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CRISIS

PR News/Crisp Survey: 60 Percent Have Updated Crisis Plans, but Social Monitoring Shows Holes

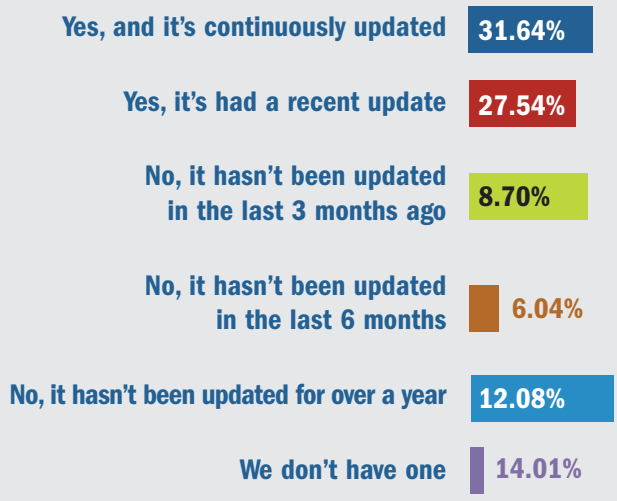
There are more pleasant things to do than pay insurance bills, particularly when the money could be used for other needs. The bill-payer laments she'll never need to use the insurance, why pay it? Still, if she's smart, she pays.

Brands' preparation for PR crises is similar. It can be a hard sell to convince executives to devote valuable financial and human resources to PR crisis preparation. Still, odds are that a crisis will touch nearly all businesses. **Deloitte**'s 2018 Global Crisis Management Survey showed 80 percent of crisis-management teams were mobilized in the past two years. Those brands with crisis plans and crisis-practice regimes should fare better. The last thing you want to do during a crisis is to begin formulating a crisis-response plan. The prudent company prepares in advance, figuring it's akin to having an insurance policy.

To gauge attitudes toward advanced crisis preparation, pain points and the use of technology during a crisis, *PR News* and **Crisp**, a social media issue detection and crisis monitoring firm, surveyed 400+ PR executives last month.

1

Do you have an up-to-date crisis communications plan in place?



Source: PR News and Crisp, (414 respondents), Febuary 2019

CRISIS AND BOTTOM-LINE CONCERNS

What emerges from the survey, said **Emma Monks**, Crisp's VP of crisis intelligence, is how a crisis affects the bottom line. The data the C-suite considers most important after a crisis (see Chart 9) "relates to money and customers," she said. "You can get wrapped up in all sorts of things during a crisis, but at the end of the day, it's all about financial impact." How the crisis influenced brand reputation (64 percent), impacted stakeholders and others (56 percent) and changed public sentiment (55 percent) were the top information the C-suite requests after a crisis, the survey shows.

Monks interpreted the data in Chart 4 as signifying that too many brands are too slow to react to crisis. The chart shows nearly 50 percent of communicators saying that they'd be notified of a significant after-hours issue the next day. "If

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Editor, Seth Arenstein, sarenstein@accessintel.com
Content Director, Melissa Hoffmann, mhoffmann@accessintel.com
Graphic Designer, Yelena Shamis, yshamis@accessintel.com
Senior Content Manager, Sophie Maerowitz, SMaerowitz@accessintel.com
Content Manager, Justin Joffe, jjoffe@accessintel.com
Director of Marketing, Laura Snitkovskiy, lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com
Sales Director, Katie Sullivan, PR News, The Social Shake-Up, ksullivan@accessintel.com
VP of Marketing, Amy Jefferies, ajefferies@accessintel.com
SVP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz, dschwartz@accessintel.com
Chief Operating Officer, Heather Farley
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Group Subscriptions — Carol Brault, cbrault@accessintel.com
Additional Copies & Article Reprints — Contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295; accessintel@wrightsmedia.com

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9211 Corporate Blvd, 4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Client Services:
Phone: 888.707.5814 · Fax: 301.309.3847
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:
40 Wall Street, 50th floor, New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212.621.4890 · Fax: 212.621.4879

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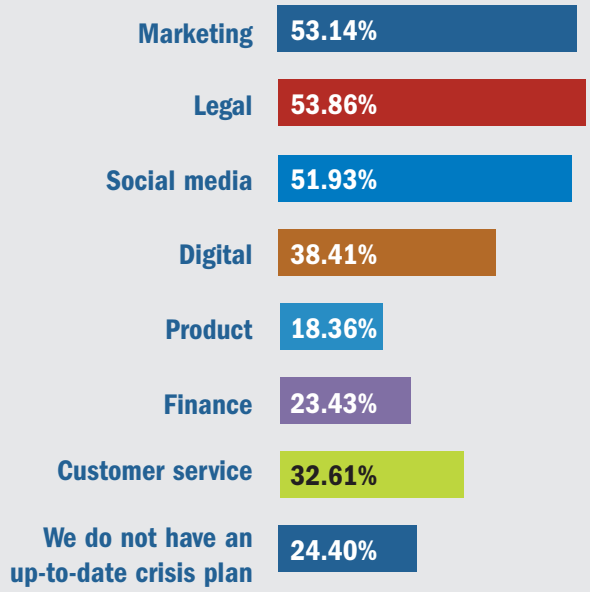
MARCH 15, 2019
WASHINGTON, DC

CSR AND NONPROFITS AWARDS LUNCHEON
MARCH 15, 2019
WASHINGTON, DC

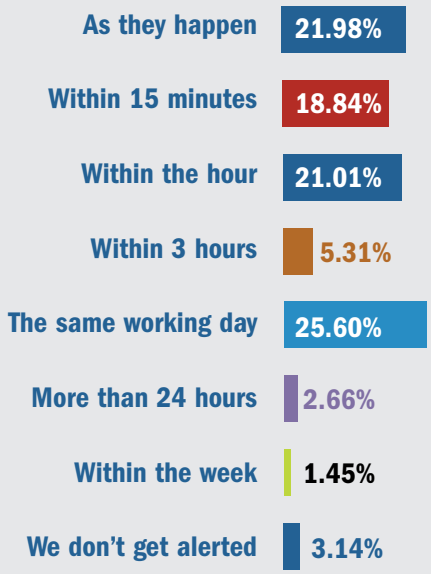
Continued from page 1

Reaction to Off-Hours Crisis Still Lags

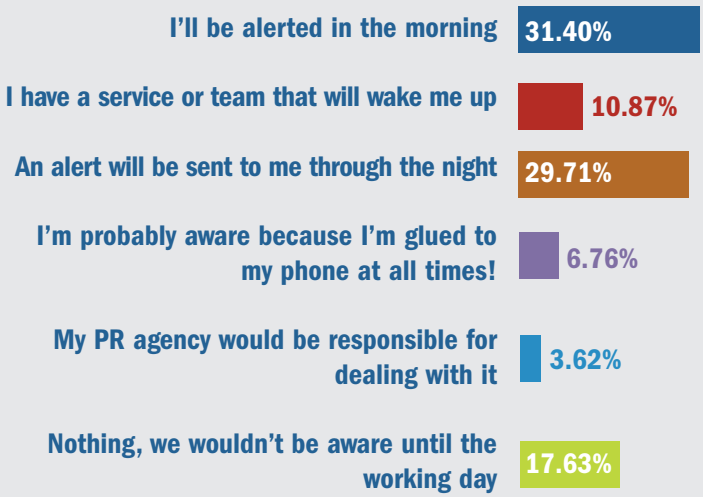
2 **If yes to Q5, which departments have a role in the plan? (Check all that apply)**



3 **On average, how quickly do you get alerted to PR issues breaking online?**



4 **If a PR issue occurred at 3am that could have a serious impact on your brand, what currently happens?**



you're reacting to a crisis the next day," she said, "you're already behind."

Also reactive, she says, is the preponderance of manual monitoring (67 percent) of breaking PR issues online (see Chart 6). [Monks' dislike of manual monitoring is discussed below.]

