

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Contents

Rebranding

Name-Calling: When Rebranding = Renaming, PR Takes the Lead

Early this month, **Matsushita Electric Industrial** president Fumio Ohtsubo made a major announcement to the business world: The 88-year-old Japanese electronics manufacturer was officially leaving behind the name of its founder and adopting that of its most well-known brand, **Panasonic**. The announcement is part of

a trend that has had resounding implications for business and communications: Brands and reputations have become increasingly critical to organizational success; fragmented corporate identities no longer resonate with audiences; company names convey more than a simple combination of words; and, if not executed flawlessly, rebranding a company with a new name can be fatal.

Of course, all of these implications are intrinsically impor-

tant to PR executives, who are charged with managing brands and identities—not to mention the mandatory messaging and communication about the name change that must go out to all internal and external constituents.

Given the fact that rebranding via name changes can happen at any organization, from a two-person firm to a multinational company, every PR professional should know the following best practices to

avoid corporate identity crises.

► Conduct an identity audit.

Before an organization ever attempts any type of rebranding—and especially when said rebranding involves a name change—it is essential that communications professionals spearhead a thorough identity audit to understand what the company is, was and intends to be. As Paul Argenti, professor at the **Tuck School of**

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

Seven Things You Will Learn In This Week's Issue Of PR News

1. Product launches are the perfect opportunity to integrate marketing and PR. (p. 7)
2. 73% of COOs in "Most Admired Companies" give themselves six months or less to prove their worth when a new CEO arrives. (p. 2)
3. Depending on the length of a story, a journalist will ask between 10 and 30 questions, which will usually result in only one or two quotes. (p. 8)
4. Business magazines are globally the most trusted source of information. (p. 3)
5. 25% of COOs in "Most Admired Companies" have no interdepartmental rivals. (p. 2)
6. When changing the name of a company, you can choose from real words, derivatives of real words, combinations of existing words or non-words. (p. 6)
7. 58% of U.S. survey respondents trust business to do what's right. (p. 3)

Integration

Marketing

Product Launches

For the Love of the Launch: How Product Launches Can Instigate Integration

Raise your hand if you are tired of the constant lip service that's paid to the integration of PR and marketing. (Ours are raised.) It's been a topic du jour for more than a decade (or two) and, while progress has been made (albeit out of necessity—thank you, digital communications platforms) on the integration front, there is still a lot of shared strife among PR professionals and marketing executives, and very little effort to join forces.

But enough lamenting, because there are more and more opportunities for PR to collaborate with marketing. For starters, at the CMO Leadership Forum held in New York City on January 17, the dominant sentiments were

those of confusion and anxiety surrounding the following challenges: how to regain the control lost to consumers at the proverbial hands of digital communications platforms; how to quantify the success of marketing efforts when traditional ad measures are irrelevant; how to leverage social media to connect with consumers; and how to differentiate brands in a competitive environment.

Do these sound familiar? They should, because they are the very challenges that PR executives face—and the same challenges that said executives are overcoming with powerful communications strategies. What this suggests, then, is that both parties are more

open to collaboration; it's just a matter of pinpointing a place to start.

LAUNCH A PARTNERSHIP WITH A LAUNCH

You have to crawl before you can walk, so it's only natural to apply that principle to business. The most natural starting point for collaboration between the PR and marketing functions is a product launch, as executives from both disciplines will find each other to be very useful.

Plus, product launches are truly collaborative across organizations because of all the functions inherently involved: research and development in creating the product; public relations in uncovering users'

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A Seat at the Table: The Rise of the CCO

Good news for communications executives: A study released by **Weber Shandwick**, in conjunction with **Spencer Stuart** and **KRC Research**, reveals a positive correlation between a company's corporate communications organization and its ranking on *Fortune's* "World Most Admired Companies" list. Specifically, the study shows that chief communications officers (CCOs)—or the executives who lead companies' corporate communications departments—are integral to positively impacting a company's reputation.

