

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Contents

Diversity Communications Employee Relations

Diversity and Inclusion Must Be Communicated From the Inside-Out

All national political conventions have their moments—good, puzzling and just plain bad. At the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla., Mitt Romney's wife, Ann, gave an impassioned speech that just may have humanized her husband in the eyes of the American public. Then, special

guest Clint Eastwood wowed some and perplexed others with his conversation with a chair. Finally, there was the horrific incident involving a CNN camera person: Reportedly two attendees threw peanuts at the African-American woman and said "this is how we feed the animals." Ugly to be sure. The peanut-throwing incident wasn't the only time when race became an issue at the convention. While the

Republicans ensured women and minorities—particularly Hispanics—were represented on the stage, the lack of diversity among the delegates was noticeable, prompting a snarky Twitter handle crafted by singer Clay Aiken that drew national attention.

Diversity is a subject that some might feel shouldn't need to be discussed in the 21st century. But while diversity and inclusion strides have been

made in Corporate America, there's significant room for improvement, says Charles K. Poole, senior VP, internal/external communications at Citi. "There is no doubt great strides have been made," says Poole. "But just like anything else, more can be done."

Before looking into what more organizations can do regarding diversity, let's look at some statistics: People of

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

Seven Things You Will Learn in This Week's Issue of PR News

1. The Republican National Convention's image was marred by an incident involving delegates and a CNN camera person. (p. 1)
2. One tip for picking a PR agency: involve key leaders from the start of the process. (p. 1)
3. A survey finds that 36% of social network users say the sites are important to them in keeping up with politics. (p. 3)
4. The centerpiece of the New York Museum of Conan Art was a life-size statue of the man made completely of colored pencils and zip ties. (p. 4)
5. SmArties are hipsters in their 20's and 30's who are tech-savvy; addicted to pop culture; and like witty banter. (p. 5)
6. Among Fortune 500 CEOs, 21 are people of color. (p. 6)
7. Despite the popularity of "Big Data," a majority of marketers believe that less than half of their analytics are useful. (p. 8)

▶ Management POV

Avoid Major Roadblocks: Streamline the Search for a PR Agency Partner

Whether a B2B client search for an agency partner stems from a major business transition or a cyclical review of results from the incumbent firm, the process can be fraught with complications. The intricate structure of some B2Bs can create roadblocks in the decision making to identify a suitable match.

Having little to no experience with outside PR counsel is yet another obstacle for many business-facing companies that have traditionally relied on internal staff and resources to handle corporate and marketing communications.

Since many senior B2B communications executives are already gearing up for their 2013 budget discussion talks,

we reached out to experienced agency seekers for their insights on the B2B agency search process. Our three seasoned veterans offered perspectives from the vantage points of marketing management consulting, external procurement and an end client.

DAN PLACHTA Engagement Manager, The Bedford Group

For more than 20 years, The Bedford Group has managed agency searches across categories, disciplines and geographies in both B2B and B2C. The following are our top three tips for a B2B search:

- Build consensus from

the start. Since many B2B organizations are highly matrixed enterprises with diverse product lines, involve key business unit leaders from the start of the search. The process should be a consensus-building exercise for all stakeholders who take a leadership role in guiding the communications product. Waiting until the final presentation for executive involvement can derail the search and/or create dissenting pockets within the organization going forward.

- Expand criteria beyond direct category experience. When establishing search parameters clients often

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Editor, Scott Van Camp,
212.621.4693, svancamp@accessintel.com

Editorial Director, Jon Gelberg,
212.621.4940, jgelberg@accessintel.com

Editorial Director/Events, Steve Goldstein,
212.621.4890, sgoldstein@accessintel.com

Senior Editor, Jamar Hudson,
301.354.1692, jhudson@accessintel.com

Community Editor, Bill Miltenberg,
212.621.4980, bmiltenberg@accessintel.com

Contributing Writer, Linda Romanello

Director of Marketing & Event Logistics, Kate Schaeffer,
301.354.2303, kschaeffer@accessintel.com

Marketing Manager, Laura Berdichevsky,
301.354.1610, lberdichevsky@accessintel.com

Associate Publisher and Brand Director,
PR News Group, Amy Jefferies, 301.354.1699
ajefferies@accessintel.com

Art Director, Steve Olson

SVP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz
212.621.4964, dschwartz@accessintel.com

Division President, Heather Farley

President & CEO, Don Pazour



PR News ADVISORY BOARD

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Group Subscriptions - Kate Schaeffer,
301.354.2303; kschaeffer@accessintel.com