PLAN IN PLACE

It's encouraging that 60 percent said they have an updated crisis communications plan (Chart 1); 32 percent said their plan is "continually updated" and 28 percent responded it's had "a recent update."

This is a better result than in previous surveys. In 2016 PR News and **Nasdaq** found that only about 50 percent of companies had crisis plans.

The increase in plans seems to demonstrate a rise in crisis' importance. This is not a surprise. The volume of PR crises appearing in media headlines has risen. In addition, social media's ability to destroy a brand's reputation speedily should prompt crisis preparation with great vigor.

Still, 14 percent of communicators told us "we don't have" a plan. Adding those respondents to the 12 percent who said their plan hasn't been "updated in more than one year,"

Continued on page 3

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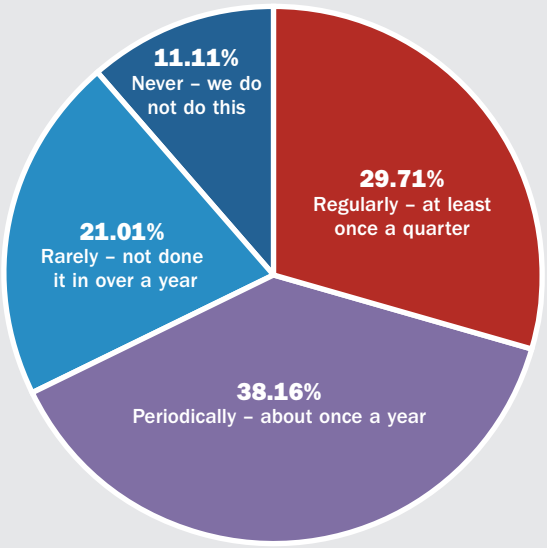
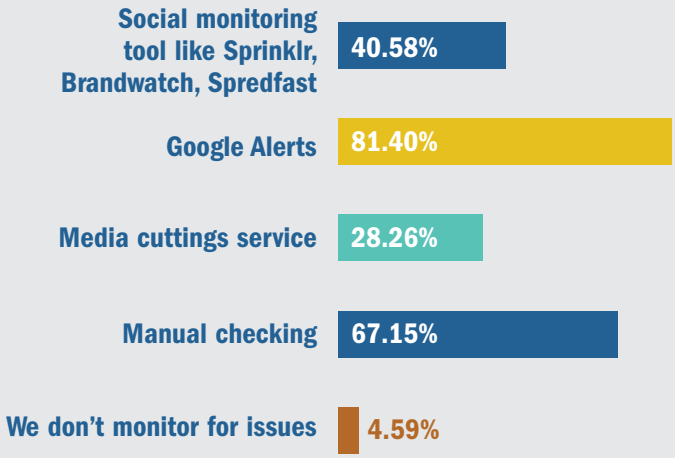
5

How often do you conduct a risk assessment of potential threats to your brand's reputation?



6

What tools do you use to monitor for potential PR issues breaking online? (Check all that apply)



7

At what point would you classify a PR issue as a PR crisis? (Check all that apply)

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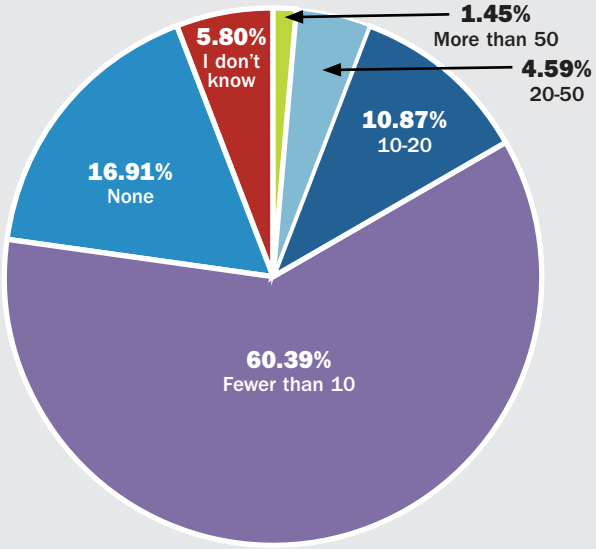
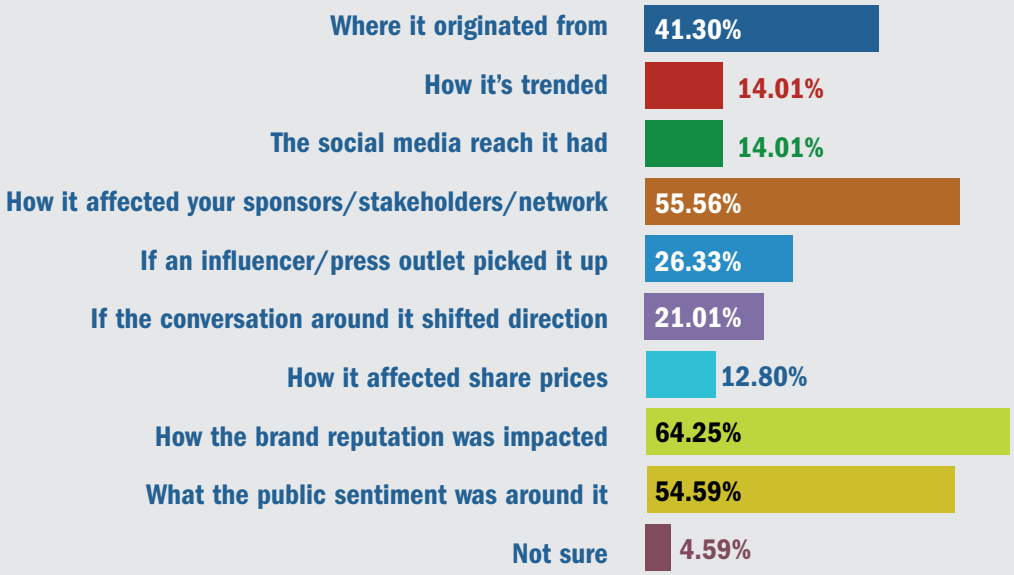
8 **In the last 12 months, how many PR issues have you identified that could have harmed your brand or reputation?**

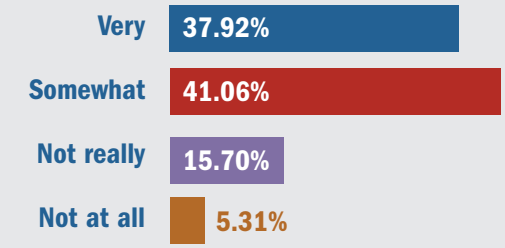


11 **What are the 3 most difficult issues in crisis management for your brand? (Check all that apply)**

9 **After a crisis, what are the 3 most critical pieces of information your C-suite wants to know? (Check all that apply)**



10 **How willing is your CEO/Head of Organization to invest in strong crisis preparation?**



and the segment that said it hasn't been revised during "the last six months" (6 percent), brings the unprepared and out-of-date to 32 percent, which is significant.

Of course, having an updated crisis plan is just part of the battle. Only those with a current plan, a monitoring regime and a periodic crisis simulation schedule are on the path to good crisis preparedness.

INTEGRATION

Chart 2 also seems encouraging in that it shows an integrated response to crises. Note that only communicators who told us their companies and organizations have updated crisis communications plans (Chart 1) were asked to respond here.

As is seen in Chart 2, marketing (53 percent), legal (54 percent) and social media (52 percent) are the most involved, though digital (38 percent) and customer service (33 percent) also are integral.

Monks' issue with this question is that "communications" isn't one of the responses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEED

As digital technology and social media proliferate, the role of speed in crises has become critical. As such, some of Chart 3's results are encouraging. A total of 22 percent said they hear of events "as they happen," 19 percent said "within 15 minutes" and 21 percent "within the hour."

