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WRITING WELL

BY JEFF OPPERMAN, DIRECTOR OF EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, PACE UNIVERSITY

6 Recommendations That Will Make Your PR Writing Great in 2016

My number one writing insight for 2016 originates in a quote from someone who died in 1910.

Russian author Leo Tolstoy said, “If you ask someone, ‘Can you play the violin?’ and he replies, ‘I don’t know, I’ve not tried, perhaps I can,’ you would laugh at him. Whereas about writing, people always say, ‘I don’t know, I have not tried,’ as though one had only to try and one would become a writer.”

What Tolstoy knew, and many others don’t, is that writing is hard.

So,

Writing Tip #1: Being a Writer, Especially a Great Writer, Takes Work: When LeBron James plays basketball at a level that other players can only reach in their dreams and Julianne Hough guides the celebrity with two



Continued on page 3

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

JUAN-CARLOS MOLLEDA, TRUSTEE, INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Taxonomy of Responses to VW’s Goodwill Package Reveals PR Lessons

Two automobiles—a 2012 Jetta and a 2013 Passat—became the protagonists in a “soft launch” of **Volkswagen’s** transnational crisis in May 2014, alerting the **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) and the **California Air Resources Board** (CARB) to issues with VW’s reported emissions data.

VW remained silent until December 2014, when the company began a voluntary recall of nearly 500,000 vehicles in the U.S.

Then, on Sept. 3, 2015, and without going into detail, the German carmaker admitted to regulatory agencies that “clean” diesel cars included software to cut emissions when testing in a laboratory. Two weeks later, the U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) announced VW’s violation,

spearheading a dynamic global news flow and social media bursting in flames.

In short order, VW CEO Martin Winterkorn resigned; Matthias Müller from **Porsche** replaced him. A series of executive suspensions, somber and upbeat apologies and announcements about customer communications and restructuring followed. But the controversy and new revelations continued.

Throughout, VW has been consistent in its crisis communications: The company has said little. Public apologies



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Editor, Seth Arenstein, sarenstein@accessintel.com
Editorial Director, Steve Goldstein, sgoldstein@accessintel.com
Graphic Designer, Yelena Shamis, yshamis@accessintel.com
Group Content Manager, Richard Brownell, rbrownell@accessintel.com
Assistant Content Manager, Mark Renfree, menfree@accessintel.com
Managing Editor, Guidebooks, Ian Wright, iwright@accessintel.com
Director of Marketing, Laura Snitkovskiy, lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com
Assistant Marketing Manager, Rachel Schermann, rschermann@accessintel.com
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Client Services:
 Phone: 888.707.5814 · Fax: 301.309.3847
 e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:
 40 Wall Street, 50th floor, New York, NY 10005
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Brands' Brief Instructional Videos Got the Most Shares on Facebook in '15

BuzzFeed Food captured the most **Facebook** shares of all U.S. brands in 2015, with 91% of its 50.1 million shares coming from video posts, according to **Shareablee** data supplied to *PR News*. These were mostly brief videos showing simple recipes. The takeaway for PR pros in all industries: posting brief videos with easy, useful tips is a recipe for success on Facebook.