Additional Copies & Article Reprints -
Contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295; info@
wrightsmedia.com



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4 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20850

Client Services:

Phone: 888.707.5814 • Fax: 301.309.3847
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:

88 Pine Street, Suite 510, New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212.621.4890 • Fax: 212.621.4879

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PR News Announces Digital PR Awards Finalists

Firmly firmly integrated into most PR campaigns, digital PR is an integral component of communications initiatives, as audiences engage with multiple digital platforms, be it Facebook, Twitter, Web sites, YouTube or Pinterest. The following 2012 Digital PR Awards finalists have produced top-flight digital communications initiatives and *PR News* is proud to honor the organizations and people behind them. All finalists will be celebrated at our Digital PR Awards luncheon at New York's Grand Hyatt on Oct. 1, 2012 (visit www.prnewsonline.com/awards/digitalprawards2012-finalists.html). For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Diane Schwartz at dschwartz@accessintel.com.

Blog (Organization)

- Charles Schwab • ESPN • Lockheed Martin • The National Archives and Records Administration • Research in Motion

Blogger

- Steve Cody, Peppercom • Todd Defren, SHIFT Communications • Gini Dietrich, Arment Dietrich
- Shel Holtz, Holtz Communication + Technology
- Kathleen Henson, Henson Consulting
- Jeff Simmermon, Time Warner Cable

Cause Marketing/CSR

- AOL • Cone Communications • Look Good Feel Better
- MWW • Ogilvy PR Australia • Pearson Foundation
- Popchips • Stonyfield Farm

Contest/Game

- AICPA • GolinHarris/McDonald's • Littelfuse
- Porter Novelli • rbb Public Relations • Zocalo Group

Crisis Management

- American Airlines and Weber Shandwick • Chesapeake Energy • Chevrolet: General Motors • Hospital for Special Care
- PCIAA & RMIIA • TTNET • Weber Shandwick

Digital Communicator

- Samara Finn - Marina Maher Communications
- Tim Haran - USANA Health Sciences
- Richard Licata - NBC Entertainment

Digital Marketing Campaign – \$100K and Under

- Discovery Communications • D S Simon Productions, Inc for HP Hood and the Dairy Management, Inc.
- HORN • Linhart Public Relations and Vermilion Design + Interactive • Ogilvy PR Australia • PR Newswire Association, LLC and Apple Vacations

Digital Marketing Campaign - \$100K – \$200K

- CRT/tanaka • Emerging Media • The History Channel
- NBC Entertainment

Digital Marketing Campaign - \$200K – \$500K

- The Hershey Company • HORN • Lippe Taylor Brand Communications • MilkPEP and Weber Shandwick
- RadioShack and Weber Shandwick
- Save Our Water/ACWA

Digital Marketing Campaign - \$500K+

- AICPA • Boeing • Current Lifestyle Marketing
- Porter Novelli • Simantel

Digital PR Campaign

- The Clorox Company with Ketchum • Eukanuba
- Everyday Health • Food Network and Text 100
- Inner Circle Labs • MWW • PBS

Digital PR Team of the Year

- American Red Cross • Fleishman-Hillard • Kaiser

- Permanente • Lantronix • MWW's Dialogue Digital
- NBC Entertainment

Email Newsletter

- Bhava Communications • Hunter Public Relations
- LEWIS PR US • Peppercom • Toy Industry Association
- UCSF

Employee Communications Online

- Bacardi Limited • Capstrat • Newlink Communications
- Northwestern Memorial Hospital • Ogilvy PR

Facebook Communications/Uses of Facebook

- Cisco Systems • Esurance • Integrate PR • Marion, Montgomery, Inc. • PepsiCo • rbb Public Relations
- RFIbinder • The Ritz Carlton • Sprout
- TBWA/Chiat/Day • Weber Shandwick

Influencer Communications

- CRT/tanaka • GolinHarris • GroundFloor Media
- Mastercard • SHIFT Communications

Intranet

- Bacardi Limited • Intellectual Ventures • Liaison Technologies • The Nature Conservancy • Turk Telecom
- Weber Shandwick

Listening Campaign

- Cone Communications • Spectrum Science
- MilkPEP and Weber Shandwick

Location-Based Digital Campaign

- AMD • The Ritz-Carlton • Weber Shandwick

Media Relations Campaign

- AMD • Inner Circle Labs • LEWIS PR
- RFIbinder and Akerman Senterfitt • Unilever

Microsite/Custom Site

- AOL • Boeing • High Road Communications • Ingersoll Rand
- The Nature Conservancy • NBC Entertainment • Raytheon

