

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Social Media

Digital PR

Celebrity Activity on Social Media Illustrates Transformation In PR

Celebrities have all the fun on social media. Some get paid an obscene amount of money to promote a brand on Facebook or Twitter; most have the freedom to tweet their thoughts whenever they want. With them, even a “bad” tweet can be good.

The most successful celebrities on social media, whether

they hawk products or not, have one skill that brands themselves should emulate: engagement. Authentic engagement. “You can get as many friends, followers or have the best looking Facebook page, but true engagement is hard to achieve,” says Mark Zablow, founder of **Cogent Entertainment**, a company that finds social media celebrities for its stable of about 30 client brands. The difference between

a brand’s social presence and a celebrity’s? Zablow says brands have a set social playbook: “the traditional reply—you jump in and thank them for their comment—and we’ll get right back to you,” he says. “That’s the minimum. Brands stop there out of fear.” Celebrities, on the other hand, don’t necessarily engage with fans in a predictable manner, and that can be a good thing.

Take Twitter, the social

platform of choice for today’s celebrities. “Twitter is such a powerful channel, and so interesting because of the dynamic of a conversation,” says Adrianna Giuliani, SVP, creative & strategic planner at **DeVries Public Relations**. “For a celeb it can show slice of life, unique lifestyle or give a window into who they really are.” And that’s the difference between the way brands and

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

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7. To properly communicate bad news, try the simple “sandwich technique.” (p. 8)

Marketing Communications Digital PR

Smart Companies Leading the Charge To Fully Integrate PR and Marketing

The relationship between public relations and marketing has traditionally been perceived as edgy. “Contentious,” “siloes,” “turf war” are words and phrases that come to mind when you describe the supposed rift between the two factions.

Thanks to the meteoric rise of digital and social media, old, familiar questions have once again bubbled up to the surface, such as “Who owns social media—PR or marketing?” and “How can the two entities work closer together for a truly integrated communications effort?”

Nonetheless, at many organizations PR and marketing are working together, and digital and social efforts have been blended into the mar-

keting/communications mix. At **Wyndham Hotel Group**, which owns Days Inn, Howard Johnson and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, “collaboration” is the buzzword when talking about PR and marketing. “We work this way because we have reaped the benefits and, frankly, because we have to in order to accomplish our goals,” says Christine Da Silva, VP, marketing communications, at Wyndham Hotel Group. Wyndham’s teams are small, given that it stewards 15 hotel brands across 66 countries, Da Silva says.

Therefore, it has to leverage all departments in the best ways possible. “While the lines between marketing and PR are fuzzier than in the past, we

define our roles and responsibilities quite clearly,” she says. “Our public relations team is responsible for relationship-building and reputation management while our marketing team is focused on selling.”

“That’s not to say that when PR and marketing report into different department leads there’s a disconnect, Da Silva says. “It takes additional effort to ensure connectedness but it can absolutely work.”

The synergy at Wyndham is strong, with marketing and PR working together on most initiatives. In doing so, Da Silva says that campaigns have seen a much higher ROI. An example of seamless collaboration between the two: Last April,

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

Group Editor, Matthew Schwartz,
212.621.4940, mschwartz@accessintel.com

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

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

Conference Content Associate, Sreyashi Kanjital,
skanjital@accessintel.com

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

Marketing Manager, Laura Snitkovskiy,
301.354.1610, lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com

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

General Manager, Tony Silber, 203.899.8424

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

Division President, Heather Farley

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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

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▶ How To...

Digital PR

BY JASON WOODWARD

5 Things That Communicators Should Know About Twitter's Vine



Vine, dubbed by some as “the Instagram of video,” appears to be one of the most promising video apps in recent memory, and is getting a long look from communicators. The service, which Twitter purchased before it even launched, allows users to create six-second video montages that loop continuously (check out **VinePeek** to view newly posted Vines in real-time).

So why all the fuss? Here are five things you need to know about Vine:

1. It's video for the mobile generation.

In order for brands to thrive, their content must be mobile-ready. But the transition has proven difficult for video: Users might not have the time (or attention spans) to watch an entire clip while browsing quickly through their feeds; audio makes videos tricky to watch in public and videos need a solid Internet connection to avoid the “buffer wheel of death.”