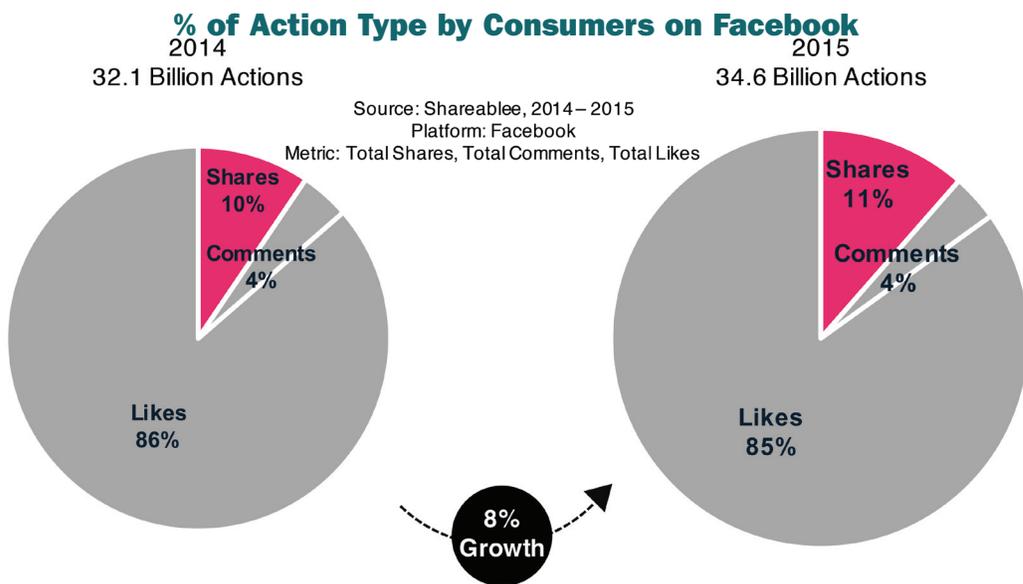
Recipes accounted for five of the year's top 20 Facebook videos, including **TipHero's** omelet muffins, **Tasty's** mozzarella-stuffed, slow cooker meatballs, **BuzzFeed Food's** pizza cone and

Tasty's chocolate cream cheese-stuffed monkey bread. The most-engaged Facebook video of 2015 was a **TipHero** recipe for apple roses. That 74-second video's basic instructions have generated nearly 8 million total actions (likes, comments and shares), 73% of which were shares.

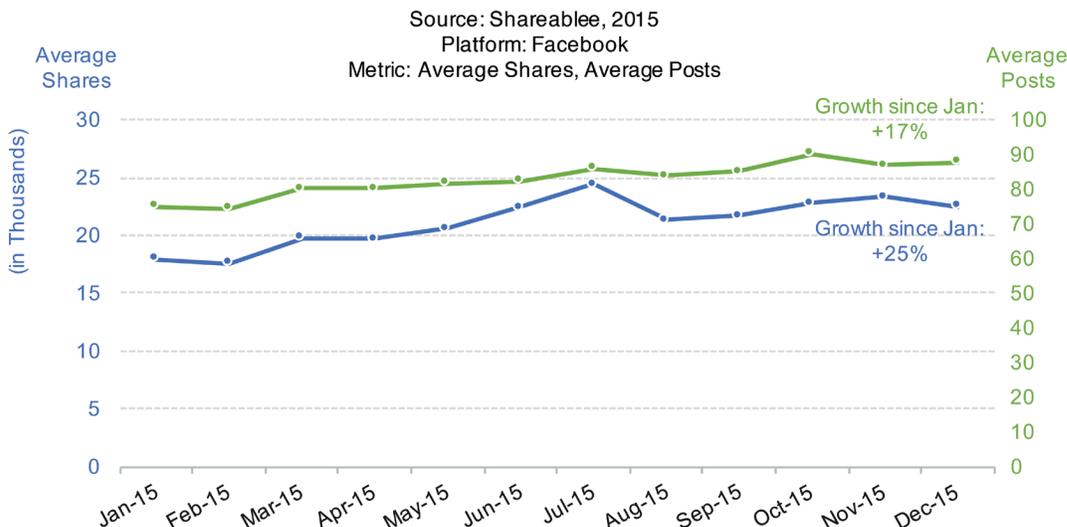
This quick, ephemeral content will be even more valuable for brands adjusting their social strategies to accommodate live video features, such as the new Facebook Live.

In 2015, sharing of U.S. brands' Facebook posts grew 124% vs 2014. ■

U.S. Brands on Facebook: 2014-2015



Trend: U.S. Brands Average Shares and Average Shares per Month



Great Writing Is About Your Audience, Not You

left feet through a rumba on “Dancing with the Stars,” you see James’ and Hough’s final drafts, not their hours of practice. Great writing takes the same effort, and great writers practice and polish their work until the final copy looks effortless.

Writing Tip #2: Great Writing Isn’t About You: Understanding that great writing isn’t about you doesn’t mean you refrain from working personal flourishes into your copy. It just means that your goal for the piece should not be to show the world how talented and smart you are. Your goal is to make the audience the primary beneficiary. What you find interesting or think is important is irrelevant—unless you write something that only you will read. This leads to...

