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## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Six Steps to Build Trust With Journalists on Social Media During the Fake News Era

With the frequency of fake news as a topic of conversation, we decided to zag instead of zig and concentrate on building trust between journalists and communicators via social media. We asked Marco González, VP public relations & corporate affairs, **LBI Media Inc./Estrella TV**, for best practices.

**You Can Trust Me, Honestly:** As with so many things in PR, the basics can be applied widely. Just as we're urged to be

authentic in establishing relationships in traditional circumstances, the same applies to gaining the trust of journalists on social. "Avoid speaking to journalists on social media using PR lingo and jargon; it comes across as disingenuous instead of authentic," he says.

The phrase, "On behalf of X, Y, Z organization..." is verbose, he adds. "Relationships are built on a one-to-one basis, between people, not between a journalist and the corpora-

*Continued on page 3*

## HOW I GOT HERE

BY TRISTA MORRISON, VP, COMMUNICATIONS, SOBI

### Advice for Thriving as a PR Pro in a Highly Regulated Industry

*Editor's Note: We ask PR leaders to tell us about people who've influenced their career, the best advice they've received and recent trends. This week we talk with Trista Morrison, VP, communications, N. America, Sobi.*

▶ **Take a breath when you can.** It was week two on my previous job at **Ironwood Pharmaceuticals** and I was chomping at the bit to get as much done as I possibly could and I was concerned I wasn't adding enough value yet. The gentleman who hired me said, "You know, there will be so many days in this job when you are racing toward a deadline. So just take a breath when you

can." That's a good reminder, especially in PR, which is so fast-paced and you never know what you're going to face each day. When you're starting a new job and you have a chance to take a breath because your plate hasn't become 100% filled up with work and meetings yet, it's a really great time to immerse yourself in the corporate narrative, to read everything the company has been saying about itself.

*Continued on page 4*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

**WEBINAR:  
EFFECTIVE CRISIS  
COMMUNICATIONS:  
USING SOCIAL TO  
PROTECT YOUR BRAND**

**AUGUST 31, 2017**  
 1:30-3:00PM ET

**PLATINUM PR &  
AGENCY ELITE  
LUNCHEON**

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2017**  
 NEW YORK CITY, NY

**THE DIGITAL  
COMMUNICATIONS  
MARKETING SHOW**

**OCTOBER 17- 19, 2017**  
 MIAMI, FL

# Consumer Engagement With Nonprofits' Facebook Videos Up 48% in 2017

The more things change...A few weeks ago we mentioned that B2B brands' **Facebook** video posts soared during 2017's first six months, with video views up nearly 40% year over year, according to **Shareablee** data provided exclusively to *PR News* (PRN, August 15, 2017). Last week we noted the picture for B2C brands was less rosy, though the news on video was similarly upbeat, with video posts rising 42% (PRN, August 22, 2017). Still, total content posted and consumer engagement, or actions, with it were off, 7% and 6% respectively. The story is similar this week, for nonprofits during the January 1-June 30, 2017 timeframe. Compared to 2016's first half, consumer engagement with nonprofit brands' content on Facebook was

down almost 5%, says Shareablee's Ron Lee. Again, though, video activity was robust, up 54% in videos posted and 48% in consumer engagement.

Turning to brands, perennial leader **PETA** maintained its dominant spot with nearly 16 million actions, up 59% year over year. While the animal advocacy group increased its video posts by 9%, consumer engagement with them rose 54%. **ACLU's** consumer engagement growth was tremendous, up 1411%, with nearly 14 million social actions. This primarily was due to video growth: Video posts were up 112%, which increased engagement 2439% and Facebook fans 223%. Also notable was **North Shore Animal League America**, with 4.8 million actions, up 71% from the same period last year. ■

Shareablee

SOCIAL SCORECARD

## TOP NONPROFIT BRANDS ON FACEBOOK – H1 2017

Based on Total Actions (reactions, comments and shares)  
 Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareablee.