But Vine bypasses all of these concerns. It enables brands to create bite-sized, easily skimmable video content that's tailor-made to the browsing habits of today's mobile users. Vines also play automatically in the app and on Twitter, removing even the slightest barriers to consumption—a critical step when one extra click can mean the difference between a view and a skip-over.

2. Vine acts as a visual extension of Twitter.

Little by little, Twitter has increased its focus on visual content: Making photos and videos expandable and viewable as part of tweets; replacing third-party image-hosting apps with its own; introducing

Instagram-like image filters and now adding embeddable videos with Vine.

Although Vines can also be shared on Facebook, the integration is much clunkier — users see only a static thumbnail, which then launches a new browser tab. On Twitter, users can open, view and pause Vines seamlessly within their own tweet streams. This tight integration could easily lead to promoted Vines for brands, much like sponsored hashtags and promoted tweets.

3. Brands can tell stories on Vine that they know their viewers will watch all the way to the end.

Research abounds on the optimal video length for the Web's modern viewer, with recommendations varying from 30 seconds to four minutes. But by capping its videos at six seconds, Vine asks for a virtually insignificant time investment from the viewer.

This all but guarantees that if someone starts watching your Vine, they'll watch the whole thing. Since Vines loop endlessly, most consumers will probably watch them through multiple times. Instead of worrying about the video's parameters, the lightweight nature of Vine enables brands to focus on what they should do best: tell a compelling story.

4. Content is still king, but creativity has become the prince.

More important than any medium, budget or featured celebrity is the actual quality of the marketing messages you create and produce. In other words: content is king. However, the quality of your content is fueled by the distinctiveness of your creativity. And the less you have to work with,

the more creative you're forced to be.

In other words: constraints drive creativity. Such is the case with Vine. It now offers video makers a very limited toolkit: all video must be shot on an iPhone (for now); it must be shot within the Vine app; it can't be cropped, edited or touched up after the fact; you can't add any text or special effects and external videos that were taken somewhere else cannot be imported into the app.

Although these might seem like barriers, smart marketers will see them as opportunities for their creativity to flourish, creating content that tells a story that wouldn't really make sense on another medium. Google these lighthearted examples: “Dying for a coffee” from one of Twitter's illustrators and “Good things come together” from Malibu Rum.

5. What does this mean for other video apps?

Vine isn't exactly a pioneer when it comes to short-form video. Apps like **Keek**, **Tout** and **Viddy** have been working to break into the mainstream for some time, even racking up an impressive number of users. But something about Vine has given it a sense of momentum that the others never enjoyed.

More than anything, it has shown that people are looking for more simple, shareable ways to express themselves. Brands should be looking to do the same. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Jason Woodward is a research & social/digital media associate at Hunter Public Relations in New York City. He can be reached at jwoodward@hunterpr.com.

Smaller-Sized PR Agencies Ramp Up Digital Services; Online Media Consumption Now Exceeds Offline Use

▶ **PR Agencies Ramp Up Digital Offerings:** It is becoming more and more apparent to small- to medium-sized agencies that they need a separate department to handle their digital business, according to **Second Wind's** 2012 Annual Agency Survey.

Among responding agencies, more than half (63%) have dedicated digital groups while 32% of agencies separate their digital group from the rest of the agency, a 3% bump from last year's survey. Other study findings include:

- The percentage of agency revenue deriving from digital projects is projected to increase from 11% in 2011 to 13% in 2012.
- Despite the growing need for digital services, smaller agencies are slower to hire digital staff, with 51% having one to two employees, 32% having three to four employees and 17% having five to 10 employees.
- These digital departments encompass services from website development (96%) to email marketing (92%), social media (90%) and banner-ad creation (89%).
- Ninety-four percent of agencies use Google analytics for digital media tracking and analysis, with the other

6% using **DoubleClick**, **MediaPlex**, **Omniure** or other online resources.

- Social media has become an important tactic in digital marketing. Public relations agencies are managing and creating their clients' Facebook pages (86%), Twitter accounts (66%), blogs (66%) and LinkedIn presences (48%).
- A growing number of agencies (56%) also monitor and report on client social media activity, with 43% relying on **HootSuitePro**, 20% using **Radian6**, and other respondents using a mixture of social media monitoring packages.