Mobile Initiatives

- Accenture • American Cancer Society
- DC Interactive Group • Kanyon Shopping Center
- NBC Entertainment • TTNET
- Vodafone and Plasenta

Most Engaged Brand/Online Community

- The Clorox Company with Ketchum • CRT/tanaka
- GolinHarris/McDonald's
- Unilever • Vodafone and Plasenta

New Digital Service/Product

- Cone Communications • Ground Floor Media • HORN
- SocialChorus

Public Finds Social Networking Sites Politically Useful; Keurig and Skype Identified as 'Breakaway Brands'

► **Public Votes "Yes" for Social Media:** A Pew Internet & American Life Project survey found that 36% of social networking site users say the sites are "very important" or "somewhat important" to them in keeping up with political news. Other survey highlights include:

- 25% of social network users surveyed say they became more active in a political issue after discussing it or

reading posts about it, and 16% say they changed their views about an issue after discussing it or reading about it on the sites.

- Among Democrats, 33% say they are becoming more active as a result of social networks as did 24% of Republicans, 39% of self-described liberals and 21% of self-described moderates.

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project

► **Top Brands Revealed:** Keurig and Skype are some of the leading "breakaway brands" that have seen dramatic improvements in perception among U.S. consumers, says a 2008-2011 study (released in August 2012) of 15,000 consumers by Landor. Covering 48 metrics—including relevance, innovation, dynamism and distinctiveness—and 2,500 products and services, Landor identified the brands that saw the greatest growth in this

period. Highlights include:

- Facebook led the charts, logging a 206% lift from 2008-11 (this was pre-IPO).
- Second place, with a 79% lift, went to coffee-pod maker Keurig, which was praised for making fair trade and recyclable products.
- Skype, the online tele-platform, claimed third, growing 77% from 2008-11. PRN

Source: Landor

Digital PR Awards Finalists

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New Site

- American Automobile Association • APCO Worldwide
- MilkPEP and Weber Shandwick • National Safe Boating Council
- Waggener Edstrom Worldwide

Online Newsroom

- Bally Technologies • Cisco Systems • ConranPR • Fleishman-Hillard
- Hilton Hotels & Resorts with Covalent Logic • MWW
- Procter & Gamble Company

PR Firm of the Year: Digital

- Affect • Fleishman Hillard • HORN • Integrate Public Relations • MWW
- Porter Novelli • Weber Shandwick

Public Affairs Campaign

- APCO Worldwide • International Franchise Association • Property Casualty Insurers Association of America • Southwest Airlines

Redesign/Relaunch of Site

- Charles Schwab • Experian Hitwise • KB Home • National Council on Crime and Delinquency • Spectrum Science Communications

SEO

- CRT/tanaka • Cuyahoga Community College • DMC Harper University Hospital
- Great Plains Communications • LexisNexis® Web Visibility Solutions

Social Networking Campaign

- The Clorox Company with Ketchum • HORN • MilkPEP and Weber Shandwick
- Ogilvy PR Australia • Porter Novelli • Quinn & Co • rbb Public Relations
- Waggener Edstrom Worldwide

Twitter Communications

- AMD • American Airlines and Weber Shandwick • Cisco Systems
- MilkPEP and Weber Shandwick • NYC & Company • U.S. Department of Labor
- Waggener Edstrom Worldwide

Video

- Boeing • CIT • Coca Cola Company • Everyday Health • Fleishman Hillard
- Lockheed Martin • Northwestern Memorial • Vivid Ascent

Viral Campaign

- AMD • GolinHarris/McDonald's • Marina Maher Communications
- Mohegan Sun

WOW! Campaign

- American Red Cross and Dell • BWK New York • HORN • Kaiser Permanente
- Linhart Public Relations and Vermillion Design + Interactive
- Vodafone and Plasenta



PR News' Platinum PR Awards Luncheon

September 14 | 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. ET | The Grand Hyatt, NYC

This must-attend event will honor the Platinum PR Award winners and honorable mentions who represent the corporations, agencies and nonprofits who took chances, made tremendous strides and understand the power of public relations.

Join us to salute the year's most outstanding communications initiatives and programs in the highly competitive and dynamic PR arena.

Register now at www.prnewsonline.com/platinumluncheon.



20710

Neo-Classic PR Stunt Parodies New York Art Museums, Driving Awareness of *Conan's* Return to the Big Apple

Company: TBS

Agency: LeadDog Marketing Communications

Timeframe: July - November 2011

There's no doubt that New York City is a mecca for museums. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Museum of Modern Art to the Guggenheim (and many more in between), locals and tourists alike flock to these venues to get their dose of culture.