Source: f

RANK	BRAND	TOTAL ACTIONS	TOTAL POSTS	ACTIONS PER POST	TOTAL FANS
1	PETA	15,702,866	773	20,314	5,285,026
2	ACLU Nationwide	13,730,480	1,156	11,878	2,206,768
3	Mercy For Animals	6,973,648	1,310	5,323	2,437,817
4	North Shore Animal League America	4,775,909	747	6,393	1,109,083
5	Focus on the Family	4,447,291	860	5,171	2,810,788
6	The National Audubon Society	3,961,435	717	5,525	1,119,237
7	NRDC	3,497,959	1,393	2,511	895,907
8	Do Something	3,245,931	2,683	1,210	2,525,679
9	<b>peta2</b> FREE FOR ALL	2,929,266	810	3,616	1,728,637
10	Planned Parenthood Action	2,847,071	819	3,476	1,116,592

# Follow Journalists Socially, Pitch Them Privately

tion a PR person is representing...use language that's personal and will provide the human touch."

**What Have You Done for Me Lately?** The second of González's tactics is to connect with journalists consistently, "Not just when you need something or you're pitching a story. Be in constant interaction with them...Engage with their work...retweet, repost, like and comment on something they've written...establish that interaction and you will become someone they know."



**Marco González,**  
Vice President,  
Public Relations &  
Corporate Affairs  
LBI Media Inc./  
Estrella TV

**I Really Read Your Article:** There are no shortcuts here, however. "Show real interest [in their work]. Don't retweet an article that you didn't read or one where you've read the headline only. "That's not authentic. Read the articles. Do your homework. If you're not interested in a subject, don't retweet an article about it."

**Directory Assistance:** González advocates sending direct messages to journalists on social. "Compliment them on an article you liked. Ask a question about something they've written. Thank them for including your company in an article. Direct messages show interest and journalists appreciate it."

something they've written. Thank them for including your company in an article. Direct messages show interest and journalists appreciate it."

**Time Passages:** OK, we know what you're thinking: "Who has the time to care and feed journalists on social?" González isn't buying it. Following journalists on social "is not an option, this is part of your job, your discipline. You have to carve out 30 minutes or an hour daily to do this...Do it at home if you can't fit it into your day," he says. "Years ago [you kept up with journalists on the] phone, then fax, then email. Social is the way we do business now."

Failing to keep up with journalists on social is like not taking a phone call. "What kind of PR person are you?" He adds, if you don't do this, "someone else will take your job. Marketing wants to take this from PR...you have to establish that [we, PR] manages content, we manage the narrative. So you have to be in tune with what" journalists are writing.

The channels he uses most are **Twitter, LinkedIn** and **Face-**

**book,** in that order. To monitor journalists he uses the tool **Meltwater,** but he also does things "the old-fashioned way, by hand."

**Here's the Pitch:** While González is a proponent of following journalists on social, as we have seen, his pitching procedure is a mix of social media and direct contact. He may begin the pitch on social, but always does it privately, via a direct messaging feature. His opening might be an article the journalist has just written. Suppose the journalist hasn't mentioned his brand in the article. He'll comment on the article socially and then go to a direct message, ending with, "Should you cover this topic again, I'd like to offer some of our CEO and other executives as resources." After that he follows up with an email that "tells the reporter who we are," and includes links and other materials about his company.

Another tip: González has created a Facebook group for Latino reporters in his area. Although he doesn't pitch there, he extends invitations to events. "This has been very successful," he says. In addition, he still uses the telephone to pitch, too. "I know many of my colleagues have become wizards at pitching on social alone, and some can do wonders in just 140 characters. For me, email seems much more personal," he says. In addition, email, as opposed to social media, allows him the room to provide details of a pitch. ■

**Note:** To hear more from González, join us at *PR News'* Digital PR and Marketing Summit, Oct. 17-19, Miami. For information: <http://tinyurl.com/ya7gctt8>

González was one of 24 PR leaders who weighed in on the question: "How can public relations leaders become stronger strategic business advisers as the lines between PR, digital and marketing continue to blur?" See their responses at: <http://tinyurl.com/y973u6g8>

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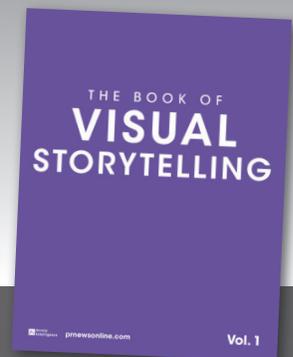
Takeaways
1. It's critical to spend time daily following and commenting on the work reporters in your target market are doing.
2. Social media can be a great tool for building trust with journalists, but the meat of a pitch is done best via email or phone.
3. Consider offering reporters the chance to join a Facebook group. This can prove successful when sending invitations to events.

