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The How-To Resource for Communicators

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Tips to Work With Influencers, Agencies in the Aftermath of the FTC-Warner Bros. Case

It's happened again. The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) has upended a major brand for failing to comply with regulations concerning influencers. This time it's **Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Inc.** Its online influencers failed "to disclose adequately" that the brand paid them to provide favorable coverage during a late-2014 marketing campaign for video game *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor*. The brand settled with the FTC, the agency said July 11.

The last time an FTC decision concerning influencers was discussed in our pages it was high-end fashion brand **Lord & Taylor** caught in the regulatory thicket (*PRN*, March 21). In the FTC's first action regarding influencers, the retailer allegedly paid for "a seemingly objective article" in *Nylon*, an online publication. The commission also charged the retailer with failing to disclose it paid 50 fashion influencers to wear a paisley dress from its summer 2015 collection in photos

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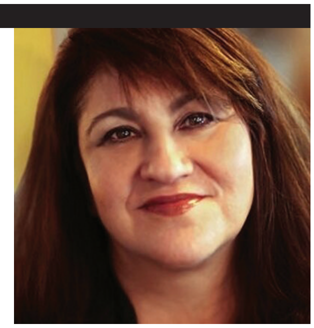
MEASUREMENT

BY MARGOT SAVELL, SVP, HEAD OF GLOBAL MEASUREMENT, HILL+KNOWLTON STRATEGIES' RESEARCH + DATA INSIGHTS

Measuring the World: Tips & Tactics for Global Measurement Programs



It is becoming increasingly critical to meet the needs of businesses that operate in different markets around the world. As a result, many companies are integrating global media measurement programs into their communications plans to provide a worldwide roadmap that drives future strategy.

If you are considering a similar path, here are some important steps to take your measurement program global. Many are the same that you follow in your U.S. market. But there are some stark differences that require your attention.

It is also important to note that global measurement is a big lift that requires a team to tackle.

CHOOSING MARKETS AND LANGUAGES

When setting up your global measurement program, your first step should be determining which of your markets should be measured. After that rank their order of importance based on your business and communications goals. This will help you focus your analysis, insights and recommendations on the priority markets.

The next step is to pin down the languages that are important to your industry in each market. For example, a measurement program in India might require an understanding of six

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BY JOSEPH CHECKLER, SENIOR MEDIA SPECIALIST, PEPPERCOMM

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5 Specific Examples of What Makes a Media Pitch Work

One thing that surprised me in jumping to PR from journalism was a general lack of understanding of what makes an interesting story. It's human nature to think, "My story is interesting." Don't certain annoying parents blindly think, "My kid is the best"? Certainly it takes some doing to convince others, even if that story actually is interesting. (And yes, annoying parents, *of course* your kid is the best.)

For brand communicators pitching stories to journalists, a good tip is to think outside your sphere. It's not enough to tell your brand's story. You have to make it relatable to the masses. In this case, "the masses" means reporters and editors who get pitched dozens of stories weekly. Most of those stories are centered around "Me, me, me, me." And oh yeah, "me."

Good journalists and editors can smell when brands are looking for media coverage about how wonderful they are. By contrast, editors and journalists seek pitches that will touch their readers. They want stories about interesting problems. Issues or problems that large groups of people may be facing can make excellent stories. A pitch about one brand's journey, told in its own words from start to finish, will not.

This feature [http://on.wsj.com/29I4DiI], by my former colleague and "estranged office wife" Rachel Feintzeig, about executives getting so bogged down by meetings and appointments that they have no time to get their work done, illustrates what it takes to get into a top-tier story.

Its concrete examples are what make it an effective story, such as the part about the manager whose workload forced him to skip all but the most important meetings.

While some brands and communicators need to make minor (or wholesale) changes to their thinking to get it into these features, understanding the points provided below might help.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that it's the reporter's story. It was Rachel's idea. In reporting it, she talked to a ton of people. The best sources—that is, those she ended up using—were undoubtedly people who understood how to listen, and could identify what was most interesting about their stories.

