



PRNews'
Media
Training
Guidebook

- ▶ Messaging ▶ Crafting Sound Bites ▶ Pitching ▶ Camera Readiness
- ▶ Bridging Techniques ▶ Social Media ▶ Crisis Communications

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Editor's Letter

Media Training for the 24/7 Echo Chamber

It's not too alarmist to say that every time you sit at your keyboard, the whole world is watching. Our messages—every tweet, sound bite and Facebook post—travel blazingly fast, each one having a potential ripple effect on an organization's reputation.

That's why *PR News* has published this fourth volume of its *Media Training Guidebook*. Journalists in shrinking newsrooms and bloggers depend more and more on messages and content from companies and nonprofits because they don't have the resources to slow themselves down with old-fashioned reporting. And when you prepare for a media interview, you must assume that anything said or written will be used by countless media outlets and bloggers, leaving little room for carelessness and error.

Which is where this *Media Training Guidebook* comes in. In these pages top media trainers share insights, tips and checklists that will help you set the agenda in your dealings with the media; stay on message and field difficult questions; engage with journalists on Twitter; invest in messaging research and create positioning platforms; train yourself and C-suite executives in mastering nonverbal cues; keep relationships with journalists intact even when your executives have been misquoted or coverage contains factual errors; train spokespeople in the do's and don'ts of using social media to communicate with stakeholders; and use those platforms to your advantage in times of crisis.

A special thanks goes out to all of media training experts who dedicated their time to crafting the tips, best practices, key strategies and practical checklists that you will be able to turn to time and time again. Their goal, and ours: to increase your chances of success as you send your messages out into the 24/7 media cycle.

Speaking of which, please share your own media relations successes with us so we can keep the educational ball rolling.

Sincerely,

Steve Goldstein
Editorial Director, *PR News*
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Hub and Spoke Model: Corporate Messaging and Media Outreach

By Sue Otten

AGCO, a global manufacturer of agricultural equipment where I serve as director of corporate marketing and brand communications, was determined to enhance its corporate brand messaging through social media efforts.

AGCO's goal was twofold: build the awareness of its corporate brand and positively position its product brands for growth and margin improvement. But with limited budgets, in terms of both funding and manpower, PR and communications efforts to build the brand needed to share technologies and content development processes.

In addition, though the corporate marketing team was well suited to write and produce branded messages, it did not have all the information that was needed to produce content. Instead, it was far more effective for them to be the curators of content, acting as editors and publishers, than to be the creators of content. The product brand teams, which are decentralized and with a matrix-managed organizational structure, required the right tools and process to pull the stories together. That became possible with the hub and spoke model.

The Hub and Spoke Model

In the case of social media messaging, the model applies the simple organizational pattern of the hub and spoke. Its goal is to maximize exposure of corporate messaging and content as it originates from a single, centralized point. In AGCO's case, the hub was established through its global blog, with con-

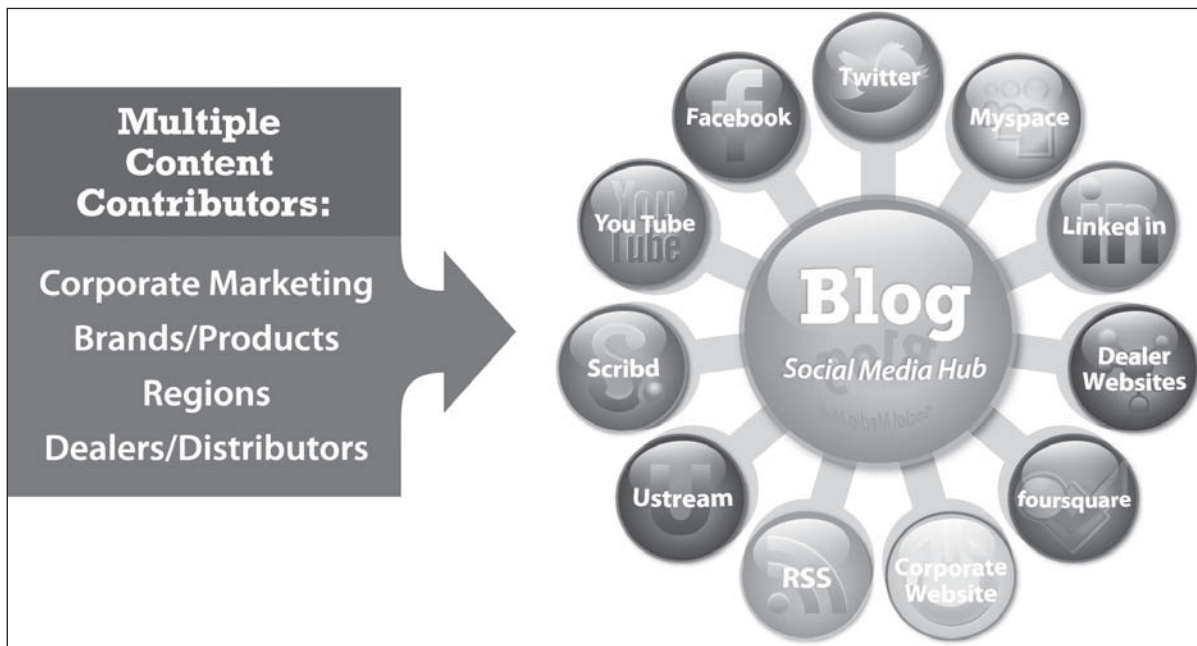
tent flowing through several connective messaging channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and RSS feeds) as the spokes.