## VISUAL STORYTELLING GUIDEBOOK

PR News' Visual Storytelling Guidebook is packed with how-to's and case study examples on how to use visuals to tell new stories about your brand and connect with new audiences and customers. You'll learn how visuals can enhance and complement the stories your brand has to tell, discover what tools and resources are available to you and connect with new audiences—audiences that increasingly expect and consume visual information on digital channels.

**Chapters include:**

- Getting Started
- Creating Great Images
- Instagram
- Snapchat, Pinterest and More
- Live Streaming
- Video



Questions? Contact Laura Snitkovskiy at [laura@accessintel.com](mailto:laura@accessintel.com)  
[www.prnewsonline.com/visual-storytelling-guidebook](http://www.prnewsonline.com/visual-storytelling-guidebook)

# Tips for Communicating in a Regulated Industry

- ▶ **My mom was a PR maven in her day.** She was an expert in executive communications and crisis communications and held high-level jobs at places like **Texas Instruments** and **EDS** back in the tech heyday. She also was a single mother. My father passed away from cancer when I was very young. I was very inspired to see her dedication to her field. She showed me you can be committed to your career and still be a great mom.
- ▶ **I feel people are starting to recognize the importance of storytelling and corporate narrative and that corporate communications is getting a seat at the table more often than not.** The reason *Harry Potter* books are so awesome is that when you get the big reveal in Chapter 22, you say to yourself, “Of course, of course, I can’t believe I didn’t see it coming.” To have that reaction you have to leave the wand on the table in Chapter 3. So you can’t bring me into corporate strategy at Chapter 21 and tell me to write a press release for tomorrow about something. Communications needs to be involved in Chapter 3 so we can be laying the groundwork with our core audiences all along the way. So when that big news comes in Chapter 22 and we make that big announcement, people will say, “Oh, of course. It makes strategic sense with what they’ve been setting up with their strategy. I get it.” I feel there’s an increasing understanding of that, which is a great trend.
- ▶ **As a reporter, which I used to be, you’re protected by the truth.** There’s only a limited amount of trouble you can get into if you’re telling the truth. What’s different in a pharmaceutical company, in communications, something can be true and still be off-label. Label is the term to describe the sheet that comes with your medicine. It’s essentially a summary of what it does, dosage, possible side effects, etc. It’s what the **FDA** has approved. That was hard for me to get my head around at first. You can have a statement that is true. The data support it. But if it’s not in the label, you can’t talk about it.
- ▶ **When I started in pharma more than 15 years ago, I thought, “Why do we need three lawyers to look at something? Can’t we just have one lawyer?”** But I learned they are incredibly valuable. To be a successful communicator in pharmaceuticals you must work very closely with legal, regulatory, compliance and medical. It can be really hard, though, because as a communicator in pharmaceuticals you can get caught in the middle. Executives on one side want to communicate something and then on the other side you have regulatory, compliance and medical advisors who are telling you why you can’t say that thing. What I try to remember is that everyone is coming from a good place. Everyone is trying to protect the company’s reputation and has its best interests at heart. Nobody is limiting communications just to be mean, and on the other side executives think it’s important for the company’s well-being to communicate X, Y and Z. So the key is to remember we’re all working on the same team and try to figure out how to say something that will be compliant.
- ▶ **It makes me sad to think about pricing issues that have been brought about by a few bad actors in the pharmaceutical industry.** The vast majority of people who work in it do so because they have huge hearts and they want to do work that has a major impact on people’s lives. I can’t imagine doing any other kind of work. The phone calls and letters you get from patients whose lives have been touched by your medicines, there’s just nothing like it.
- ▶ **Pricing is so complex. I understand why people in this industry don’t want to talk about it.** I’d rather be talking with a reporter about a positive story about our company than discussing a thorny issue about somebody else’s prices. But if you expect reporters to do their job and deliver really good and fair reporting on such a complex issue, you have to educate them. You have to help them understand how the business works, even if it’s off the record. We’ve had good outcomes with that.
- ▶ **I’m not sure having been a reporter on a daily for six years makes me a better communicator.** I certainly have a ton of respect for reporters. I love media relations; it’s one of my favorite parts of the job. But I have high standards. If you’re pitching a reporter you should know their coverage, know what they’re interested in and know what they’ve been writing about. And you should have a really good idea for a story that’s going to appeal to their audience. If you don’t feel like you have that, then I don’t think you need to be on the phone with them. I think it’s better to set your management team’s expectations accordingly rather than pitch material that’s not worthy of being pitched. I know it’s a rare group that loves media relations. But if you follow those rules and truly believe you have a story that’s worth a journalist’s time, you won’t dread picking up the phone to call a reporter.
- ▶ **Communications is so broad and has many sub-disciplines, such as crisis communications, internal communications, product PR etc.** If you want to get to a place where you’re leading a communications team, you’ll need to understand all of them and how they fit together to support your business. I’m biased, but starting out an agency is a great way to get experience and exposure in a lot of areas. ■