PR professionals knew this all along, of course, but this study provides hard evidence that the corporate communications function is an important ally to the CEO and the leadership team.

According to Leslie Gaines-Ross, chief reputation strategist at Weber Shandwick, "Our research identifies how the corporate communications function can be a critical force in driving a company's reputation

in good times and bad. With the right organizational structure and partnership at the top, the best CCOs can significantly contribute to building shareholder value and corporate reputation."

The shift of communicators from tacticians to strategists is quantified by the following findings:

- **CCOs' responsibilities will increasingly shift from tactical to strategic.** While CCOs are carving out their role as strategic partners at the highest levels of business, they view work today as predominately tactical (58% tactical, 42% strategic). However, respondents suggest that this imbalance will shift as the tools used to perform their jobs (including social media) become more important.
- **CCOs hold prominent positions at the world's largest companies.** Nearly one-half surveyed report directly to

the chief executive officer (48%) and are visible to their boards (had a median seven interactions with their board during the past year).

- **CCOs and CMOs are friends and rivals.** CCOs' dynamic relationship with chief marketing officers (CMOs)—often a main rival and ally—reflects the growing influence of communications in today's marketing mix. [For more on the PR-marketing rivalry, see pages 1, 7.]
- **Measurement of CCO effectiveness is predominately qualitative.** The vast majority of those surveyed report being measured on qualitative measures such as "positive" media coverage (75%) and CEOs' "gut" feel (73%). They are least likely to be measured by quantitative metrics such as the number of media mentions (35%) and ability to control costs (32%).

HOW CCOS IN MOST ADMIRABLE COMPANIES DIFFER FROM CCOS IN CONTENDER COMPANIES

CCOs in Most Admired Companies Are MORE Likely than CCOS in Contender Companies to:	Most Admired Companies	Contender Companies
Have longer tenures	4 years, 10 months	3 years, 5 months
Have prior PR agency experience	42%	32%
Report to CEOs	53%	33%
Have no interdepartmental rivals	25%	9%
Identify reputation management as top priority in 2008	34%	21%
Report that future CCO success depends on global expertise	52%	41%
CCOs in Most Admired Companies Are LESS Likely than CCOS in Contender Companies to:		
Rate talent shortage as a significant challenge	35%	47%
Give themselves six months or less to prove their worth when a new CEO arrives	73%	85%

Based on Fortune's 2006 Most Admired Survey (March 19, 2007). In general, Most Admired Companies are the most highly ranked companies in an industry on overall reputation. Contender Companies are ranked in the industry's bottom half.

The Trust Barometer; Use of Online Video Skyrockets; Video-Buying Tips of the Trade

► **Only as Far as I Can Throw You:** The ninth annual Edelman Trust Barometer, released last week, examines consumer trust in various areas of business. This year, the survey has uncovered a widening gap between trust in business and trust in government; an increase in trust in media; and the rising importance of social media. With all the implications of trust of PR execs' role in managing and maintaining reputations and brands, these findings are an important measure of the state of business today. Here are some key results:

- 58% of U.S. respondents say they trust business to do what's right, compared with 39% for government.
- 55% of 25-34-year-old respondents in the U.S. ranked Wikipedia second as a source of credible information.
- Business magazines, chosen by 57% of respondents, are globally the most trusted source of information on companies.
- Trust in CEOs is around 20% in the U.S., versus 43% for an average employee.

- 85% of respondents will pass along positive information about a company or discuss negative experiences.

- Only 20% trust corporate or product advertising.

Source: 2008 Edelman Trust Barometer

► **Online Video:** A recent survey shows that Americans are frequenting video-sharing sites like **YouTube** at skyrocketing rates. To no one's surprise, young people, especially males, are watching online video in droves, but the survey also shows that almost everyone is now getting in on the action:

- 48% of Internet users have visited a video-sharing site such as YouTube, compared with 33% in December 2006.
- 15% said they had used a video-sharing site "yesterday," compared with 8% last year.
- 20% of men watch a video on a site like YouTube on a typical day, compared with 11% of women.
- 14% of those 30-49 use a video-sharing site on a typical day, up from 7%.

