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Skipping the media

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The rise of social media has resulted in the increased popularity of the social media pitch. Using myriad platforms, many PR pros have embraced the art of connecting via tweet and "like" and have found social media to be an avenue for true engagement with journalists. For those trying to get a message out, social media can also generate an audience that has the potential to rival a traditional news medium's circulation numbers. So who needs traditional media?

inVocus asked some PR folk why they still needed traditional means to communicate, and found that when it comes to pitching news organizations, many PR pros are in agreement: you can't beat the credibility that comes with placement in a traditional medium. Meanwhile, using the two means of transmission hand-in-hand seems to be the evolved way to pitch.

Justin Juley, President, SMPS Wisconsin

TRADITIONAL THIRD PARTY MEDIA OUTLETS PROVIDE CREDIBILITY. It's always less credible when a company itself is touting how great they are via social media. Traditional media adds credibility to statements.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD. Just because your company uses social media doesn't mean your entire audience will. Social media is another tool in the tool box of public relations and communication assets. It needs to be integrated into your communications strategy to provide a balanced approach that reaches all corners of your target audience.

SOCIAL MEDIARISK. There can be a lack of control when you do a social media post; not everyone has figured out the social media realm either. Once it's out there, it's open for anyone to forward and comment on – both positive and negative. PR professionals must take into account any impacts social media may have to their company's brand. In a study I read, 50 percent of companies do not have a social media plan. Creating a plan and subsequent policy for employees is a step in the right direction to controlling risk.

Manny Otiko, VP of Social and New Media, Desmond & Louis

I would say that most PR people are using a blend of traditional and new media. However traditional media still carries more credibility. Most of the C-level executives, who often make the decision to hire a PR company, still read old media. I have heard PR professionals say that clients consider an old-fashioned newspaper clip more valuable than a link to a website.

Clients will consider a story in the Wall Street Journal more than credible than a post to Facebook that generated 2,000 views. Social media is so new, that it simply does not have the cachet of an article printed in the Wall Street Journal or the New York Times.

Grant DiCianni, President, Tapestry Productions Inc.

Not all 'audiences' are in fact reachable through social media. For example, Facebook's July 2009 number indicated that it had 2,946,440 users in the state of Illinois. While that's a lot, the population of Illinois in the same year was 12,910,409. Now, deduct out the non-active users, duplicate pages, deceased people, corporate/charity/non-personal accounts and take into account the number of kids and you're left with a much smaller population. According to other studies on Twitter, up to 79 percent of its accounts are inactive. Contrast that with the stats for major news portals or other traditional media streams and you find that there are several scenarios and demographics in which "real" media provides better exposure and better ROI.

Ron Wood, Ron Wood Public Relations Ltd.

Would you go into a war zone with only one bullet? When I go battle to help a client get attention, I want to use all the bullets (tools) that are available to me. Backing up a news story in and/or on the media about a client by with using social media expands the reach of the story.

Amy Levy, Amy Levy Public Relations Inc.

With social media, the individual or company can toot their own horn; make announcements about new products, new services, and deals in a very subjective way.

With journalists, the PR professional needs to target the appropriate media outlet, identify the editor that covers that beat and in a concise, informative way, share the message to entice the journalist to ask for more information. Then the journalist takes the information and delivers it to his/her outlet's readers and viewers in a way that incorporates the editorial opinion of that outlet. Anyone can advertise, anyone can tweet, anyone can put something on Facebook. To secure media coverage in an outlet that is trusted and worthwhile, means more to the client, more to the consumer and the story has more legs.

Tynicka Battle, CEO, ThinkTank Digital

A client may value print placement over social media marketing. Even when we outline the potential massive reach of a social media strategy versus the reach of certain desired print/online outlets, some clients still prefer the print "look." And as you know, the client is always right.

For our entertainment clients, there are times when we have the opportunity to premiere a particular asset (song, music video, film trailer, etc.) and the talent's social media reach exceeds the traffic of a desired partner site. While math would predict that we should choose to premiere the asset on the social media profile, sometimes the approving nod of an influential tastemaker outlet (or journalist) is actually the "home run" a campaign needs.

Shar-day Campbell, Marketing & Communications Consultant

As a PR professional for nonprofits, I have leveraged both traditional and social media to advance the visibility of causes.

Considering that social media posts only have a shelf life of a couple hours, I use an integrated approach to reach my target audience. Most people need to hear something upward of three times before it resonates. Social media is just one medium to reach the masses.

Sakita Holley, CEO, House of Success PR

Even though digital communication is on the rise, a recent PEW [study](#) showed that only 8 percent of Americans are using Twitter. That number is slightly higher for Facebook but the statistics clearly underscore that people are still tuning in to traditional print/broadcast media outlets for their information. These are outlets that they trust, therefore we have to continue to use these platforms to tell our clients' stories.

Lynette Mattke, CEO, PicPocket Books

I find that we still do reach a different audience when we communicate via traditional press vs. social media. And even when there is an overlap, the message is framed differently when it reaches people via social media vs. traditional press, so there are benefits to pursuing both. As an online tech company, my main go-to PR platforms are on social media, but it is definitely an incomplete strategy if it is social media-only.


Joshua Lynsen, Account Executive & Social Media Manager, Chase Communications

Here at Chase, we regularly use social media channels to share client messages. We're using Facebook to excite people about a shopping center's renovation. We're using Twitter to intensify interest in a medical conference. And we're using YouTube to highlight the neighborhood surrounding a new condo development. These and other social media tools are great resources with incredible potential.

While social media has gained significant traction and growing momentum, it is not appropriate or efficient to miss traditional media, whether broadcast or print. We use diverse channels to deliver messages because our audiences use diverse channels to consume messages. An opportunity ignored is an opportunity lost.

– *Katrina M. Mendolera*

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HISTORY TODAY

July 18, 1976 – Nadia Comaneci scored a perfect 10 in gymnastics during the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal. The 14-year-old Romanian gymnast became the first person to ever make a perfect score of 10 in an Olympic gymnastic event. She took the score during her routine on uneven bars. After she finished, scoreboards flipped to 1.00, as they were not equipped to even mark a perfect score of 10. By the end of the games, Comaneci would rack up six more perfect 10s, winning her the all-around title at the Olympics and helping to push the Romanian team to second. Viewers were stunned at her achievements, and she became an instant icon of the sport. She continued to successfully compete in the sport and retired in 1981. She settled in the U.S. in 2001, and now works with several charities in both the U.S. and Romania.

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