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# PR Growth Struggles to Reach a Paltry 4.3% in 2016 as Salaries and Bonuses Top Billing Rates

The news is sobering for PR firm profitability in a new survey from **Gould+Partners**. The 226 N. American firms surveyed grew a modest 4.8% in 2016. Most categories of firms grew less than they did in 2015.

The 78 firms with revenue of \$3 million-\$10 million had a negative growth rate of 1.4% in 2016. The 49 firms in the \$10 million-\$25 million revenue group topped the growth list at 8.1%. The 39 firms with revenue of more than \$25 million grew 4.8%. The 60 firms with net revenue of less than \$3 million grew 7.3%.

The two charts below show growth and operating profit by

	By Region					
	# Firms	% Growth	# Firms	% Growth	% Operating Profit	
	2016	2015	2016	2015		
1. NY Metro	74	4.3%	65	5.8%	16.3%	14.6%
2. DC & Suburbs	13	5.4%	16	7.2%	12.3%	16.5%
3. NE	21	3.9%	21	12.4%	12.9%	13.9%
4. SE	22	6.7%	19	12.9%	12.7%	16.6%
5. Midwest	36	3.2%	39	4.0%	18.0%	15.1%
6. SW	14	4.2%	20	12.3%	16.5%	15.3%
7. Southern CA	14	0.1%	13	13.0%	11.3%	10.1%
8. Northern CA	17	14.7%	12	16.6%	14.6%	17.8%
9. NW	7	4.3%	5	(3.8%)	22.5%	16.7%
10. Canada	8	21.8%	5	8.8%	23.4%	18.7%
	<b>226</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

region. In the U.S., the Southeast region topped the charts. Canada bested the U.S.

We asked Rick Gould, CPA, J.D., managing partner, Gould+Partners, what's ahead for the industry. "I see it going only one way, further south." He calls the 4.8% growth figure "dismal...I believe the only way we will see a turnaround is if PR agency management proactively increases billing rates as it give raises every year. If not, we will see both profitability and growth continue to the decreasing trend."

He has a special message for the firms with net revenue of \$3 million-\$10 million mentioned earlier, which he says are stuck in "growth gridlock." Gould urges them to "take a hard look at your benchmarks in relation to firms that are growing at least 10% yearly, with net operating profit at more than 20%."

What does all this mean for PR pros expecting raises for the rest of the year? "Firms must give market raises each year or they will lose good people, which will have a snowball effect on profitability, value and the quality of work," Gould says. "If they give market raises every year and don't increase billing rates and retainers proportionately, however, they will take a further hit on their bottom line."

Gould's findings were consistent with its *Best Practices Benchmarking* report (*PRN*, June 26, 2017), which showed operating profit down slightly to 15.2% in 2016 from 15.3% in 2015 and a billing/utilization report from July, which showed billing rates failed to increase during 2016 at the same pace as salaries and costs (*PRN*, July 10, 2017). ■

	All Regions	1 NY Metro	2 DC & Suburbs	3 NE	4 SE	5 Midwest	6 SW	7 Southern CA	8 Northern CA	9 NW	10 Canada
	226	74	13	21	22	36	14	14	17	7	8
% Growth	4.8%	4.3%	5.4%	3.9%	6.7%	3.2%	4.2%	0.1%	14.7%	4.3%	21.8%
Average Annual Net Revenues		\$73,557,767	\$18,363,585	\$7,323,461	\$6,163,477	\$24,175,635	\$4,950,011	\$8,008,538	\$19,953,186	\$18,561,520	\$15,279,658

Southern Comfort: These tables from the Gould + Partners study show the 22 firms surveyed in the SE region led U.S. growth in 2016. Source: Gould + Partners

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# How a Former Brand PR Pro Upgraded a Church's Earthly Messaging



Traditionally churches and other religious institutions have not been places where one would imagine a need for PR, communications, a website, branding, PR and social media.