Another tip: I remember from my journalism days several sources recommending other experts as resources. This is an indication that the sources weren't interested only in getting their names in print. Rather, they looked beyond their agenda for the common goal of accurate reporting. They helped make my article better. Win-win.

With that, here are five things companies and brands should keep in mind if they want to be featured in features:

1. If data is used, it must identify a real trend. The sources Rachel used illustrate examples found in hard data. Quoting the article: "**Cigna** found that trouble starts when more than 40% of the connections in a network run through one person."

2. Words can bring numbers to life. An executive from the data-gathering firm was able to say something that added to the data itself. Again, quoting the article: "Research and advisory firm **CEB** found that 35%-40% of managers 'are so overloaded that it's actually impossible for them to get work done effectively,' said Brian Kropp, a CEB leader who works with chief HR officers."

3. Don't be afraid to talk about your brand's issues. Sources in the article admitted something was amiss and needed to be corrected. This made them seem more human, and compelling. It also made a terrific story. Quoting the article: "When technology company **Juniper Networks** analyzed employee networks to untangle a client's complaints about miscommunications with the firm, it found that the bulk of communication about the account was going through a small group of employees," according to Chris Ernst, a network analysis expert who helped Juniper." As noted earlier, I realize such openness requires a change of thinking.

4. The problem must be broad, not just a problem one company happens to solve. In the *New York Times* story we will look at next [http://nyti.ms/29zvAhV], independent experts were able to corroborate the reporter's findings. Recognize reporters always will look for these types of sources, so it's best to pick a topic you know can be corroborated.

4a. To be a publishable feature, the story won't be all about one source. The story in *The New York Times* starts with a problem: a man who founded a business dedicated to complicated specialty packaging. His problem was that

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Vigilance Is the Rule With Influencers

posted on Nylon's **Instagram** account. The posts contained the Lord & Taylor hashtag, but lacked "#paidpost" or "#sponsoredpost," the FTC said.

BRANDS IN THE TARGET

Stephanie McCratic, Founder, Acorn

In Lord & Taylor and Warner Brothers, the brands outsourced their influencer work. Yet the FTC went after the brands only. "The FTC once again is holding" brands "responsible for violations...by doing so, it's reminding" [them] they are responsible for ensuring FTC compliance with their influencer campaigns, even when they delegate their duties to an agency," says Allison Fitzpatrick, partner at the law firm of **Davis & Gilbert**.

Essentially acting as temp agencies for brands, influencer companies locate, vet and pay the influencers, says Stephanie McCratic, founder of **Acorn: The Influence Agency**, which has supplied influencers to brands such as **Walmart** and **Kimberly-Clark**. "They do all the H.R. things" with influencers for brands, including apprise them of disclosure guidelines, she adds. Influencer companies are growing in number, Fitzpatrick says. "Brands are not recruiting their own influencers," she adds.

While not charging influencers in either case with infractions, as far as we know, the FTC, in its July 11 press release, for the first time called out an influencer. Its choice was the "wildly popular" PewDiePie. As it did with Lord & Taylor and Warner Bros., the FTC went after a large target, Fitzpatrick says. "Perhaps the FTC is warning very popular influencers" that they will be scrutinized and they need to be compliant, she adds.

PewDiePie, Influencer

Born Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg, the 26-year-old Swede failed to adequately disclose that he was one of many influencers paid "thousands of dollars [by Warner Bros.] to post positive gameplay videos on YouTube and social media," the FTC said. PewDiePie's Mordor video "was played more than 3.7 million times," the FTC release said. In all, influencer videos for *Mordor* were seen some 5.5 million times, according to the FTC.

