

# The Term “White Lie” Gives All PR Pros a Bad Name



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When Hope Hicks used the term “white lie” while testifying about the Russia investigation to the House Intelligence Committee, she gave all [public relations](#) professionals a bad name. As a professional communicator, the term “white lie” should not be in your vocabulary much less used. Honesty and transparency is an important part of our industry.

When people use the words “spin,” “alternative facts” or “white lie” in relation to our work, it gives people the false impression that our industry exists to help people cover up bad news or condone appalling behavior. This could not be further from reality. It is our job to make sure our clients are being honest and transparent with their audiences –and we take that responsibility very seriously.

While it has been reported that [Hope Hicks’ departure is not related to her recent testimony](#) with the House Committee, it is also not clear why she is leaving the Trump administration. News reports have given her credit for her quiet, behind-the-scenes work leading the communications team. No matter what side of the aisle you are on, a communications director for any organization always needs to be calm, cool and collected, and have direct access to the President, which Hicks appeared to have secured. Leading communications for any

president is never easy, but working with a leader who will heed your advice and has a deep comprehension (and respect) for the work is critical to success.

One of the more interesting things about Hicks' departure is that the White House and Trump's inner circle are praising her work. All other departures have ended with a generic statement of well wishes or nasty tweets. This may be one of the sincerest statements Trump has made during his time in office: "Hope is outstanding and has done great work for the last three years. She is as smart and thoughtful as they come, a truly great person. I will miss having her by my side but when she approached me about pursuing other opportunities, I totally understood. I am sure we will work together again in the future."

Moving forward the Trump administration needs to hire a communications director who can help gain the public's trust as well as respect of the communications staff already in place. They also need to find someone who will be in it for the long haul, which for true professionals is longer than a year. Hicks was the third person to hold the title in the last 13 months, which puts Trump [on track to have 11 people hold the title](#) during his current term. This type of turnover is not good for morale and signals that there is a larger problem with the leadership and rings true at all organizations, not just the White House. The person who takes this job needs to understand Trump must start winning in the court of public opinion, which in most cases is significantly harsher than penalties imposed in the court of law.

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