A very large Episcopal church (2,200 members) in Fairfield County, CT, hired me from the corporate world to take it to a new level of communication. I was not particularly religious, although I had been raised in the Episcopal Church, which was helpful. I arrived with most of the preconceived notions one might have when considering working at a church. For the most part, it's been completely the opposite of what I had imagined.

The church has an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 million and a capital campaign of almost \$6 million. Today many churches and other religious institutions are run in ways similar to businesses. They also are far-reaching and have programs for education, outreach, community and world support, capital and annual campaigns, raising awareness of issues and creating a strong community. Many also recognize that the needs of members have changed from the days of attending services on weekends. Technology, mobility, and communications, both with members and the community at large, can have a tremendous influence on the success of a modern religious organization.

## CONNECTING IMAGERY AND MESSAGING

I have a communication design background with marketing and PR—a bit different for a church communicator. I have never run into a person in the church world with a similar background, although there are some powerhouses of PR and social media in the field. The components of design/imagery/technology and written content go hand in hand when a solid communications plan is in place. In both the religious and secular world this often is overlooked, yet it is crucial to disseminating a strong, professional image and message.

Fortunately, the church has embraced this concept and keeps making strides in this direction. It holds a national conference every year and introduces the latest technology and strategies for communicators.

## BRANDING & EXPANDING

I was asked to begin my work by executing a brand. I was also asked to make the brand more friendly and approachable, which consisted of a rather scary and formal lion.

As you know, a strong, recognizable brand is a critical component of a successful communication strategy. Brand recognition can create a presence without words. It can be very powerful. I created a family of logos harkening back to the church's origi-



Lion Eyes: The church's new logo (far left) is meant to be more friendly than its previous formal lion. More friendly still are variations for its pre-school, youth group and bookstore.

nal lion, but also included variations on the brand for the church's many areas: A preschool, a bookstore, a youth group and many other components [see graphic below, left]. This way, the world would know who was speaking by (hopefully) recognizing the graphic.

We further strengthened the brand via premiums (tees, ties, mugs, hats, etc.). Over time people have come to recognize the logo without seeing the name of the church.

## MEDIA THAT MATTERS

Another useful platform for church PR and brand recognition is the local newspaper. People in communities still read their local papers over larger ones. I write press releases for anything and everything at the church and try to have a weekly release and photo for events. It isn't difficult to do here. I also release these to online media. They include a yearlong speaker series, concerts, outreach, holiday markets, art exhibits, a huge fair and barbeque for outreach fundraising, and anything else of note. We also often place ads in these papers to strengthen our presence locally.

Another important component that has proven to be highly successful is to have an archive of photographs of people and events to go with the copy. This also strengthens communication in so many ways that words alone cannot. We have a group of parishioners who take photographs every Sunday. We created an online archive that records everything that happens here weekly.

## PHOTOS ARE ESSENTIAL

People just don't read as much anymore. That's an unfortunate but essential fact to the success of PR. People love to look at relevant images and graphics, though. A photograph also may get your audience to read the accompanying copy. You can tell a story with photography as easily as with words. We have a weekly online newsletter that averaged an 18% open rate. It wasn't a terrible open rate, but I began to pack it full of photographs. In a short amount of time, it shot into the 42%-53% range and has remained there.

Newspapers also tend to be more likely to run your release with a photograph. Photographs can also be used for social media, your website, printed materials, banners, posters, and so many other things. In our case, this resource is free and has been invaluable.

## EVEN CHURCHES MUST BE ACTIVE ONLINE

Social media also has become an important component to the success of the church. At a workshop recently I remember being told that if a church failed to get on the online/social media/live stream bandwagon, it would be quickly left in the dust.