Allison Fitzpatrick, Partner, Davis & Gilbert

PewDiePie, in a July 11 **YouTube** video responding to the Warner Bros-FTC announcement [http://bit.ly/29AbFPd], says he disclosed his Mordor video sponsor was Warner Bros., although he admits, "I could have" disclosed it more prominently. He also charges his name was mentioned in the press release "because I'm big" and would serve as clickbait. In between foul-languaged tirades, PewDiePie correctly points out his video was produced prior to disclosure guidance the FTC released in May 2015. That guidance clarified questions about the agency's definition of conspicuous disclosure.

In the Warner Bros. case, the FTC says the brand "instructed influencers to place…disclosures in the description box appearing below" their videos. Disclosures were "visible only if consumers clicked on the "Show More" button in the description box," the FTC said.

What do these cases mean for brand communicators?

1. Brand communicators need to be extremely careful when choosing the companies they delegate their influencer work to, says Fitzpatrick. As these incidents illustrate, influencer companies can hold a brand's reputation in their hands.

2. Communicators should insist that contracts with influencer companies include strong language regarding compliance with FTC regulations. Insist also that you receive detailed descriptions of how the company will monitor influencers, Fitzpatrick says. Ask questions such as how often will it be done? Who will do it and how will it be done?

McCratic says her company uses a combination of technology and "human eyeballs" to monitor influencers under its purview. She says every piece of work an influencer creates is monitored. Brands that work directly with influencers, Fitzpatrick says, should likewise insert strong language in their contracts about compliance.

3. Communicators need to ask for reports from influencer companies that include updates on monitoring and compliance, Fitzpatrick says. Whether they're issued weekly, month-

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Be Sure Your Measurement Tools Work Globally

languages in coverage about consumer electronics, but only one language in the technology industry.

Next, find out which media channels are used most frequently in each market. Don't waste your time and effort on media that is not being consumed by your target audiences.

Once you have all of this information, check to make sure your listening tool has the functionality to pull coverage in those markets, languages and media channels. Every tool does not cover media sources in all countries and languages.

FINDING THE RIGHT TOOL

If you don't already have a data license with a specific tool, reach out to several vendors to determine which one best meets your needs. Many options are available; for example, one tool offers coverage in 40 countries and 80 languages, while another spans 186 languages in 190 countries.

In addition, some tools provide online coverage only, while others access data from television, radio and print, in addition to online. As well, be sure to check how many media sources are included—I've seen ranges from 2,000 to 2 million depending on the number of media channels, countries and languages available in each tool.

TRANSLATING KEYWORDS AND RESULTS

After you finalize the priority markets, languages, media sources and tools, the next step is to set up keywords and search strings in all languages important to your global measurement program. The best choice is to have a native speaker in each language translate the keywords for you. An additional benefit: Analysts on the ground in different countries also have the advantage of being able to interpret the data from a local perspective, with an understanding of the resident issues, challenges and cultures.

If you lack native speakers in your organization, this step can be outsourced to PR agencies or research companies that have a global presence.

A less-desirable option is to use a free tool to translate your keywords and search strings. Such tools also can be used to translate coverage results. Should you take this route, however, the best practice is to use more than one translation tool to make sure the context is accurate. I have seen analysis based on only one tool, which provided a translation that was out of context and made no sense in conjunction with the report itself.

VALIDATING DATA

Data is inherently messy. It's more so when coverage is in different languages. For example, one company discovered that its stock market ticker formed an unrelated word in Spanish. Additional qualifiers had to be added to its search strings to eliminate that coverage.

Be sure to plan for extra time to validate and optimize your results to eliminate unnecessary noise, ensuring that the data is clean, relevant and consistent in each language and country.

VISUALIZING DATA

Global data, like domestic figures, can be sliced and diced in several ways, depending on your PR strategies in each country. For example, if your PR activities are consistent across markets, identical metrics can be applied to each. This will demonstrate a global view of how each country stacks up against others and can showcase performance successes around the world.

"Data is inherently messy. It's more so when coverage is in different languages. Make sure you clean your data."