The concern is that more than one-quarter of respondents (26 percent) said they hear about breaking PR issues "the same working day" they occur. In an environment where seconds can make or break a brand's reputation, that's still too slow.

Similarly, the emphasis on speed is a pain point for communicators when dealing with a crisis. Notice that more than half of respondents (54 percent) chose "reacting fast enough" as their top crisis issue (see Chart 11).

Continuing the discussion about speed, Chart 4 seems disappointing in that just 30 percent of communicators are alerted during the evening when a "PR issue that could have a serious impact on your brand" occurs after hours, and only 11 percent have a service that wakes them.

With the 24/7 news and social media cycle, it seems risky to leave your brand exposed during off-hours.

Monks is concerned with the 49 percent who will be alerted in the morning/the next working day. "You're already starting on the back foot" when you wait until the next day to begin working on a crisis response, she said.

OTHER PAIN POINTS

Looking at other difficulties illustrates much about modern PR crises (see Chart 11). Besides the already mentioned "reacting fast enough" (54 percent), the top three most difficult issues are "preparing the right response" (52 percent), "having enough resources to adequately manage a crisis well" (48 percent) and "measuring impact" (47 percent).

Note the significant numbers for "knowing when to react" (32 percent) and "dealing with the C-suite and stakeholders" (35 percent). Knowing when to react relates to the difficulty of knowing if you are in a crisis. "A crisis plan works best when it first defines what a crisis looks like for your brand," Monks said.

Those who've worked in a PR crisis can identify with 35 percent of respondents who picked "dealing with the C-suite" as a major pain point. C-suite executives often approach a crisis from various vantage points. Getting them to agree on a response can be as difficult as crafting the response itself.

RESOURCES

The difficulty that surprised Monks and us was "having enough resources to adequately manage a crisis well," which seemed high at 48 percent. Considering the potential destruction a PR crisis can bring, it's surprising to see resources lacking for crisis. Monks and we believe respondents were referring to inadequate human resources.

[We encourage you, the reader, to let us know what resources, if any, may be lacking in your crisis-response regime. Is there a deficit in human resources, technology, experience or something else? Please email editor Seth Arenstein at: sarenstein@accessintel.com]

The response about resources (Chart 11) is slightly at odds in light of the results in Chart 10. Here an overwhelming majority (79 percent) said their CEOs were "very willing" or "somewhat willing" to invest in "strong crisis preparation."

MANUAL MONITORING

Arguably the most disturbing data came in the responses seen in Chart 6, though there was at least one positive: the results show the majority of respondents are monitoring social for potential issues. They also are doing so with tools, such as Google Alerts (81 percent) and social media products, such as Sprinklr, Brandwatch and Spredfast (41 percent). Those who said they aren't monitoring was minimal (5 percent).

The potential downside here is that 67 percent said they are monitoring manually. "That's kind of scary," Monks said. "Who's doing the monitoring?" she asks. Do they have the skill level necessary to do it well? Another concern she has is whether or not the monitoring is being done consistently. "What if [the person doing the monitoring] has a busy day or is swamped, does the monitoring get done that day? What about holidays and off-hours?"

"Manual monitoring likely means Google Alerts and searches," she said, but "that means you're missing a lot of data sources…no one tool has a monopoly on data sources."

For Monks, "it's incredibly dangerous" to monitor only with tools or only manually. "Machines aren't great" at interpreting sentiment, for example. And, as noted above, human-only monitoring can be inconsistent. A mix of humans and tools is the best option, she said.

'SHOCKING' RISK

The importance of risk assessment has risen in crisis-management circles. One factor to explain this is the

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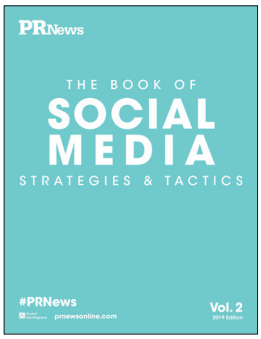

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Continued from page 5

rise of influencers, who can help brands with third-party validation and authenticity, but can also go off script—personally or professionally—and inflict significant reputation damage.

As you can see in Chart 5, a solid majority (68 percent) of respondents said their companies are "regularly" or "periodically" conducting risk assessments of potential threats. On the other hand, it is troubling that more than 30 percent told us their company "rarely" or "never" conducts a risk assessment of potential reputation threats. "That's shocking," Monks said, though she believes the 11 percent who said their organizations "never" conduct a risk assessment "might be unaware that it's being done."

In sum, the study shows improvement in preparation for crises, though it indicates there is room for improvement. Again, planning, practicing and monitoring are key. ■

CONTACT: *partnerships@crispthinking.com*

IMAGE PATROL

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO, PAINE PUBLISHING

Botched Responses: Patriots Issue Quick Denial, Huawei Chooses Charm

One organization is a household name, perhaps the most famous in American football. The other was virtually unknown to most American consumers until very recently. Both are extraordinarily successful, and have been the subject of unwelcome headlines in recent weeks. Most of the media coverage is the result of actions of individuals at the top and the policies and culture they created.

Huawei

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of cover-age	F	When you check Google news and your brand and the term "security risk" receive nearly one million results, you're having a really bad month.	Relationships take commitment, time and a history of actions that build trust. PR or a charm offensive can't quickly take the place of a solid reputation.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	D	The current crop of spokespeople certainly is trying hard to get out its messages, but after years of ignoring PR advice whether they will have any credibility is debatable.	Chest-beating and declarations of how big and powerful you are don't change minds or media coverage.
Communication of key messages	C	They are certainly getting visibility for their messages. Whether anyone believes them re-mains to be seen.	Just putting messages out there (and measuring message "exposure") is a start. But measuring whether anyone believes them is what really matters.
Management of negative mes-sages	F	Security concerns and ties to the Chinese gov-ernment appear in almost all coverage of the recent charm offensive	You can't suppress negative messages with a charm of-fensive if there isn't a history to back up your "charm."
Impact on cus-tomers and po-tential custom-ers	D	Security is a top concern for consumers as well as major corporations that are potential customers for Huawei's products So far, most western companies don't seem to be falling for the new company line.	Trust is built with consistent action, authenticity and transparency, not with a one-month charm offensive. Don't expect a PR campaign to turn around your image overnight.
Impact on em-ployees and potential em-ployees	C	Huawei is an employee-owned company, so all the chest beating and defiance will be more effective at energizing and encouraging em-ployees than it will be with potential custom-ers.	A good PR strategy should also engage and encourage employees, who can then amplify your messages.
Overall score	D	Opportunistic PR to counter opposition isn't inherently a bad idea. But when it runs coun-ter to a long history of secrecy and avoiding the media, it will lack credibility.	You can't reverse decades of bad PR strategy overnight. "Charm" and openness may work, but it takes time and consistency.

HUAWEI

China's **Huawei** has grown from a startup in 1987 to one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world. Its leader is **Ren Zhengfei**, a recluse who until very recently avoided the media altogether.

The company has long been suspected of close ties to the Chinese government. As a result, security officials in the U.S., U.K. and other western countries routinely blocked its access to their markets, fearing security risks.

The concerns didn't stop the company's growth and it dominates many of the markets in which it operates.

Then, in December, Ren's daughter, who is the company's CFO, was arrested in Canada, accused of fraud and sanctions violations with headlines framing the company as a major security threat.

All of this occurred as the company was preparing for one of the major conferences of the year—the **Mobile World Congress** and the US was ramping up its trade war with China. Suddenly the company was subject of intense media scrutiny.

At Mobile World, Huawei traditionally has maintained a dominant presence, with its logo in every conceivable place. But this year the U.S. sent a delegation to protest Huawei's involvement in 5G (the latest generation of wireless), calling it a threat to security that would enable China to spy on its rivals.

