved?**

**MP** Digital communication is playing an increasingly pivotal role in our communication strategy. These outstanding results are recognition not only of our ability to convey our strategic vision and concrete approach to the future, including our role in driving the ecological transition, but also, and above all, our transparency. By integrating all our digital platforms, we have been able to meet the key demands of our stakeholders: financial targets and performance, sustainability issues and initiatives, governance reporting and content designed to attract the best talent.

We have done this by digitalising content, making the most of the operational data at our disposal and through progressive integration of the various channels and target audiences.

**Dietro l'energia che usi ogni giorno, ci siamo noi.**

**Terna**  
Driving Energy

L'energia non si muove da sola.  
Noi di Terna siamo il più grande operatore indipendente europeo di trasmissione dell'energia elettrica e la portiamo in tutta Italia, a beneficio di persone e imprese. Con soluzioni innovative lavoriamo per garantire alle prossime generazioni un futuro veramente sostenibile, alimentato da fonti rinnovabili e senza emissioni inquinanti. Perché l'energia è un diritto di tutti. E il nostro dovere ogni giorno.





Thanks to our solid cultural base, alongside the constant commitment from everyone within the company, we have been able to create both strong and innovative digital communication: an example of this is our decision to have the CEO, Stefano Donnarumma, present the 2021-2025 Industrial Plan, “Driving Energy”, in the form of an actual film, made available to all our stakeholders through digital channels.



### 📣 What, instead, is the biggest challenge you face?

**MP** Terna’s role is strategic for our country: we depend on Terna to guarantee the round-the-clock supply of an essential public good, represented by electricity. But not having a direct relationship with consumers means that we have to find the right way and the right language to enable us to speak to everyone, as the driver of the ecological transition and as the enabler of a decarbonised system.

To meet these challenges, we have come up with the payoff “Driving Energy”, which we used in our first advertising campaign that aims to highlight our role as a leading infrastructure company working hard to shape the country’s future.



**📌 Teamwork is undoubtedly essential is making all of this possible, but it has become even more challenging in the last year. How have you managed to involve your colleagues across all the company's various departments in achieving these results whilst working remotely from home?**

**MP** 2020 was a challenging year, marked by the Covid-19 emergency. Despite the difficulties and the lockdown, thanks to the commitment shown by everyone at Terna, starting from our Chairwoman, Valentina Bosetti, and CEO, Stefano Donnarumma, from June we were able to make up the ground lost earlier in the year and achieve the best results in the Group's history.

Digital tools certainly played a key part. But our success was primarily down to the passion shown by the women and men who every day used Teams, and other applications, to work together on digitalising every aspect of life. This included the website, our financial and sustainability reports and "Terna Incontra" meetings, which were held entirely on line, enabling us to continue to consult local stakeholders on projects affecting their area of the country.

The permanent working group proved a big success, bringing together people from all areas of the organisation - from external communication, ICT, the electricity system, planning, sustainability, HR and finance - to work side-by-side in order to agree on content and discuss solutions.

This entails a rolling process, almost a form of digital artisanship that we have now translated into agile working, where results are arrived at through the constant exchange of different points of view. To facilitate this approach, we are working on ways to increasingly involve all areas of the

organisation throughout the country. To do this, the strategy must be shared across all the available channels, starting from the Intranet, with internal communication reaching more and more people and senior management taking a leading role in responding to queries.

**📌 Terna is at the centre of an unprecedented transformation and the transition to a decarbonised energy system has led to renewed attention on how Terna does business, with new stakeholders to engage with. Can you give us some examples of how you have responded to this growing demand for greater information on the electricity industry through the use of digital tools?**

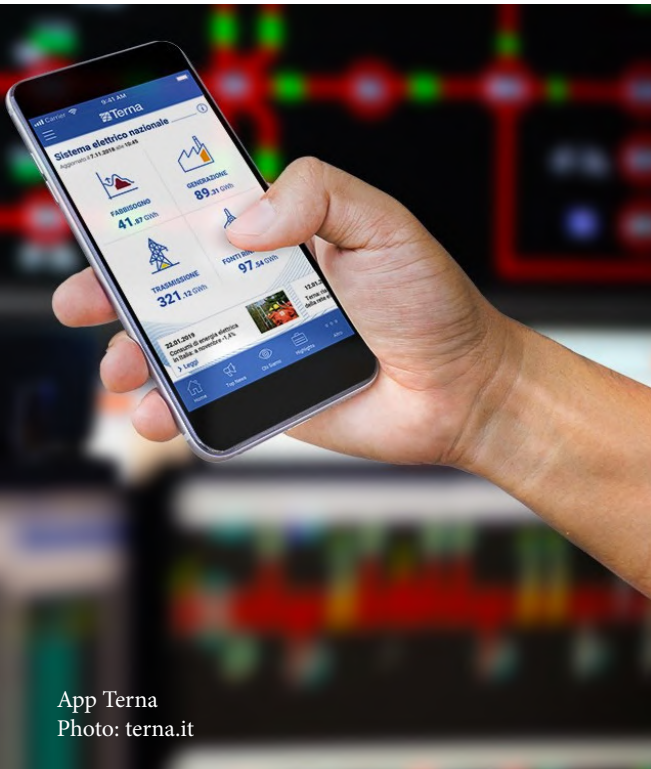
**MP** The world of energy is going through a period of radical change: the transition from traditional to renewable sources of energy has thrown up new challenges.