But when different strategies and tactics are developed for each country, as is often the case, consistent analytics and data visualization gets a bit trickier. Coverage volume and other metrics cannot be applied equally across markets because some have unique PR activities. For example, one country might focus on a video program, so video metrics such as views come into play. Another country might activate an **Instagram** and **Twitter** program, where the metrics are quite different.

In these cases, comparing metrics across markets is unlikely to yield an accurate global view of performance. It might be more helpful to equate coverage of key messages or topics in different countries. Perhaps comparing results and outcomes from campaigns or launches is the answer.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR PROGRAM

In summary, your global measurement program must be customized for countries, languages, metrics and visualizations. Look for global trends and overarching themes when analyzing the data to see what is generating attention in the global media landscape. This will enable you to uncover your high-impact markets across the globe. It also will unveil opportunities to revise strategies and build brand awareness for the most important industry topics in each country. ■

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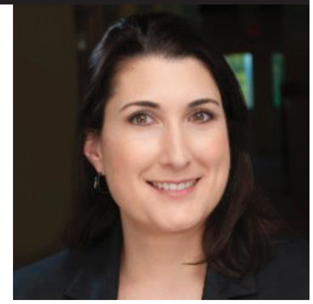
BY MELISSA SCHWARTZ, VP, STRATEGY & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE BROMWICH GROUP

How Much Is Too Much? Tips for Striking the Right Balance With CSR



When a company does something good and no one notices, what is the impact? Companies create philanthropic or charitable initiatives as part of their CSR programs for many reasons. Because there is the notion that CSR campaigns are created to cover up bad behavior, some corporations shy away from publicizing these efforts to stakeholders. They worry that if they do, they are signaling that there is a reason behind the strategy and will come under attack.

In failing to leverage CSR activities, corporations do themselves, their stakeholders and the greater community a disservice. They should publicly take ownership of their good deeds with strategic communications campaigns and cause marketing, not only to highlight their contributions, but also to encourage similar behavior among their peers. The purpose and importance of these campaigns do more than curry favor. They can motivate action.

HOW TO BEGIN

As PR pros, the responsibility of crafting a stakeholder communications strategy often falls to us. Before you can identify the best strategies, however, your team must take a realistic look at why the campaign was created.

These factors will help you determine how aggressive your communications strategy should be: Is the campaign unique? How large is the scope of the initiative? How will you judge success? Are there metrics that can be reported late as part of an ongoing narrative?

The following will help determine what kind of visibility your organization should have: Who are the available spokespeople within the organization? What negative impressions are associated with your brand? Who else is in the space? Consider outside validators. Which validators might improve your negative market opinion? Is there an external recipient of your activities? If so, how is it viewed, who are its spokespeople, what is their level of commitment to spotlight your effort?

There is no right or wrong answer; the objective is to walk into a strategic brainstorming session with as many facts as possible. Collecting some of this information may require a meeting with organizational leadership and can sometimes become an awkward conversation. Stand firm. Identifying the opportunities and challenges of a robust PR campaign before it launches can save you time and heartburn later.

As CSR programs are implemented, much effort is made to engage employees. Executives, however, struggle with the appropriate level of external promotion to stakeholders. It's a delicate dance.

At a minimum, an external page of your website should articulate your CSR efforts. These need not be extensive. **Wells Fargo** has a single webpage identifying opportunities for employees and providing public information [https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/csr/]. **Anheuser-Busch** has a multilayered CSR campaign focused not just on responsible drinking but on water conservation and providing clean drinking water to people affected by natural disasters. Its **Twitter** and **Facebook** pages regularly incorporate storytelling around these activities.

If you are launching a cause marketing campaign, you should consider a microsite. This allows visitors to learn about the program from your main website but does not overwhelm them with detail. **Yoplait** launched such a site to implement "Friends in the Fight," where consumers enter points from items to help determine the charities that will receive donations from Yoplait [https://friendsinthefight.yoplait.com/#our-story]. **Target** maintains a less interactive but equally effective microsite for its corporate efforts, which range from education to safety and preparedness [https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility].