Writing Tip #3: Know Your Audience: The goal of every written piece is to get something from the audience. Attention, agreement, support, action, information, contributions, reactions and decisions are just some of the outcomes great writers hope to evoke through their efforts. But in order to achieve any of these outcomes, the writer must first give the audience what it needs to respond. The only way to gain these insights is to ask the right questions: What is the audience’s relationship to the topic? What is the audience’s primary interest in the topic? How will the audience benefit from the topic? What attitudes, perceptions, or fears might the audience have about the topic? What unique facts will the audience need? What questions will the audience ask?

Writing Tip #4: Become a Great Reader: You may be surprised to learn that you’ll find some of your best reading material in the supermarket checkout line. Read about the latest celebrity divorce or how to give your kitchen an inexpensive makeover or get abs of steel in 28 days. You are doing research; not on the topic, but on the writing. You’ll discover supermarket publications contain some of the most concise, clear and easy-to-digest and remember language anywhere. That’s the language great writers speak.

Take Sen. Edward Kennedy’s famous quote from the eulogy of his brother, Sen. Robert Kennedy: “My brother need not be idealized, or enlarged in death beyond what he was in life; to be remembered as a good and decent man, who saw wrong and tried to right it, saw suffering and tried to heal it, saw war and tried to stop it.”

Robert Kennedy was a senator, attorney general, a hu-

manitarian and a leader in the civil rights movement and the war on poverty. Yet when it came to summing up his brother’s lasting impact, Ted Kennedy chose simple language to deliver one of the most powerful statements ever spoken.

Writing Tip # 5: Become a Storyteller: Since the first hunter ventured from his village in search of food and returned with dinner and the story of how he obtained it, stories have contained four basic elements—a good guy, bad guy, conflict and resolution. From Shakespeare to *Star Wars*, well-written stories that contain these elements resonate with audiences and get them to respond with the outcome the writer wants.

Great writers can turn any business, PR or marketing piece into a story. The client or the business is the good guy. The competition or a weak economy is the bad guy. The difference between products, processes or solutions is the conflict. The resolution of the story leaves the audience with no choice but to sign up for what the writer is selling.

Writing Tip #6: Put the Punchline First: Many people write like they tell a joke. They provide background information before building up to the story’s punchline, or most important point. A great writer puts the punchline first and delivers the one indispensable message that the audience must read in order for the writer to get what he or she wants.

Imagine that the first hunter prepared a press release for the people of his village about the hunt. He wants the audience to read the release and recognize him as a great hunter. What is the one indispensable message that the village must have for the hunter to achieve his goal? “Are we eating tonight or not?” they want to know. If the hunter begins his release with, “Tonight, we feast!” the audience has the message most likely to give the hunter the recognition he craves. The details of the hunt can follow for anyone who is not hungry and wants to read past the first sentence.

There is more to great writing, of course, but this “Top Six for ’16” is a nice alliteration and a good start to great writing in the new year. Follow these tips and bad writers will become good, good writers will become great and great writers will start rewriting. ■

CONTACT: Jeff Opperman is creator of the *Writing for Results writing seminar*. jeff.opperman@gmail.com



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Measuring Social Responses to VW's Offer

and customer correspondence have been repeated on online platforms. VW has asked for patience while it looks for an optimal remedy for the deceived customers who may be offered a mechanical solution to repair the illegal device.

Late last year VW offered affected customers a "Goodwill Package." VW describes it as "a first step toward restoring your invaluable trust." It includes a \$500 prepaid Visa gift card (aka loyalty card), a \$500 VW dealership card and free 24-hour roadside assistance for three years.

How have customers and other active publics responded to the package?

Peak coverage, based on data from **Factiva**, occurred between Nov. 9 and 15, with 1,267 hits, 152 publications, 1,095 web news items and one multimedia channel. Over 16 days, 1,498 Tweets were posted, including VW goodwill package or #goodwillpackage.

More specifically, **Consumerist.com** found 120,000 people accepted the package online. That is roughly 25% of the affected 482,000 vehicles covered by the package guidelines, said VW spokesperson Jeannine Ginivan.