Few of them would captivate like NYCOCOMoCA, the New York Museum of Conan Art, which in its limited 2011 run drew thousands of art-goers clamoring to see a relatively new creative genre.

NYCOCOMoCA was no ordinary museum. In fact, it was a PR stunt, meant to celebrate and gain press around comedian and talk-show host Conan O'Brien. O'Brien had just returned to NYC for the first time since he left NBC abruptly in January 2010 and

landed on TBS. To make a splash in the largest media market in the world, while supporting "Conan Week," TBS, O'Brien's writing and design group Team Coco and marketing agency **LeadDog Marketing Group** would join forces to parody the aforementioned classic New York institutions: High-end art museums and galleries.

SKEWERING HIGH-BROW

There are plenty of other things in NYC to parody. Why choose art museums? Brainstorming sessions involving all parties resulted in many ideas—playing up Conan's orange hair was one, says Carter Schwarberg, senior graphic designer at LeadDog and art director on the project. But the idea of art was a natural fit, as hundreds of pieces of "fan art" has been submitted and displayed digitally on the Team Coco Web site, teamcoco.com. "This was a chance to take that art and put it on display in



Photo courtesy of LeadDog Marketing Group

The Time Warner Center at Manhattan's bustling Columbus Circle served as the venue for NYCOCOMoCa, the New York Museum of Conan Art.

one of the great art capitols of the world," says Schwarberg. Thus the idea was hatched: NYCOCOMoCA would be an unparalleled combination of O'Brien's distinctive humor and a high-end museum-quality design that would rival the best of New York's galleries. The LeadDog team would head up the creation of an authentic and immersive experience for rabid Conan fans in celebration of Conan's week of New York shows, while heading up the local PR effort to drive Conan fans to the exhibit.

SETTING THE STAGE

How to display the fan art was a critical point. Schwarberg considered customizing a bus and driving it around New York or perhaps make it a pop-up display. But a more static platform made the most sense—the Time Warner Center, home to Turner Broadcasting near Columbus Circle—and close to the Beacon Theater, where the *Conan* show would be taping.

Make no mistake, putting together high-brow parody is serious work. Schwarberg's

job to meld multiple components of the effort gave a slightly different meaning to the widely used PR/marketing term "content curation." With 200 pieces of fan art displayed on Team Coco's online gallery, Schwarberg picked 54 pieces for display, which ran the art gamut—from portraiture and digital art to edible creations and sculpture.

But no serious showing can be without a *pièce de résistance*: a commissioned work that served as the focal point of the exhibit. Found object artist Federico Uribe of the NOW Contemporary Art Gallery in Miami was up to the task, creating a life-size statue made completely of colored pencils and zip ties titled "Conan Pencilism" (the exhibit was an exercise in "isms" says Schwarberg).

HITTING UP HIPSTERS

As the museum details were being cemented, PR outreach was underway. While the national media relations strategy around O'Brien's return to the Big Apple was

THE FANS GO WILD: DIGITAL LESSONS LEARNED FROM FAN WEB SITES

While the New York Museum of Conan Art was designed and executed by marketing and PR, it was driven by O'Brien's rabid fans, who have sent in hundreds of pieces of fan art to teamcoco.com, the Conan fan site. What is it about these Web sites that cause such devotion? We asked Alanna Francis, director of marketing at Web design and marketing company **Blue Fountain Media** (bluefountainmedia.com) and Melissa Murphy, senior manager, influencer activation and collaboration at **SocialChorus** (socialchorus.com) to highlight fan site tactics that can transfer to just about any organization.

- **Communicate Brand Passion.** "Fan sites convey a passion that really comes through to the audience," says Murphy. Believe in your own brand and transfer that passion to your Web site.
- **Provide exclusive content.** Sneak peaks and interviews fans can find nowhere else stokes the engagement, says Murphy.
- **Employ Gamification.** Games that fans can play individually and with each other keep them highly engaged, says Francis.
- **Leverage visitor-generated content:** Whether it's reviews, setting up a forum, or accepting videos, user content builds community and engagement, says Francis.



The centerpiece of the exhibit was a commissioned work by found object artist Federico Uribe.

being executed by Brian Ross, director of marketing strategy at TBS Entertainment at Turner Broadcasting, LeadDog's Melissa Garvin, senior manager of PR, was devising the all-important local strategy to draw attention to the NYC-based museum. The prime audience target, says Garvin: "The SmArty," someone who is smart, creative, trend-forward, tech-savvy, influential and artistic (see the sidebar for reaching this audience).

