

**PRNews'**

# **MEDIA RELATIONS Guidebook**

Connecting With Journalists. Producing Results.



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FACEBOOK STARTING A CONVERSATION  
MESSAGE BRIDGING REPUTATION  
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## Foreword

## New Media Relations Meld Tradition with Innovation

Whether communicating to consumer audiences, technologists, scientists or the B2B sector, PR execs who engage with the media most effectively have mastered the messaging and the communications tools to best deliver a story that advances the objectives of the subject-matter experts.

While much in the industry has changed—on both sides of the PR/media equation—this imperative has not.

Welcome to the 2013 edition of the *PR News* Media Relations Guidebook, designed specifically to guide you in this important discipline. In the pages that follow, we explore the practical implications for some of the most innovative developments in media relations. These include the technologies, methodologies and mannerisms that define the ecosystem in which PR pros practice their craft.

It's little wonder that the maturing role of social media has left an indelible mark on how audiences choose to receive information. It has changed the nature of news cycles, and even the basic definition of media players. To wit, do bloggers count as influencers? Can we take citizen journalism seriously? How do you best reach the different types of outlets? Do press releases matter anymore?

But social media also offers interesting opportunities to engage and remain in-touch with influencers, whether they are reporters working for traditional media brands or up-and-coming bloggers.

As Eve Mayer, CEO of Social Media Delivered, points out, Twitter can offer a path for reporters to follow their newsmakers on a regular basis, while Allison Steinberg, senior media analyst at JetBlue, recounts how the airline is leveraging a broad array of social media tools to stay engaged with its key constituents.

Our contributing writers run the gamut of media relations. Each author brings insight to his or her subject from roles as agency advisors, corporate practitioners, marketing communications execs and academics.

Equally important in our article selection process was to present more than just the positions of PR folks with 20 years or 30 years of experience; the new millennium, after all, has introduced some inter-generational differences that affect the process of building relationships with the media.

As the market evolves at a rapid clip, there are no easy answers to the overarching challenge of how to get a story effectively distributed to the media. There is no silver bullet.

The best chance of succeeding in media relations these days will result from taking the proven principles of the past and overlaying them with today's technologies to create a genuine sense of trust and authority between PR execs and media reps. The market demands it, and the Guidebook you hold in your hands helps deliver it to you.

Best Regards,

Lane F. Cooper

Editor, *PR News* Media Relations Guidebook



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# Personalized Outreach Turns the Tide In Support of an Arizona Copper Mine

By PR News Editors

**N**obody wants this copper mine.” That was the prevailing wisdom in Pima County, Ariz., when in early 2013 Rosemont Copper Company, a division of base metals company Augusta Resource Corp., proposed an open-pit copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains near Tucson.

Opposition was threatening to undermine the federal, state, and local public-review and permitting process. If Augusta Resource couldn't demonstrate public support for their proposed Rosemont Copper project, it would be difficult to overcome opposition and secure county, state, and federal approvals. As Augusta Resource's only mining asset, failing to win U.S. Forest Service (USFS) approval would have a significant negative impact on the company.

Before Santa Monica, Calif.-based Davies Public Affairs came on board the project in 2009, Rosemont Copper spent three years working to build local support. While communications inroads were made during that time by local PR agencies, “their outreach was more informational,” says Kathy Arnold, VP, environmental and regulatory affairs for Rosemont Copper Company. “It was missing the, ‘Why we should say yes’ equation.” Outreach with more bite was clearly needed.

As opposition to the project grew, the USFS mandated that 10 public hearings be held during a three-month period. Since the USFS had the final say on the mine's permit, it was critical to demonstrate the significant public support that Rosemont enjoyed following a transparent and

powerful outreach at these public hearings.

So Davies Public Affairs was hired to design and execute a comprehensive strategic communication and grassroots program that targeted the 50,000 residents of Pima County. “We needed to tell bigger stories about the mine,” Arnold says.

## Mining for Data

Extensive research would help to identify the most effective messaging. This was segmented into four areas:

1. Qualitative interviews were conducted with more than 50 local thought leaders and residents to provide insight into the local psyche, community values and concerns relating to the copper mine. “We spoke to people for over an hour, asking them questions like ‘why do you like living here?’ and ‘what have you heard about mining projects?’” says John Davies, CEO of Davies Public Affairs. The answers would allow Davies to create targeted messages that resonated and activated key supporters to take action and get involved.
2. Polling was conducted to narrow the target audience and work out which supporters would be more likely to support the project.
3. State-wide data mining was conducted to build a database of 50,000 residents organized by various groups and demographics. From this list, Davies could identify political contributors, high-propensity voters and influential residents in Pima County whose voices would resonate strongly with regulatory and elected officials.
4. With insight from the qualitative interviews,

blind ID calls were conducted with a short phone script to identify likely supporters and eliminate opposition from direct-mail targets.