Source: Second Wind

▶ **Global Online Consumption Tops Offline:** That shift toward more digital services on the part of PR agencies is for a good reason. For consumers of media worldwide, online usage now exceeds offline media consumption, accounting for 57% of daily media time, says a new study.

Global consumption of digital media by consumers now accounts for 57% of daily media time spent, according to a recently released **GlobalWebIndex** report.

Other findings include:

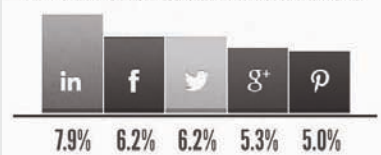
- Overall, more media time is spent online than offline in 23 out of the 31 major global markets tracked by the study. Consumers now spend an average of 10.7 hours a day with all forms of media—5.6 hours of that on digital.
- Online consumption is heavier in rapidly growing markets such as UAE and China, where total online time accounted for 7.3 and 6.1 hours of average daily media consumption, respectively.
- Offline media, such as TV, radio and newspapers, still account for the majority of media time in mature Internet markets such as the Netherlands, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.
- TV remains the strongest traditional medium, with average daily viewing time across all markets of 2.49 hours. U.S. TV consumption is the greatest, with an average 3.59 hours daily.

PRN

Source: GlobalWebIndex

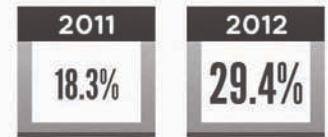
Share Buttons Boost Email

AVERAGE EMAIL CTR FOR MESSAGES SHARED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS:



EMAIL MARKETERS HAVE NOTICED THIS TREND.

YEAR BY YEAR, MORE AND MORE MARKETERS INCLUDE SOCIAL SHARING ICONS IN THEIR EMAILS:



THAT'S A 61% INCREASE

WHERE DO THEY SHARE?

PERCENTAGE OF EMAIL MARKETERS WHO INCLUDED SHARING LINKS TO A SPECIFIC NETWORK IN 2012:



NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL ICONS USED IN AN AVERAGE EMAIL:



Email newsletters that include social sharing buttons have an average click-through rate 158% higher than those that don't, according to GetResponse.

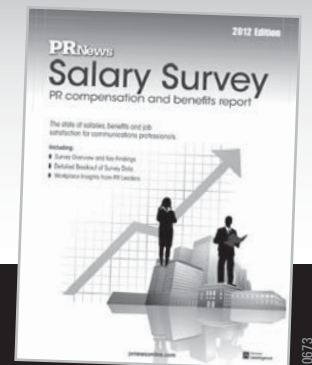
Source: GetResponse

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Nature Conservancy, Seeking Renewed Relevance, Focuses on Environment's Benefits to Human Health

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Timeframe: May 2011 - Present

Budget: \$500 (video production)

It's tough going these days for environmental and green organizations. As traditional donors to the environmental sector skew older (Caucasian men and women now well into their sixties), the green movement is losing momentum. With the tough economy on people's minds, attitudes about the environment are currently 85% negative and 55% positive, according to **Pew Research**.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which launched in 1951 and now has more than one million members, grappled with these statistics as the organization's communications team met during a planning retreat in 2011.

Kerry Crisley, associate director of strategic communications, whose area of focus is oceans, was thinking how the organization would get people to care. While the environment wasn't top of mind, health and wellness were front and center.

"We'd had a Web page that presented coral reefs as the medicine chests of the next century," Crisley says. "And just about everyone has been touched by cancer either directly or indirectly. What if we could find someone who could say the words, 'a coral reef saved my life'?"

One of TNC's scientists mentioned that the main drug used in the chemotherapy of Leukemia patients is derived from a sea sponge found in the Caribbean. The TNC team then spoke with an expert at the Massachusetts General Hospital's Cancer Center about



Image courtesy of The Nature Conservancy

For its "Coral Reefs Saved My Life" campaign, The Nature Conservancy led off with a video featuring Arden O'Connor, who was being treated with a drug that originated in the ocean.

the drug and other remedies stemming from marine life. Stephanie Wear, TNC's director of coral reef conservation, spent weeks researching the connection of coral reefs and life-saving medicines.