- 30% of those 50-64 have ever visited such a site, and 7% visit regularly.

- 54% of all adults have high-speed connections at home.

- 22% of Americans shoot their own videos, and 14% of them post some of that video online, up threefold since April 2006.

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project

► **7 Tips for Buying Video:** The landscape of digital video is evolving quickly, and the idea of monetizing it is still in its infancy. To help agencies cope with this dynamic sector, Julie Ruvolo, who leads ad sales and strategy at Divx's **Stage6**, offers these tips for smart video buys:

- **Agencies need education:** Digital strategists and planners need to know the basics, whether they're taught by the in-house guru or a borrowed consultant. An overview could take half a day, but will give you an advantage over most other agencies.
- **Answering the phone is not enough:** Ruvolo urges agencies not to wait for technology and innovation to come to them. Instead, be

proactive, get out there and explore a little.

- **Know that you don't know everything:** Even the best tech reporter might be unaware of dozens of new technologies sprouting up. The agency needn't catalog all of them, but have enough of a framework to spot the relevant ones and organize them accordingly.

- **Look beyond Nielsen and comScore:** Many new sites and services are misrepresented in the traditional analytics services. Ruvolo recommends Alexa, Compete or Quantcast for a quick evaluation of whether a site gets traffic.

- **Less panel talk, more silo burning:** Competing agencies within holding companies may be reticent to share information, but each agency working on its own spreadsheet of all the video-sharing sites is incomplete.

- **Put sales people to work:** Savvy sales folks know the competitive landscape better than many digital planners. Take advantage of them by asking them to come in and give you the lay of the land.

Source: iMediaConnection.com PRN

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Googling for a Cause: A PR Partnership Goes Digital on Behalf of the Darfur Crisis

Companies: Google, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and BrightEarth Project
Timeframe: 2006-ongoing

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in

Washington, D.C., wanted visitors to learn about the ravaging effects of the modern-day genocide in Darfur. Teaming up with **Google**, the museum created a campaign entitled “Crisis in Darfur” that incorporated the use of satellite imagery with layers of data and multimedia in Google Earth, the virtual program that offers 3D maps of the globe. This innovative, technically savvy program makes the genocide in Darfur tangible to viewers on the other side of the world, and also serves as a new model in the dissemination of information about human rights violations.

The idea of the program crystallized with the birth of another program: the first version of Google Earth, which was released in June 2005. Prior to this, the museum’s **Academy for Genocide Prevention** was seeking new ways that foreign policy experts from diverse organizations, such as the U.S. government, NGOs and the UN, could better communicate to the public about emerging threats of genocide and mass atrocities. In Google Earth, the museum recognized tremendous potential to share information about genocide and human rights abuses in a compelling and timely manner. Thus, a partnership was born.

A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW

To further flesh out and

implement the project, the **BrightEarth Project**, an outside volunteer organization, was recruited to seek out the necessary data and imagery. Because the crisis in Darfur was entering its third year, the team at BrightEarth hoped that usual data already existed. What they found—satellite imagery and online maps created by the **United Nations**, NGOs and the **U.S. State Department**—affirmed this.

Working with museum staff over the course of a year, the BrightEarth volunteers pooled data on village destruction, locations of refugee camps and humanitarian access. From this, they created the first layers in early 2006. However, without high-resolution imagery underneath, presenting the data in Google Earth wasn’t that different from showing a traditional map. Enter Google, which soon agreed to provide high-resolution imagery of large swaths of land represented in the Crisis in Darfur project.

It would take a bit of persuasion on the museum’s behalf to entice the online behemoth to join the fold and seal the collaboration, but it was agreed early on that Google’s participation was essential.

