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SOCIAL MEDIA

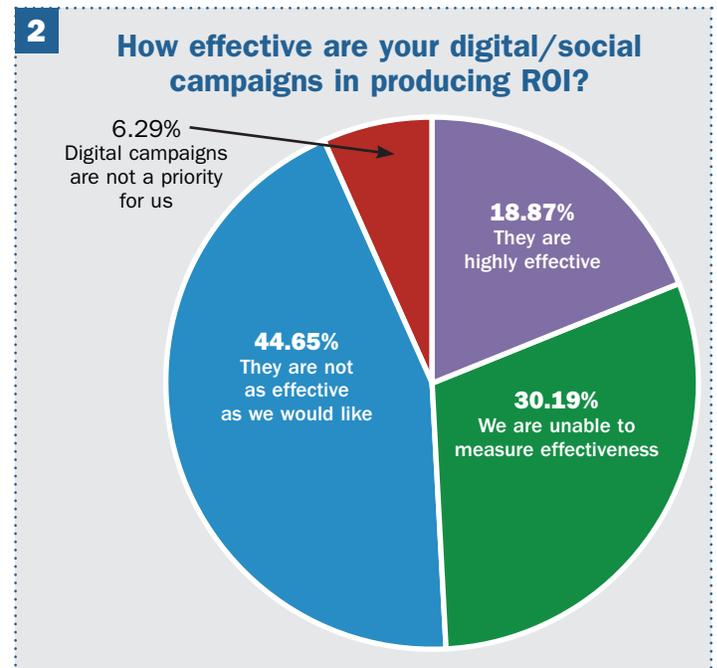
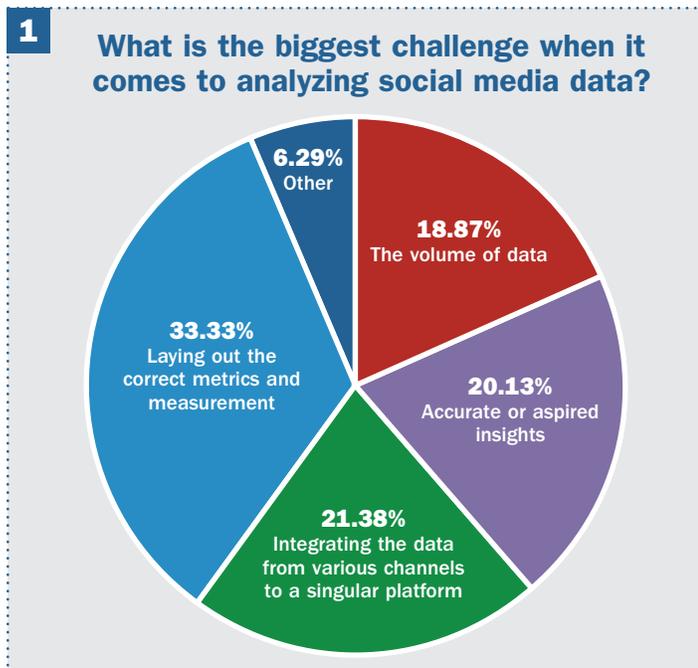
Social Media ROI: 45% Say It's Less Effective Than They'd Like, 30% Are Unable to Measure It

As readers of this publication know, we like to gauge the mood of the industry at frequent intervals. So after returning from **The Social Shake-Up** last month in Atlanta, we examined how communicators are assessing the bevy of data that social media generates.

To do this, PRNEWS developed a survey with **InfoVision Social**, the research and social media analytics arm of **Info-**

Vision, a company that delivers customized strategies and insights. Some 200 communicators took part in the survey, conducted last month.

Looking at chart one, you can see respondents were almost evenly divided as to their biggest challenges in analyzing social media data. Not surprisingly, measurement and finding the correct metrics led the pack at 33 percent. Follow-



Source: PRNEWS/Infovision Social (200 Responses, May 2019)

Continued on page 3



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
Divisional President, Kerry Smith, ksmith@accessintel.com
Chief Operating Officer, Heather Farley
President & CEO, Don Pazour

Group Subscriptions – Carol Brault, cbrault@accessintel.com
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 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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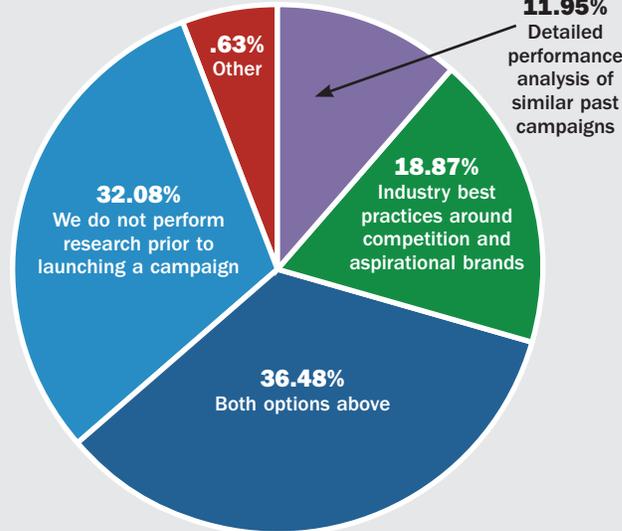
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Continued from page 1

70% Conduct Research Prior to Social

3 What kind of research do you invest in before launching a large social media campaign?



tying social media data to revenue.” Another respondent noted it’s hard figure out “what social media data means for our business.”

Yet another mentioned the age-old problem of “knowing what data to pull,” while yet another concurred and noted, “KPIs are changing all the time...we want [to track] all of them.”

The biggest issue for one respondent was “not understanding how to evaluate the data.” Several survey participants said “all the above” options on our chart were their biggest challenges.

We asked **Rajesh Kari**, VP/business leader at InfoVision Social, for his reaction to lingering issues with measurement and metrics. “We’ve seen a huge void and opportunity

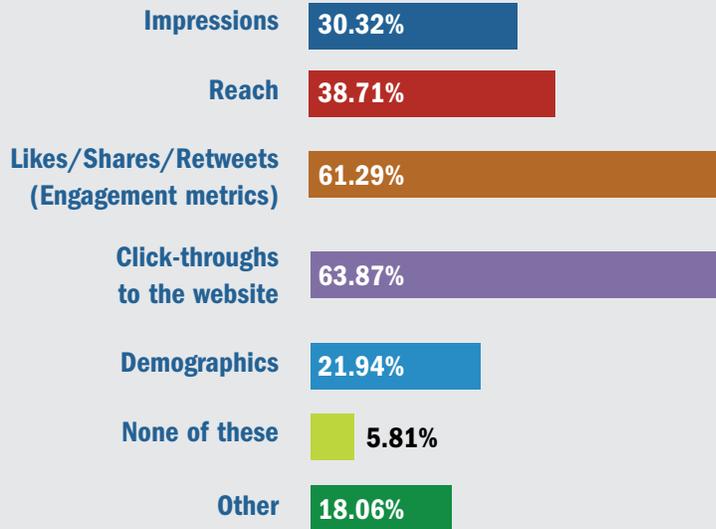
gap...in making sense of unstructured social data by deriving accurate and relevant metrics and measurement.” He added, “The foundation starts with data curation and integration for an effective outcome.”

ROI DISAPPOINTS

A related question is whether or not social and digital campaigns are effective in terms of ROI (see chart 2). Nearly half (45 percent) of those surveyed indicated that “They are not as effective as we would like.”

Also concerning were the 30 percent who responded, “We are unable to measure effectiveness.” At this point in the evolution of PR and communications, being unable to measure the effectiveness of your

4 Which social media metrics is your C-suite most interested in? (Check all that apply)



ing closely was handling the volume of data (19 percent), arriving at accurate or useful insights (20 percent) and integrating data from several channels into a single platform (21 percent).

Particularly insightful were write-in responses to this question. One respondent said, “Our problem is translating sales and ROI from social media efforts into something executives understand.” The challenge, another responded, “is

work seems anachronistic.