A secondary target was the unique community of art and pop-culture loving New Yorkers who feel they have "seen it all," says Garvin. LeadDog compiled a list of media outlets these targets peruse, including print properties *The New Yorker*, *New York* magazine, *Time Out New York*, *Village Voice*, *Metro*, blogs Gothamist and Flavorpill, and TV outlet NY1.

The event was pitched via e-mails and phone calls as a "must-visit, limited engagement cultural event," says Garvin. LeadDog also leveraged images of the artwork to catch the media's eye and created digital "invitations" for the museum—similar to the invites one gets when a legitimate art exhibit opens.

Social media and guerilla

marketing strategies were also deployed. NYCOCOMoCA attendees would be able to check into the gallery via Foursquare, and a NYCOCOMoCA t-shirt was given to anyone who checked in on Facebook or Twitter. Brand ambassadors clad in black turtlenecks and orange berets handed out postcards to passersby outside the exhibit.

To drive social media efforts, TBS worked with the design and development group **Deep Local**, which produced an orange robotic couch—made in the likeness of Conan's hair—that hugged visitors and spoke to them while taking their picture. Attendees immediately received the photo and could share it on-site via Facebook and Twitter.

OPENING NIGHT

Meanwhile, back at the Time Warner Center's second floor, NYCOCOMoCA was taking shape. A spot-on parody is no laughing matter, and the devil was in the details. LeadDog tended to the look and feel of the exhibit, designing the logo, the exhibit walls, flooring and lighting, staff uniforms and a welcome desk (just like in those highfalutin museums). Collateral included promotional postcards, posters T-shirts and buttons.

By the time the space was finished, NYCOCOMoCA had all the trappings of a New York City art museum, complete with four different sections featuring different genres: classical narcissism; neo-impressionistic expressionism; really real surrealism; and post-self deconstructivism. You get the picture. The exhibit was topped off with a hilarious audio tour that O'Brien and his TV sidekick Andy Richter ad-libbed as they walked through the museum.

BIG DRAW

Opening October 18, 2011, NYCOCOMoCA drew an impressive number of *Conan*

fans and art aficionados. But there might have been even more if O'Brien's schedule would have allowed more local media opportunities, says Garvin. One tactic tried was inviting art schools and local community centers to be a "guest of Conan" for the day and receive a grand tour from a guide. Time constraints made that move difficult, says Garvin.

In any event, the 11-day exhibit drew 41,592 attendees. Other results include:

- 10,240 postcards distributed
- 1,507 foursquare check-ins
- 1,727 audio tours taken;
- 7,900 New Yorkers hugged by the Conan LoveSeat
- Time Warner Center's traffic was increased by 7,247 people, compared to the same time frame in 2010
- 45 total broadcast, print,

online and social media placements

The best hit? An exclusive with *New York* magazine's Vulture section that featured a time-lapse video of the exhibit's construction. Even better, the *Conan* show's ratings were up 7% among adults 18-49 during his New York City stint.

By adding art to the PR mix, O'Brien's return to New York City proved to be a pretty picture indeed. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Carter Schwarberg, carter@leaddogmarketing.com;
Melissa Garvin, mgarvin@leaddogmarketing.com;
Alanna Francis, alanna@bluefountainmedia.com;
Melissa Murphy, melissa@poppresso.com.

APPEALING TO THE IMPOSSIBLY HIP: HOW TO SWAY THE SmArty

Looking to attract people to NYCOCOMoCA, the New York Museum of Conan Art, **LeadDog Marketing Group** turned to a target audience that is multiplying not only in New York City but around the globe: SmArties, men and women typically in their 20's and 30's who value independent thinking; are well educated; tech-savvy; are addicted to pop culture; and have an appreciation of art and indie-rock, creativity and witty banter. Here are tips from Melissa Garvin, senior manager of PR at LeadDog, on how to reach this growing group:



SmArty in action

- **Involve them:** By using fan art as the focus of the museum, the audience was not only engaged, they were included, says Garvin. Attendees were able to look at fellow fans' work and feel immersed in the experience.
- **Appeal to the over-sharer:** "SmArties love to share—whether it's their knowledge of a TV series, or the awesome under-the-radar bar they just stumbled upon," says Garvin. They especially love to share information via their social media platforms. To appeal to the oversharer, the Conan team encouraged Foursquare check-ins, as well as tweets and Facebook posts.
- **Mix high and low brow:** While they may read the *New Yorker* religiously, they're also checking out Gawker. "We focused on traditional art sections, as well as pop-culture focused entertainment beats to reach the SmArty from all sides," says Garvin.
- **Embrace spontaneity:** "The SmArty is constantly trying to create their own 'New York moment' by weeding out the 'uncool' happenings in the city," says Garvin. The exhibit engaged the SmArty with the above tactics, yet, allowed for there to be a sense of discovery.