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New England Patriots

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	**F**	Perhaps if the Patriots hadn't just won their sixth Super Bowl title, the news wouldn't have reverber-at-ed around the world. But with so much recent atten-tion it shouldn't come as a surprise that me-dia out-lets around the globe reported the news.	Visibility breeds greater visibility and if you've spent years getting attention for yourself and your organization, don't be surprised when you become the focus of negative headlines.
Effectiveness of spokes-people	**F**	The worst move you can make is to issue a blanket denial when you know you are the subject of an in-vestigation but before you know how much trouble you are really in.	In some cases "Translucency" (as opposed to transparency) is the best approach. Say only as much as you can. Inform the media of actions you are taking to find out more, but wait to issue sig-nificant statements until you have all the facts.
Communication of key messages	**F**	There was no message other than the initial denial, which left the media, and Florida investigators, to fill in the gaps. The investigators got all their mes-sag-es out clearly, leaving Kraft with little wiggle room.	You can't communicate a key message if all you do is issue a denial. Rather, you leave the media to the opposition, who will flood the airwaves with its positioning of the story.
Management of negative messages	**F**	If this was a simple case of a prominent person caught with his proverbial pants down, the story wouldn't have had legs. But thanks to the ab-sence of messaging from Kraft and the Patriots, the Florida investigators were able to position the charges as part of a larger human trafficking case, which is a lot harder to dismiss.	In the era of the #MeToo movement, any crises that imply exploitation of women and young girls will be particularly severe. The implications for PR will be felt across all corporations, no matter their historical reputation. In these times a tone-deaf response will be very hard to recover from.
Impact on employees and potential employees	**D**	Leadership actions have consequences and the Patri-ots are already feeling the impact in the loss of a key advisor to Patriots' coach Bill Belichick. Whether other employees will make similar decisions remains to be seen.	Any scandal involving leadership, particularly one that includes ethi-cal questions, will impact em-ployee morale, engagement and retention. Be pre-pared with a strategy to counteract the blow-back among employees.
Impact on fans	**C**	Kraft has long been a controversial figure, but so far, Patriots' fans aren't wavering in their support for the team. Whether they will continue to sup-port Robert Kraft is another story. The impact on NFL fans may be bigger, depending on Kraft's consequences. What will be especially telling is the response of the fe-male fans the NFL has been trying to attract.	If your strategy is to attract the attention of a new demographic or a new target audience, these groups' response to your crisis should be top of mind. All your dollars and efforts will be for naught if the behavior of leadership is a turn-off for that new audience.
Overall score	**F**	The afterglow of fan love inspired by their Super Bowl win will inoculate the Patriots against this crisis for a period of time. The same will not be true for NFL fans generally. As more evidence surfaces, maintaining the denial response will become more difficult for Kraft. Pressure will mount on the NFL to act.	A tone-deaf denial is never appropriate in any cri-sis, but it particularly dangerous when there's vid-eo evidence of guilt, and the nature of the crisis is likely to alienate a key target audience

Continued from page 7

In response, Huawei launched an aggressive campaign to rebut the spying allegation and reshape its image. The campaign included full-page ads in major U.S. and U.K. publications as well as an unprecedented invitation to foreign media outlets to visit its facilities. All of which is in sharp contrast to its traditional avoidance of the media. Whether the new charm offensive will work is uncertain, given its leadership's long history of delegating communications to lobbyists and overseas PR agencies.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

In contrast to Ren Zhengfei, **Robert Kraft**, chairman and CEO of the **New England Patriots**, revels in the spotlight. He is one of the most visible of **NFL** owners and a friend of **President Trump**.

This is why his name was the first to make headlines when Palm Beach, Florida, investigators filed prostitution charges against a number of prominent businessmen in a wide-ranging human trafficking investigation. Through a spokesperson, Kraft immediately issued a denial. This was despite the revealing and sexually explicit video footage that the Palm Beach investigators apparently have.

Kraft and the Patriots are not strangers to PR crises and scandals. They have weathered numerous storms thanks to the continuing success of the team and the loyalty of its fans. Whether Kraft can survive this one is less certain.

The NFL is pushing hard to attract more female viewers, and it has said that its Personal Conduct Policy will apply. The policy was implemented in the wake of numerous sexual violence scandals that have plagued the league for years. It likely will mean punishment for Kraft. So, chances are that the denials of Kraft (and his lawyers) will do little to save him.

Full disclosure: I live in New England and have been a Patriots fan for most of life, except for a brief flirtation with the San Francisco 49ers when I lived in California in the early 1980s. [**Note:** Charts for this story are on pages 6 and 7.] ■

CONTACT: *kdpaine@painepublishing.com*

CSR

Univision and Ben & Jerry's Have Similar CSR Goals Yet Take on Issues in Very Different Ways

[**Editor's Note**: With PR News' CSR and Nonprofit Awards luncheon coming March 15, we look at two brands taking stands, though they do so in contrasting ways. For those readers interested in attending the luncheon, please contact Carol Brault (cbrault@accesintel.com) and ask for your 33 percent discount as a PR News subscriber.]

It was just more than one year ago, in mid February 2018. The country's biggest story was the fatal shooting of students and teachers at **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School** in Parkland, FL. In response, students were organizing protests against companies doing business with the **National Rifle Association** (NRA). **Delta Air Lines** was on the list. It offered a 2-10 percent discount on airfare to NRA members.

When the issue rose to the level of Delta CEO **Ed Bastian**, he was unsure of why the carrier even offered the deal, according to the **NY Times**. Since the deal meant almost nothing in revenue terms—very few additional tickets were sold as a result of it—Delta made "a quick decision" to drop the NRA discount, Bastian told the Times. That move "wasn't an anti-NRA stance or pro gun-control stance," he added.

THE RELUCTANT SOCIAL ADVOCATE

Yet in the glare of the debate following Parkland, Delta's decision became enmeshed in politics. In Georgia, Delta's home, legislators were debating killing a steep tax on jet fuel. Rescinding the tax would mean a $40 million savings for Delta.

But the NRA wanted to punish Delta for cutting ties to the organization. It pushed lawmakers in the Republican-held Georgia house and senate to keep the tax.

In the run-up to the vote, Delta refused to change its mind on the NRA discount. The issue then became personal. "It was more than a business decision for me," Bastian said. "You try to detach your personal emotions from your business, but there's a point where you can't anymore." It was at this time that Bastian raised the stakes, making Delta's move a political issue. "Our values are not for sale," Bastion said at the time.

Fine, said Lt. Gov. **Casey Cagle**, a Republican. "Businesses have every legal right to make their own decisions…[but] corporations can't attack conservatives and expect us not to fight back," Cagle said.

Lawmakers reinstated the tax, which flew through the Republican-controlled chambers and Delta had a $40 million bill to pay.

The story ended well for Delta, though, since then-governor **Nathan Deal**, also a Republican, signed an executive order rescinding the tax. Earlier this year new GA governor **Brian Kemp** signaled he's in favor of extending Deal's order.

Still, the story illustrates the risk involved when business and socio-political issues get mixed. It also shows why many brands prefer to steer clear of hotly contested issues.

NIKE'S CALCULATION

Contrast Delta's reluctant activism with **Nike**'s decision to stand with **Colin Kaepernick** in his battle, which began as

a fight against racism and eventually included the right to protest during the national anthem. In addition to paying Kaepernick for endorsing Nike products, the brand also made a donation to his foundation, signaling its support for the athlete's social agenda.

Its endorsement of Kaepernick resulted in igniting the wrath of the president and his base. Smartly, the brand did its homework prior to the endorsement. While it knew some of its customers would turn against it, Nike calculated correctly that most of customers would embrace the campaign. The brand's summer sales broke records and its share price spiked.

Brands know they can't remain on the sidelines forever. Research argues that consumers, particularly millennials, insist brands represent more than their products and services.

In a 2017 survey of 1,000 "hyper-aware and influential consumers," **APCO Worldwide** found 90 percent of them expect companies to be involved in taking on society's most pressing issues. 71 percent told APCO it is acceptable for companies to do so even if it is controversial issue. And 95 percent believe companies have the ability to create a better society. Most important, of course, is some research shows consumers will drop brands that fail to speak up.