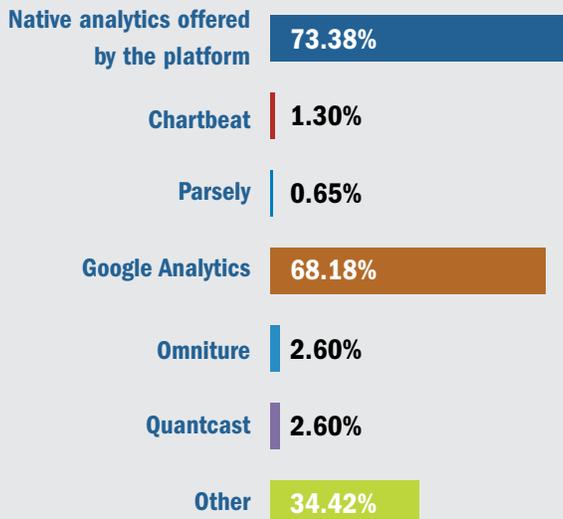
“Measuring social ROI is a complex process for many,” Kari said. A well-defined social outreach goal is key to campaign evaluation, he added. In addition, “a targeted campaign” with reliable data supporting it is crucial.

Additional cause for concern comes from the next chart (see chart 3), where 32 percent admit dispensing with research prior to launch-

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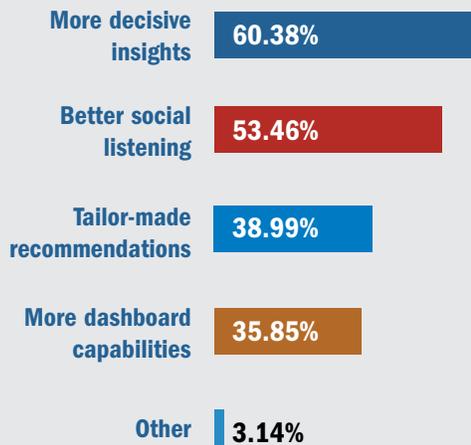
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What tools do you use to analyze social media metrics? (Check all that apply)



6

Which of the following features would you like to improve in your current social media tools? (Check all that apply)

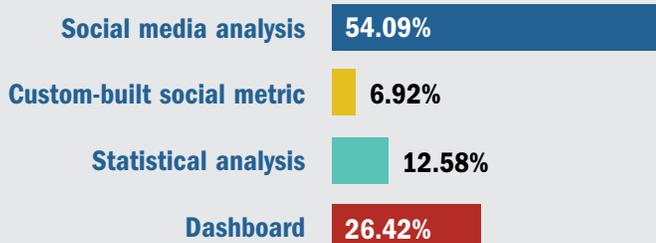


sis of similar past campaigns” or look at “industry best practices” before embarking on a social media initiative.

One of the major questions as social media pushes further into traditional business practice is which social metrics are important to the C-suite. While many communicators continue to cite impressions as an important metric—30 percent of respondents said the C-suite is interested in impressions—(see chart 4) the majority of senior executives in this survey were more

7

I derive social media ROI from a ...



interested in figures connected to engagement (61 percent) and calls to action, such as click-throughs to the brand or organization’s site (64 percent).

With nearly 20 percent choosing “other,” the written answers are important. The preponderance of them concerned correlating social posts with “track-able transactions,” as one respondent wrote. These metrics included revenue, leads, employee recruitment, ROI and actions such as attending events, making donations, requesting additional information and watching corporate videos.

NATIVE TOOLS, GOOGLE ANALYTICS DOMINATE

Turning to which tools communicators use to track social media data (see chart 5), the overwhelming response favored native analytics (73 percent) and **Google Analytics** (68 percent).

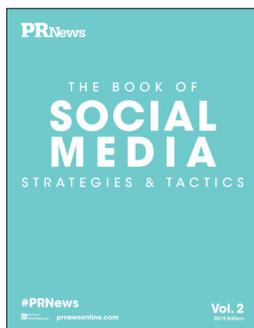
This wasn’t surprising. The vast number of communicators lack the resources necessary for costly or custom tools. Google Analytics is known as a very effective analytical tool.

Continued on page 4

ing a large campaign. This group seemingly is ignoring an accepted staple of PR.

Is it possible that foregoing research prior to campaigns is hurting ROI on the back end?

Some better news is that nearly 70 percent of those surveyed said they either conduct “detailed performance analy-



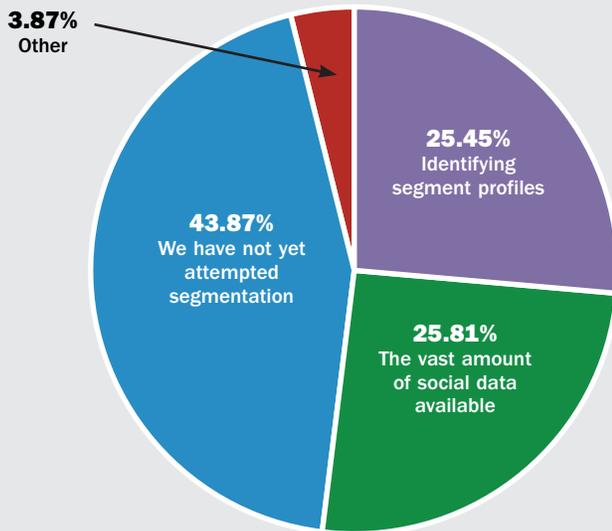
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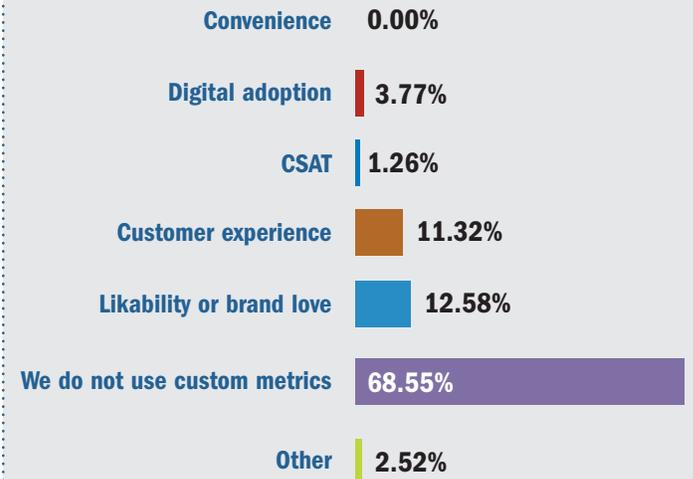
This guidebook features case studies and contributions from companies like:



8 What is your biggest challenge in audience segmentation on social media?



9 If you use custom metrics for social media KPI measurement, what are the key metrics you measure?



Rajesh Kari
VP/Business
Leader
InfoVision

In addition to those tools listed as options on our chart, 34 percent of write-ins included **SproutSocial** (35 percent) and **Hootsuite** (22 percent). There also were votes for **Meltwater** and **Adobe** (both at 3 percent), **Falcon**, **Shareablee**, **Sprinklr**, **TrackMaven**, **SOCi**, **Agorapulse**, **Domo**, **Khoros**, **Later.com**, **Spredfast** and **CrowdTangle**.

“Advanced metrics to measure qualitative KPIs is the need of the hour,” Kari said, “therefore a consultative approach to derive specific metrics for performance evaluation is suggested.”

Kari also stressed that “the underutilized audience segmentation & measurement is where marketers are missing the jackpot” (see chart 8 and coverage below).

60 PERCENT WANT MORE INSIGHTS

As to what characteristics users would like to see in tracking tools (see chart 6), it’s interesting that there wasn’t a larger desire for custom-made devices, though the 39 percent response indicates a clear market niche. Ditto the 36 percent who said they’d like to see a more extensive dashboard. The biggest segment wants more useful insights from tools (60 percent) and improvements in social listening (53 percent).

The first figure, about insights, reinforces a trend we saw in an earlier survey. In that survey, conducted late last year, PRNEWS and partner **PublicRelay** found senior leaders increasingly are asking PR to justify decisions with data (see PRNEWS, Nov. 2018).