Diving Into Diversity

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color make up nearly one-third of the workforce, reports the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Yet there is a startling lack of diversity in corporate boardrooms. According to the Center for American Progress' July, 2012 report, among Fortune 500 CEOs, only 21 are people of color— that's just 4.2%.

DIVERSITY'S VALUE

Organizations are missing out on the advantages diversity brings—the value of which cannot be measured by raw numbers, says Poole. The real value comes from bringing diversity of thought and talent into the fold. “You can't categorize diversity based on what a person looks like,” says Poole. “It's what that person can do.”

And that points directly to the business side of the equation. “Organizations need to drive the efforts of diversity from a ‘program’ into becoming part of the way they do busi-

ness,” says Joe Santana, an executive diversity and inclusion consultant. And that concept is a reality at **CVS Caremark**, where according to David L.



“You can't categorize diversity based on what a person looks like. It's what that person can do for the organization.”

Charles K. Poole
Citi

Casey, the company's chief diversity officer, diversity is a top-down priority of its leadership. In fact, CVS Caremark leverages diversity as a market differentiator. “It's not just enough to have diversity, it's about managing diversity just as you would any other strategic asset,” says Casey.

SELF-REFLECTION

Tackling diversity is a challenge, and takes much organizational—and self—reflection, says Santana. “Companies must

analyze how their current state of diversity is impacting their business,” he says. Once that is determined, it's simply not enough to just “get it.”

“Even when leadership realizes the value of it, that doesn't mean they are going to start behaving differently,” says Santana. Talk about how organizations consider themselves to be meritocracies can sometimes be just that—talk.

BRIDGING THE GAP

To walk the walk, it's about bridging cultural gaps, says Sonia Sroka, senior VP, director of Hispanic marketing at **Porter Novelli**. Here are four suggestions from Sroka on how to approach diversity:

- Have a clear understanding about diversity and inclusion in your organization;
- It's about a diversity of ideas and experience, not just race, ethnicity or gender;
- Efforts should be driven by executives and not housed as HR function; and
- Consider your efforts more than just a feel-good exercise.

Casey says one of the biggest challenges is for organizations to quantify the value of diversity to their corporate cultures. But an equal challenge is having diversity programs result in real employee satisfaction and engagement, and to turn it into an ethos that permeates the workplace.

PR, ORGANICALLY

From a communications standpoint, Poole is wary of PR programs that tout diversity in a big way, internally or externally. “That makes diversity more of the exception, rather than the rule,” he says. Poole believes that for a diversity movement to be successful, it should be subtle, and start with the

engagement level of employees. “Everyone must engage with each other beyond just words,” he says. Thus, putting people in teams and asking them to work together frees them up for “organic interaction,” says Poole. “You must show your employees a way to find their own paths toward diversity.” Which means, says Poole, more bottom-up efforts in an organization to achieve diversity organically, and less top-down directives that may water down your efforts.

CVS Caremark has seen success with PR around diversity. While acknowledging that resonance with the public and employees around the issue is hard to measure, anecdotally a video about the company's commitment to diversity was well received at a National Urban League Convention, where people reportedly stopped and watched it from start to finish.

“We see that our diversity story matters to our equally diverse customer base and the communities in which we operate across the country,” says Casey (see the sidebar for his steps toward achieving diversity in your organization).

In any case, the subject of diversity can be daunting. “Our brain is wired for living in a society different from today, in which we're shoulder to shoulder with people who view the world differently,” says Santana. “We need to evolve our behavior to a new level to get the best outcomes.” **PRN**

CONTACT:

Sonia Sroka, sonia.sroka@porternovelli.com; David L. Casey, david.casey@cvscaremark.com; Charles K. Poole, pooleproof@aol.com; Joseph Santana, joseph.l.santana@gmail.com.

AVOID MARKET IRRELEVANCE: 3 STEPS TOWARD ACHIEVING DIVERSITY

Diversity is not just a cosmetic program that improves the reputation and standing of an organization. It's an expectation of today's young workforce, says David L. Casey, chief diversity officer at **CVS Caremark**. “Younger employees have definite expectations of how employers will handle the diversity issue,” he says. “In fact, they don't want an employer to look at diversity as an issue that needs to be addressed by human resources.” Here are three steps from Casey on ingraining diversity deep into an organization's culture.