This social media model is particularly useful when trying to stretch the reach of a small corporate marketing team, which must expose the corporate brand message across languages, countries and continents. While many traditional communication channels are helpful in achieving these objectives, social media, in particular, has emerged (and continues to evolve) as an extremely low-cost, high-impact tool, capable of spanning the globe.

Mile Wide, Inch Deep

As with many corporate marketing teams, the phrase "mile wide, inch deep" often is used to describe the overarching exposure objectives of the AGCO team. The goal, as we headed into 2010, was to deliver the corporate brand message to as large an audience as possible, including a wide variety of stakeholders. In the case of AGCO, this audience includes both business and consumer groups: dealers, customers, prospects, consumers, farmers, members of the agriculture industry at large, as well as internal employees. AGCO's objective is to build AGCO brands and share information about its products and services.

Under this rubric of "mile wide, inch deep," the hub and spoke model provides a corporate mouthpiece for brands, products, services and regional marketing teams around the globe. It supports both broad corporate brand building



AGCO used the hub and spoke model to maximize the exposure of its corporate messaging through one central social media hub.

and specific product brand messaging.

Distributing content from the blog through the social channels, or spokes, allows AGCO’s small team to disseminate information about hundreds of products, including technical information, news about new products, product care and maintenance how-tos. In addition, marketing teams can share and receive customer testimonials. The parent organization uses this same infrastructure to leverage its global agriculture expertise, contribute to the industry’s community in social media, connect with journalists and citizen journalists, promote AGCO’s corporate mission and values and build the corporate brand.

Content Creation and Dissemination

With this model, a modest corporate marketing team has globally accessible tools and technologies at its fingertips, which can be used by marketing and sales teams across all products, brands and regions. Each global team has controlled access to the various platforms, so content can reach the market with maximum expediency and efficiency.

For global, decentralized, multi-brand orga-

nizations, getting the various internal stakeholders and marketers to participate, all of whom wish to get their messages out through corporate channels, can be a challenge. (See

Strategies for Developing Relationships With Media

- **Specialize.** Focus on the content that is relevant to the individual bloggers and journalists targeted. For example, the AGCO Blog features a separate Safety section. This feed focuses on only the blog posts that are related to farm and machine safety, so bloggers and journalists interested in this area can receive uncluttered content on the topic. This makes it easier for them to pick up our message and distribute to their own readers.
- **Custom Feeds.** Consider creating custom feeds by relevant topics that will make your content more useful to bloggers and journalists.

—Sue Otten

The hub was established through AGCO's global blog, with content flowing through several connective messaging channels serving as the spokes.

sidebar for more details on the tools AGCO uses to facilitate this process.)

Corporate Blog as the Hub

In AGCO's case, the corporate blog serves as the hub, within which there are multiple blog sections: one for broad, corporate messaging; one for each of the four core product brands; and feeds that support two of the company's core values: a strategic harvesting products initiative and farm safety. So, one blog hub houses seven individual feeds, with some overlap to ensure the corporate message is pushed out through all. The spokes are the specific social channels AGCO maintains: a Facebook business page, Twitter account, YouTube channels, **Scribd** for document sharing and **Ustream** for collaborative video chats. Remember to utilize the social tools your organization can support; for example, don't set up a YouTube or Facebook channel unless your team can commit to keeping the content current.

Establish a Central Social Editorial Calendar

Once participation is enabled and your various internal stakeholders are on board to utilize the hub and spokes, the establishment of a central social editorial content calendar will collect the content coming in from all directions, facilitate the day-to-day content efforts, and help identify areas of overlap, opportunities for further collaboration and holes in your content plan.

Checklist: Calculating ROI

Gauging social media marketing effectiveness through ROI analysis means incorporating all of the various payoffs yielded. You'll want to look at:

- Page views** (Facebook tab views, blog page views—anything you can measure)
- Time spent** (i.e., by individuals on your blog, as in the AGCO example)
- Fan/follower interactions** (likes, new follows, check-ins, comments)
- Leads generated** (e-mails, newsletter sign-ups, phone calls made, whatever constitutes a lead for your company)
- Sentiment** (Are your social Web mentions positive, negative, mostly neutral?)
- Ecosystem size** (not just your fans and followers, but their fans and followers—see this as potential reach)

Incorporate your social media investment (time and hard costs) against the above gains, and you'll have an ROI that should tell you approximately what you're getting for your dollars. This can translate into greater brand awareness, brand affinity, loyalty and higher purchase intent.