“The volunteers of the BrightEarth Project was working with the museum to do some drafts [on what would become the Crisis in Darfur project] and explore the possibilities of what we could do with Google Earth, using their imagery and data to illustrate [the massive scope of the genocide in Darfur],” says Michael Graham, program coordinator of the Genocide Prevention Mapping Mission Initiative for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“When we came together

with these volunteers and created some initial layers, we thought the most effective thing to do was to get that content to be featured in Google Earth. There was some back and forth [with Google], convincing them to work with us so we could get new high-resolution satellite imagery of the Darfur area.” In the fall of 2006, Google agreed to allow the museum to feature its layers on top of the Google Earth imagery in the Crisis in Darfur project.

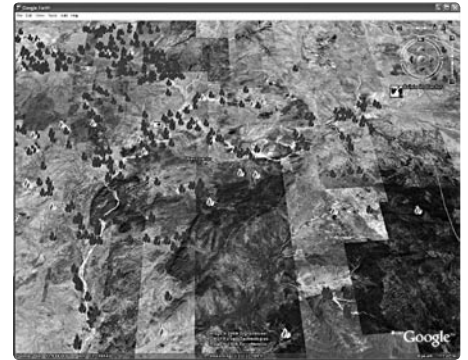
“The combination of their mapping layer with our Google Earth software and imagery allowed the general public for the first time to zoom into Darfur and see the thousands of burnt-out villages, destroyed homes and bleak refugee camps with their own eyes,” says Kate Hurowitz, manager, global communications and public affairs, Google.

A TEAM EFFORT

Google Earth’s delayed involvement notwithstanding, their work with the museum to meet the goals of the initiative was an example of a true collaboration. “[From the inception of their participation], we worked with some of their staff at Google Earth every week from the fall of 2006 to the launch, prepping everything, making sure everything was good to go,” says Graham.

The combined synergy of the museum and Google Earth heightened the program’s ultimate effectiveness.

“It was completely a joint launch,” says Andrew



The locations of more than 1,600 damaged and destroyed villages are shown in Google Earth. Users can zoom in to see tens of thousands of homes, schools and mosques that have been burned to the ground.

Hollinger, the museum’s director of media relations. “Google Earth had provided us obviously with the high-resolution maps necessary to do the mapping in the first place, and they were also very much behind the project. We did a joint announcement here at the museum. Perhaps most important, Google made the Crisis in Darfur default content for all Google Earth users so anyone who goes onto Google Earth and [virtually] ‘flies over Africa is going to encounter this material.’”

Unsurprisingly, with such a densely detailed program, challenges abounded, but for Graham it all boiled down to making sure the project made sense to the viewer and that the narratives were clear.

“Initially [it was hard logistically] organizing volunteers to get everything finished. But the biggest challenge was dealing with that much information and pulling it into a coherent story.”

For Google’s Hurowitz, the challenge was making the graphic and disturbing material viewer-friendly without sanitizing the content and diluting

Photo courtesy: Google Earth

the project's objective.

"We have millions of kids flying around in Google Earth, so we wanted to find a responsible approach, which also allowed uncensored access to all of the material," she explains. "Finally, we arrived at an excellent win-win solution. We worked together to split their layer into two parts, a preview layer that was included in Google Earth, and a second layer downloadable from the first, which contained the more disturbing material. The download link includes a warning about the nature of the material. That has worked well."

Using the satellite imagery, users were able to see the impact that the genocide in Darfur has had on regional, village and even individual home levels. Images of the charred remains of villages on Google Earth, coupled with a multitude of refugee camps housing tens of thousands of displaced, showed incontrovertible proof of the tragic devastation. Viewers can click on icons and read about the villages and the people who lived there. They can also click on "How can I help" links that send users to a Web site (<http://www.ushmm.org/con-science/alert/darfur/what>).

STORIES BEHIND THE STORY

As effective as the data and imagery were in making the devastating repercussions of the genocide palpable to viewers, they were still unable to convey the stories behind the statistics. To fill in the gaps and finish the product, photos and videos from museum staff and renowned international photographers were added to the project. Also included were testimonies from **Amnesty International**. All of these elements combined to put the pieces into context.

