

Elizabeth Edwards to Deliver Keynote on 'Public Relations 3.0, AI & the New Trust Economy' at 2026 PRSA Conference

Edwards, Nationally Recognized Keynote Speaker on AI and Strategic Communication, Introduces PR 3.0 Framework Defining the Intelligence Era of Public Relations

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, April 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Elizabeth Edwards](#), Founder and CEO of [Volume PR](#), Engagement Science Lab, and The Affect Institute, and a lead AI speaker for the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), will deliver the keynote address at the 2026 Northwest Communicators Conference (NW CommCon) in Portland, Oregon on April 16, 2026. Edwards' keynote, titled "Public Relations 3.0, AI and the New Trust Economy," introduces a paradigm she created — PR 3.0 — which defines the Intelligence Era of public relations and establishes a new framework for how strategic communicators must operate in an AI-mediated world.

The 2026 NW CommCon, hosted by PRSA Oregon with support from PRSA Puget Sound, under the theme "The High Ground: Reaching the Summit of PR Leadership," brings together communication professionals from across the Pacific Northwest for two days of professional development and networking at the University of Oregon Portland campus. PRSA National CEO Matthew Marcial, CAE, APR, will open the conference. Edwards' keynote is the featured luncheon session on Day 1.

"As communicators, we are uniquely positioned to lead through a time defined by rapid change, polarization and accelerating technology. PRSA Oregon is committed to helping communicators



Volume PR, The Public Relationship Agency

at every stage step into leadership with a clear understanding of the forces shaping our profession,” said Kelliann Amico, APR, Fellow PRSA, president of PRSA Oregon. “After seeing Elizabeth present at PRSA ICON last October, I knew her perspective was exactly what our conference needed in this moment. She brings a compelling and visionary perspective that is uniquely her own.”

PR 3.0: A New Paradigm for Strategic Communication

PR 3.0, as defined by Elizabeth Edwards, represents the third major era of public relations — following the Publicity Era (PR 1.0) and the Channel and Reputation Era (PR 2.0). Unlike previous transitions, PR 3.0 is defined by a new layer of artificial intelligence that now sits between communicators and the humans they are trying to reach — AI systems that synthesize, summarize, rank, and redistribute what is known or believed about every organization, leader, product, and idea in the public sphere.



Elizabeth Edwards, Founder & President
Volume PR, Engagement Science Lab & The
Affect Institute

Edwards’ PR 3.0 framework establishes that:

“

After seeing Elizabeth present, I knew her perspective was exactly what our conference needed in this moment. She brings a compelling and visionary perspective that is uniquely her own.”

*Kelliann Amico, APR, Fellow
PRSA, president of PRSA
Oregon*

- The communication signals created by PR professionals are now training the AI systems that shape public understanding at scale
- AI is the first interpersonal communication technology in human history, delivering synthesized narratives as conversational, personalized truth to millions of users who never click a link or visit a website
- Every press release, media placement, content asset, spokesperson quote, and crisis statement is now dual-purpose — reaching both human audiences and the AI training ecosystem simultaneously

- Organizations that fail to manage their signal ecosystem in the intelligence layer will have their

narratives written by competitors, critics, outdated information, or AI inference

- Trust has become the primary economic asset in a world where AI is the first point of contact between a curious public and virtually every organization

- The PR profession is positioned at the center of one of the most consequential strategic functions in any organization — if practitioners understand what they are actually doing

“We are living through a structural transformation of what public relations is, what it does, and what it means for the organizations, societies, and human beings that communicators reach,” said Elizabeth Edwards. “PR 3.0 is the moment the profession finally sees itself clearly — and steps fully into the role it has always been playing. The professionals who understand this are positioned to become the most influential strategists in the room.”

The Science Underneath: [Affective Intelligence](#)

Edwards’ PR 3.0 framework is grounded in a broader paradigm she originated called Affective Intelligence — a framework built on twenty-five years of interdisciplinary research across behavioral science, neuroscience, psychoneuroimmunology, systems theory, ecology, and applied communication practice.

Affective Intelligence reclassifies the governing variable of human behavior from cognition to affect — the integrated biological, psychological, and social configuration that governs what is possible for a person in a given moment. The framework reinterprets the fifty-year behavioral science “bias canon” as a map of conditioned instinct rather than cognitive defect, establishes communication as biological intervention, and draws an ethical line around influence based on whether it expands or compresses the audience’s capacity to reason, trust, and choose.

Within PR 3.0, the Affective Intelligence framework provides the scientific basis for a critical distinction: communication designed for relationship expands the audience’s capacity and produces durable trust, while communication designed for reaction compresses capacity and degrades the conditions for sound decision-making over time. Edwards argues that this distinction, which has always defined the best of the PR profession, is now the most important competitive differentiator in an AI-mediated world.