Kari agreed that there’s an increasing demand for social data to generate “actionable insights.” For brands, he said, “It’s not just numbers and dashboards that elevate their understanding to the next level—it’s about making the right choices or insights-driven business decisions.”

“Advanced metrics to measure qualitative KPIs is the need of the hour...audience segmentation is underutilized and it’s where many are missing the jackpot.”
Rajesh Kari, VP/Business Leader InfoVision Social

The desire for better social listening in this new survey seems to indicate the importance of social listening for spotting trends, gaining insights and providing early warning on potential crises.

Tracking with the survey’s finding about the respondents’ lack of non-native tool use is chart 9. As you can see, the largest segment by far is the 69 percent who said they lack custom metrics.

Another result from the survey indicates a wide open swath for vendors and consultants supplying solutions and expertise around segmentation.

Chart 8 indicates nearly half of our respondents (44 percent) have yet to attempt audience segmentation. Just more than half (51 percent) said they either were having issues identifying segment profiles or found the vast amount of data available to be overwhelming. ■

CONTACT: Rajesh@infovision.com Nandita@infovision.com

PR Leaders Urged to Create Supportive Culture, Offer Programs to Combat Mental Health Issues

A career in PR and communications attracts people for a variety of reasons. Yet PR also is listed among the top 10 most stressful occupations. In addition, the profession is a proven contributor to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse and other serious conditions.

Roughly 20 percent of the U.S. adult population suffers from a mental health condition, so this is not an issue limited to the communications industry. It is, however, particularly relevant for PR leaders to confront endemic risks.

We all know PR is a hard job. But we shouldn't accept that people must suffer (often in silence) to work in the field. Below are steps PR leaders can take to create a work environment that not only assists those who are suffering, but seeks to build positive mental health.

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT



Isabel Podda
COO,
Infinite Global

Communications leaders must work to destigmatize mental health. While entertainers and athletes have gone public with their mental health struggles, it's hard for an employee to step forward and admit to having problems.

Employees should know whom they could talk to when experiencing symptoms. A collegial, understanding work culture is step one. Yet it's also imperative to have people available who are trained in mental health. Their

role is twofold: Identify people who may be suffering silently, open communication channels and help employees find the right professional support, but also play an integral role in enabling the agency to promote positive mental health.

Since poor mental health can touch anyone at any stage in their life or career, it is key that these first aiders are able to operate at all levels of the business.

BENEFITS AND TRAINING

Policies and programs that offer resources to staffers to deal with mental health issues, such as an employee assistance program, a comprehensive health plan with low deductible

options, and incentives to live a healthy lifestyle are baseline best practices. Such policies and programs allow employees to take care of themselves proactively.

Beyond this, companies should consider offering perks and benefits that not only support positive mental health but provide resources to engage in activities that prevent mental health decline.

For example, a plan that allows employees to build programs that fit their needs, and includes benefits such as cultural immersion, gym credits, sports and concert tickets, and museum memberships. By offering programs like this, communications leaders can reemphasize their commitment to promoting positive life balance.

ONE PATH DOES NOT FIT ALL

We all have that team member: the media guru who can get any journalist on the phone instantly. You're probably not inclined to encourage her to pursue other areas of interest, are you? You should.

Being pigeonholed—even in a role someone initially liked and excels at—can become stifling and, more often than not, leads to burnout. It is crucial for managers to regularly engage with all team members in formal and informal settings. More important, listen intently to what employees are saying to preempt burnout and its impact on mental health.

Professional fulfillment can come in many shapes and sizes, and it's important to provide employees with opportunities to bring out their best. Plus, as reported in **Harvard Business Review**, studies show that learning new things “helps connect us to an underlying purpose of growth and development. This way, we can see ourselves as constantly improving and developing, rather than being stuck with fixed capabilities.”■

CONTACT: SophieC@infiniteglobal.com IsabelP@infiniteglobal.com



Sophie Cikovsky
Assoc VP,
Infinite Global

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Influencers Here to Stay, Though Issues with ROI, Budgets and Regulatory Compliance Linger

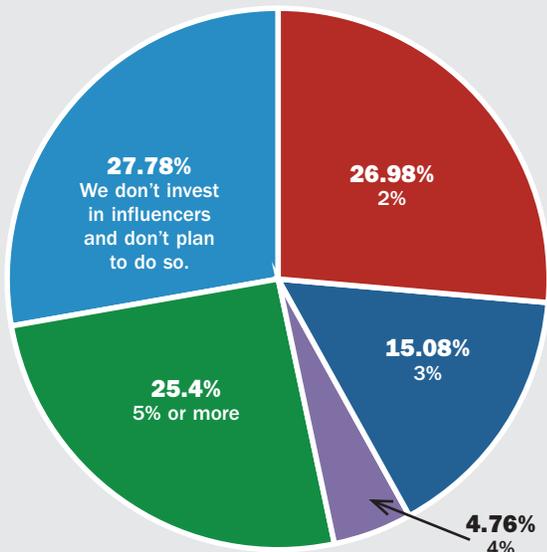
In gauging the pulse of industry, PRNEWS found that one area of major interest at the **Social Shake-Up Show** in Atlanta last month was influencers: whether or not to use them, how to use them, where to find them, how to compensate them, how to determine ROI and how to ensure compliance with government regulations. Spending on influencer marketing is estimated to reach \$6.5 billion this year, and a survey of nearly 400 PR pros that PRNEWS and **Meltwater** conducted in January found 82 percent were either using influencers or considering it. Nearly half (49 percent) were using influencers, the survey found (PRNEWS, Feb. 2019).

A five-country study of influencer marketing from **Rakuten Marketing** found that 60 percent of shoppers interact with an influencer daily. The survey also found that most marketers plan to increase their spending on influencers. Nearly 70 percent of American consumers told Rakuten they trust a product recommendation from an influencer as long as the influencer discloses her relationship with the brand.

MICRO-INFLUENCERS DOMINATE

Spending on micro-influencers is rising, while budgets for celebrity influencers are ebbing. U.S. marketers said they are willing to spend up to \$32,000 on a campaign with a micro-influencer (30,000 followers or fewer) compared to \$39,000 with a celebrity influencer (500,000+ followers).

1 How much of your marketing budget would you be willing to devote to influencer marketing?

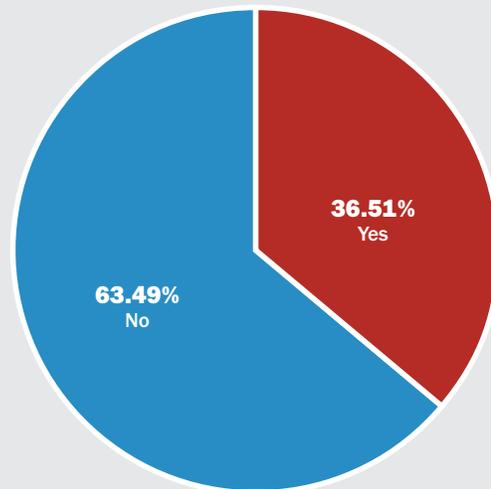


Source: PRNEWS/Buztubr, May 2019 (150 responses)

2 What are your biggest struggles with influencer marketing? (please check all that apply)



3 Is transparency an issue preventing you from investing in influencer marketing?



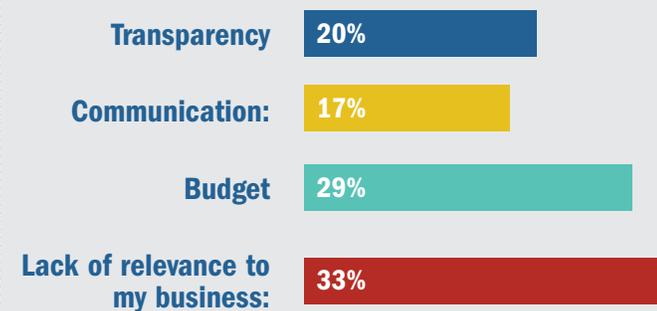
The study surveyed more than 700 marketers in consumer-facing businesses and nearly 4,000 shoppers (1,000 in the U.S.).