Launched on April 10, 2007, and still ongoing today, the Crisis in Darfur project

has garnered international attention. The ROI has been tracked in a number of ways that include media coverage, Web site traffic, clicks on "How can I help" links in Google Earth layers and subscriptions to the e-newsletter. The project has been covered worldwide by media outlets and in many different languages, from Arabic to Dutch. Teachers, aid workers and activists are now using it to show what the effects of genocide look like.

Other results from the campaign have been the following:

- The Museum's Web site is receiving 50% more traffic than it did prior to the Crisis in Darfur effort;
- International visitation has increased from 29% to 52%;
- The number of hits from the Sudan has multiplied more than tenfold;
- The project has expanded the global reach of the museum's Web site. The percentage of the museum's Web traffic from outside the U.S. leaped from 25% in May 2006 to 46% in May 2007, and then to 52% in September 2007, with a greater percentage of visitors reportedly coming from countries such as China, Turkey, Brazil and the Netherlands;
- Nearly 200,000 visits have been made to the "What Can I Do" (to Prevent Genocide) page since the launch (this is 40,000 visits/month average, which is up from around 2,000 visits/month before the launch); and,
- Subscriptions to the e-newsletter (related to genocide prevention) saw a boost of 1,000 to 1,200 new subscribers in the month after the launch—seven times the monthly average.

In addition to these results, the campaign won the 2007 *PR News* Nonprofit PR Award in the "advocacy campaign and lobbying effort" category; it also received an honorable mention in the "corporate partnership/s" category.

The results have been so positive and beneficial for both the museum and for Google Earth that, as of press time, there are plans for other joint projects, according to Hollinger, though not on the scale of the partnership that characterized the Crisis in Darfur program. "We certainly plan on using Google Earth technology to draw attention to potentially genocidal situations around the world," he says.

For Google, one important lesson learned was that their product could be easily utilized as an effective platform for outreach and information on an ongoing humanitarian crisis.

"The Crisis in Darfur project paved the way for the creation of the Google Earth Outreach program (<http://earth.google.com/outreach>), which aims to make Google Earth more accessible to non-profits and public benefit organizations," says Hurowitz. "By talking to the folks at USHMM and other public benefit organizations,

we were able to get a good sense of what the challenges are for organizations with limited access to resources (technological and otherwise). The tutorials, case studies and other materials available on the Google Earth Outreach site were designed with those concerns in mind."

For the museum, working with Google Earth was certainly a best practice in terms of mutual cooperation.

"Working with them was absolutely fantastic in that they were so supportive of us," adds Hollinger. "They made a tremendous impact on the amount of attention [the Crisis in Darfur program] got. Otherwise, we did do a lot of preparation coming up to it. But I think when they and our organization came together, the outcome was something that stirred up lot of people. It was Google Earth and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum saying that this is something that's going on now and it's important for people to know about it and learn how to stop it."

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GETTING VISUAL

The overall aesthetic of the Crisis in Darfur project was integral to its success, says Andrew Hollinger, media relations director of the **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum**.

"From a pragmatic PR perspective, just in terms of the outreach that we do—and Google Earth is a very visual medium—we took a lot of time to prepare photographs that are featured on it. Michael [Graham, program coordinator of the **Genocide Prevention Mapping Mission Initiative** for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum], did a phenomenal demonstration DVD where he leveraged the visual impact of the whole program so that we had these things available for broadcast outlets, Web sites—any organization that could utilize still imagery or moving footage. We had all of this material ready to go, which really helped deepen the coverage of [Crisis in Darfur] and help us get not just more stories, but better, bigger and more well-rounded stories."