—Sue Otten

The Hub and Spoke Model For Media Outreach

The model works well for communicating a corporate message through social media channels to professional journalists, bloggers and industry voices.

Use Twitter Conferences. Post messages to the blog and support them on Twitter, where your news and stories will get picked up by

journalists and other professional and non-professional voices. (Twitter is a favorite social medium among journalists due to its headline-oriented format and ease of use in the field.)

As is the case in many industries, Twitter voices in the agriculture industry range from students and universities, to research organizations and scientists, to lobbyists, “advocates” and even farmers, big and small. This variety and the number of voices means that it is important for AGCO’s social media messaging strategy to provide a strong presence in this channel.

One example in the ag industry is AgChats, a weekly ag industry Twitter conference in which the sponsoring organization, **AgChat Foundation**, posts questions on a specific industry topic. Twitter participants tweet answers, thoughts and perspectives, which stimulate robust dialogue in the community. Twitter conferences like AgChats provide an excellent opportunity for AGCO to share its messaging and engage with relevant members of the industry.

Use Video Chats. Another way to reach out to the media with this model is through video chats. AGCO hosts its own, streaming video chat on Ustream. The process entails inviting participation first through the blog hub, then pushing that message out through to Facebook fans and Twitter followers.

The result of disseminating the invitation in this way is the development of a healthy base of participants for the Ustream video chat. They typically include members of the media in addition to customers, dealers and other industry organizations.

Direct Outreach to Bloggers/Journalists. In addition to the broad outreach tactics like Twitter conferences and streaming video chats, an important part of the model’s social media strategy is direct outreach to key bloggers and journalists. Often they are first attracted to the

Tools for Success

There are two imperatives for achieving a successful hub and spoke social media messaging model:

1. A spirit of collaboration and willingness to reach out to the various internal constituents the model is meant to serve, and;
2. The blog hub must be built in a platform that is easy to administer, allows for unlimited users at different permission levels, and is flexible enough to evolve in scope as your company evolves.

WordPress is an excellent choice for advanced enterprise blogging and hub-site hosting as described here, and is the platform AGCO selected to do the job. This platform allows the global teams responsible for creating content to quickly submit blog posts for review. The corporate marketing team approves and publishes, ensuring quality control while still enabling the global teams to contribute their content seamlessly.

You’ll also want to select automation and aggregation tools that will allow streamlining of Facebook and Twitter content. **Vitruve, CoTweet, Tweetdeck, Media Funnel** and others can help you save time and maximize your organizational output.

—Sue Otten

AGCO message through the blog and/or social channels.

Those relationships can be nurtured further through direct contact and providing relevant news and information based on individual preferences and topics. Establishing topic-related RSS feeds through a well-built blog will further enhance this relationship.

ROI – Return On Involvement For Social Media

As with any new tool, questions of ROI abound. However, things like radio—or even the Internet—were questioned as serious business communications tools when they were new. Though social media has emerged as an easy-to-use, cost-effective communication tool, marketers must be fiscally responsible corporate citizens and keep an eye on the return on their organization's time and infrastructure investments. The ROI model for each organization will be different, and they should be. Each must accurately reflect the efforts put forth and the value placed on returns gained.

For AGCO, value is placed on generating qualified leads for customers (i.e. dealers), building brand loyalty through social fan/follower engagement, and increasing brand awareness. Based on these objectives, AGCO implements engagement and lead generation campaigns through the social hub and spokes, which are evaluated in part by a calculation of return on involvement: the value of fan and follower engagement. AGCO also looks at monthly and quarterly ROI for engagement and conducts e-mail lead generation campaigns through CRM tools on Facebook, all with the end goals of generating consumer/dealer interactions. In this way, AGCO utilizes social media to constantly learn about its audiences and develop continually higher quality fans and followers, with the intent to fill the sales prospect pipeline.

With the constantly evolving nature of social media tools and technology, the medium is sure to continually change the way we live, interact and do business. As such, marketers must keep eyes and ears open to new ways to connect with customers. The hub and spoke model continues to provide a flexible way

Wheel Advantage: Five Benefits of the Hub and Spoke Model

Want to ensure you're in control of and getting value from your multiple social media destinations? To start, Jeremiah Olywang, partner at **Altimeter Group**, and Peter Heffring, CEO of **Expion**, recommend looking at the hub and spoke model. "If you have a lot of spokes—products, departments, franchises, etc.—it's important to leverage the value of them," says Heffring. "Moving content from your hub and into the spokes, while empowering your local staff, is the best way to do that." Here are some Hub and Spoke benefits:

1. Helps move from social media fragmentation to centralization, but allows for local control as well.
2. Higher active engagement, which leads to improved customer loyalty.
3. Better collaboration with employees and customers for more relevant marketing.
4. Get real-time market intelligence on product and service issues.
5. Improved accountability when employees own the customer relationship.

—PR News Editors

to incorporate new tools as they arise, while maintaining a single, manageable point of centralization. **PRN**

Sue Otten is director, corporate marketing and brand communications worldwide at AGCO, a global farm equipment manufacturer.