The initiative was set. TNC would not espouse the ocean as something beautiful that must be saved. Instead it would tout the personal health benefits that ocean life could provide. The campaign has included the following steps:

- Confirm the medicines derived from oceans and build a consumer campaign to raise awareness, encourage engagement and generate revenue for TNC's marine work.
- Identify individuals whose lives have been saved because of nature.
- Identify individuals in the medical field who would validate the role the oceans play in lifesaving medicines.
- Develop personal stories with heart and emotion that appeal to a mass audience (especially Generation X women).
- Maximize the use of images, video, the Web, social media

and public relations to spread the word.

- Raise awareness of the connections during key points of the year, such as World Ocean's Day in June 2011 and Mother's Day in 2011 and 2012.

FINDING THE FACE

In looking for an individual to personalize the story, TNC team found Arden O'Connor, an avid snorkeler and visitor of the Caribbean who received the Arra-C drug as part of her chemotherapy treatments when she was diagnosed with leukemia.

Tapping physicians and marine biologists for research support, TNC developed a compelling story of Arden's personal struggle for survival and connected the role that nature played, building a campaign titled, "A Coral Reef Saved My Life."

VIDEO ON THE CHEAP

First up in campaign execution was the creation of two videos (made for a grand total of \$500). The first, Crisley says, featured O'Connor, Dr. Bruce Chabner, director of clinical research at Massachusetts

4 Tips for Cultivating a Compelling Long-Term Story

When Kerry Crisley, associate director of strategic communications at The Nature Conservancy, first came up with the idea to marry coral reef protection with life-saving cancer drugs in 2011, little did the organization know that the campaign built around that story would still have some pop two years later. But a story must have the right components to make a long-term play with the media and the public. Here's four tips from Crisley on creating a story that resonates:



Kerry Crisley

- 1. Meet people where they are:** "Everyone appreciates conservation, but that's not the first thing that comes to mind for people who are busy," Crisley says. "We considered the earth in terms of how it can improve lives, making the message more personal."
- 2. Add a face to the message:** "Find a person who exemplifies your story, and get that person on camera," she says. In TNC's case, it was Arden O'Connor, a woman battling cancer, who was being treated with a drug derived from coral reefs.
- 3. When an idea takes off, don't hesitate to go big:** "The videos we made were just the beginning. Media relations, our website and social media all have played a part in getting this message across," Crisley says.
- 4. The more evergreen the story the better:** "When we find new spokespeople, or if a new drug from coral reefs comes on the market, we'll have this story to tell once again," she says.

General Hospital Cancer Center and Stephanie Wear, director of coral reef conservation at The Nature Conservancy. A second video was a “man on the street” effort, asking citizens how much they knew about coral reefs as the “medicine chests of the sea.” A dedicated landing page was set up to present the coral reef story, which included a call to action for donations and memberships.

Within the first three months of release, the two videos were ranked in the top 10% of TNC’s 600+ video archive in unique views. Much of that success is due to media relations around the coral reef initiative.

TAKING IT OUT SLOW

“Going out to the media with a story that shows what nature can do for people is not an easy task,” says Rachel Winters, senior media relations manager of The Nature Conservancy. “But I recognized the strong correlation of the value coral reefs and the medicines they can offer. I knew it was a story that could work.”

Winters’ media strategy was anything but Media Relations 101. While she knew the coral reef story inside and out, it wasn’t until after the Web page was up that she began her outreach. “I didn’t send it out via a mass pitch or a press release,” she says. Instead, she kept the story in her back pocket for

one-on-one meetings with journalists. “It was a good conversation piece,” she says. What is more, Winters had another reason to be interested in the topic: her father was fighting cancer at the time of the launch.

PRESS POUNCES

The story resonated with the media, particularly broadcast stations. Winters did a coral reef segment on TNC’s bi-weekly spot on NY1. After lunch with Chris Kilham, the “medicine hunter” on Fox News, Winters landed a segment on “Fox News Health.”

The big get was a segment on “NBC Nightly News” with reporter Anne Thompson.

The team went to Key West, Fla., where NBC documented TNC’s work in protecting endangered reefs, featuring O’Connor. The piece aired in April 2012 during Earth Month.