Brands in Zero Gravity	
66%	Percentage of U.S. consumers who stop using products/services because the brand's response to an issue does not support their personal views.
43%	Percentage who say if a company can explain why it's taken a stance they're extremely or very likely to continue to support it even if they disagree with the position.
61%	Percentage who urge companies to take a stand even if they disagree with the position.
75%	Percentage of U.S. millennials who urge companies to take a stand even if they disagree with the position.
79%	Percentage of consumers who indicate a high likelihood to continue using products/services from companies who are taking stands.

Top issues for U.S. consumers: sexual harassment, diversity/ethnicity, data security, unemployment, outsourcing jobs overseas, Top issues for U.S. consumers

Source: FleishmanHillard, "Zero Gravity," 2,000 U.S. and U.K. engaged consumers, (surveyed in July 2018)

RISK ASSESSMENT

Bobby Amirshahi
SVP, Corporate Communications
Univision

Still, for most brands, even those who are socially active, taking a stand on a sociopolitical issue is a calculated risk that's loaded with potential pitfalls (just ask Delta). And questions abound. When should a brand take a stand? How should it do this? Who should speak up? How do you decide which issues are worthy of a fight? And while it can be great to take a stand, how many stands are enough? In other words, at what point do too many stands distract a brand from serving its customers?

The answers to these questions aren't easy. A recent study from **FleishmanHillard** describes the brand's dilemma as "zero gravity." By its definition, zero gravity is "an issues-laden environment that quickly tests corporate values… it's the zone where every issue in the spotlight feels like a competing force, pulling [brands] in equal and opposite directions. A place where [companies] can't find [their] footing because the options are loaded with real business risk."

[**Note to Subscribers:** FleishmanHillard's report is available in the PR News Subscriber Resources Center.]

STANDING UP OR SITTING DOWN

Bobby Amirshahi understands this territory well. He's SVP, corporate communications, at **Univision**, which took its first big stand in 2015 when **Donald Trump**, then co-owner of the **Miss Universe** pageant, called Mexican immigrants "criminals and rapists." At the time, Univision was a partner with Trump in televising the pageant. The network pulled out of the partnership quickly.

Univision has since become known for its activism, yet Amirshahi quickly notes, "We're a for-profit company…and we definitely run a risk" of alienating partners "when we take a stand." Univision's partners are crucial to its business; they are advertisers as well as media companies that pay for the right to carry its television content.

In addition, the company's target audience has multiple media choices. Antagonizing its audience would be disastrous for Univision.

Amirshahi continues, "Do you take a stand on every single issue that affects your core consumer?" If you did, "you could create so much noise around your brand that it distracts from the way you actually serve your audience." He sums up the situation well, "Knowing when to stand up and when to sit down…is the hardest thing" to decide after a brand begins to take stands.

The company's mission statement, he says, helps it determine what issues to back. Univision "stands up on an issue when it directly concerns or impacts our community in this country," he says. Amirshahi and his colleagues do a lot of homework around social issues Univision is mulling. A decision to engage rarely is a slam-dunk.

For example, Amirshahi concedes Univision took "a tremendous risk" last year when it opposed the White House's stance on the immigration policy known as DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Univision's activities included filing amicus briefs, initiating a social media effort and organizing against the planned citizenship question in the **2020 Census**.

Internally, Univision immediately told its employees it would pay legal costs should they need to fight against the administration's policy. "We don't see a divergence in being for-profit and standing up for Hispanic America…we can do

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Continued from page 9

both," he adds. Indeed, the network's TV ratings rose after the DACA stance, per Amirshahi.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Another aspect of Univision's internal communications on social issues has the company "almost always communicat[ing a stance] to our employees before or, if necessary, at the same time as making a position public," Amirshahi tells us.

When there's a chance partners might look askance at a position Univision takes, "We post more in-depth explanations on our policy blog or carefully select media outlets and reporters to whom we tell our story and explain our rationale."

It's working. Amirshahi says Univision's ratings improved after its DACA stand and have remained strong.

SALES AND STANDS

Lindsay Bumps
PR Media Maven
Ben & Jerry's

The situation is almost totally different for **Lindsay Bumps**, PR media maven at **Ben & Jerry's** (yes, that's really her title). At the start of a presentation she describes the company as "an activist brand that just happens to make incredible ice cream."

For Ben & Jerry's, sales "are an important KPI, but not the most important." More important, she says, are KPIs that measure how much of an impact a social initiative makes. "Did we effect change?" How many signatures did a brand-backed petition receive? In terms of social media KPIs, the brand looks closely at impressions, but also at engagement. "Did we engage with the right audience" to make a difference on an issue? Such questions are discussed and reported on during daily, weekly and 30-day interactions (emails, phone calls or meeting) with senior executives, she says.

While many of its social campaigns have an ice cream component—Save Our Swirled, or SOS, the brand's first global flavor, was the centerpiece of a climate change effort—"we don't do these campaigns for sales." It's the difference between marketing for a cause and marketing for sales (see graphic).

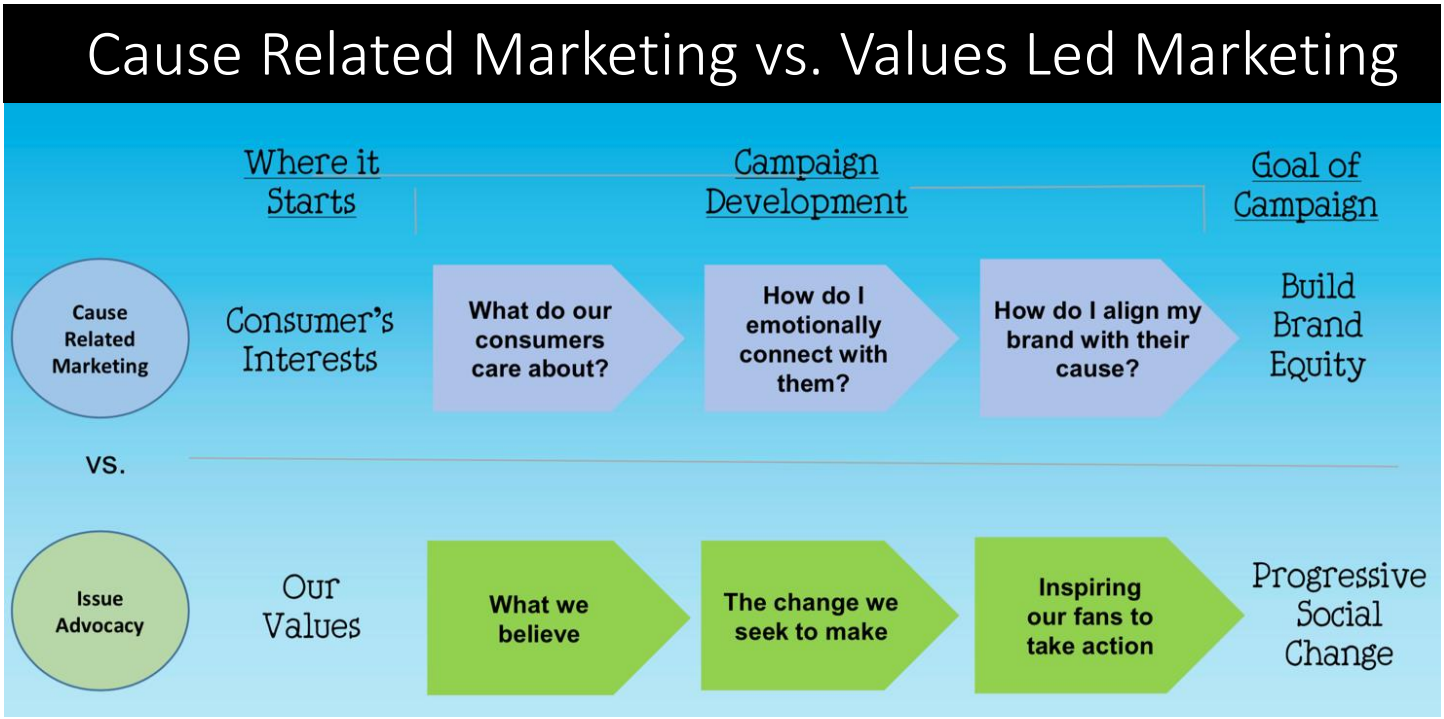
For the record, the campaign resulted in 60,000 signatures on a global warming petition that was presented to world leaders. And for those of you keeping track, Save Our Swirled features raspberry ice cream, marshmallow and raspberry swirls, plus dark and white fudge ice cream cones. One of the taglines was, "If it's melted, it's ruined."