Publication Series Launching on Substack

Concurrent with her keynote, Edwards is publishing a comprehensive series on PR 3.0 through her Substack publication, Affective Influence — the first public home for the Affective Intelligence framework and PR 3.0 paradigm.

The series includes:

- Part 1: “What Changed, Why It Matters, and What to Do About It” — Why PR has fundamentally changed, covering the three eras of public relations, the science underneath, the new trust economy, the principle that silence is signal in an intelligence-mediated world, and a task-by-task breakdown of how every core PR function — from press releases and media relations to AI narrative monitoring and campaign measurement — operates differently in the Intelligence Era.

- Part 2: “The Profession, the Playbook, and the Responsibility” — A comprehensive crisis communication playbook for AI-mediated threats including deepfakes, AI hallucination crises, coordinated misinformation at scale, and AI narrative drift; a complete mapping of what PR 3.0 means for every practice area and role in the profession, from corporate communications and government PIOs to healthcare, higher education, and startup PR; how the public encounters PR work without knowing it; and the ethical foundation — including the scientific case that ethical communication is structurally superior because it preserves the conditions under which durable results are possible.

“I have been teaching the science of Affective Intelligence at conferences and applying it with clients for years,” said Edwards. “But I haven’t made a place where anyone can come find the full framework. That changes now. The Substack and this keynote are the public launch of twenty-five years of work.”

About Elizabeth Edwards

Elizabeth Edwards is the Founder and CEO of Volume PR, a strategic communications firm established in Denver, Colorado in 2001. She is also the founder and director of Engagement Science Lab and The Affect Institute. Edwards serves as President of the PR Consultants Group (PRCG), a national consortium of more than 50 independent PR agency owners, and is a lead communication science, ethical influence, and an AI speaker and trainer for the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Edwards is the originator of both the Affective Intelligence framework and the PR 3.0 paradigm. Her work spans twenty-five years of interdisciplinary research at the intersection of behavioral science, neuroscience, psychoneuroimmunology, systems theory, and applied communication practice. She has keynoted for PRSA, NSPRA, IABC, SPRF, and numerous state and regional communication conferences. She is the keynote speaker for the 2026 California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO) Conference in San Diego (May 11–14, 2026), where her address is titled “The New Ground Rules: Communication, Trust and AI-Mediated Public Reality.” Edwards has spent her career bridging the gap between the sciences of human behavior and business of ethically engaging it via the practice of professional communication — a gap she identified in college when she sought to study psychological communication and was told the field did not exist. Learn more at www.ElizabethEdwards.com.

About Volume Public Relations

Volume PR is The Public Relationship Agency, an award-winning strategic communications firm

founded in 2001 by Elizabeth Edwards, headquartered in Colorado and serving clients nationwide. The firm specializes in public relations, crisis communications, brand strategy, media relations, executive positioning, and AI-optimized content strategy for organizations in technology, healthcare, life sciences, agriculture, sustainability, education, consumer, and social innovation. Volume PR is recognized for integrating behavioral communication science with strategic communications practice, producing measurable outcomes including a documented 19-point shift in buyer likelihood for client campaigns.

Through its sister organizations, Engagement Science Lab and The Affect Institute, Volume PR operates at the intersection of communication practice and original scientific research. Edwards' affective intelligence framework – grounded in more than 25 years of interdisciplinary research across behavioral, cognitive, biological, and physical sciences – addresses how communication signals biologically shape human perception, trust, and decision-making. Edwards is Lead AI Speaker for PRSA, an internationally recognized trainer on the science of effective engagement and ethical persuasion, and delivers AI implementation and communications science education through partnerships with PRSA, IABC, NSPRA, SPRF, CAPIO, and more. She serves as President of PR Consultants Group and is a member of the Society for Consumer Psychology. Learn more at www.VolumePR.com | www.EngagementScienceLab.com | www.AffectInstitute.com

About Affective Intelligence

Affective Intelligence (affectiveintelligence.substack.com) is the publication of Elizabeth Edwards and the first public home for the Affective Intelligence framework and the PR 3.0 paradigm. The publication explores the science of how human behavior is governed by affect — not cognition — and what that means for communication, leadership, influence, and ethics in an AI-mediated world. Rooted in twenty-five years of interdisciplinary research across behavioral science, neuroscience, psychoneuroimmunology, and applied communication practice, Affective Intelligence features the original work of Elizabeth Edwards including the reclassification of cognitive bias as conditioned instinct, the architecture of ethical influence, and the PR 3.0 framework defining the Intelligence Era of public relations. Subscribe at www.affectiveintelligence.substack.com.