## Ayes Have It

From the research stemmed the campaign's objectives. The over-arching goal was to win a timely approval for the copper mine. To accomplish that goal, Davies strived to:

- Create a strong brand with a compelling and transparent message focused upon sustainable mining and economic return.
- Identify and recruit an army of supporters that could play an active role in the approval process.
- Leverage the strong public support to influence regulators and the permitting process and overcome the perception of opposition
- Place Rosemont in an offensive position, rather than defensive.
- Ensure the agenda of debate included Rosemont's unique benefits and approach to mining—from the demand for copper in renewable energy and electric cars, to the environmentally sensitive approach to mining Rosemont proposed.

The strategy, Davies says, was to recruit enough motivated, well-educated supporters to overcome and outnumber the opposition at every hearing and in communications with decision makers. "People are either leaning your way or are leaning against you, while the rest are overwhelmed with life and won't take the time to figure out which side they're on," Davies say. "Without doing anything, public opinion tends to go against you."

Research was uncovered that, despite numerous well-paying jobs and millions of dollars of tax revenue the new mine would bring, residents were not willing to compromise on the environment. Says Arnold: "[At hearings] we can talk for 20 minutes and then people stand up and say, 'they're going to tear up the earth and it will be ugly.' It's tough to combat that."

So the messaging needed to stress strict environmental controls, modern mining technology, and the economic contributions the mine would make to Pima County.

## Building A Bridge

Using the research findings, Davies designed a strategic communication program that positioned the proposed copper mine as "A Bridge to a Sustainable Future." To make copper relevant to everyone on some level, it was critical that the communications materials reflect how copper is used in our everyday life.

A key message point: "Almost everything in our daily lives is affected by copper."

## Targeting Residents

Davies designed and launched an outreach program that ultimately targeted 50,000 residents in targeted communities in and around Tucson.

The fully integrated PR program included the following:

- Fact Booklet/Letter/Phone Call: A project fact booklet told the mine's story, and included a letter and a pre-paid comment card. Davies currently sends quarterly letter updates to more than 12,000 supporter households throughout Arizona.
- Website/Social Media: Completely overhauled in August 2012, the website ([www.Rosemont-Copper.com](http://www.Rosemont-Copper.com)) provides the community with information about the proposed mine, environmental impact reports, process animations, as well as the ability to sign up to support, attend events, take mine tours or ask questions. Website images and videos are shared via Rosemont-hosted social media accounts, including Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo.
- USFS Letter Writing Program: Davies secured 1,000 letter signers and executed a massive personal letter writing campaign to regulatory officials and the media to convey widespread support for the copper mine.
- Supporter Activation for USFS Public Hearings: The USFS ultimately mandated that there would be eight public hearings on the Rosemont Copper Mine during a two-month period in late 2011. Davies targeted 8,000 individuals in the database and secured 1,500 individuals willing to attend public hearings.

## The Process Behind Qualitative Interviews

In its campaign to build support for a proposed copper mine in Pima County, Arizona, Davies Public Affairs conducted qualitative interviews with 65 influencers in the area. Feedback from the interviews were used to build the outreach program. John Davies, CEO of the agency, reveals the process behind those interviews:

- ▶ Began qualitative research by creating a comprehensive database of thought leaders, political donors and influencers throughout the county and state.
- ▶ Developed focused interview questionnaire to gain insight into what was really going on in the community, test messaging and understand the public's real feelings towards the mine.
- ▶ Analyzed results and developed overall findings focusing on dangers, opportunities and strengths.
- ▶ All messaging and strategy going forward was driven by the qualitative findings from the research process.