**We want to continue to expand our target, reaching out more and more to a generalist audience.**

As Stefano Donnarumma, our CEO, says, my department's true mission is to make all our stakeholders aware of the need for a shared commitment to bringing about a real ecological transition in our country, in common with the rest of Europe and the world.





App Terna  
Photo: terna.it

How and using which tools? By digitalising strategic content, explaining the complexities of this enormous change through stories, videos, infographics and other content that can be easily accessed and shared, so as to draw attention to an issue that affects everyone, but that isn't so simple to explain. We have created a blog, Lightbox, that serves this purpose, providing in-depth analysis and engaging stories from the world of energy.

The Terna app offers readily accessible data on the electricity system, using graphics to simply illustrate the link between the volume of energy demand met by renewable sources and our ability to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

We have also stepped up our communication through social networks, opening an Instagram channel and introducing our CEO to LinkedIn, of which he is now a keen user.

**Q** The successes of last year must have aroused even greater expectations for the future. What is the next major ambition you are hoping to achieve?

**MP** Our goal is to publicise Terna and the strategic role we play for the country, in both driving the system and enabling the economic recovery: every €1 billion Terna invests in electricity infrastructure – and Terna plans to invest almost €9 billion over the next five years – will generate almost €3 billion in additional GDP and create hundreds of jobs.

We want to continue to expand our target, reaching out more and more to a generalist audience, thanks to the power of our stories and our approach to sustainability, which is at the heart of our business model. And at the centre of everything will be content, to be tailored to the needs of new channels, with highly innovative projects such as brand journalism and data visualisation.



📌 **Before you go, can you give us three recommendations for companies that have yet to embrace transparency and distinctive communication and who are looking to emulate Terna's example?**

## **1 DON'T BE AFRAID TO LAY YOURSELVES BARE**

**MP** There are no issues that you can't discuss with stakeholders, starting from the most difficult, such as the need to build an overhead power line in a certain locality.

From this viewpoint, the new digital channels and tools are an excellent way of fostering dialogue and listening to each other.

## **2 SET YOURSELVES A CLEAR PURPOSE**

Having a well-defined purpose at the centre of your strategy and organisation facilitates more responsible and effective communication.

At Terna, the ecological transition and sustainability are at the heart of everything we do.

## **3 TEAMWORK IS NOT JUST A FIGURE OF SPEECH**

Every step change in performance at a major company occurs when organisational barriers and silos are broken down.

At Terna, personal and professional relationships have, through the digitalisation of strategic content, resulted in an extraordinary level of expertise sharing. This has enabled us to come up with ideas that are more original and distinctive. My motto with the people who work with me: never settle for what you have.



**MASSIMILIANO PAOLUCCI**

*The Terna Group's Head of External Relations, Institutional Affairs and Sustainability*

Massimiliano Paolucci has been the Terna Group's Head of External Relations, Institutional Affairs and Sustainability since June 2020. Prior to this, he was the Acea Group's Director of External Relations and Communications, Director of Corporate Relations and Affairs at the Condotte Group, Head of Communications for Gemina and Aeroporti di Roma and Head of Communications at Aiscat (the Italian Association of Motorway and Tunnel Operators).

Between 1998 and 2010, he held a series of positions of growing responsibility in External Relations and Communication at Telecom Italia, including Image Director at Telecom Italia's Argentine subsidiary, Secretary General of the Group Steering Committee, Director of Communication, Joint Head of External Relations and Head of Communication for all the Group's subsidiaries. Between 2004 and 2006, he was responsible for coordinating Media Relations for the Pirelli Group, Olimpia and Camfin, before becoming the Pirelli Group's Head of Media Communications.

Between 1984 and 1998, Mr Paolucci worked for the Corriere della Sera newspaper and numerous other publications, including Il Mondo, l'Europeo, Raidue 3131, La Stampa, La Voce di Indro Montanelli, Il Finanziere, Il Carabiniere and Le Scelte del Consumatore. He was Editor-in-Chief for the magazine, ForceSicurezza. In this period, he was also in charge of specific areas of the Publi & Consult press agency and head of an area of external relations at Guida Monaci.