Another survey, this one from **Uproar PR** and released late last month, confirms the trend toward micro-influencers. But one major question is how to define a micro-influencer. In this case, the study defines a micro-influencer as having 100,000 or fewer followers.

It found 72 percent of those surveyed prefer micro-influencers and 68 percent made a purchase based on a non-celebrity's post. The most popular micro-influencers had fewer than 30,000 followers, said the survey, which had 109 respondents.

PRNEWS and California-based **Buztubr**, which offers a platform that connects brands and influencers via **Facebook** and **Instagram**, last month conducted a short survey about industry attitudes toward influencer marketing.

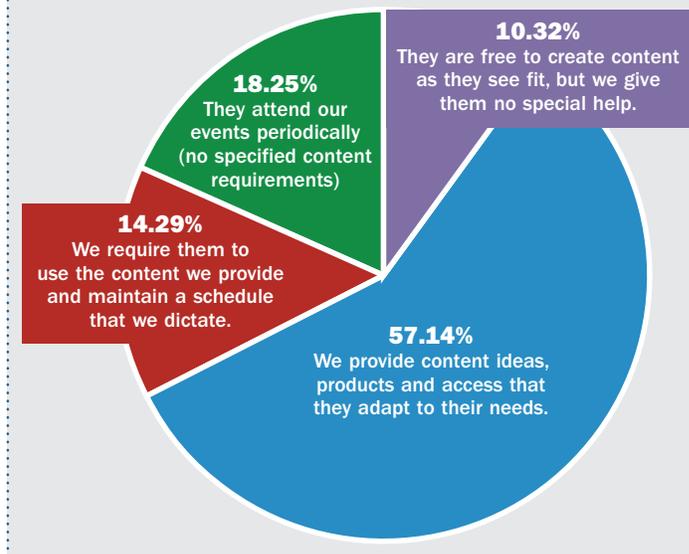
4 Rate (from 0-4, with 4 being the highest value) the most pressing issues you have with influencer marketing.



5 If you use influencers, how do you find them?



6 If you use influencers, what do they do?



half those surveyed (49 percent) said they currently use influencers. Just 18 percent said they didn't use influencers and had no plans to do so. Forty-three percent also told us they planned to increase spending on influencers in 2019 vs 2018, while 52 percent predicted spending would remain constant.

THE CONUNDRUM OF DETERMINING ROI

The elusiveness of determining ROI, one of the universal issues in PR, extends to influencer marketing. As you can see in chart 2, nearly 50 percent of respondents said difficulty in determining ROI was one of their biggest struggles with influencer marketing. Almost 40 percent said trusting influencers to represent their brand was among their top challenges; 34 percent chose the burden and investment of managing influencers as one of the major struggles with influencer marketing.

In a related question, whose responses are seen on chart 4, the most pressing issues the respondents had with influencer marketing also centered on resources. Asked to rate pain points on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest value, 29 percent said budgets were their top issue, followed closely by transparency (20 percent) and communication (17 percent).

84% FIND INFLUENCERS WITHOUT AGENCIES

It's understandable that so many told us that influencer marketing is expensive and too much of an investment. Looking at chart 5 we see that nearly 84 percent of those surveyed find influencers themselves. Just 16 percent entrust that time-intensive duty to an agency.

Turning to chart 3, 63 percent said transparency was not an issue preventing them from investing in influencer marketing. Looking at the nearly 40 percent who perceived transparency as an issue, **Gunn Hoh**, COO of Buztubr said. "This issue relates back to questions about



Gunn Hoh
COO
Buztubr

The survey also inquired about budgets for influencer marketing and pain points, among other issues. Nearly 150 PR pros took part in the study. Their demographic characteristics can be seen in chart 8. Forty-nine percent were brand communicators, 30 percent worked at nonprofits or government organizations, and 13 percent were from PR agencies.

In sum, the survey demonstrated continued strong support for influencer marketing, though several pain points linger. Among the pain points are determining ROI and the amount of time and resources it takes to find and manage influencers. In addition, the survey shows a disconcerting lack of brand vigilance with respect to regulation.

72% BUDGET FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING

Looking at chart 1, the overwhelming majority of respondents (72 percent) are willing to devote budget to influencer marketing.

This figure is consistent with the response to a similar question from a survey conducted late last year by PRNEWS and **Meltwater**, a media intelligence company (PRNEWS, Feb. 2019). In that survey, 81 percent of the 400 respondents indicated they were either using influencers or were considering doing so. In addition, nearly

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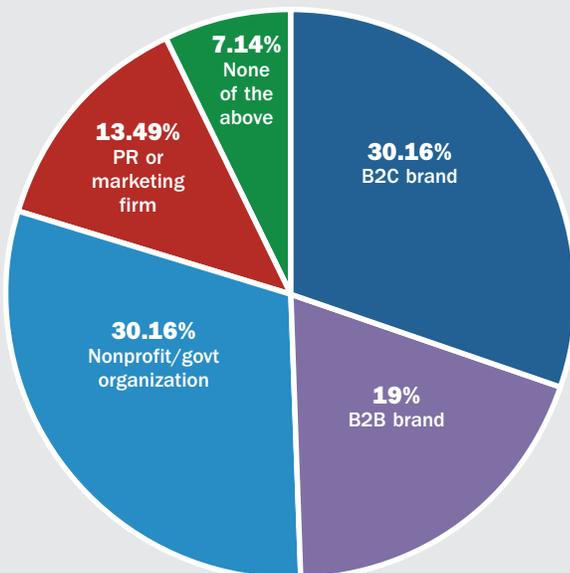
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How do you handle regulation for influencers?



8

Your position is at a:



the legitimacy of influencers.” These communicators, he says, are concerned about the authenticity of influencers’ followers. It’s possible that they were bought, so brands worry about an influencer’s “real standing” with “authentic consumers.”

A possible remedy, of course, is for brands to use third-party influencer analytics platforms that look extensively at influencers’ followers.

Hoh believes “a lot of these questions come from the fact that there was no real accountability in the influencer sphere until recently.” For a while, he says, “It was a free game for influencers,” and a lot of brands were burned.

LET INFLUENCERS DO THEIR THING

Once you have decided to engage an influencer, among the next decisions is what you want them to do for your brand. Chart 6 shows respondents playing it fairly loose with influencers in terms of content creation. More than half (57 percent) said they offer influencers content ideas and access

to products, allowing them to adapt material to their needs. Just 14 percent have a mandated content schedule with influencers. Nearly 30 percent allow influencers to create content without set requirements.

The lack of structure for content creation was not surprising to Hoh. “I’m more surprised that some brands are trying so hard to control influencers’ content,” he said. “Smart brands know that an influencer is also a content creator...that’s how they gained a following in the first place.” Trying to adjust the influencer to your specified content won’t be nearly as effective as allowing the influencer to portray your product “in a way they know their followers love to see.”

REGULATORY RESPITE?



Allison Fitzpatrick
Partner
Davis & Gilbert, LLC

Regulation is a major issue for those using influencers. While just more than half (51 percent) of those surveyed said they insist on a signed contract, nearly one-third said they either have an oral agreement with influencers or are not compliant (see chart 7).

“I am glad to see so many PR pros require that their influencers sign a contract; however, this number should be closer to 100 percent,” said attorney **Allison Fitzpatrick**, a partner at **Davis & Gilbert LLP**. “As a reminder, the **Federal Trade Commission** does not believe that having a contract is enough,” she said. In her view, marketers have a duty to train and monitor their influencers to ensure that they are disclosing their relationships in their sponsored posts.

She and Hoh differ on allowing an agency to handle regulation. Hoh has concerns. But Fitzpatrick said, “Many agencies in the U.S. have appropriate procedures...for contracting with, monitoring and training influencers—at least many of the agencies that I worked with in the past on their influencer marketing campaigns.”

On the other hand, marketers “cannot hide their heads in the sand and delegate all of their regulatory responsibilities to agencies,” Fitzpatrick said. “They need to conduct due diligence on their agencies to ensure that they have proper procedures in place for complying with the law.”