The Name Game

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Business, writes in *Corporate Communication, Fourth Edition (McGraw-Hill)*, communications execs can conduct identity audits by taking the following approach:

“[They] conduct in-depth interviews with top managers and those working in areas most affected by any planned changes. They review company literature, advertising, stationery, products and services and facilities. They also research perceptions among the most important constituencies, including employees, analysts and customers. The idea is to be thorough, to uncover relationships and inconsistencies, and then to use the audit as a basis for potential identity changes.”

► **Ask constituents for input.** As PR execs proceed with the

identity audit, they should ask key constituents to give their own perceptions of the company. For example, the executives at then-Matsushita surveyed consumers about their level of recognition surrounding the company name versus its Panasonic brand. Then, perhaps more strategic, they e-mailed questionnaires to journalists, seeking their advice on what it would take for the media to consistently refer to the company as Panasonic.

It is essential to get these insights from consumers and media because they will inform the communications strategists of potential land mines that would have otherwise been overlooked.

► **Brainstorm names that reflect the brand's values, as internal and external**

constituents define them.

“Introducing a new brand is not just the introduction of a new name and brand identity,” says Stephen Debruyn, VP of marketing for **Cision**. “It is an opportunity to identify the values the brand stands for, and to communicate these values both internally and externally. This fills the ‘empty vessel’ of the new brand and overtime imbues it with meaning.”

Debruyn speaks from experience, as he was integral to last year's rebranding of the **Observer Group** to its new iteration, **Cision**. In this case, the company faced the challenge of multiple brands under one umbrella organization that meant different things to different people.

“While Cision is not a Fortune 500-sized company, its branding issues were complex because so many entities had to be integrated, some of them with very strong brand names of their own, into a single global organization,” Debruyn says. He worked with Landor, a branding services firm, to choose a name that reflected the brand, though paying outside consultants is not the only way to successfully rename a company.

► **Know your options.** Because you can trademark everything these days (case in point: “You're fired”), it's not only difficult to choose a name that reflects your brand; sometimes the hardest part is finding a name that hasn't already been taken. Thus, when beginning the brainstorming and selection process, consider these options:

- Real words: **Apple**
- Combinations of existing words: **BlackBerry**
- Derivatives of a real word: **Accenture**, Cision
- Surnames: **Ernst & Young**

• Non-words: **Google**

Then, of course, it's essential to work with a legal team to ensure that the name hasn't been trademarked elsewhere (for additional caveats, see sidebar).

► **Roll it out in phases.** Don't drop a bomb on constituents by announcing the new name and then conducting business as usual; rather, build a core team of people who are dedicated to the rebranding/name-change process.

“You need a small team empowered to set the schedule and drive the program, with CEO-level authority to make decisions and get the job done,” Debruyn says. “At the same time, you need to include a broad cross-section of representatives from all locations and levels of your organization to ensure you get a consensus that will result in effective implementation.”

Employees should be the first to know about the name change, as they will be the stewards of the new brand. They need to know what it means to “live the brand” both internally and externally. Then, update the corporate Web site and all other corporate entities with the new brand name (and new logo, if applicable). Finally, communicate the change to external constituents while maintaining a very transparent approach. Beyond the simple name change, they should understand the reasons behind the decision; otherwise, they will likely be resistant.

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SIDE-STEPPING LAND MINES

When your rebranding efforts involve a name change, Stephen Debruyn, VP of marketing for **Cision**, advises communications executives to be aware of the following caveats:

- Don't abandon an established brand name unless you absolutely have to. It takes time and it is a major investment to establish a new brand, and there is a risk you will lose your customers along the way.
- Don't think of it as simply a renaming exercise—that's only the start of the process. Too many organizations change the name and expect the rest to take care of itself, and lose sight of the true opportunity rebranding represents—that of defining the identity of the brand based on specific corporate values.
- Remind everyone there are no bad ideas. Often names that sound horrible when you first hear them will grow on you. New names never jump out at you. Be open to creative approaches when trying to decide on a name and identity, and take some time to build consensus. Create internal buy-in by encouraging employees to submit ideas for the new corporate name. Some of the best-known corporate brands were created by employees, not consultants.
- Don't fall too deeply in love with any name until after you've done your global legal search on availability. Cision had numerous good options, but some were unavailable in some regions of the world where it needed to be. The Cision name worked worldwide, and over time a strong consensus was reached that it was the best and, in some people's minds, the *only* name that fully conveyed what the company was trying to accomplish.

