

Transcript of clip from Sally Susman's Mind Tools Expert Interview

"It was such an important time for the world, for Pfizer and for me. The idea that we would create a vaccine in eight months rather than 12 years was so bold that it forced us to do everything differently, in terms of from a company perspective.

"Instead of working in a linear fashion – typically you would do some drug discovery and consider your testing strategies, start to design trials, begin to work on reconfiguring your manufacturing – we just did everything at once and it was really the only way that we could achieve such a boldly ambitious agenda for the company. At the same time, I felt I needed an equally brave intention.

"And for me it was that we would use this moment to really reintroduce to society what happens in big bio-pharmaceutical companies and particularly at Pfizer. Our reputation, frankly, had been struggling; big pharma had many detractors, and yet we make life-saving medicine, so this was the opportunity to reintroduce ourselves and change the course of the narrative for the industry.

"Rachel Salaman: So, what did you learn about corporate communications during the pandemic?

"Sally Susman: I learned that there is no substitute for full transparency. We took some of our intellectual property that's treasured information in our company and put it on the website because it was important that we could build confidence.

"I learned about the irreplaceable asset of authenticity; we made our scientists readily available to speak to the media or government officials so people could hear directly from those people who were in the laboratories and closest to the work.

"I learned so many things, it's hard to know where to begin and end, but they are chronicled in my book, 'Breaking Through,' which really takes decades of learning but things that crystallized for me during the pandemic."

[Listen to the full 30-minute interview in the Mind Tools Club.](#)