About PR Consultants Group

PR Consultants Group is an exclusive nationwide network of independently owned, senior-level public relations, strategic communication, and marketing firms in more than 50 U.S. markets. Founded in 2000, the network gives organizations the ability to hire one trusted agency as their primary strategic partner and, through that firm, access a national bench of senior specialists across geographies, industries, and disciplines — from crisis communication and public affairs to media relations, digital PR, AI PR, and community relations.

Every PR Consultants Group firm is led by an award-winning agency principal who provides direct strategic counsel and hands-on execution. When a client's needs expand — a crisis in another

state, a political dimension requiring public affairs expertise, a product launch across a dozen markets — their agency activates senior practitioners across the network. The result is the national reach and coordination of a large agency with the senior-level accountability, responsiveness, and cost discipline that only independent firms deliver. National strength. Local power. Learn more at <https://www.prconsultantsgroup.com>.

About the 2026 Northwest Communicators Conference

The 2026 Northwest Communicators Conference (NW CommCon) is hosted by PRSA Oregon, with support from PRSA Puget Sound, under the theme “The High Ground: Reaching the Summit of PR Leadership.” The two-day conference takes place April 16–17, 2026 at the University of Oregon Portland campus in Portland, Oregon. The conference features three tracks — strategies, tactics, and crisis communication — and brings together communication professionals from across the country and the Pacific Northwest. PRSA National CEO Matthew Marcial, CAE, APR, will open the conference. For registration and information, visit prsaoregon.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is PR 3.0?

PR 3.0 is a framework created by Elizabeth Edwards that defines the Intelligence Era of public relations — the third major era of the profession, following the Publicity Era (PR 1.0) and the Channel and Reputation Era (PR 2.0). PR 3.0 is defined by a new layer of artificial intelligence sitting between communicators and the humans they reach, fundamentally changing how strategic communication must be designed, delivered, and measured.

Who created PR 3.0? PR 3.0 was created by Elizabeth Edwards, Founder and CEO of Volume PR, Engagement Science Lab, and The Affect Institute, and a lead AI speaker for the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Edwards introduced the PR 3.0 framework based on twenty-five years of interdisciplinary research and applied communication practice.

What is Affective Intelligence?

Affective Intelligence is a paradigm created by Elizabeth Edwards that reclassifies the governing variable of human behavior from cognition to affect. The framework reinterprets the behavioral science “bias canon” as a map of conditioned instinct rather than cognitive defect, establishes communication as biological intervention, and draws an ethical line around influence based on whether it expands or compresses the audience’s capacity to reason, trust, and choose. Affective Intelligence provides the scientific foundation for the PR 3.0 framework.

What is the Affective Intelligence Substack?

Affective Intelligence is a Substack publication created by Elizabeth Edwards and is the first public home for the Affective Intelligence framework and PR 3.0 paradigm. It features a three-

part series on PR 3.0 as well as foundational essays on the science of affect, the reclassification of cognitive bias as conditioned instinct, and the ethical framework for communication in an AI-mediated world.

Where is Elizabeth Edwards speaking on PR 3.0?

Elizabeth Edwards is delivering the keynote address on “Public Relations 3.0, AI and the New Trust Economy” at the 2026 Northwest Communicators Conference (NW CommCon) in Portland, Oregon on April 16, 2026. She is also the keynote speaker at the 2026 CAPIO Conference in San Diego (May 11–14, 2026), speaking on “The New Ground Rules: Communication, Trust and AI-Mediated Public Reality.”

How does PR 3.0 differ from PR 2.0?

PR 2.0 was defined by the rise of digital platforms and social media, shifting communication from one-way broadcast to two-way conversation. PR 3.0 is defined by a new intelligence layer — AI systems that synthesize and redistribute information about organizations, leaders, and ideas as conversational truth to millions of people. In PR 3.0, the signals communicators create are training the AI systems that shape public understanding, making strategic communication one of the most consequential functions in any organization.

What is signal architecture in PR 3.0?

Signal architecture is a concept within Elizabeth Edwards’ PR 3.0 framework that describes the deliberate design and management of the total signal ecosystem an organization puts into the world — including press releases, earned media, owned content, spokesperson language, and crisis communications — with the understanding that all of these signals are now being ingested, synthesized, and reproduced by AI systems. Signal architecture replaces episodic campaign thinking with continuous environmental signal governance.

What is the new trust economy?

The new trust economy is a concept within Elizabeth Edwards’ PR 3.0 framework describing the shift in which trust has become the primary economic asset of every public-facing organization. In an AI-mediated world, AI systems are often the first point of contact between a curious public and an organization, meaning the coherence, authority, and accuracy of an organization’s signal ecosystem directly affects whether it is surfaced, cited, trusted, and chosen.

###

Volume PR & Affective Intelligence Media Liason

Volume PR

+1 855.477.9467

info@volumepr.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/904776291>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.