Integration Via Product Launches

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needs for that product; marketing for building the creative; and so on.

“When you are launching a product, you first figure out what you can do to introduce that product to your target audience,” says Jeffrey Julin, president of **MGA Communications** and CEO of the **Public Relations Society of America**. “Then you identify tactics. Integration will happen around the programs themselves, [especially] as marketers realize that it always has been about building relationships.”

OK, so the theoretical reasons for integrating over a product launch are there. Now, there’s the question of taking action.

► Speak the same language.

It seems like a given, but it’s hard to work with someone when you speak English and they speak Chinese. In the same vein, various communications functions have different interpretations of everything from social media to their own disciplines.

“The biggest issue in the advertising industry is collaborating,” Tom Carroll, president and CEO of **TBWA Worldwide**, said during the CMO Leadership Forum. “But no one speaks the same language. We have to define a vocabulary.”

The question, then, is what words need defining in the first place.

“The biggest challenge right now is defining marketing,” Daniel Kelley, partner, **Heidrick & Struggles**, said during the forum panel called “Creating the Marketing Organization of the Future.”

All this confusion with terminology (and the protectiveness it sparks) is evidence enough that semantics

need to be laid out before any meaningful collaboration can occur. Julie Crabill, account director and manager, industry relations, **SHIFT Communications**, offers these tips for defining terms related to product launches:

- Tier out needs and opportunities in a way that marketers will understand;
- Ask, “What is the upside of doing something a certain way, and what is the negative impact of not doing something that PR advises?”
- Give the marketing department finite information on investments (in terms of time, money and resources) needed to make the launch work.

► Understand their business.

Whether it’s really the case or not, marketers and PR executives still think they have different business concerns. Because of that, Crabill says, “Listen and understand the needs of the marketing department, and agree to a give-and-take. When does PR need to come first, and when should it take a backseat in the bigger-picture marketing needs?”

This is extremely pertinent to product launches, because these initiatives are all about getting the maximum exposure of a product to the target audience (“target” being the key word). There is any number of ways to conduct this outreach, and some will be more marketing than PR-oriented; however, the most important thing for PR executives is to ensure message consistency regardless of the approach or delivery vehicle.

► Bond over the mutual love of celebrity.

Celebrity spokes-

people are often key components of product launches, and they are something both PR and marketing executives can appreciate. For marketers, they are natural hooks for advertising initiatives; from a PR perspective, they represent the brand and deliver key messages to audiences. In both cases, then, a celebrity spokesperson must be chosen carefully. For a list of best practices to consider and questions to ask when choosing a celebrity spokesperson for a product launch, see sidebar.

► **Take ownership online.** If PR people are looking for an answer to the online conundrum of how to regain control, then they shouldn’t look for it in the marketing department.

“Everyone is in a panic about digital. Well, everything is digital,” Carroll says. “The ones in panic are the ones in trouble. The people with the steadiest hands are the ones who win.”

Now that PR executives can rest easy knowing they are not losing an impossible race to their marketing counterparts, they can step up with digital communications strategies that marketers have no choice but to stand behind. A product

launch is an especially opportune time to do this, because new products can be tested by very specific, rapt audiences via online channels. Plus, PR execs can leverage the digital tools they are already accustomed to: social media press releases, blogger relations, social media newsrooms, social networking groups, etc. Because PR is all about building relationships and engaging consumers, it has a head start in all social media initiatives.

“As marketing organizations inevitably focus on consumer centricity, there is concern that attention is being diverted away from two key constituents: the rest of the organization, and actual customers,” Kelley admitted during the forum. “With everything that technology enables, it’s easy for attention to be diverted.”