For print media, Winters saw the coral reef story as an opportunity to broaden TNC’s reach into consumer publications, which would be interested in the human-interest angle.

Linking the pitch to the O’Connor video, Winters landed stories in Huffington Post (the blog covered the “Adopt A Coral Reef” campaign in an article about the 2012 holiday gift-buying season), *Martha Stewart Living* and the online consumer

green-living site Care2.

In addition, TNC team shared O’Connor’s story with the organization’s one million members via its website and social media. Treatments on the Web include personal interviews, long- and short-form stories and photos with a call to action to help save our oceans and save lives.

DRIVING MEMBERSHIP, REVENUE

The inclusion of the Coral Reefs campaign in the organization’s annual Mother’s Day email promotion resulted in a 50% increase in gift memberships and a 35% jump in revenue, from 2010 to 2011.

In 2012, the same Mother’s Day promotion was even more impressive: a 93% boost in gift memberships and a 125% increase in revenue from 2011 to 2012.

Given the multifaceted elements of the campaign, the story continues to have legs.

Winters says she’s just scratched the surface with print media, while other broadcast outlets are being

Ocean Lifesaver



As part of its ongoing, two-year old campaign, The Nature Conservancy has added an informational slide show to its Coral Reefs landing page.

Source: The Nature Conservancy

explored for potential coverage. “We’re trying to be strategic with this, because there’s a potential of raising millions of dollars over the next few years,” Winters says.

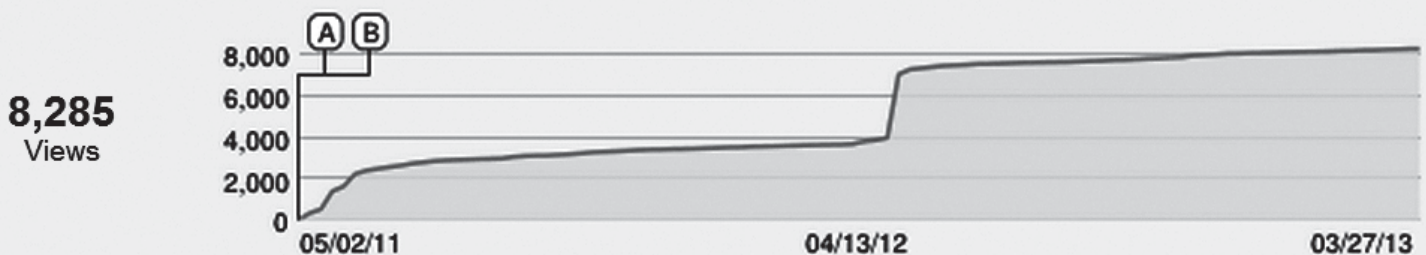
Crisley agrees. With the story now two years old, TNC is planning for the next iteration, “the 2.0 version,” as she put it. They’ll be looking for new spokespeople and new vehicles to employ to get the story out.

Those have yet to be determined, but if 2.0 is as good as 1.0, the TNC could be in for another windfall. PRN

CONTACT:

Contact: Kerry Crisley, kcrisley@tnc.org; Rachel Winters, rwinters@tnc.org.

Video on Medical Value of Coral Reefs Resonates



The Nature Conservancy’s Coral Reef Saved My Life video has 8,285 views on Youtube, which places it at number 39 out of 1,009 videos on the organization’s official YouTube channel. Three follow-up videos garnered 3,646 views, 1,973 views and 1,107 views, respectively.

Source: The Nature Conservancy

Celebrities and Social Media

► Page 1

celebrities engage on social: brands don't take chances to show their true personalities like celebrities do.

JT DOES DIGITAL

The fact is, many celebrities use a full arsenal of digital tools to build their brands and drive their business' bottom lines. Pop superstar Justin Timberlake is a prime example of how entertainers use social media to build and grow their audiences. His new album, "The 20/20 Experience," sold 980,000 copies in its first week, according to Nielsen

SoundScan. To reach that number, Timberlake used social media channels for maximum effect.

Timberlake joined Instagram the day of the 2013 Grammy Awards, which was also his first live performance of a song from his new album. Within no time, Timberlake attracted hundreds of thousands of followers.