## 5 Tips for Dealing With Unhappy Citizens on Social Media

Rosemont Copper and Davies Public Affairs use Facebook as the main social media platform for the campaign to raise support for a copper mine in Arizona. The page attracts both supporters and the opposition, which can result in lively conversations. Heather-Anne MacLean, manager, engagement and influencer relations at Salesforce Marketing Cloud, offers tips for handling an unhappy public on social media:

- ▶ Be prepared for dissenting members of the public to create social media pages.
- ▶ Educate non-PR colleagues about limitations and best practices of social media.
- ▶ Anticipate difficult online discussions and unflattering videos and photos, and have a plan to openly and transparently deal with them instead of hiding them.
- ▶ Ensure all information posted as factual can be fully supported if challenged.
- ▶ Never resort to using false identities to attempt to demonstrate greater support than actually exists, even if detractors are using the alias tactic. When the truth comes out—and it will—any trust that may have existed will dissipate immediately.

## 3 to 1 Swing

Davies' efforts changed the debate in favor of the copper mine. Polling showed that the strategic communication and grassroots program completely turned public opinion, from three to one against the proposed mine, to three to one in favor of the mine. Specific results include:

- Identified 13,500 supporter households. This base continues to grow by an average of 150 supporters a month.
- Letter-writing campaign netted more than 25,000 original letters to the USFS, the Governor of Arizona, the state's two U.S. Senators and targeted members of Congress.
- Organized a rally with more than 6,000 supporters.
- Activated more than 500 supporters for every USFS public hearing—speakers for the mine outnumbered opponents five to one.
- Media coverage at every public hearing conveyed overwhelming public support for the mine. One local paper reported that mine op-

ponents "took a thrashing" at one of the USFS hearings.

To keep up the momentum, the company gives regular tours of the site—and is booked solid for three months in advance, Arnold says.

Davies Public Affairs' ability to win a majority of support for the mine has also made Arnold's job in Arizona a bit easier.

"It's tough to be the lone voice in the wilderness, and you don't want your supporters to be Rosemont employees—you want them to be the person in town who owns the grocery store," Arnold says. **PRN**

# Venerable Hardware Brand Uses PR To Lead a Makeover For a New Era

*By PR News Editors*

**T**he early 1930s were tough for farmers in San Jose, California. Two years of drought and crop failures, plus the Great Depression, brought plenty of economic woe. Thirty farmers, mostly prune growers, considered buying their farm supplies as a cooperative. Each farmer put up \$30 and Orchard Supply was born.

“One of the biggest PR challenges was convincing the Los Angeles Times that a local store opening was somehow big news.”

No longer a cooperative, Orchard Supply Hardware (Nasdaq:OSH), as it's known today, faces economic and competitive challenges experienced by many other retailers: cash-strapped consumers who are increasingly turning to digital platforms to shop, and stiff competition from big-box stores like Lowes and Home Depot.

With 89 stores, all in California, close to 6,000 employees and annual sales of \$660 million, the company in 2012 was looking to expand its presence in Southern California while retooling other stores. Turning to its long-time Silicon Valley based PR agency PRx Digital, Orchard Supply embarked on a store rollout program that would feature communications tactics quite outside the box for the home improvement retailer. These tactics included:

- Telling their own story creatively: Beyond traditional and new media, PRx Digital would use a variety of platforms to tell the story of each grand opening.
- Moms matter: Pitch Orchard Supply's female-friendly new stores to "Mommy Bloggers" as well as traditional media channels.
- Become content publishers: YouTube is now a verb for retailers, and Orchard Supply is no exception.
- Mobile is an essential platform for retail content: At a time of "showrooming" — trolling store aisles with smartphones and tablets in hand—Orchard Supply would adapt with some technology of its own.

Ultimately, these tactics play into one overarching goal, bringing people into the stores, says Cody Kraatz, account and digital media director at PRx Digital.

## Seeding the Ecosystem

The plan was to open five new or transformed stores within a four-month period: Locales targeted included stores in Torrance, West Los Angeles, Pismo Beach in Southern California, and the Silvercreek and Cottle stores in San Jose. PRx Digital's strategy around these launches was to pitch traditional and new media to bring customers through the doors at each location.

"We create what we call a 'content ecosystem,' based on media relations, government relations, photography and videography," Kraatz says.

For media relations, Kraatz and his team of three produced pre- and post-multimedia news releases for each opening. Each includes photos and video, and is sent out multiple times in multiple formats: As a full news release, with a link to Orchard's site for photos, and in an invitation to a targeted group of broadcast and print media at each location. "If they want to come to the store, we'll set up a tour for them," Kraatz says.

Then there are follow-up calls and day-before-opening e-mails to the press who don't take them up on the preview tours. The overall objective is to get media out to the grand opening or just after, as the news value dissipates over time, he adds.