NOISE IS NOT AN ISSUE

It might sound as if Ben & Jerry's takes a stand on nearly every issue that reaches the company. While the brand pushes numerous causes, it doesn't do so willy-nilly. "Our mission and values" guide us, Bumps says. When "something is happening that negatively affects our mission and values we will speak out." Yet there are some occasions when the brand decides not to take a stand. For example, it didn't comment on certain "live-shooter" incidents, she says.

Unlike Unvision, though, creating too much noise with socio-political stands "is not an issue" for Ben & Jerry's, she says. "We're not afraid to speak out when we need to…we do it with our brands in mind, but also thinking about the impact we can have on any given issue."

In addition, there's what she describes as a "formally informal" decision-making process to pick which issues and organizations to support. "We're fortunate" in that all members of the cross-functional decision-making committee sit in one building. Usually two members each "from our social mis-



Source: Ben & Jerry's

sion team, leadership team, PR team and franchise team" periodically discuss "what impact it will have if we choose to speak out or not to speak out." While there's "definitely" involvement from the CEO, CMO and COO, though this trio of executives does not make the decisions "by themselves."

The group meets regularly to tackle yearlong social initiatives, such as marriage equality and GMO labeling. It also gathers as needed when a pressing issue arises.

Reporting to the C-suite is fairly conventional. The brand uses email, phone calls and memos at 24-hour, seven-day and 30-day intervals. In addition there are more formal reports made to the C-suite.

In the end, Bumps realizes she's in an unusual situation and is "very fortunate" to be at a company where products, sales and social activism sit "side by side" in terms of importance. Still, she urges other brands to be "unafraid about speaking out…don't let risk prevent you." ■

CONTACT: *kefernandez@univision.net Lindsay.Bumps@benjerry.com*

CASE STUDY

How a Medical Shipping Company Excited Its Employees and Customers About CSR

It's an age-old problem. How much should a brand trumpet its CSR work? On a practical level, CSR must compete with other corporate priorities, such as sales and marketing, in the fight for communicators' time and budget. In addition, with so much noise in the marketplace, what chance does a CSR effort have of breaking through and getting media coverage?

On the other hand, we know that consumers, particularly millennials, want brands to stand for more than products and services [see previous CSR story in this edition].

In addition, when CSR programs are too quiet, internal and external stakeholders, who potentially could advance the campaigns, might not know about them.

WHY BRANDS SHOULD TALK ABOUT CSR

The worst result might be that people who could benefit from CSR might be unaware of its availability. Take, for example, **Sam Weinreb**. Brought to the Auschwitz work camp at age 12, his gums and teeth began to ache, though he dared not mention this to his Nazi captors, who actually encouraged such reports. The boy already knew the sick were taken for "treatment" and never returned. After surviving Auschwitz, he eventually made it to the U.S., where he was placed in an orphanage.

Now 91, Weinreb desperately needed extensive oral care, as do many Holocaust survivors in the U.S. and Canada, 25 percent of whom live in poverty. It so happens that **Henry Schein, Inc.**, the world's largest provider of health care products and services, the **Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity** and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** have a program designed to provide treatment for Holocaust survivors. Weinreb underwent extensive dental procedures and oral surgery thanks to the program.

Weinreb's story, and others like his, is so compelling that Henry Schein communicators have pitched it successfully to media. Along with several others from the program, Weinreb's plight was reported in Reader's Digest and elsewhere. As a result, more medical professionals and Henry Schein customers have joined the program. No doubt it's also led to more Holocaust survivors receiving badly needed treatment. This shows the multiple benefits for Henry Schein and other brands to talk about CSR.

THE ISSUES

An 87-year-old **Fortune 500** company, Henry Schein is known mostly for packaging medical and dental equipment and supplies. It works with more than 3,000 industry partners and ships packages to more than 1 million medical and dental practices globally. The company's CSR effort is extensive. In the early 2000s, Henry Schein decided it wanted to do more.

Its CSR mission, says **Ann Marie Gothard**, VP, corporate media relations, is to "leverage the collective strength of our partners…to serve as a catalyst to address certain needs." Those include access to care for underserved communities and emergency preparedness and relief. Periodically, Henry Schein brings needed equipment and dental and medical personnel to areas of need.

While external communications for CSR is critical, it's also important to communicate it internally. For Henry Schein, that means communicating with 18,000 employees in 31 countries.

THE TACTICS

Earlier attempts to get Henry Schein's disparate employee base interested in its CSR programs produced tepid results. Then communicators hit on the idea of putting the program into the hands of employees. Literally. Last year at six national sales meetings attendees packed personal hygiene kits for those in need. They included toothbrushes, toothpaste and other items.

Making the "We Care Global Challenge" even more personal, labels on the boxes tell recipients the name of the person who packed it. On top of that, the packing groups were organized so that employees who rarely interact with each other were working side by side. Employees packed 17,000 boxes and helped build community.

The effort worked so well it's been extended to 15 national sales meetings this year, Gothard says. This year's boxes will contain cancer comfort kits for patients.

A MEDAL FOR THOSE WHO CARE

An external awareness effort that has been successful is the "Henry Schein Cares Medal." Each year the company asks its partners to nominate a group that's advanced healthcare (medical or dental) in their communities. The contest attracts both partners and non-partners, which helps introduce the company to prospective customers.

To publicize the Medal, communicators stage Facebook Live chats with honorees during trade shows. Topics are critical. "We try to pick topics of interest to our base," Gothard says. In addition to providing value to Henry Schein partners, these chats "give community groups a voice they might not otherwise have," she says. The company also brings hooree organizations to Washington, D.C. to meet members of Congress, spreading word of the effort further. In fact, a call from the federal government to Henry Schein spurred the effort mentioned above that provides oral care to Holocaust survivors. The program now is active in 16 chapters of the Alpha Omega dental fraternity across the country and has served some 600 survivors.

LESSONS LEARNED

Time Commitment: These programs work (or fail) because of the relationships Henry Schein builds with customers and partner health organizations, Gothard says. "You must be willing to invest the time to build them."

Message Alignment: Getting several groups to read from the same script also is critical. Message alignment with the other groups is key, so open lines of communication are a necessity. In addition message map documents are extremely helpful and result in great efficiency.

Target Small Groups: Instead of blasting its message randomly, Henry Schein seeks to connect with niche markets. "The oral health community is a defined group," so the key is reaching out to the right target audience, Gothard says.

The Next Generation: To spread the word about its CSR programs Henry Schein consciously targets dental and medical schools, particularly for its access-to-care programs. ■

CONTACT: *Annmarie.gothard@henryschein.com*

DATA

The Best Times to Pitch, Concerns About Influencer Scalability and PR's 24/7 Pressure

Several studies caught our attention last month and early this month. We dug a bit on each to capture exclusive data points.

Pitching Times: Set for release today, data from **Propel** claims to know the most propitious times and days to pitch journalists. The best days are Monday through Wednesday, it says. Pitches sent Thursday or Friday are half as likely to be responded to. It bases this data on 2,150 email pitches sent from 18 PR pros to 1,657 journalists (January 6-February 16, 2019).