ORAL TRADITION IS INSUFFICIENT

Hoh and Fitzpatrick were concerned with the 15 percent who have oral agreements with influencers. “I would never recommend” that, Hoh said. Fitzpatrick added, “One of the first things regulators look for is whether the marketer has a contract with the influencer with appropriate disclosure obligations.”

She also noted in light of the **Fyre Festival**, where all but one of the influencers, or Fyre Starters, failed to disclose that they were paid for their endorsement, “it is not safe to assume that influencers will disclose that they were paid for

their endorsement absent a contract requiring them to do so.” Fortunately, Fyre has resulted in “more influencers adding #ad to their sponsored posts.”

Hoh found it unacceptable that 12 percent who admit they are not compliant. This will hurt the industry, he said. Fitzpatrick concurred. Regulators, she said, “do not want to go after marketers who are trying to comply” with regulatory requirements. But, she added, “They will—and have—gone after marketers who do not have any procedures in place.” ■

CONTACT: gunn@buztubr.com afitzpatrick@dglaw.com

TECHNOLOGY

BY EILEEN SIMONSON HIEBLER

Building Trust or Not Quite Yet? What Senior Communicators Need to Know About Blockchain

Many communicators know blockchain is a technology that’s associated mostly with electronic cash or cryptocurrency called **Bitcoin**. They may know **Facebook** plans to unveil a cryptocurrency, **Global Coin**, late this year and put it on the market in 2020. Some say it won’t be a cryptocurrency, but instead more like **PayPal** or other digital wallets. There’s far more PR should know about blockchain.

One advantage of using digital currency in a financial transaction is that it removes the middleman. Blockchain technology makes that possible.



Nikki Parker
SVP
5WPR

This is because blockchain technology, in theory, at least, eliminates the ability to manipulate information after it (the information) has been put in place. As different sources create a chain of data, the technology locks it, making it immutable.

“Blockchain is a ledger system of who touches *what* and *when* as data courses through any sort of supply chain or flow,”

says **Nikki Parker**, SVP at **5WPR**.

She likens blockchain to the life of a diamond. First it’s mined, then assessed and weighed, tracked, and recorded, all with a significant degree of validation and 100 percent trust.

So instead of having a bank oversee financial transactions between two users, they can use electronic cash, such as bitcoin, and deal with each other directly.

WHAT BLOCKCHAIN COULD MEAN FOR PR

Blockchain technology has uses beyond the financial sector. “Regardless of the industry...there’s a blockchain application for it,” says **Katie Creaser**, SVP at **Affect PR**. “This is why communicators need to pay attention.”

For example, **Walmart** is using blockchain to track lettuce shipments and ultimately, prevent E. coli outbreaks.

In healthcare, blockchain can be used to house electronic

health records, making it possible to securely share information across providers.

BLOCKCHAIN BEYOND FINANCE



Katie Creaser
SVP
Affect PR

Later this month, during a conference in Los Angeles, researchers from the **University of Surrey** will present a paper that could have implications for the PR industry, as well as many others. They will discuss the development of **Archangel**, a database that uses blockchain and AI to safeguard digital government records from the U.S., U.K. and Australia.

Archangel is jointly maintained, so “everyone can check and add records, but no one can change them. As no data can be modified, the integrity of the historical record remains intact,” the university said last month in a statement.

Blockchain technology “essentially provides a digital fingerprint for archives, making it possible to verify their authenticity,” says **John Collomosse**, a professor who heads the project at Surrey.

Adds **Jeni Tennison**, CEO of the **Open Data Institute**, “It is becoming easier and easier to manipulate digital records, which makes it crucial for the institutions who take care of those records to be able to demonstrate their trustworthiness.”

Archangel is one of many projects in the Surrey blockchain testbed, a nearly \$5 million group of efforts in the emerging technology.

BLOCKCHAIN AS A PROMOTER OF TRUST

In a sense, a proof-of-authority blockchain system makes it possible to create the ultimate in trust and authenticity. This ability could render blockchain vital to communicators.

“Imagine,” Creaser said, “being able to identify fake news indisputably, winning the battle against fake Facebook accounts, bots and deepfakes.”

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How Digital and Opinion Research Expertise Will Help Manage Your Crisis and Win Your Lawsuit

[Editor's Note: The authors of this article are **Jim Moorhead**, senior director, global crisis management and litigation communications practice, **APCO Worldwide**, **Rachael Siefert**, senior director and N. America digital strategy lead, APCO Worldwide, and **Bill Dalbec**, managing director, **APCO Insight**, APCO Worldwide.]

As PR pros know, rule one for communications pros and attorneys specializing in crisis or litigation management is to never be unprepared or surprised when a situation arises.

To quickly respond in a credible and effective manner, communicators must change their approach to crisis management. They must proactively utilize research capabilities to gain accurate, actionable intelligence on the issue at hand as well as the expectations of key stakeholder audiences.

The communications trifecta is credibility, speed and resonance for brands and organizations caught in the grasp of a PR crisis or high-profile litigation. For communications pros, reaching that trifecta calls for a response strategy that answers the questions weighing heaviest on the minds of customers and clients, the media, regulators, and vigilant watchdog groups.



Jim Moorhead
Senior Director,
Global Crisis
Management
and Litigation
Communications
Practice,
APCO Worldwide

It also requires meeting the expectations of an increasingly discerning court of public opinion. Failing to do so can unleash a wave of business and reputational damage that can be difficult, and in some cases impossible, to reverse.

ADDRESS STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS HEAD ON

Knowing the full scale and impact of a crisis or litigation, and making decisions on a response strategy, require a multi-perspective, research-based approach that identifies key stakeholders, uncovers their positions and marshals support for the organization.

Many communications professionals and attorneys struggle with PR crises and litigation because they often lack the insights needed to make informed decisions. By improving your understanding of stakeholder audiences and their opinions on the crisis or litigation, you will strategically position yourself to reassure stakeholders and win their support.

Answers to the following key questions are at the core of a strategy that not only leads to informed decisions, but can also weather even the harshest and most unpredictable media and societal climates.

- ▶ **Question:** Who are the most influential stakeholders driving opinions, trends and public sentiment?
- ▶ **Result:** Identification of influential voices who can serve as advocates and spur support among other audiences.
- ▶ **Question:** What information are they receiving?

- ▶ **Result:** Insights into the intelligence that is forming and shaping opinions, and the opportunity to reinforce positive information and correct inaccurate reporting where needed.
- ▶ **Question:** How are their opinions being impacted?
- ▶ **Result:** Ability to further strengthen the opinions of supporters, and meet the concerns of critics and uncertainties of undecided audiences with objective, fact-based information.
- ▶ **Question:** What do they need the brand to do and say?
- ▶ **Result:** Customized responses that directly resonate with stakeholders and speed resolution, while maximizing the strengths of the organization's messaging and mitigating or eliminating attacks from critics.
- ▶ **Question:** Who would be most persuasive to them?
- ▶ **Result:** A spokesperson with the knowledge, credibility and confidence needed to communicate an understanding of, and build support for, the organization's position,

RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

The disciplined approach that identifies response-strategy content applies equally to the research methods used to learn stakeholder opinions. By analyzing digital data to inform rapid opinion research, you are able to receive the insights needed to determine the scope of the crisis or litigation, provide potential remedies and in many cases, predict a situation before it occurs.

DIGITAL DATA RESEARCH

Being an expert in stakeholder audiences, and realizing how they receive, process and share information, are mission-critical requirements for a response strategy. Research designed to build stakeholder expertise uses a three-tiered approach that focuses on the integrated issue landscape, stakeholder audiences and key messaging.