There was support for the package on **Twitter**, but most postings seemed negative. Some Twitter users think this is an unacceptable form of remediation, categorizing the gesture as a disappointment after waiting for a more concrete response more than two months after the scandal became public, and charging that it is not enough to win back loyalty.

Other Twitter users highlighted the additional wait to activate the cards offered in the package (i.e., four weeks) and the confusion over an arbitration clause. For instance, one person wrote "It appears that @VW clarified the fine print for goodwill package. Take it or leave it. Won't affect class action. Yes, they still suck."

A TAXONOMY OF RESPONDENTS

As of Nov. 30, 2015, more than 641 comments were recorded. I read and sorted them into five distinct categories. I called the first category **Dissatisfaction with Amount of Compensation**. Many commenters believed the goodwill package to be not enough, or insignificant. Commenters debated the value of a \$500 VW gift card versus a \$500 check, insinuating that a gift card to a dealership is worth far less than the cash.

I named the second category **Ulterior Motive**. There was a large discussion over whether titling the compensation the "Goodwill Package" accurately represented its purpose. As one commenter pointed out: "It should not be called 'goodwill package.' This is a 'we committed felonious fraud and we were caught package.' Goodwill insinuates that they do this, well, out of goodwill."

The third identified category is **American Focus**, reflecting a considerable amount of discussion on VW's focus on the U.S. market—which for VW has global PR implications. Consumers from countries such as the U.K. and Australia felt that VW is not doing enough to address their markets.

Comments such as "What about us in Europe?????" demonstrated that commenters believe VW should expand its attention to other parts of the world.

I called the fourth category **Refund Consumers**. Many commenters in this category brought up the popular notion that anyone who purchased an affected vehicle should be given a full refund for the car. As one commenter put it, "Can someone explain why car owners aren't allowed to return the vehicle and be paid everything they've paid toward the vehicle they were sold by VW? I feel like this is common sense, you paid for something that wasn't what VW said it was and you should be fully reimbursed."

The fifth category was **Confusion Over Terms**. Many commenters asked if their model is eligible, where it is eligible and what the legal implications are. Commenters repeatedly emphasize "reading the fine print," as suspicion as to whether or not this negates other compensation was expressed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR VW AND PR PROS

To date, the outcome of VW's actions and strategies appear more negative than positive and have generated many more questions (although in VW's defense, a frequently asked questions section of vwdieselform.com clarifies concerns and consumer doubts about the goodwill gesture).

Meantime, VW's stock price has fluctuated wildly. It fell to its lowest value Oct. 2 (\$92.36), before reaching its highest value (\$135.35) Dec. 29. The DoJ lawsuit, with as much as \$45 billion in fines, sent VW down more than 13%. For PR pros, four takeaways can be drawn from the VW diesel crisis thus far:

- **Come Clean Early:** When management knows troubling news is coming, your best counsel to the C-suite is to come clean, take responsibility and announce the brand will collaborate with authorities. Get ahead of the crisis.
- **Take Action and Demonstrate Confidence:** Announce and implement actions in full force, one following the other, as a systematic strategy to regain control over the crisis on all fronts. The responses need to show confidence despite your being in the middle of a perfect storm.
- **Ensure Your Publics Understand:** For complex cases where the remedy or resolution involves delicate steps, make sure your target audiences clearly understand your intent. Be ready with follow-ups soon after the announcement. Forecast concerns and questions and offer real-time clarifications across multiple channels.
- **Make Communications Central to Your Response:** Ensure the communications team is as close as possible to the contingency. This is a time for strengthening and empowering the PR and communications team and the organization's appreciation of its role, significance and contributions. ■

CONTACT: *Juan-Carlos Molleda is professor and chair of the Department of Public Relations, University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications. jmolleda@jou.ufl.edu*

Five Ways Social Listening Will Become Audience Intelligence in '16



Less than a decade ago, we experienced an explosion of new social media channels. This led to the birth of the social media listening industry. In the early days, if we could just capture what people were saying, we were thrilled. We stared at pie charts and looked at graphs and learned the basics of what our customers were really doing online.