And we always knew journalists rarely eat lunch. Pitches sent at 12-1pm are 90% more likely to get opened than those sent first thing, 9-10am, the data says. Propel CEO **Zach Cutler** says he has no idea why this is so. Perhaps journalists are busy with deadlines and meetings in the morning, he adds.

Influencer Gap: Allison+Partners' study last month about influencers echoes some of the conclusions of the PR News-**Meltwater** study you read about in these pages last month. Similar to our study, Allison's study found influencer marketing becoming entrenched, though several questions remain.

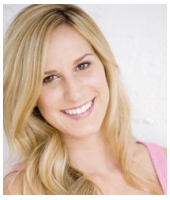
For example, "marketers expressed concern about scalability," says **Brent Diggins**, managing director of measurement + analytics. This is so, Diggins told us, both in terms of their own ability and that of influencers.

For example, if marketers want to enact a nationwide campaign and do it quickly, "that is doable with something like paid media or media relations," he says. Marketers are less confident, though, that they could deploy such a campaign quickly with influencer marketing. "This could be a barrier to growth," he says. The reason is that influencers have "bandwidth issues, too…they can't turn out great content as fast" as marketers demand sometimes.

24/7 Gender Neutral: A study from the **Institute of PR** and **KPMG** about women leadership in PR found at least one commonality between the sexes, IPR chief **Tina McCorkindale** says. "Men and women feel pressure to constantly be on." They often check email and calls after hours and on weekends. Some women told IPR they decided to forego having children or an additional child due to work-life pressures. Some mid-level women mentioned they eschewed top PR jobs due to the lack of work-life fit. ■

March Madness PR Style: Young Pros Blast Lack of Clarity, Integration and Use of Data

[**Editor's Note:** With March Madness ensnaring college campuses—and everywhere else—later this month, we wanted to ask PR pros close to college age our roundtable question this month. We looked to those honored in 2018 as PR News Rising Stars to respond to themed questions: "What about PR and communications gets you mad? And what can be done about it?" Their edited responses are below.]



Courtney Allen
VP, Digital
Rogers & Cowan

As March Madness gets closer, brands are quick to want to jump on the bandwagon and find a connection with this cultural moment. Many times, however, the result is a half-baked idea that may drive consumer response in one area (social, earned or email). Very few brands create a strategic, holistically integrated approach around March Madness. There is a great opportunity to engage in a way that not only drives audience response and engagement, but also increases brand recognition and creates a lasting positive affiliation. Brands have the potential to stand out amongst the crowd. Take a 360-degree approach to March activations and focus on storytelling that is authentic and cohesive.

Michael Brown
CEO
Vicarious PR

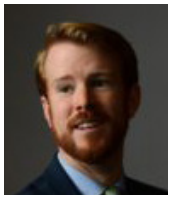
There are a great many maddening things, but one is having uninformed clients who expect too much based on an opinion of their product/service and then treat PR pros badly. I also find lazy PR folk intolerable, those who do the bare minimum and don't offer solid insights and data to clients. These also tend to be the PR people who don't modernize what PR is and tell clients that social media and new media are not part of their purview. These people make the rest of us look bad and don't offer data-driven PR, which is so important to effectively capture audiences, pivot messaging and create impactful campaigns.

Briana Bucinell
Account Director
Kglobal

Local news is still an integral part of some PR plans, but drastic budget cuts and a decreasing number of reporters have made securing local media more challenging. That's maddening. Yet, in a way, smaller newsrooms are pushing PR professionals to do our jobs better. We must think more strategically when executing local campaigns, develop better PR efforts and continue to provide a full package of content. While I love seeing the outcomes of this challenge (and being part of them!), I still want local papers and TV stations to employ more reporters. Local media is the pulse of communities - without it, communities are not alive.

Joanna Coker
Communications Specialist
Cox Enterprises

There isn't anything about the PR industry that makes me mad, but there are opportunities for growth that I'd love to see more companies embrace. For example, I'd love if more companies would allow employees to 'make a little music.' That will happen if staff are encouraged to bring their authentic selves to work and empowered to insert joy into the work place. During my first month at Cox, the Atlanta Falcons made it to the Super Bowl, and the company organized employee engagement activities around it. I remember thinking, "Wow, this company takes employee engagement seriously." With March Madness approaching, I'd love it if more companies could find cool ways to engage their employee base and create environments where people feel comfortable to be themselves.

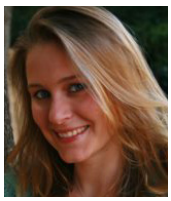


Kevin Deane
Digital Design Director
Northeastern University

PR and communications are inherently tricky practices, but what can really drive me nuts is the name – communication or, more specifically, sometimes the lack of it. Every project and campaign has a goal that's trying to be achieved, and if everyone isn't on the same page, life is harder. That's why I also harp on collaboration with my team.

An extra insight, or timely response, can be a difference maker. Even supposedly solo projects should be looked at as extra opportunity for teamwork. Sometimes all it takes is a quick trip across the room or a timely response to email for the knots to come undone - but it takes that little extra investment from everyone involved.

A chatty team is a happy team.



Melissa England
AVP, Entertainment Practice
Finn Partners

PR pros need to understand and embrace the entire communications profession to truly achieve awareness and impact. I of-

Continued on page 14

ten witness more experienced PR pros take on the role of media relations and younger PR pros assinged to digital relations. For the continued growth of the profession, we *all* need to approach situations with a more integrated lens. Younger staff need to follow, read, and watch traditional media to better pitch it and understand how it plays in to each outlet's style of storytelling. They need to be willing to pick up the phone or meet a reporter for coffee. More experienced pros should embrace the reach of digital platforms and stay on top of the continued evolution so that placements last longer and reach greater audiences. The profession is dynamic. We need to be perpetual students and teachers.

Dominic Hawkins
Senior Associate, Public Affairs
SKDKnickerbocker

People who know and work with me will be the first to tell you that I don't often get angry. Working in the industry can be stressful enough. We don't need to add to that by being emotional. That said, we have to stop using consultant speak when talking. Phrases like "MECE," "boiling the ocean," and "run the traps" typically hold little meaning for stakeholders. Let's talk like normal humans and speak in plain English to avoid confusion. Don't get me wrong, I've been known to include words like "leverage" in my proposals, which happens to be my favorite. But as professional communicators, we should strive to eliminate jargon and be as clear as possible.

Chris Huppertz
Director, Public Relations
Bob Gold & Associates

"How can I attribute my company's success (or sales) to your PR efforts?" Every PR pro faces this seemingly simple question, but the answer can be elusive.

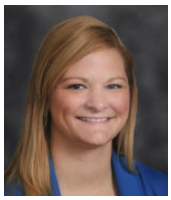
Unlike our marketing counterparts, the correlation between PR and sales is hard to track – and even harder to take credit for! We simply can't know if consumer X bought the product because of a story online, or an interview on TV.

So how can we address this? Forget AVEs – they don't work. Instead – just like in basketball – PR pros need a stat sheet. A very comprehensive one. Knowing how many points you've scored – or stories you've secured – isn't enough. What about rebounds? Assists? Turnovers? Steals? They're all important, and some are more critical to a brand's success than others.

Work collaboratively to identify a brand's needs and establish clear goals to reach. The data you capture won't just showcase your value – it will help you become better, and work smarter.

Lauren Kaufman
Account Supervisor, Integrated Marketing
Pan Communications

With the rise of conversational marketing, the need for communicators to be transparent is higher than ever. Overuse of jargon still is a major issue in communications. Pushing out complex, robotic content seriously dilutes your messaging. No matter the industry, remember that you're communicating on a human-to-human level, and need to talk in the same way as you would to a trusted friend. Furthermore, you have the opportunity to tap into a wealth of data to understand how your audiences are communicating, and what their values are. Taking a data-driven, transparent approach to communication will allow you to connect with audiences on a deeper, more authentic level.