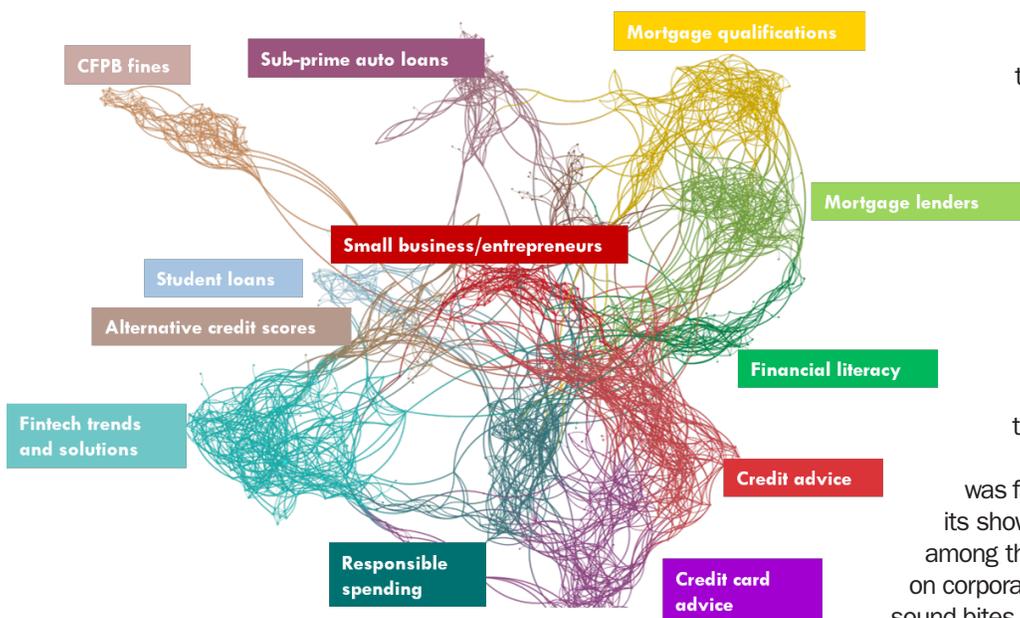


Rachael Siefert
Senior Director
and N. America
Digital Strategy
Lead, APCO
Worldwide

Integrated Issue Landscape: Starting your research with a 360-degree view into the offline and online issue landscape provides insights ranging from the types of conversations stakeholders are having and the forums they frequent to the information sources they trust and forces guiding their opinions. By analyzing content from traditional earned media, blogs and social media, you can learn where the most influential and vocal stakeholders obtain their news and where they can be found. [See graphic below.]

Stakeholder Audiences: Understanding how stakeholders are organizing themselves online, and how information and influence flow between them, helps inform content and amplification strategies. It also ensures that communications target audiences in a way that is compelling, relevant and optimized for engagement.

Stakeholders form like-minded communities online based on shared interests, beliefs and opinions of the organization



*Integrated Issue Landscape: A 360-degree view online and offline.
Source: APCO Worldwide*

that is caught up in the crisis or litigation. When you know how your stakeholders behave and what they believe, you can create opportunities to connect with and engage them as advocates who can sway critics and the undecided, and further galvanize supporters.



Bill Dalbec
Managing Director, APCO
Insight, APCO
Worldwide

Key Messaging: Effective response strategies recognize that stakeholders are individuals first, each with a viewpoint, experiences and beliefs. As a result, stakeholders respond to messaging and situations differently.

Research based on digital data informs an in-depth understanding of the complex nature of stakeholders, resulting in messaging that aligns with their key priorities and helps drive positive relationships.

RAPID OPINION RESEARCH

The most effective response strategies share a key element – the voices of stakeholders. By learning stakeholder questions and concerns, you will realize the full extent of their awareness of a crisis, and create, test and refine messaging.

Rapid opinion research uses three methods to capture stakeholder voices, while meeting the quick connection and response times needed for an always-on media cycle. The outcome is an understanding of perceptions and beliefs, identification of effective messaging and a path to positively impact public opinion.

Online Focus Groups: These allow for real-time conversations among 25-30 stakeholders that reveal the information they are receiving, and need to receive, surrounding a crisis or litigation. They also identify the words, phrases and tone that resonate positively or negatively with key audiences. Group discussions generally take place during an evening and can be accessed from any Internet-enabled device.

Surveys cast a wider participant net than online focus groups and online communities. They also are very reliable in identifying supporters, critics and the undecided as well as effective, pressure-tested messaging.

There is also more flexibility in the timing and frequency of surveys. Some are performed before and after a crisis or litigation, and daily, weekly or monthly depending on the immediacy of the need to identify changes in stakeholder reactions.

For example, an entertainment company was facing litigation over the use of animals in its show. By convening a series of focus groups among their primary customers to gain feedback on corporate messages and outside-the-courtroom sound bites, the entertainment company was able to frame its case and develop its defense strategy.

Online Communities: Interaction among stakeholders and insights obtained over an extended period make online communities a critical component of a response strategy.

Session formats depend on circumstances and range from opinions on trial summaries to reactions to videotaped news reports. They usually involve 30 to 100 participants who can share their opinions, including those formed between sessions, with the online community. Sessions can be held over a few days, weeks and even up to one year.

Surveys: A point-in-time measurement of stakeholders' awareness of a crisis or litigation, and the significance it may have on their opinion of an organization, is one of the top contributions surveys make to a response strategy.

For example, a telecommunications company seeking to stop a merger of its competitors deployed a survey and discovered that subscribers of the would-be-merging companies were the loudest opponents of the proposed deal. The company utilized this fact to recruit and mobilize a community of like-minded subscribers to oppose the proposed merger.

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GETTING CRISIS MANAGEMENT RIGHT

Being better informed improves stakeholder engagement and promotes smarter decision-making.

By continuously analyzing the integrated issue landscape and your stakeholders, you can not only build a timely and effective response strategy, but also identify trends that are predictive of a crisis or litigation to come. ■

CONTACT: jkoo@apcoworldwide.com

Lessons for Media Relations Pros From Chick-fil-A



[Editor’s Note: The author is a former VP, global corporate communications, at **Hyundai Motor**, and was a **Washington Post** journalist.]

If PR pros want better results in media relations—getting reporters to respond to our pitches, show up at our press briefings, interview our executives—maybe we should be more like **Chick-fil-A**. I understand this idea may chafe some PR pros. As part of their philanthropy, the brand’s owners contribute to groups whose policies are seen by some as divisive. Still, Chick-fil-A offers plenty of lessons in relationship building and maintenance, which are the heart of media relations. Allow me to beg your indulgence. Anyone who’s been to a Chick-fil-A outlet cannot fail to notice one thing, aside from the delicious waffle fries: The consistently and relentlessly cheerful crew members.

Chick-fil-A employees: 1) make eye contact, 2) smile, 3) speak enthusiastically and 4) don’t just mumble “thank you” or offer a disinterested grunt after you pay. They say, “My pleasure.” These four behaviors are part of an extensive employee training regime known as Core 4.

CUSTOMER CARE OF BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS

Another training piece involves what Chick-fil-A calls “Second-Mile Service.” As you may know, the company is Christian-owned. The training relates a story from the “Gospel of Matthew.” In the story Jesus tells his disciples to go a second mile with anyone who asks them to walk one mile. The application for Chick-fil-A is that employees are urged to provide customer service beyond what is expected—and what other fast-food restaurants provide. Hold doors open for customers, carry large loads to their cars, bring them free refills.

Does all this work?

Look at the data. 2018 marked the third straight year Chick-fil-A topped its customer satisfaction index, according to **QSR Magazine**, the trade publication of the quick-service industry.

Another report in QSR Magazine showed Chick-fil-A franchises earn more per restaurant than **McDonalds**, **Starbucks** and **Subway** combined.

Chick-fil-A has the strongest fast-food brand personality, ranking highest in three of five brand personality di-

mensions (sincerity, excitement and competence), according to a **Zion & Zion** study released May 29, 2019. It ranked second in a fourth personality dimension (sophistication). The study looked at the 26 largest fast-food brands, surveying 4,400 adults and using results from 3,200 who were familiar with the restaurants they were asked about.

This favorable personality creates a secondary effect: Customers are not only happier, they are nicer in response. Just spend time standing in any Chick-fil-A line and watch customers interact with employees. Compare that to what you see at the cash register line of any other fast-food restaurant. It’s harder to be mean to nice people.