Fast forward to 2016 and the world has changed. Social listening doesn't cut it. Audience intelligence is replacing it.

We all know in real life that listening is valuable only if you are listening to the right people. We don't treat all opinions as equal or react to every comment unless we want to drive ourselves insane. Instead, we are moving toward an ability to identify the exact audience that matters so that we can listen to what our audience cares about and we can know what content it prefers, which channels are its favorites, what time of day its members go online, what their patterns of behavior are and what they mean to our brand.

In 2016, the trend away from social listening and toward audience intelligence will be driven by five changes in how we view listening and its next-generation cousin, intelligence. They are listed here:

- ▶ **The Importance of Non-Verbal Listening:** When we are in a sales situation, we know that as much as two-thirds of what we learn is non-verbal. The non-verbal equivalent online includes search queries, downloads, retweets and likes, shares and other non-verbal communications that are critical to understanding reality. We must account for behavior in new ways in our listening approach.
- ▶ **The Ability to Build the Right Profiles:** There are many false positives in listening, ranging from spam to simply tracking the wrong information. Analysts today must be craftspeople who can build profiles that focus exactly on what you want to learn about. These profiles are highly precise and contain a range of keywords and phrases.
- ▶ **Measure the Conversation, Not the Instance:** When

consumers react online they often share and talk across multiple channels over a period of time. Our ability to identify their patterns helps us build the right trail of measurement. Think of a conversation starting in **Twitter**, going to **Instagram** and ending with comments on **Facebook**. If you measure Twitter only, or look solely at Instagram, you have just a partial picture. Consumers follow patterns, so you can see their trails over time. As we do offline, we tend to walk the same path over and over again.

- ▶ **Compare and Contrast Audiences:** If you are tracking

“ We don't treat all opinions as equal or react to every comment unless we want to drive ourselves insane. ”

each audience, you can see how it differs on the same topic from another group. What are cardiologists saying vs. general practitioners? What are enterprise IT leaders in cybersecurity saying vs. your employees vs. CIOs? If you compare and contrast audiences, your ability to see new insights greatly increases.

- ▶ **Understand Your Data Sources:** We need to ensure that the data we are measuring really represents where your audience is. Know what channels you are receiving data from so you can see if it matches up with the location of your customers. And be careful to determine if you are paying twice or thrice for the same data vs. different providers. It's time for us to engage in de-duplication of data so we don't overpay for the same data. After all, we need more resources to improve our audience intelligence. ■

CONTACT: @bobpearson1845

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Next Trends in Employee Engagement: Great Content, Fewer Emails and Shorter Meetings

Internal communications and employee engagement become hot topics whenever communicators talk shop. Amy Kot thinks about these topics full time. The **Edelman** SVP has advised a global array of companies for nearly two decades about how best to speak to employees, improve retention and accelerate business performance. Ahead of an article to be published in this week's *Edelman Connections* newsletter, Kot shared with us New Year's resolutions and best-in-class approaches designed to make your internal communications resonate with your customers, aka your employees.

Overall, brands should emphasize employee-centric communications that inspire plenty of dialogue as opposed to one-way, top-down models. Engagement is particularly important today since "turnover is so expensive...and social media makes it easy for motivated, engaged employees to be tremendous brand ambassadors," she says. The specifics:

1. Content Is Content Is Content: A great way to think about employee communications, Kot says, is to blur the line between external and internal. "The external is the internal," she says. After all, the content you provide to employees must be similar in quality to anything you write for external use: "sharp, fresh and to the point...that will capture—and hold—employees' increasingly limited attention."

Briefly: In her article, she advocates "short, snackable, visual" content, including "short-form articles, videos, infographics, listicles and **BuzzFeed**-style quizzes."

A tip designed to boost engagement is to include a call to action (heard that term before?). Ask employees to enter an online quiz or a photo contest and share the results via a social platform, like **Yammer**, Kot writes.

Homeland: Similar to external communications, it's critical to reach employees where they are, she writes. "Today's employees unlock their personal smartphones with a thumbprint and have 24/7 access to endless social and news feeds. Leading companies are capitalizing on this trend with internal news portals and apps that work on employees' personal devices, with content curated newsfeed style so it's easy to access, digest and share."