Step 1: Acknowledge that “ignoring” the rapidly changing demographics of your talent pools and customers is a one-way ticket to marketplace irrelevance. “One of our guiding philosophies is ‘What got us here won't get us there’” says Casey.

Step 2: Engage top leadership on the issue and help them understand, if they don't already, that although often hard to quantify, diversity initiatives have a significant ROI. “The key to maintaining relevance in today's marketplace is innovation,” says Casey. “And the key to innovation is having multiple perspectives not just meeting, but anticipating the needs of your customers.”

Step 3: Understand diversity isn't just about black and white, or male and female. It is about all differences—of opinion, of approach. It is so important to stop trying to create a culture of homogeneity and an environment that rewards the kind of rigid uniformity that stifles innovation, says Casey.

PR Agency Partner Search

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place too much emphasis on direct category experience. While the considered firms ideally should have a thorough understanding of

the category, more important is their intellectual bandwidth to communicate with multiple segments across complicated lines of business.

- **Filter out the “fakers.”**

Throughout the search, plant a few “filters” to validate whether or not the agency truly grasps the target groups and “speaks their language.” With a recent financial services client, we executed this by having the candidates complete a business banking questionnaire that revealed whether or not they were using the necessary “tribal code” (e.g. using “financing” rather than “loan” when speaking to a CFO-level target).

Hiring a new public relations agency is not an easy process. But by removing the guesswork and establishing the right metrics to guide the review, you can build a foundation for a productive, long-lasting relationship.

BRAD DEHART
Global Practice Leader,
Marketing Practice,
Procurian

Many companies who are embarking on PR agency searches are starting to work with procurement teams to help with the pitches. Particularly since the downturn in 2008, there has been increasing scru-

tiny on marketing and communications budgets overall. As a result, procurement has been called upon by finance leaders to “address this spend.”

Where this falls down is when PR and communications departments do not have specialized marketing procurement resources in place to help. In some cases, if there is funding,



they will engage an outside search consultant, or they will limp through the process with what may be an internal generalist procurement team (particularly B2B firms that may not have large marketing budgets).

Our firm provides ongoing, specialized marketing procurement and agency management support and we frequently conduct public relations as well as ad, digital and other specialized agency searches for our customers.

It seemed four or five years ago that social media was much more of a focus for B2C clients than for B2B clients. There was also a tendency to see social media as owned by the PR agencies.

Also, listening platforms were within PR agency pass-through expenses, and community management efforts were within PR. This has all changed dramatically.

While the PR agencies play important roles, at many companies these agencies are no longer playing an overall lead role on social media programs. Ad agencies, digital agencies and social media strategy agencies are involved, and there are often resources internally

that are managing social media platforms as well as handling community management. Sometimes these functions are handled by another outsourced provider beyond the PR agency.

LUJEAN SMITH
Global Communications
Leader, GE Power &
Water, Water & Process
Technologies

Selecting the right agency partner can make all the dif-



ference in the success of your company’s PR program. I’ve managed and helped develop several RFPs for PR and advertising agencies over the years, and found a few steps that can make the process easier:

- **Examine your needs and determine exactly the type of partner you’re looking for.**

Do you have good in-house writing expertise, but need media relations support? Do you need solid technical writers for B2B outreach, or are you looking for an agency that can translate your complex business solutions into easy-to-understand messages for mainstream media? What’s the stretch goal for your PR program that your agency needs to help you achieve? Understanding your needs will help you develop a targeted RFP that will help you find the right agency fit for your business.

- **Reach out to contacts within your network, both in and outside your industry, to get agency recommendations to**

include in the RFP process. Opening the first round to a large field will give you a wider range of choices and could introduce you to a final candidate that you might have otherwise overlooked.

- **Ask tough questions of the candidates when you’re at the interview stage.** Is this the same team that will work on your day-to-day business? Can they provide journalist references who can speak to the expertise of the agency staff? How do they handle disagreements in approach with their clients?

Think of the answers that you would have liked to have had prior to choosing your previous or current agency, and ask those questions. You want this to be a long-term relationship, so you need to get to know the agency well before you commit.

Other considerations in the agency selection process should include defining a solid retainer budget, service expectations, administrative and overhead costs, meeting and reporting rhythms, and onboarding responsibilities.