We had a **Facebook** page with about 30 people in our network when I was hired. I attached it to **Twitter** and began to post as

frequently as possible. (This is where a strong photo resource comes into play again.) We now have more than 500 people following us. That may seem small but when the rector told me he no longer recognized the names of people in our network, I took that as a success, because it meant we were reaching people beyond our members alone. There are many options in social media and you could execute PR all day on it, but it's better to determine what your specific audience might use most.

Our members use Facebook and Twitter. Still, we expanded to **Instagram** and group texting for youth. Social media is a great resource and boosting posts is cost effective for advertising events. An ad or boosted post can reach thousands of targeted people for a bargain price.

### FULL-SERVICE WEBSITE

Our website became another important component of communication. Over time we created a resource for viewing videos of classes, concerts, and sermons, and we also live stream a weekday class through **Google** Hangouts. Later this year we will begin to live stream Sunday services, using a professional firm. This is reflective of our understanding that people may be unable to get to a physical church, but we can still reach them and communicate with them on their devices wherever they are.

We also provide downloads of printed materials for those who prefer to receive communication in a more traditional way. Members also can log in to our database, where their information and photo are stored. This creates a secure directory of members and is another great tool for planning communication.

### WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

While it might not be true for your brand or organization, in our case we have decided it is in our best interests to offer resources for everyone, not just the currently desired millennial demographic. Although millennials are an important demographic for the future and laser-focused on now, we believe it's foolish to ignore other generations in our audience.

An older generation largely is responsible for financially supporting the church. We never forget this generation when

planning a communication strategy, but it means the strategy must include a wide range of options to cater to a wide range of ages. It covers everyone from those who only are on devices to other who read only printed material and make telephone calls. It is quite a challenge. We are a people business covering a wide swath. People tend to resent being forced to receive communication in ways they are uncomfortable with.

### HUMANIZING THE BRAND

We also shoot a weekly vlog with the rector on an iPhone. It is then uploaded to the website, **YouTube** channel and Facebook. This has become popular and is an easy way for the rector to touch base with congregants. It doesn't take a huge budget and fancy equipment to execute these types of communication. People still appreciate human contact. We have a high-end TV camera for bigger events, but more casual and quick communication is captured and uploaded relatively easily with an iPhone or iPad and microphone.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Have we stumbled along the way? Absolutely. One example that comes to mind is when we provided access to videos related to Church School lessons for children via a password on our website. The thinking was that parents could use it as a learning tool and hand their child a device to watch when running errands or in situations where children might be bored. This failed completely. But we learned more about our audience outside of the church.

The need for sophisticated communication is everywhere. Churches are no exception. We have gone from a very basic communication plan to a very high-tech and sophisticated one that communicates and keeps up with our members and their lives and remains relevant. Our church has grown and strengthened its goals as a result. The strategy will need to continue to change and grow, and this is part of how religious institutions will continue to thrive in a fast-paced and technical world—a far cry from where they began. ■

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## Use Images to Increase the Chances of Your Copy Being Read

Most people don't read as much as they once did. This becomes a challenge when it's your job to communicate with an audience. Photography can be a great resource to gain the attention of your audience.

► Use graphics and photographs with your copy. People like to look at photos of other people. Our open rates in email blasts increased dramatically when we began to use photographs to accompany copy.

- Always try to submit a photograph with press releases. The release will have a much higher chance of running in newspapers with a photograph.
- Tell the story with photographs. Sometimes a photograph and a good caption with a press release create a stronger message than a traditional press release alone.
- Try to develop a resource for your photographs. Photographs of your business or products are invaluable,

- and free in many cases.
- If you can't develop a photography resource use stock photography. Stock photography is very affordable. Some stock houses cater to specific areas of business as well. For example, we use one aimed at religious organizations.
- Create or hire someone to do original art. Should you lack the talent in-house to create graphics, hire a graphic artist. Imagery can become a signature of your communication.