MEDIA RELATIONS AS FAST-FOOD SERVICE

The parallel for PR pros is clear: We are, especially when executing media relations duties, service personnel. Our job is to serve brands and their employees with media attention and, where possible, positive coverage.

We can only be successful in these interactions—over the long-term—by treating journalists with respect and politeness.

To be sure, PR has its adversarial moments; this can be a bare-knuckles business. We must aggressively push back against inaccurate or unfair reporting. Similarly, we must argue to correct biased TV news chyrons on the fly.

But even these prickly situations, if handled with grace, facts and respect for the journalist, can yield better results than screaming on the phone and sending ALL CAPS emails.

How Funding a Toothpaste and Eye Drop Could Change How we Cure Disease - Hi Erin, In th...	11:40 AM
Prestigious Cleantech Incubator Announces First Agtech Cohort - Hi Erin, The Wells Fargo I...	11:34 AM
Nutritional Supplement Industry Touts New Benchmarking Standards at ANSI’s Dietary Su...	11:30 AM
Media Advisory: New Report Offers Plan for Assessing Organohalogen Flame Retardants f...	11:29 AM
Google I/O Latest and Greatest – Developer Commentary - Hi Erin, I’m reaching out on beha...	11:29 AM
Madison Ave Headshop - designer Brett Heyman launches Flower by Edie Parker for new g...	11:19 AM
Media Advisory: Press Conference Led by Top Experts to Address the Myth of U.S. Generic...	11:17 AM
Fwd: Embargo Opportunity: New Survey Shows Most Americans Concerned About Consum...	10:57 AM
Launching Tomorrow: "Destroyer of Weakness" - Hey Erin, Wanted to reach out and let you ...	10:53 AM
NEWS: 2019 Asthma Capitals Report—How Does Your City Measure Up?—Expert Avail - Hi ...	10:48 AM
Expert into you may appreciate Your Brain on Food - Hi Erin - So sorry to be a pest but I wa...	10:47 AM
MEDIA ADVISORY: Haight Ashbury Press Event Wed at 10am - Hi Erin, The National Trust f...	10:46 AM
Storm Water Banking Could Help Texas Manage Floods and Droughts - Storm Water Bankin...	10:46 AM
Embargoed paper: a smartphone app that can detect ear infections - Hi Erin, I am the engin...	10:32 AM
Media Advisory: Examining the Neurobiological and Socio-behavioral Science of Adolesce...	10:32 AM



4 ways bad PR agents are constantly trying to gaslight me, lol:

1) pretending they have already been in communication with me when they haven't ("did you get my last email?" No, bc this is your first email)

2) adding "re:" to emails that have never appeared in my inbox before

10:58 AM - 24 May 2019

1 Retweet 9 Likes

1 Reply 1 Retweet 9 Likes



3) pretending we are old chums when we have never exchanged words before ("Hi, Aja! How have you been?")

4) pretending they have read my articles when they haven't (my favorite is when they tell me they loved reading my articles in another publication i've never written for)

APPLICATION TO MEDIA RELATIONS

So how do we apply Chick-fil-A's lessons to media relations? Is it just about adding smiling emojis to our email pitches? No. Remember that at its base, Core 4 is not about smiles or cheerfulness, it's about respect and relationships.

At the heart of that is understanding what a journalist's job is—their daily workflow, demands on their time, what they and their organization consider newsworthy and when not to bother them. Yes, unless you're offering the story of the century, it's likely you're bothering them.

Just like every fast-food restaurant is competing for your business, each day there are 100 other PR pros competing for the attention of the one reporter you're targeting.

Business Insider reporter **Erin Brodwin** recently tweeted a screen shot of her email inbox (see previous page). As you see, it shows 15 unsolicited pitches in about 60 minutes.

Aside from the volume, look at the pitches. Brodwin is a health and tech reporter. Why is she getting a pitch about weather? Her bio says she "writes about the latest developments in the world of drugs, neuroscience, food, and nutrition." So is she going to write about your head shop? Your nutritional supplement? And just count how many instances of "reaching out" you see in these 15 pitches.

We can do better.

A MEDIA RELATIONS CHECKLIST

Here, then, are some guidelines. They are fundamental, but bear more than repeating. Institutionalize them the way Chick-fil-A has institutionalized its training methods:

- ▶ **Help educate your company's executives on story criteria.** To a journalist, a story must be true, timely, newsworthy, substantial, have impact and be relevant to her readers. Not everything your company does or says is newsworthy just because your company thinks so. Less is more. Work with your brand to create fewer—but more newsworthy—statements, events and opportunities.
- ▶ **Research the journalists you're pitching.** I know many PR pros – especially younger ones at big shops – are required to show that they've made a certain number of pitches per issue. This makes it tough. But you'll get much better results for your company by pitching the right journalist rather than a lot of journalists.
- ▶ **Get the name of the reporter right.** Don't send "Dear REPORTER NAME HERE" emails. Don't assume gender based on name.
- ▶ **Avoid Stretching.** Don't try lame ways to connect your pitch to a reporter's beat when there's no connection.
- ▶ **Don't be glib; be a grown-up.** On your first email contact with a journalist you don't know, address her by an honorific and her last name. If she responds, and signs her email with her first name, then you have permission to use her first name. Few things chafe a journalist—or, frankly, any human—more than unearned familiarity.
- ▶ **Don't try to snow anyone.** Open your pitch by clearly identifying who you are and who you work for.
- ▶ **Don't use profanity or crude language in your pitch.** You're only humiliating yourself. And use correct punctuation. See: grown-up.
- ▶ **Don't "reach out," "check in," "circle back," "touch base with" or use other euphemisms to try to minimize your impact on the journalist's life.** You know you're imposing. They know you're imposing. Do it quickly and professionally and say plainly and politely what you want.
- ▶ **Offer something of value.** If you have a newsworthy story, interview, statement or so on, the reporter will be grateful. In addition, you've started building a relationship. The journalist likely will take your email or call again.
- ▶ In fact, if you want to see a list of worst practices, look at journalists' **Twitter** feeds, where PR practitioners are routinely flack-shamed. For instance, witness these pitiful "gaslighting" tricks, as described by **Vox** internet culture reporter **Aja Romano** (above, left).

Continued on page 14

Finally, like Chick-fil-A, go the second mile where appropriate. Recently I emailed a couple of reporters at a Washington news bureau and got no response, which surprised me, because I am acquainted with them. I sent a polite follow-up and again received no reply.

Moments later, I realized, via photos posted on Twitter, that all the reporters in that bureau were at a memorial ser-

vice for a former colleague.

I felt terrible. I sent the journalists one more email, apologizing for intruding on their grief. One responded politely and gratefully. That's not a tactic. That's a relationship.■

CONTACT: ahrensf@gmail.com

Continued from page 9

As trust in media takes a beating with the rise of fake news, Creaser believes there's a substantial place for blockchain in PR. "Blockchain can be used to open up content's metadata, including the origin of the content, the date and time of publication, and even the editing history...this could provide an opportunity to promote trust in media sources."

PUSH BLOCKCHAIN USE CASES



Meredith L. Eaton
Head, N. America
Red Lorry Yellow Lorry

Another question for communicators is how to incorporate blockchain into a brand's narrative. The key, says **Meredith L. Eaton**, North America director of the PR firm **Red Lorry Yellow Lorry**, is that "we're moving away from conversations about what blockchain is to how it's being used." As blockchain is used in more applications, PR pros need to shift emphasis to "use cases, offering proof in terms of customers or data, and providing credible spokespeople."

James Beck, who heads global PR at **ConsenSys**, a blockchain software technology company, agrees. "Blockchain can be needlessly complicated if people attempt to merely explain the protocols that govern it," he says.

Instead, communicators should emphasize blockchain "as a means to a new type of internet architecture where value is natively digital and privacy and data ownership are strengthened," he says.

PR'S BLOCKCHAIN BATTLE

He admits this may be a battle. "PR will need to challenge founders of blockchain-based companies...to not espouse the technology itself, but as a means to an end that provides greater value for consumers and enterprises."