Putting in some extra time up front will pay off when you select the agency that will help you meet your PR goals. **PRN**

CONTACT:

B2B Communications is written by Mary C. Buhay, VP at Gibbs & Soell Public Relations. She can be reached at mbuhay@gibbs-soell.com.

Editor’s Note: Tune into our Pinterest Power Webinar on Thursday, Sept. 13 (www.prnewsonline.com/webinars/2012-9-13.html); and learn how to measure your PR programs across all the dominant social media platforms at the PR News Social Media Measurement Conference in NYC on Tuesday, Oct. 2 (www.prnewsonline.com/socialmediameasureConference/).



PR's Crystal Ball: Embracing Predictive Analytics

The turn of events came mid-semester, when a gangly teen was called to the front of our music theory class. Asked to compose a short classical piece, he instead created an algorithm that instructed his computer to do the work. While the result was pleasant to the ear, it was also a bit unsettling. Soul had been replaced by science.

Had I not been witness to this, I may have gone on to earn my engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Instead, I transferred out and began studying communications across the Charles River at Boston University.

Since then, I've been asked the question time and time again. Can the data-centric, logic-based sensibilities of an engineer coexist with the non-linear creativity of a PR professional? For our industry to prosper, there is only one answer. There is no longer an "either/or" option. Data skills must go hand-in-hand with creative skills.

THE REARVIEW MIRROR

We've all seen the standard PR metrics dashboards. Outputs running alongside outcomes. Competitive share interspersed with sales impacts. Even the dreaded ad value equivalency.

But, for a moment, put aside the debate on what the "right" metrics are. They'll

vary by organization, by team, by industry and individual. Instead, let's focus on what those numbers are telling us—or not—as the case may be.

A recent report from **Econsultancy and Lynchpin** pointed out that despite the explosion of data sources, a majority of marketers believe that less than half of their analytics are useful.

Some say this stems from being blinded by too much information. Let me offer another explanation. These marketers are trying to hurtle forward at top speeds, but with their eyes locked firmly on the rearview mirror. The data which is driving much of the PR industry today is snapshot based—a look at moments frozen in time, without the corresponding analysis as to what that data means for the future.

Edmund Burke famously opined that those who don't know history are destined to repeat it. Yet those who don't look where they're headed are bound to crash.

PAST IS PREDICTIVE

We may not have a crystal ball, but we're coming closer.

You've undoubtedly heard of the line made famous by money managers looking to manage expectations: past results are not a guarantee of future performance.

Sure, there's no guarantee,

but what's already transpired is certainly informing future planning. So why not use the same predictive strategy for your PR programs? Here's how to get started:

- **Think trends, not snapshots.** Looking at any given picture is interesting, but even more intriguing is viewing a series of pictures —of the same subject —shot over time. The change in their faces and environments tells a more compelling story. Similarly, pull together your data from months gone by to better understand the trends at hand, then project that momentum out another few months.
- **Get visual.** Some of us can "see" figures coming to life directly from a quantitative report or spreadsheet. If you can't, convert that data into something more visual.
- **Start small.** Don't try to boil the ocean by attempting to put all of your data into the mix. Choose a few categories in which you truly understand the intrinsic relationship between what has occurred, and what that means for the future.
- **Find new applications.** Apply predictive modeling to new applications, including highly variable scenarios such as crisis communications. A few months ago, a

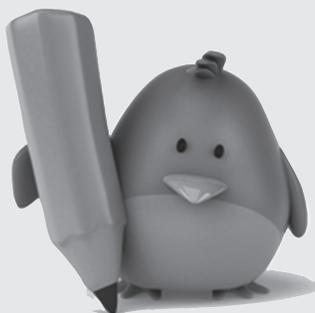
global brand found itself under attack by an online pundit, leading one of its agencies to immediately begin advocating for a full-blown response. We instead hit the pause button to see how the data played out over the next 90 minutes. Using real-time monitoring, the trend line soon indicated that the issue would run its course in a few hours —an instance where doing nothing trumped a knee-jerk reaction.

- **Evangelize.** Your greatest challenge in advancing the power of predictive data may be inertia. Make the first move and retire antiquated reports that say little, weigh a lot and barely get read. Replace them with a couple of informed analyses of what's to come, and watch eyes (and brains) light up.

Over the past several weeks, "Big Data" has leapt onto the scene as a buzzword. Now's the time to take advantage of the concept. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Mike McDougall, APR, is managing partner of McDougall Travers Collins (McDougallTC.com), Contact him at mmcdougall@mcdougalltc.com.



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