I Did It My Way: Many leading brands have found nobody tells their story better than their customers. The **FedEx Instagram** account, for example, is entirely populated with consumer-generated content (PRN, 9/28/2015). Similarly, Kot writes that best-in-class brands delegate "the bulk of [employee communications] content" to employees, deputizing them as citizen journalists. "Have them interview leaders, blog, tweet, photograph and film their experience to bring it to life for their colleagues," she writes.

2. E-maelstrom: "Employees are drowning in email," Kot says. Her article notes a study finding that workers spend some 28% of their day interacting with email. That sounds

conservative to us, we tell her. She agrees. What to do? Communicators must inventory what's going out, she says. Usually "email overload is a symptom of too many one-off missives from disparate teams," Kot writes. As a result, smart brands create "cross-functional internal communications advisory groups to align disconnected functions around consistent processes and core messaging." Protocols are developed "to bundle similar messages from multiple senders and funnel them through a roster of fewer, more effective channels (e.g., all HR messages are included in a monthly e-newsletter)."

Put the Top Down: But to get an entire company to streamline its email flow, doesn't everyone have to comply? "Yes. This must start at the top," Kot says. In fact, a common problem for internal communicators, she writes, is that leaders of various business units "each have communication agendas and initiatives that compete for employee mindshare." An editorial calendar can rein in email, she writes.

Check, Please: She advocates guidelines and checklists for content creators "before they hit send on one-off emails and [to] prioritize messages so employees understand at-a-glance" emails that require immediate attention. Set up a four-tier message prioritization system. Tier I includes top-priority corporate initiatives and CEO communications; Tier IV is routine communications (staffing announcements, IT updates, local site communications). Only Tier I messages warrant all-employee emails, she writes.

3. Meet Me Halfway: You thought email was the only overload? You've not attended enough meetings. In her article, Kot singles out all-hands meetings and suggests ways to energize them. First, instead of a top-down agenda, use a virtual voting tool to let staff choose topics. "Crowdsourcing the agenda enables leaders to focus on priority topics and engages employees from the start," she writes. Limit meetings to fewer than two hours (bless you, Amy).

I Can't Hear You: Employees, like customers, want to be heard, Kot says, so provide many ways for them to participate. "Beyond live Q&A, invite attendees to pose questions throughout the meeting via internal social channels, hashtags or a virtual real-time queue such as **SocialQ&A.com**," she writes. "Capturing questions can also serve as a metric for tracking engagement over time."

And: Shift the spotlight off the CEO and onto division leaders; use the 70/30 rule, limit presentations to not more than 70% of the meeting, with 30% for dialogue; insert dialogue throughout, don't leave it until the end; make sure all materials are available to employees after meetings with a recap of takeaways; "quick feedback surveys and/or mobile polls during or after a town hall provide insight for planning future meetings, as well as tracking engagement over time. ■

CONTACT: Amy.Kot@edelman.com

4 Reasons Why You Should Adopt Compelling Branded Content



Branded content has its detractors.

There are those who say there's too much content these days and, with increasing demands on everyone's time, why add to the clutter? Who's going to read it? Absorb it? Who's going to act on it? What value could it possibly provide?

There are those who question the vehicles through which branded content reaches its audiences: owned and paid media. Rather than charting one's own path or riding on the margins of established conventional media, they ask, isn't it always better to get that coveted third-party endorsement? Doesn't that have more power and ring truer with the audience that brands are trying to reach?

And there are those who question the very ethics of branded content creators. Aren't they misleading consumers with, for example, native advertising copy that, as the critics see it, masquerades as "real" editorial content? Isn't this the antithesis of truth in advertising? Won't it lead to an erosion of brand loyalty once the wool is pulled off the consumer's eyes?