**1. Houston, We Have a Few Problems:** It's inappropriate to assign blame at this point since recovery and rescue are top priorities. Still, there are crisis communications lessons stemming from the weekend's weather tragedy in Texas. It seemed a bizarre sight Sunday evening to watch **CNN's** ticker running a quote from Houston mayor **Sylvester Turner** saying he stands by his call not to evacuate residents of the country's fourth-largest city in anticipation of Hurricane Harvey, now Tropical Storm Harvey. Above the ticker video showed scenes of waist-high water flooding Houston-area homes, businesses and roads. The mayor believed logistics surrounding an evacuation would have been "crazy." Most officials, including Texas governor **Greg Abbott**, took the high road Sunday, preferring to address recovery, not the mayor's decision, a good move in terms of crisis communications. Now's not finger-pointing time and much more information needs to be collected before officials can say unequivocally that not evacuating was the right call. A bit of background adds to Abbott's restraint. In what's been reported as an impromptu remark, Abbott said Friday at noon that he'd "strongly consider" evacuating. "If I were living in the Houston region, as I once did, I would decide to head to areas north of there," Abbott added. Unfortunately, Houston-area residents were caught in the middle of competing statements from state and local officials. Yesterday morning, the Houston area's initial mandatory evacuations were ordered. In large part these evacuations are in anticipation of reports that Harvey is expected to re-

group over the Gulf of Mexico and pour another five feet of rain onto Houston by Wednesday. – Good thinking by local Texas TV stations turning to social media to alert citizens during Harvey. Many stations provided continuous coverage via **Facebook Live** as well as posting stories, *MarketShare* reported.

**2. A Job for an Uber Woman?** If it took **Uber Technologies'** cars as long to arrive as it took the brand to replace former CEO and co-founder **Travis Kalanick**, who left in late June, chances are **Lyft** would own a fair larger share



of the U.S. market. Seriously, as readers of this page know well, Kalanick's alleged back-room fights to continue controlling the company (he's still a board member, *PRN*, Aug. 15, 2017), a host of lawsuits (including one from **Google** over autonomous car development patents), regulatory roadblocks, a slew of internal issues and charges of a sexualized corporate culture made the CEO selection arduous. Oh, and there's rising competition in the ride business. The job was so undesirable that former **GE** boss **Jeff Immelt** and **Hewlett Packard Enterprise** CEO **Meg Whitman** pulled out. Having a woman as CEO might have helped rehab Uber's frat-boy image. Still, Uber is one of the world's largest private tech companies by estimated valuation and a behemoth in its sector. No truth to reports that incoming CEO **Dara Khosrowshahi** of **Expedia** has purchased a bevy of olive branches and hired **Job** as a consultant. Wishing him and chief brand officer **Bozoma Saint John** (*PRN*, June 12, 2017) much luck.

**3. News Bits:** Our **Katie Paine** told you in a recent *Image Patrol* that Brit-

ain's **Public Relations and Communications Association** (PRCA) likely would sanction **Bell Pottinger** for its part in mounting a campaign for sleazy South African client **Oakbay Capital** (*PRN*, July 17, 2017). Emails detailing BP's work for Oakbay, now a former client, leaked and caused a furor. Reports in British media, citing sources, say PRCA has decided to slap on sanctions, although it would not comment. A decision is expected next week. – Chicago's **Motion PR** added a digital practice and hired former Imagination VP **Pete Herrnreiter** as digital director.

**4. People:** **Chipotle Mexican Grill** named **Laurie Schalow** CCO, a new position. She comes to Chipotle from **YUM! Brands**, where she most recently was VP, public affairs. – Congrats to old friend **Erin Calhoun** (picture 3, p. 1) on being named SVP, corporate communications, **Showtime Networks**. The veteran cable exec served at **Discovery** and **NBCU**. **Hyundai Motor America** named 13-year Hyundai vet **Brandon Ramirez** senior group manager of product communications. Ramirez comes from the brand's product planning division. – **FleishmanHillard** named **John Isaf** SVP/senior partner/GM of its Boston office. He joins after 10 years at **Weber**



**Shandwick**. – **Scott Circle** promoted *PR News* friend **Dee Donovanik** to VP (picture 2, p. 1) and named **Kellie Murphy** SVP – Congrats to **Ruoyu Sun** for winning the 2017 Makovsky Best Master's Thesis of the Year Award from the **Institute for PR**. The U of GA grad's thesis examined the influence long-term communication and education about genetically modified foods has on Chinese and American millennials' attitudes on purchasing such items. ■

**Your next issue of PR News will be dated Tuesday, September 12, 2017. Have a restful Labor Day weekend.**