Sarah Kettenberg
Principal
Hill + Knowlton Strategies

The issue of PR and communications that gets me mad is the misunderstanding of our profession. Not only do people have stereotyped expectations of our work and lifestyle, but we also face scrutiny from C-level executives who don't innately understand the value of PR. As a result, they often are reluctant to give communications a seat at the table. It feels like we are constantly having to dispel myths about our work, while also trying to prove/defend our worth. One step toward solving this is to demonstrate how smoothly things work when communications is integrated into business strategy via case studies, etc. We can also make a concerted effort to speak the C-suite's language – for example, aligning on common terms and measurement metrics that convey shared value. It's on us as PR pros to ensure we're taking every opportunity to represent and educate others about our profession and the important work we do.

Amanda Marzullo
Digital Content Producer
Northwell Health

The review and approval process for creative content can be maddening. Sometimes many people need to review, watch and approve a finished piece of visual content. It can be time consuming as well frustrating to constantly be making minor changes and adjustments. To help solve this issue teams can appoint one person to be the approver and help facilitate all feedback, critiques and changes. This way an editor or designer can receive a succinct message and make all the changes at one time. This will also create a quicker delivery for the finished work.

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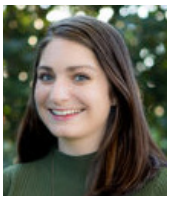
Molly Mita
Manager, Communications
ESPN

As PR pros it's not a secret that we are passionate about communicating, in fact, often we over-communicate. Something that drives our team and me crazy is communicating with lengthy, unnecessary emails. We've all been guilty of using multiple paragraphs to explain something that could be addressed in a sentence or with a simple phone call. And we've all been on the receiving end of such communication. We have become so accustomed to emailing and texting we forget the beauty of a brief phone conversation to convey a message. In 2019 we need to write fewer emails, and make sure our messages are clean and concise to stop this madness!



Cailin O'Brien
Media Relations Manager
Georgia Credit Union Affiliates

What irks me is the number of good stories that die because they were pitched with a press release. Traditional media relations remain vitally important to PR, but the changing landscape of journalism should also influence how we do business.

Newsrooms are shrinking. Reporters are covering multiple beats while churning out content to post online. Even great pitches sometimes are overlooked due to the sheer amount of news reaching journalists.

It's time to innovate how we get out our messages. Instead of writing formulaic releases, let's write like reporters, making stories easier for journalists to "grab and go" in a pinch. After that we should set up a means of getting those stories to intended audiences. Consider building an online newsroom and using social media to get stories to readers. Don't be afraid to get creative!

Cassandra Perkins
VP, Communications Manager
Bank of America

It's maddening is that we are not doing enough as an industry to build pro bono opportunities into our culture. One of the most valuable assets that a nonprofit can have is a communications expert who can generate media coverage, develop event materials, build a social media presence, and drive awareness around a mission.

Often, societal issues go under the radar until media is drawn in by celebrity involvement, scandals or large quantities of money. By lending our talent to nonprofits working to make our communities better, we can improve the world around us. PR agencies, departments, and PR consultants can help by embedding pro bono into their company's culture. At Bank of America, we offer our teammates two paid volunteer hours per week for volunteerism, a benefit that should be embedded more broadly across our industry.

Ashley Simms
Managing Supervisor
FleishmanHillard

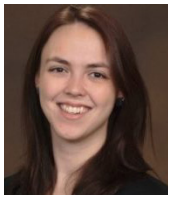
As PR pros we are always balancing protecting the organization's integrity with finding ways to innovate. Unfortunately, that means often we are faced with roadblocks and challenges when pitching ideas. Fighting against the fear of change can be frustrating and a disruption to progress. It's important to make risk-averse decisions, but that should not come at the expense of an organization becoming stagnant.

To reduce red tape, I think PR pros need to continue to build trust within organizations at all levels and provide research-based solutions. When we can show an audience has an appetite for change, we can better advocate for adapting to new environments. Whether that's empowering an organization to be a stronger thought leader on a specific topic, encouraging new storytelling methods, or embracing diverse perspectives, research can be key in accelerating approval.

Liz Skrbkova
Associate Director
Novo Nordisk Inc

Lack of clarity. It's a pet peeve to rummage through an email trail to excavate the ask. Providing clear direction and appropriate background is essential, no matter whether it's written or spoken; taking a moment to consider and articulate what it is that's needed. This rings true for all communication, but especially issues management, where I've seen the lack of thoughtful guidance up front kick-start many a downward spiral.

I've been on the receiving end of some email gems in my time - both at agencies and in-house - but at company HQ in Copenhagen, I recall some email trails marked "urgent" landing in my inbox. They swiftly transition into Danish as you scroll down. I'm sure we're all guilty of forwarding a vague, run-on email, but I draw the line at needing Google Translate to decode a message. That said, my Danish has never been better!



Julia Woislaw
Manager, Advocacy Communications
Assoc of Intl. Certified Prof. Accountants

Nothing gets me mad like PR or communications content written so that no one can understand it. Too often we mistake writing professionally with needing to write serious and complicated sentences that are inaccessible. We can solve this by writing with plain language and remembering that people enjoy reading fun and light content. Being silly, funny or light hearted won't take value away from your content. No one wants to read stiff sentences that sound like they came from a textbook. Professional does not have to be synonymous with boring. ■

PR NEWS
9211 Corporate Blvd.
4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850-3245

TAKEAWAYS

Takeaways from PRN-Crisp Survey, CSR Tips and New to the Resource Center

In each edition of PR News we highlight takeaways from se- lect articles as well as important additions to the PR News Subscriber Resources Center, available to paid subscribers at: http://www.prnewsonline.com/subscriber-resources/ You can also access the Center by clicking "Resource Cen- ter" at the top, middle of the prnewsonline.com home page.

SELECT TAKEAWAYS

- It remains alarming that in this era of digital technology, where a brand's reputation can be erased in seconds, some 30 percent of those surveyed said their companies and organizations lack a crisis plan.
- The C-suite's bottom line with regard to crisis actually is the bottom line. Most of what the C-suite wants to know post-crisis deals with money and customers, says **Emma Monks**, Crisp's VP of crisis intelligence.
- Signficant after-hours issues spotted online will linger before communicators are informed of them. This lack of speed is an issue, Monks says, since beginning your response the next day puts you behind.
- Too many brands (nearly 70 percent) are monitoring social media issues manually. This is a potential pitfall since manual monitoring can be spotty, particularly if human resources are thin and monitoring isn't done 24/7, Monks says.
- In the digital age speed has become a prominent feature of crisis response. Indeed, the survey found 54 percent of respondents said the biggest issue with crisis is the ability to respond promptly.
- **Image Patrol** (pp. 6-8): Spokespeople for **Patriots**' owner **Robert Kraft** should have resisted the urge to issue a knee-jerk denial of allegations against him until they could have gathered additional facts. A damning fact seems to be the existence of video showing Kraft engaging in sexual acts with prostitutes. Besides hurting Kraft's image, the credibility of the spokespeople is tarnished badly.
- **CSR** (pp. 8-10): The environment for brands seems to require that they stand for something beyond their goods and services. Still, it's best to do your homework rather than jumping into a socio-political issue quickly. Even an activist brand such as Ben & Jerry's chooses to refrain from taking a stand on every issue that presents itself.

NEW TO THE RESOURCES CENTER

- **Deloitte's 2018 Global Crisis Management Survey:** This 2018 survey of 500 executives reaches many of the same conclusions found in the PR News-Crisp survey featured in today's edition. An interesting nugget is the report's finding about the importance of confidence during a crisis. ■

Editor's Note: You'll notice a different logo atop this edition. It's PRNEWS' 75th anniversary this month and the new look is just one of the ways we're celebrating throughout the year. Another way will be with a September gala in NYC. We'll also be publishing retrospective articles. Should you have a poignant memory of PR News during its 75 years, please email editor Seth Arenstein at: sarenstein@accessintel.com

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