All these detractors make good points. But no revolution has ever taken place without resistance—and I'd suggest that the move toward branded content is no less than a revolution. It's not a fad or a flash in the pan. While it will evolve further, adapting to changes in media options, technology developments, and consumer preferences, it's not going away. Which means that you can't ignore it. Instead, understand it, adapt to it, even embrace it. Here's what I mean:

1. Too Much Content? Make sure you stand out. There isn't just too much branded content. There's too much content of all types, in all media, on all platforms, at all times of the day and night. But that's not a reason to shrink away from meeting the demand for more. The trick is to create content that's solid, valuable, informative, entertaining and targeted to the right audience. You know that audience. You know what its information needs are. You know how those needs dovetail with your message; and think message, more than product or service. Who's better equipped than you to craft that content and make sure it reaches consumers who are—as studies have shown—eager to soak it up?

2. Charting Your Course Provides Control—and Consumers and Publishers Appreciate That: Third-party endorsements can be valuable, but they also come with strings attached: You can't control the message or the environment in which you're placed. And there's a temporal quality to the endorsement: it's up, it's gone, it's over. A well-orchestrated, multi-faceted, ongoing, strategic branded content campaign that uses a wide variety of channels builds audience, has staying power, and provides much greater impact. Provided the content is solid and valuable and you're reaching the audience you need. And provided your audience knows it's

you behind the content. Which brings us to the next point:

3. Worried About Ethics?

Transparency works for everyone. Last month, after several years of study—and lots of well-vocalized concern on the part of consumer advocates—the **Federal Trade Commission** issued a series of guidelines regulating the appearance of native advertising in digital media. And though these are guidelines, rather than regulations, the FTC made it clear that it was serious about enforcement, holding not only brands and publishers responsible for compliance, but also anyone else involved in the creation of the branded content. While these guidelines may have been greeted, initially, with some hand-wringing on the part of not only brands but also publishers—who have become accustomed to collecting revenue from a source that's proven more viable than either print advertising or digital banner ads—in truth, the guidelines only crystallize what is current common practice. Most brands and publishers already are diligent about clearly labeling branded content, whether online or in print. And the reasons for that run deeper than concern about an FTC crackdown. Publishers don't want to compromise their reputation for objectivity with their readers. Perhaps more important, brands want the credit for providing great content. And that approach is working. A study from **The Content Council** showed that about three-quarters of respondents said they understood brands providing branded content were selling something, but said it was fine, so long as the content was valuable—and two-thirds of respondents said they were more likely to be loyal to those brands specifically because they'd read the content. Perhaps ironically, a study of millennials showed that they trusted branded content more than conventional content because they understood the brands' objectives in producing the content.

4. The Bottom Line: Branded content should become part of your strategic arsenal. You might approach it by creating an in-house brand newsroom or by working with a publication to develop a branded content strategy across their publications (perhaps created by its in-house content studio). You could create a content-based microsite and promote it through social media and targeted e-mail blasts. You could develop a native advertising campaign and release it programmatically. The point is, don't think branded content is going away soon. It's not. Don't believe that consumers aren't looking for great content produced on behalf of your brands. They are. So find your place in the growing branded content landscape and dig in deep. If you do it well, it'll pay dividends. ■

CONTACT: *Mike Winkelman is president of Leverage Media. mike@leverage-media.com*



1. Bell's Tolls Confirmed: We told you last week of unconfirmed reports from **CBS News** that the **Department of Justice** (DoJ) was investigating **Blue Bell Creameries**, claiming the company knew of issues with its ice cream production several years prior to a 2015 Listeria outbreak that sickened 10 people and killed three. In an online article last week, **CNN** said "a U.S. official confirmed" that Blue Bell indeed is under a DoJ criminal investigation. Generally commended for its transparency during the Listeria crisis—our Katie Paine graded Blue Bell "A" in her May 11, 2015, *Image Patrol* column in *PR News*—Blue Bell refused to comment to CNN or anyone else regarding the DoJ story. Later in the week, though, it issued a release that also failed to mention DoJ, yet addressed related issues. "Because Listeria is commonly found in the natural environment, no manufacturer can ever assume it can be entirely eradicated," it said in part. "We expect to periodically find microbiological indications in our facilities. Since our plants reopened, we have tested and will continue to test every batch of ice cream produced, and no products produced have tested positive for Listeria." Last spring the company gradually recalled some of its ice cream and frozen dairy products and eventually in April recalled all its stock (PRN, April 20). The culprit was a food service cup that contained Listeria, found in March. Later the CNN piece notes the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) traced the Listeria back to an outbreak in 2010.