CSR-related initiatives cannot entirely recreate a brand, but they can go a long way to help shape or reframe the narrative associated with it. PR should avoid shying away from leveraging these programs, but instead think strategically about the most effective messages and messengers. To ignore the positive impact such a promotion can provide is to undercut your own success, leaving a valuable tool behind. ■

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ly or daily, the reports should make it clear that influencers are “actually following protocol,” she adds.

On a positive note, Fitzpatrick sees an increase in brands requesting reports on influencers. On the other hand, she sees influencers becoming more powerful and gaining in negotiating power.

4. When communicators have the opportunity to review influencers’ posts, they should scrutinize them vigorously. This seems obvious, but it eluded Warner Bros. The FTC says Warner Bros. reviewed influencer posts and at least once allowed an inadequate sponsorship disclosure to be posted. “If marketers are able to review their influencers’ posts, it is imperative that they only approve posts with adequate sponsorship disclosures, as this was likely a factor that impacted Warner Bros.’ liability,” Fitzpatrick says.

5. Communicators can’t relax, Fitzpatrick says. While the FTC has acted against fashion and video games, this doesn’t mean it won’t target other sectors and their use of influencers, she says. In addition, while large brands have taken the FTC’s heat so far, small and mid-size brands should be vigilant, too, she says.

Looking ahead, Fitzpatrick sees large brands becoming more aware of FTC regulations regarding influencers. She’s concerned with smaller and mid-size companies, though, as they generally have fewer people charged with overseeing compliance.

Despite continuing FTC oversight, Fitzpatrick and McCratic agree that more and more brands will be turning to influencers. “Influencer marketing isn’t going away anytime soon,” Fitzpatrick notes, adding she spends nearly all her time working on influencer issues, including influencer agreements with brands. McCratic, who has a stake in seeing influencer marketing grow, believes eventually it will replace traditional PR. Her advice for communicators just beginning to work with influencers is to begin small. Try working with a few influencers in a single geographical location, she advises. “See which ones you are comfortable with,” she says. Should you decide to work with an influencer company, do your homework and “align yourself with the right people.” ■

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NO DISCLOSURE NO PAY: AN INFLUENCER SPEAKS

Sara Welch may not be your typical influencer. But with 31 million people blogging in the U.S, who is?

A former government employee and a mother of three young children, Welch blogs about food that’s quick and easy to prepare. In addition to her blog, *dinneratthezoo*, she writes nearly one dozen sponsored posts monthly for brands. She has been working with influencer agencies for years.

While she admits that when she began blogging nearly eight years ago, “we didn’t know about” FTC disclosure rules, the situation is different today. When you work for an influencer agency you must put your disclosure in your copy “or you don’t get paid. It’s as simple as that,” she says.

Are brands exerting more control over her work? Yes, Welch says, noting that typically her longer writing is submitted to a brand or an influencer agency several weeks before it’s posted. Things are more relaxed for tweets and Instagram posts, she adds.

Is she surprised when large brands get caught up in the FTC thicket? “Yes. The blogger community talks about disclosure regularly” in **Facebook** forums, she says. “It’s on our minds.”

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he relied on only three or four main customers. Later the story presents a solution, which happens to be a new insurance product aimed at helping smaller businesses. It helps protect them should one of their main clients fail to pay its bills or goes out of business. Note: this story would not have been interesting—to the reporter, the editor, or the general public—if it led with the solution. Full disclosure: the insurance provider is a **Peppercomm** client.

5. Provide interesting quotes that have nothing to do with data that can be used to move the story forward. This quote was used as a kicker to bring it all home: “I’m sure there’s a solution,” he added. “I just haven’t had a chance to think about it yet.”