Thus, public relations professionals have the opportunity to be the glue that holds it all together. **PRN**

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QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SIGNING A CELEBRITY

Celebrity spokespeople can boost a product launch from marketing and PR’s perspective, but choosing the wrong one can result in major crisis management. Kim Friedman, SVP, consumer practice co-director, **Manning Selvage & Lee**, recommends asking these questions before signing a celebrity:

- Do I have a spokesperson who is more credible than a celebrity?
- What does celebrity mean in relation to my product?
- What does the celebrity add?
- Will my audience believe the celebrity message?
- Can the celebrity become an integrated part of the product launch?

Media Training Execs for Social Media Coverage



The rise of social media has opened media training strategies up to many new possibilities. Not since the advent of video news releases (VNRs) has the industry had an opportunity to communicate as deeply and broadly with a variety of stakeholders and audiences. The bottom line for communicators, then, is simple: Social media requires development of a carefully thought-out script, well-crafted sound bites and a variety of proof points. The payoff is that the readers, viewers and listeners will spend more time on specific Web sites and blogs, just as they will set aside more time for watching longer video segments and vlogs.

When we prepare clients for a regular print or broadcast interview, we're often trying to handicap the interview process. We can forecast the results of a typical interview. For starters, the reporter will ask between 10 and 30 questions; depending on the length of the piece, a good outcome is one or two quotes in the resulting article or electronic story. Some of the information in non-quoted paragraphs will be either information you have provided or confirmed.

Usually, less than 10% of the words in the interview—more realistically, less than 5%—reaches the printed page or the

airwaves. And, if all else goes according to plan, said words are given within the proper context, thus advancing your cause, issue or product.

Social media platforms have the chance of capturing more of your information. We used to think that cable stations increased the opportunity for more client information to reach an audience. Except for the financial market business TV networks, cable hasn't necessarily added to the outlets for general company, scientific or association news. It hasn't lengthened the number of your quotes that make it on air.

Yet Web sites and other social media platforms, driven less by size and time constraints than on-air or cable media, can absorb more information and tell a fuller story. For example, a reporter covering a poster presentation at a scientific conference may only write one or two sentences about the subject of the poster, and perhaps include one quote from the Q&A or short media interview. The scientific association sponsoring the conference might decide to use its Web site and post full video reports from the conference, or to vlog interviews with the poster presenters. Instead of a 20-40-second sound bite, the scientist might be able to answer five minutes of questions for that vlog.

With that in mind, here are a few rules for preparing spokespersons for interviews with bloggers and other social media users.

▶ Prepare more sound bites.

While you potentially have more time with social media, that doesn't mean the reader or viewer has a longer attention span. In order to keep their attention, you need to develop more than the one killer sound bite that you know will be captured.

▶ Develop a more logical flow of information.

The typical article relies upon the reporter to write the "story." Your answer is placed into the story that the reporter decides to tell.

With a blog or vlog, there will be more of a logical flow to the story that you create.

▶ Prepare different kinds of sound bites.

The most powerful sound bites are those that are visual in nature, including anecdotes and examples. The longer format allows for analogies, third-party testimonials and/or citations from academic journals. Different readers and viewers will react to different types of proofs.

▶ Use your own visuals. The typical newspaper or TV sta-

tion is reluctant to take your charts, even if they are used in other contexts or media. In a blog or vlog, there's a greater chance of your charts and visuals making the grade, so make sure you are prepared to provide them.

▶ Prepare answers to your difficult questions.

Whether it's an investigative reporter, blogger or vlogger, credibility means being able to face and respond to objections and criticism. This is an essential element of preparation for any type of media engagement. You might be able to keep readers on your site longer if you know that the challenging questions are being addressed.

The audience for a blog or vlog may not be as large as a network news program, but it may be more targeted and specific to your needs. Adjust your preparation and you'll have more success with these and other social media platforms.

PRN

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