James Beck
Head, Global PR
ConsenSys

It's evident that PR pros credit blockchain for being plausible and practical. They see it as having a place in the industry, yet also needing time to mature.

"There's no doubt blockchain holds an incredible amount of promise, but generally...the industry is still immature," he says.

"A few years ago, we saw the ICO boom (initial coin offering, roughly cryptocurrency's version of an IPO)" and some PR pros were inundated with calls from very early stage start-ups. These companies, he says, "wanted support to get in on a unique way of fundraising-some of these companies raised lots of money, while others violated **SEC** regulations."

Fortunately, according to Beck, the regulatory crackdown "is helping the cream rise to the top." He anticipates seeing "more companies...using blockchain to disrupt old systems...and fewer start-ups that want to use blockchain to issue a coin and get rich quick."

CONTACT: meredithe@rlyl.com kcreaser@affect.com
aneely@5wpr.com

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Media Ecosystem Continues to Fragment as Fewer Reporters Contribute to Tier 1 Publications

Last month we told you about a report from the **U.S. Department of Labor** shows that there are 6 PR pros to every one journalist (see PRNEWS, May 2019). Who are those journalists? What do they cover? And where do they work?

A new survey from **Onclusive**, provided exclusively to PRNEWS, provides insight. Onclusive analyzed 2.1 billion pieces of editorial content between Q1 2018 and Q1 2019. In short, the "2019 Global Journalism Report" concludes the

author ecosystem is more fragmented across publication tiers, formats and topics.

For example, the percentage of authors who contributed to Tier 1 publications in Q1 2019 declined vs Q1 2018. Those who contributed to Tier 3 publications rose. Roughly speaking, Tier 1 pubs are mass media outlets. Tier 3 pubs are niche content sites, blogs and independent outlets.

Just 15 percent of authors contributed to Tier 1 pubs in

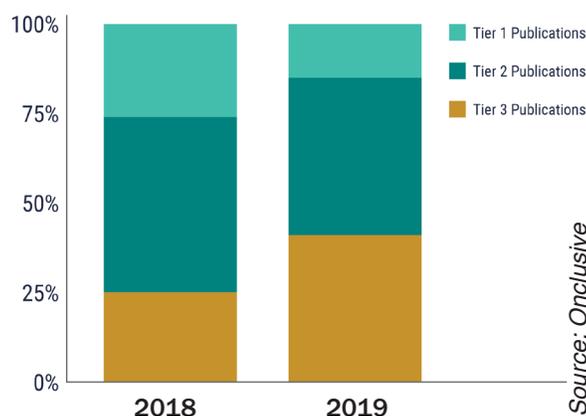
Q1 2019, down from 26 percent in Q1 2018. In Q1 2019, 41% of authors contributed to Tier 3 publications, up from 25% in Q1 2018 (see chart). Of course, a niche publication, dedicated to the interests of a brand's target audience, might be the best route for earned media.

The data also shows an increase in the number of articles published per author, though article size is declining. The number of characters per article fell 18 percent, from an average 2,324 characters per article to 1,967. Yet there's a direct correlation between article size and **Google** search rank; longer articles tend to rank higher. The average word count of a Google first-page result is 1,890 words.

Onclusive will release the study this month. ■

CONTACT: sean@onclusive.com

Percentage of Authors by Publication Tier



DATA

Justin Sun, Naval Ravikant Dominate Blockchain Influencers on Twitter During Q1 2019

Shareablee		SOCIAL SCORECARD			
TOP BLOCKCHAIN INFLUENCERS – Q1 2019					
Based on Total Actions (likes and retweets) Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareablee. Sources:					
Rank	Influencer	Total Actions	Total Tweets	Actions per Tweet	Total Followers
1	Justin Sun	671,673	370	1,815	1,027,594
2	Naval Ravikant	258,428	84	3,077	537,854
3	Andreas Antonopoulos	51,636	102	506	473,721
4	John McAfee	51,197	134	382	899,788
5	Barry Silbert	48,622	85	572	185,798
6	Jimmy Song	48,531	230	211	145,730
7	Vitalik Buterin	42,717	53	806	842,598
8	Charlie Lee Litecoin	39,134	24	1,631	808,161
9	Tuur Demeester	29,277	176	166	187,545
10	Brad Garlinghouse	29,077	9	3,231	210,580

As we noted in the blockchain story in this edition, the technology is only one decade old and the bitcoin sector that's grown up around it is immature. Ironically, for a technology that's intended to foster trust, there are more than a few untrustworthy actors vying for market share and riches.

We asked our longtime data partner **Shareablee** to delve into this 'Wild West.' Its assignment was to determine the most socially active blockchain influencers during Q1 2019 from a list of influencers we provided. (Send us an email if you'd like to see the list.) While Shareablee usually tracks social activity on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter** for us, this time it looked at Twitter only, the platform most associated with blockchain and cryptocurrency. The first thing that hit us was that there are no women on the list, which is unfortunate.

While tweets are influential in many sectors, in this space, they can move the market. In fact, as we went to press, a positive tweet from the most-social influencer, **Justin Sun**, dated Saturday, June 1, resulted in a huge rise in the price of his **Tron** coin.

Beyond that Shareablee found social activity to be erratic compared to other industries it follows for PRNEWS. For example, **Naval Ravikant's** postings rose almost 1600 percent since Q1 2018. It worked. He drove 2054 percent more actions and grew his follower 35 percent, according to Shareablee marketing director **Herman Chen**. And **Brad Garlinghouse** (#10) tweeted just 9 times during the quarter, yet those tweets produced an average of 3,200 actions (likes and retweets). Only Ravikant's tweets came close to that level of efficiency. ■

CONTACT: herman@shareablee.com

TAKEAWAYS

Takeaways from PR and Mental Health, Blockchain, Media Relations and Fast Food

In each edition of PRNEWS we highlight takeaways from select articles as well as important notes for subscribers. Remember, PRNEWS subscribers are entitled to a 33 percent discount on all PRNEWS events and webinars.

Please contact **Carol Brault** (cbrault@accessintel.com) for information. In addition, we invite you to access the PR News Subscriber Resources Center, available to paid subscribers at: <http://www.prnewsonline.com/subscriber-resources/>

SELECT TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ **PR Leaders and Mental Health** (p. 5): While communications can be a wonderful career, 'PR executive' is listed among the 10 most-stressful occupations. In addition, the profession is a proven contributor to mental health issues.
- ▶ PR leaders should create a supportive work culture where staff can admit they have mental health issues without fear of retribution. Companies should offer benefits and training so that employees can proactively treat mental health issues. Leaders should interact often enough with employees to recognize signs of burnout and its negative impact on mental health.
- ▶ **Blockchain and PR** (pp. 9, 14): The 10-year-old technology is closely associated with **Bitcoin** and other kinds of cryptocurrency. Blockchain literally blocks those seeking to change data once it's been put in place.
- ▶ The technology's role as a digital ledger that records who touches what and when as data courses through a supply chain seems to indicate it could have limitless applications.
- ▶ For PR, it might help fight against fakenews. In addition it's being tested in a joint-government digital archive in an effort to insure the integrity of valuable digital records.
- ▶ **Digital Opinion Research and Crisis** (pp.10-11): Constant monitoring of stakeholder opinions should be considered a best practice for crisis management.
- ▶ **Media Relations and Fast Food** (pp. 12-13): Although some disagree with the philanthropy of **Chick-fil-A's** owners, the brand's employee-training methods provide a number of important lessons PR leaders can apply to media relations. Essentially PR pros are competing for the business of journalists.
- ▶ To break through, make sure you are making the experience of working with you and your brand pleasant and professional for the journalist. Treat reporters with respect and politeness as you seek to build a relationship.
- ▶ **Media Relations tips:** Educate your company on what constitutes a story. Research the journalists you pitch. Get the reporter's beat and name correct. Never send a "Dear REPORTER NAME" email. Avoid lame attempts to connect your pitch to a reporter's beat if there's no clear connection. Don't assume familiarity with a journalist you don't know. Begin your pitch stating clearly who you are and where you work. Offer something of value to the reporter (a quote, an interesting statistic or a story). ■