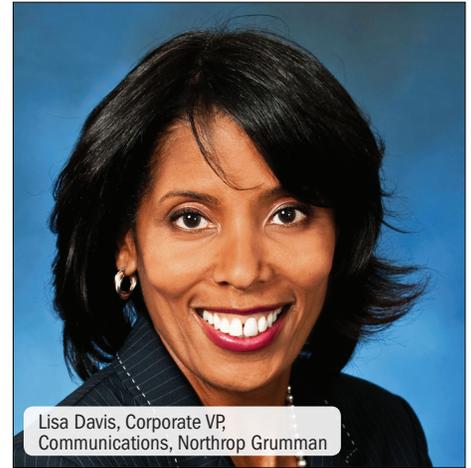
After cleaning three production plants, Blue Bell began re-introducing its products to supermarket shelves late in August (PRN, Aug 24). Blue Bell's **Twitter** and **Instagram** accounts have



chronicled the activity, detailing flavors of ice cream en route to markets. Loyal fans chimed in frequently. An Instagram message, dated Dec 28, noted, "We've started cranking out ice cream for phase five!" [of its staged re-introduction of product]. An Instagram post of Dec 29 adds details, noting Blue Bell ice cream will reach seven southeastern states beginning Jan 18 and providing a list with dates and locations.

2. Acid Reflux: Anything **Chipotle** does these days gets ink. Last week it came out the burrito maker decided early in October to sever ties with **Edelman** due to the agency's taking on business that posed a conflict. As you'll see below, the largest of Chipotle's E. coli outbreaks came to light later in the month. Chipotle failed to confirm for us whether Edelman's brief included crisis work. Earlier this week Chipotle disclosed it's being subpoenaed as part of a federal criminal investigation of a norovirus in a CA outlet last summer. In addition, the Denver-based company said sales fell 30% last month.

And last, our Dec 14 and 21 editions noted Chipotle brass was upset that the CDC reported cases of E. coli as they were received, creating the incorrect public perception that each case was a new outbreak. There hadn't been any new outbreaks since the one emanating from 11 restaurants in the Pacific Northwest between mid-October and mid-November, Chipotle reiterated. It can't say that anymore. Just before Christmas the CDC reported it's investigating five additional E. coli cases in three more states linked to Chipotle outlets. Since the DNA fingerprint of the new cases differs from that of the late October incidents they "are not being included in the case count" for the pre-



Lisa Davis, Corporate VP,
Communications, Northrop Grumman

vious outbreak, CDC said. This second outbreak includes cases in KS (1), ND (1) and OK (3), with illnesses starting between Nov 18 and 26, CDC said. Chipotle said "none of the ingredients in our restaurants today were present at the time of these illnesses." Should these latest cases constitute a separate outbreak, it would be Chipotle's sixth of 2015, according to *Food Safety News*. As with the October outbreak, the source of the contamination is unknown. "Officials at [CDC] have indicated that additional cases from similar time periods may still be reported as they make their way through various state health departments to the federal health officials," Chipotle added.

3. News Bits: Weber Shandwick acquired healthcare integrated marketing communications firm **ReviveHealth**. Deal terms were not disclosed. – **Taft and Partners** opened an office in Newark, NJ. *NJBIZ* recently named Taft NJ's 5th largest PR firm. – Integrated marketing communicator **Salt and Company** rebranded as **Wild Hive**. – **Rose of Moscow** said it will expand into Cuba.

4. People: Levick chief **Mark Irion** departed. – **Northrop Grumman** elevated **Lisa Davis** to corporate VP, communications. She replaces the retiring **Darryl Fraser**, a 37-year veteran. – **Steinreich Communications** named **Daniel Seaman** managing director of its Israel office. Seaman directed Israel's press office under six prime ministers. – **Porter Novelli** named **Melissa Kraus Taylor** managing director of its Atlanta office. – **Allison Rawlings** joined **NBC Entertainment** as SVP of corporate communications. ■

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