On Twitter, Timberlake highlighted his upcoming album, provided previews and engaged fans after the album was released, asking what their favorite song was. He also

mixed in the occasional tweet that showed he's, well, just a regular guy.

LEARN FROM MISTAKES

Timberlake notwithstanding, we all know that celebrities aren't without their social media flaws. Lila Brown, entertainment and sports publicist, at **Ella Bee Media Group** in Los Angeles, says celebrities who handle their own social media don't tweet as often as they should and fail to respond to followers.

While Twitter gives fans a unique window into celebrities, at its worst, the channel can give fans a front-row seat to a crisis, meltdown or ill humor. "Sometimes celebrities aren't taking a breath and thinking," Giuliani says. "But they are human, and it's easy to share knee-jerk reactions."

Unfortunately, brands have done that too, because there are people behind the posts, Giuliani says. "You want to think it through, and run any questionable tweets by others before you post," she says.

CELEBRITY TAKEAWAYS

Here are four celebrity strategies from Giuliani that PR pros can emulate:

1. Recognize your super fans.

Lady Gaga (@ladygaga) does this on a regular basis, giving individual shout outs to fans and following some fans back. "Is there anything cooler than when a celebrity tweets you?" asks Giuliani. Some brands are approaching that level of engagement, but most are not.

2. Offer unique access or insider information.

Giuliani follows Rachel Zoe (@RachelZoe), the celebrity stylist and Bravo star, because her Twitter and Instagram feeds feature news and pics

about her and her family that can't be found anywhere else. What inside information can brands give? If a brand sponsors a concert, it's a natural to go backstage and give a behind-the-scenes glimpse to social followers.

3. Don't be tone deaf.

Occasionally, celebrities will fail to see the ramifications of their social messages. For example, during Super Storm Sandy in October 2012, Donald Trump was sending tweets demanding President Obama show his birth documents. Brands aren't immune from this: Recently the Indian unit of **Ford Motor Company** apologized for an ad showing former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi with a group of bound women in the trunk of a car.

4. Consider sharing sensitive news. Giuliani notes a trend on Twitter: Celebrity couples are announcing their break-ups in 140 characters or less. Twitter could be a ripe platform for brands to share more sensitive information. "But you'd have to be ready to engage and answer questions," Giuliani says.

Unlike the majority of brands, top celebrities enjoy rabid followers who hang on every post or tweet. If only it were as easy for brand communicators.

That's why it's crucial to study those celebrities who do social media best. Make your brand into a star. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Contact: Mark Zablou, mark@cogentworld.com; Adrianna Giuliani, agiuliani@devriesglobal.com; Lila Brown, lila@ellabeepr.com.

5 Top Twitter Feeds to Follow

Looking to better communicate via Twitter? Here are five of the best individual tweeters, adapted from *Time's* recently released "140 Best Twitter Feeds of 2013."



Mia Farrow, @MiaFarrow (activist and actress)

Followers: 101,395

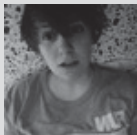
What's Good: This UNICEF Goodwill ambassador raises awareness for women's and LGBT rights and children's issues in Africa, especially Darfur. She's also not afraid to express her political views or have fun, such as when she zings her ex-husband.



Pete Souza, @petesouza (White House chief photographer);

Followers: 63,315

What's Good: Souza has unparalleled access to the commander in chief, First Lady, Vice President and Bo the dog. Souza's Twitter feed exemplifies "inside" content that's often posted before it's seen anywhere else.



Lena Dunham, @lenadunham (actress, creator of "Girls");

Followers: 903,390

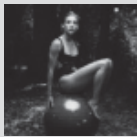
What's Good: Dunham pees quite a bit on her TV show, and her Twitter feed reflects this openness. And just like in the show, she's funny, witty and often controversial.



Samuel L. Jackson, @SamuelLJackson (actor)

Followers: 2,243,773

What's Good: Jackson has a penchant for rallying his fans around a cause, such as when he led a movement against *New York Times* film critic A.O. Scott after he panned Jackson's movie, "The Avengers."



