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A Conversation with Gabby Pascuzzi, Survivor Contestant, Technical Communicator, and STC Summit Honors Event Speaker

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This year's STC Technical Communication Summit & Expo Honors Event speaker is Gabby Pascuzzi, technical communicator and recent "Survivor: David vs. Goliath" contestant.

Nicky Bleiel, Summit Co-Chair, chatted with Gabby about "Survivor," the advantages of being a technical communicator, her Honors Event talk, and being an underdog. The Summit is 5-8 May 2019 in Denver, Colorado.



Gabby Pascuzzi Interview



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Nicky Bleiel: Today, I'm pleased to be talking with the technical communicator and true survivor, Gabby Pascuzzi. Last fall, Gabby was a contestant on CBS' 37th season of "Survivor," which was dubbed "David vs. Goliath." This May, at the STC Summit in Denver, she'll be the special guest speaker at the Honors Event on Tuesday, 7 May. Hi, Gabby!

Gabby Pascuzzi: Hi, Nicky. Great to talk to you. I am very excited about the upcoming conference.

Nicky: We're excited to have you. You were a "David" on Survivor; an assumed underdog. Do you think being a technical communicator gave you an advantage on "Survivor"?

Gabby: Yeah, absolutely. You would never think that in a game where you have to live on an island and vote each other out, that being a technical communicator would be a useful skill. However, "Survivor" is equally a game about social politics as it is about surviving in the jungle.

The social game comes down to how well you connect with people, which is largely about communication. If you're able to read between the lines of what someone is truly saying—like we so often have to do in our jobs—you may glean an extra little bit of information that can help you in the game.

I had to gather so much information and really pick out what was relevant and helpful to me. Being able to work through that and portray my thoughts in a clear way was helpful not only for playing the game, but also for making good television, telling a good story, entertaining people who were watching, you know?

Nicky: True! I really enjoyed watching you this season. At the Honors Event, STC celebrates outstanding achievement in technical communication. I think your talk is going to be a fun and fitting addition to the festivities. Could you please give us all just a very brief preview of your Honors Event talk?

Gabby: Yes. I'm going to talk about how the technical communication issues that face us all in our daily lives, how they actually applied to me on "Survivor" too. That goes from not only having to explain what a technical writer is over and over again... It's really just spreading awareness of what we do, to actually using those skills that I use every day in the game.

One example—there was a challenge where I had to direct four blindfolded players to guide me through a maze. To me, that was the ultimate test of my communication skills and my ability to give clear instructions. We ended up winning that challenge in a landslide. I hope what people take from the talk is that the skill sets we possess as technical communicators are extremely important—not only in our varied industries, but also in our day-to-day life.

We may be underestimated sometimes; just like I was an underdog. We may have to advocate for ourselves and why our roles are important. At the end of the day, there's just no denying the importance of good communication skills. It really might be useful when you least expect it, like when you're starving on an island, playing a game for a million dollars.

Nicky: Thanks so much for taking the time to talk with me today, Gabby. I'm really looking forward to hearing about all your Survivor adventures at the STC Summit this May in Denver.

Gabby: I'm looking forward to it too. See you all there. The Honors Event will be held Tuesday, 7 May at 5:00 PM MDT (GMT-6). Learn more about the Honors Event [here](#). See you in Denver!