The prevailing messages to the media: the expansion into Southern California; the new store designs that were more conducive to female shoppers; and the economic impact of the new stores (particularly in Torrance, where Orchard Supply was moving into a space previously occupied by a Kmart).

A big media hit did keep Orchard in the news after the store openings. A Nov. 21 article in the business section of the San Jose Mercury News, titled "Orchard Supply Reaches Out to Women," began with this lead: "That low-pitched hum you hear inside the Orchard Supply Hardware on East Capitol Expressway is the tension between old-school and new-school retailing."

The article, rife with positive quotes from customers, went on to detail Orchard's return back to its roots with a vintage look while moving into the digital age with a high-tech music and intercom systems.

### Video/Mobile Blitz

Digitally, PRx used YouTube videos to tell the story of each grand opening. Besides the store previews, PRx captured Orchard CEO Mark Baker cutting the chain at each opening. "We recorded 'Mommy Files' blogger Shannon Gosney's interview with Erica Ecker, Orchard's creative and visual services manager, in the Pismo Beach store," says Daniel Garza, senior VP, PRx Digital.

Garza adds that the majority of video watchers do so on Orchard's YouTube page, but 38% of the audience is watching via mobile devices. "That's a top takeaway here: mobile is crucial," he says. "As people walk through the store with their smartphones, we can provide them with the content they want, and it will increase their time in the store." And help battle showrooming.

The biggest PR challenge for Kraatz: convincing the Los Angeles Times that a store opening was big news. "It's easier in a smaller town like Pismo Beach, but in L.A. on a Saturday, a 44,000 square foot hardware store grand opening is not news," Kraatz says. But that's where Orchard's catering to female shopper angle came in. The Times wanted a trend, and PRx delivered.

### Long Lines

Despite the difficulties in cracking larger markets, the results were impressive (see charts). Metrics were generated via Cision (media publicity value); Critical Mention (broadcast metrics) and via YouTube's analytics.

In addition to coverage by newspapers like the San Jose Mercury News and the Torrance Daily Breeze, bloggers also covered the festivities, including a post in LA Observed that turned into TV news coverage before the West L.A. store's grand opening.

Ultimately, getting customers in the stores was the goal—and on that end, mission accomplished. "At every grand opening, the lines were long and a crowd had gathered even before the 7 a.m. chain-cutting ceremony, which speaks to Orchard Supply Hardware customers' loyalty and enthusiasm," says Elisabeth Handler, president and COO at PRx.

### Old With The New

At Orchard, the blending of the old and the new will continue in the stores, as well as for communications. PRx has helped develop an in-store QR code system, featuring codes on signage near products that people want. Scan these codes with a phone and they'll take customers to Orchard's Workbench YouTube channel, where they'll find relevant how-to videos.

## Drive a Stake in the Ground: Leveraging Tent-Pole Events

Whether you're promoting a new product or a three-ring circus, PR pros would do well to consider the many ways to "tentpole" in today's digital world. Here are some tips from Daniel Garza, senior VP at PRx Digital, which engineered a tent-pole strategy for Orchard Supply Hardware's 2012 store openings.

- ▶ Do your own storytelling. Collect or create a compelling multimedia package of photos, videos and text throughout the campaign, and share those stories on your own channels such as a website, social media and e-newsletters. We call this a Content Ecosystem, and the story at its core should be about more than a single event.
- ▶ Ask nontraditional media to tell the story before, during and after. Many bloggers, frequent tweeters and news reporters are eager to share a link to a YouTube video or other bits of news that fall short of a full-blown feature.
- ▶ Share every bit of engaging content created about your event on your own channels. This results in a dynamic Content Ecosystem with many feedback loops.
- ▶ Slow-release the details before the main event. Retain some tasty pieces of news to share steadily leading up to the main event, creating new reasons to reach out.
- ▶ Plan ahead and comprehensively capture the main event in photos, video, audio and other media. You'll regret it if you miss something special.
- ▶ After the event, continue to share multimedia assets from the event with media that missed it. Capture and re-share every bit of coverage you achieved on your own channels, ensuring that the Content Ecosystem lives on.

Already, there are nearly 13,500 views on the Workbench site. "As the QR codes spread in Orchard stores throughout the state, the mobile share of views will skyrocket," Handler says,

While cutting-edge communications strategies have proven successful in attracting customers to new and improved stores, Orchard Supply Hardware's lineage is that of a place where customers can go and be comfortable shopping, while getting personalized customer service. That should never change. **PRN**