Lolo Jones, @lolojones (athlete)

Followers: 348,543

What's Good: After her Olympic gold medal fail, you wouldn't expect this hurdler turned bobsledder to be too chatty on Twitter, but Jones leaves no topic untouched in chronicling her personal life—in a very humorous way.

PR/Marketing Debate

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unbeknownst to the company, the Howard Johnson brand was featured on an episode of “Mad Men,” with lead character Don Draper visiting a Howard Johnson hotel to scout the brand as a potential advertising client.

When Draper arrived at the property, he was informed that the pool would be closed for his stay.

The marketing and PR teams knew a prime opportunity existed, but it had to move quickly—one advantage of tight collaboration between the two disciplines.

The brand issued a tongue-in-cheek public apology from the head of the Howard Johnson hotel brand to all of the Don Drapers of the world, inviting them to come back and have a free-night stay at select HoJo locations throughout the U.S.

The promotion was extremely successful, garnering more than 700 news clips for the brand, totaling more than 146 million impressions.

The cost: less than \$1,000. “Turning this promotion

around in 24 hours truly took a willingness to engage and deliver from all parts of the business, and true collaboration between the PR and marketing teams,” Da Silva says.

LURE OF BRANDING

Wyndham’s collaborative strategy now appears to be more of the rule rather than the exception. But according to Deborah Radman, marketing and PR counsel at **PRIME Research** (and a member of the *PR News* Advisory Board), the word that may be the culprit in the PR/marketing disconnect is “branding.”

“Even though it’s been around for a decade now, ‘branding,’ as a catchword is hot,” Radman says. She believes that many marketers have fallen in love with building an iconic brand, yet fail to take the emotional connection between a brand and stakeholders into account. “That’s what sets brands apart,” she says.

INSIDE-OUT COMMS

That’s a concept that’s now used by **Mazda** to launch new



“Rather than break out PR from marketing, we’re moving toward a much more integrated strategy.”

—Jeremy Barnes,
Mazda North America

car models around the world. Jeremy Barnes, director, public relations & brand experience for **Mazda North American Operations**, says his company has turned the car launch on its head.

Eschewing an initial splashy ad campaign that has been the industry norm, Mazda instead uses a blend of media relations, social media and internal communications to tease the launch.

In January 2013, prior to the North American launch of the Mazda 6, in May, social and digital components were deployed, including teaser videos and photos on YouTube and Facebook, respectively. Then media relations picked up the ball, as journalists were invited to take a drive.

Simultaneously, Mazda gets the word out about the Mazda 6 to employees in its Irvine, Calif. headquarters.

“This gives them the opportunity to tell the story across their social media networks,” Barnes says. “Our best advocates are Mazda employees.”

The goal of Barnes and his communications team: When the advertising breaks in May and the launch reaches a crescendo, they want to hear Mazda dealers across the country say, “You guys are nuts; I don’t have any Mazda 6 cars left to sell.”

What makes these non-traditional car launches hum?

Barnes reports to the VP of marketing and has a seat at the table when it comes to planning. “Rather than break out PR from marketing, we’re moving toward a much more integrated strategy,” Barnes says. Besides, this “communications first” approach fits with Mazda’s younger audience base, which Barnes feels is more open to social/digital efforts than to traditional advertising.

IT AIN’T OVER...

Then again, agencies on both the marketing and PR sides aren’t going down without a fight to “own” social, digital and content creation. Advertising giant **McCann Erickson** is expanding its social media offering via its “McCann Always On” unit.

On the PR side, **Weber Shandwick** is going beyond the traditional services offered by agencies in launching a content marketing play, called MediaCo.

The ultimate payoff, however, is having a finely tuned, collaborative PR/marketing engine that can nimbly move the bottom-line needle. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Christine Da Silva, christine.dasilva@wyn.com; Deborah Radman, radman@prime-research.com; Jeremy Barnes, jrbarnes5@mazdausa.com.

Is PR Getting Left Out? 4 Strategies to Get In

At **Wyndham Hotel Group**, PR and marketing are essentially joined at the hip, says Christine Da Silva, the company’s VP of marketing communications. But what if PR is getting the cold shoulder within your company? Here are four steps, per Da Silva, to prove the value of PR:



Christine Da Silva

- **Find ways to add value and demonstrate relevance.** Being the creative center of an organization, being innovative—both are good ways to make a mark.
- **Enlist supporters.** Seek out the decision makers who believe in PR and work with communicators to try new approaches.
- **Use successes to demonstrate the power of PR.** Other leaders who might be skeptical will likely come around and realize the value of communications.
- **Be the expert.** Explain what works (and what doesn’t) in communications, and show how that affects the business.

Editor’s Note: Register now for PR News and CARMA International’s April 16 “Meaningful Metrics” webinar (www.carma.com); attend the PR Measurement Conference, set for May 15 in Washington, D.C. (prnewsonline.com/prmeasurementconference2013).

4 Rules For Revealing Bad News In a Crisis



I have counseled CEOs and senior management of companies for many years, and I have seen the struggles some of these individuals have gone through and know the sleepless nights they have suffered when the company is in a crisis.

Often, the primary cause is the angst they feel at having to break bad news, and the reasons for the dread fall into one of two categories: the CEO feels personally responsible for the crisis because, whatever the cause, it happened on her watch; or, she fears the consequences, such as losing her job, loss of reputation or a drop in share price, of reporting bad news.

There often is a natural tendency to take some sort of hyper-vigilant, knee-jerk defensive tactic, such as lying or trying to shift blame. Often that's because the person in charge simply doesn't know how to break the bad news.

So here is some advice that hopefully will help you or your leadership.

First, it is better to read from a script or note cards rather than ad lib. You don't want to forget anyone or anything under the stress you are experiencing. This is where a skilled communicator can help keep the company on the straight and narrow—especially if misguided attorneys are advocating “no comment.”

There are four basic rules to keep in mind when communicating bad news. You or your leader should do so:

▶ **Calmly.** It will serve no one's interest if anxiety, nervousness, uncertainty or perspiration shows through. It is important to draw some distinctions, though: Absolute calm will never be achieved and that should not be your aim. If one is too calm in the midst of conveying bad news in a crisis they won't look fully engaged. They certainly don't want to come across as bored or blasé. But the other end of the spectrum—mania—is worse. Seek a middle ground.

▶ **Honestly.** More than ever, tell it like it is. There is little worse than being caught in a lie when you are already conveying bad news. Why would you want to run the risk of compounding the severity of what you are saying with a falsehood? This is why you don't go off-script, and the lawyers should certainly be an integral part of the script-review process. However, there are other, often bigger communications issues at stake, such as the company's reputation.

If something is almost certainly going to come out later, why not take credit for announcing it proactively, rather than reactively?

▶ **Succinctly.** Don't elaborate unless it is called for, and never speculate. Say what you have to say and leave the stage, unless you are prepared to answer some questions. A Q&A may be appropriate, and the PR staff should draft likely questions and rehearse responses. But if not, shut up. You have done your job; now let others do theirs.

▶ **Factually.** Make certain that whatever you say is factually true and (if appropriate) provable. Giving wrong information is counterproductive to your goals.

As you convey the bad news, provide data-based statements and give a realistic and honest estimate of the situation. Never be afraid to say, “I don't know,” provided you quickly add, “But I will do my best to find out and update you.”

One of the most effective methods for conveying bad news is the “sandwich technique.” It is quite simple and very effective when delivered properly. There are three basic steps:

- **Provide a positive statement about progress being made.** Example, say you've just landed a substantial new contract that will mean sharply increased revenue. This is the news you want to headline in your remarks.

- **Deliver the bad news.** However, the new contract and the jobs it will create won't kick in until next year, which means another round of layoffs. Empathy and compassion are called for here.
- **Provide a positive statement and assessment about solutions going forward.** But those laid off will be given priority status in the re-hiring process, and when fully geared-up, our projections for growth and expansion for the organization are high.

With this method of delivery, you have fulfilled your basic requirement (delivering the bad news—job layoffs—to your targeted audience), but you have softened the blow somewhat by sandwiching it between two positive statements. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Steven Fink is president and CEO of Lexicon Communications, a crisis PR agency, and the author of the just-published “Crisis Communications: The Definitive Guide to Managing the Message” (McGraw-Hill). Read his Crisis Blog at thecrisisblog.tumblr.com.

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