These rules aside, it’s still OK to think your story is compelling. It probably is. But taking time to think about it as an actual story that involves real pain points, guessing and testing, soul searching and all those other things that make for interesting reading can help you to not only tell the story better, but to make others care about it. Show me someone who says, “Fairy tales should have a happy beginning,” and I, my friend, will show you a fool. ■

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BY JESSICA NIELSEN, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR,
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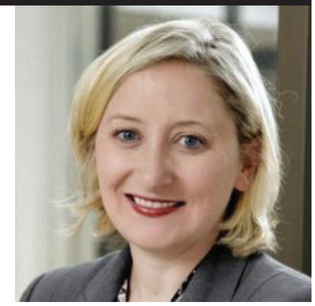
Six Tips to Help Communicators Engage With Remote Employees



Many internal communicators have an idea of how to define a remote worker, but a consistent definition often is hard to find. While some believe a remote employee is anyone who does not work at headquarters, this is not really the case. Those who work in a company building, owned or leased, remain highly connected to the brand. The ability of internal communicators to reach them is relatively easy. Remote employees typically are telecommuting from home, embedded at customer sites or working in remote parts of the country. Reaching these employees can be tricky. It certainly is not impossible. A few simple and inexpensive tips will help internal communicators reach them:

1. Choose and Deploy Employee Ambassadors: Within every subsection of employees, even remote employees, there are company champions, i.e. fully committed and dedicated team members. Find them. They will have immediate credibility. They understand the unique challenges a remote employee faces and have conquered them. They've successfully identified ways to remain connected to the organization.

Fortunately, finding these individuals is easier given today's technology. Whether through an open call for volunteers or by sending an invitation to those you've identified as engaged employees, identifying these assets is critical for success. Provide them with messaging and materials, as well as a way to connect with fellow remote team members. Make sure you thank them for their effort. In addition, ensure that the manager of each ambassador is aware of the program and the employee's role in it. Support from managers is crucial if you want to have a successful program.

2. Provide Mobile Applications: Many organizations have embraced reaching their remote workforces through mobile applications. While app prices can vary greatly, usually they are worth the investment.

There may be some obstacles, though. As we know, some brands have been slow to add mobility to internal communications apps (*PRN*, June 27). Another obstacle is determining what functionalities should be included in the app. Survey employees and work with IT to identify tasks most important to employees. While you may be unable to launch all of them simultaneously, having a solid timeline will ensure that the most important ones are included at the beginning. Functionalities that remote employees can use will drive them to your app, which can alleviate or at least help mitigate a slow adoption process.

Timecards and expenses are examples of relatively easily adapted tasks that are vital for remote employees and those at HQ. Good design will ease the process for both.

Via this same portal, communications materials, including those aimed at rallying employee morale, introducing products or addressing misconceptions or problems, can be added. A tip: Employees quickly become proficient with apps they find helpful.

Similarly, many organizations have deployed **Skype** as an internal communication tool for remote employees. It's simple, can be downloaded quickly, and is familiar to many. Such familiarity shortens the adoption process.

3. Create Dedicated Virtual Communities: Creating such communities can be achieved by leveraging social media platforms. **BAE Systems Intelligence Group** has successfully used **Facebook** and other platforms to reach its remote workforce by creating dedicated sites for employees. While this can limit the amount of information internal communicators can provide, it's a complete platform that takes little effort to get up and running. This probably should be viewed as an opportunity to address both employees and potential employees. It could and should serve as a recruitment as well as retention tool. Further, a Facebook page can be utilized to direct employees to applications or websites that can provide more secure access.

4. Engage the Leaders: The most basic step of any employee communications program rings true for virtual employees as well. Assure leaders of remote workers they will have the tools and information to engage staff. Whether it is a quarterly toolbox mailed to managers, or specific, directed information sent periodically, reaching managers is crucial. Employees' first point of reference and the individual they trust the most for information is their manager. Without connections to this critical group, your messages will be left unheard or misunderstood.

5. The Low-Budget Solution: Finally, if truly strapped for budget, emailing a newsletter focused on remote employees is an option. Just ensure that your focus is on the employees' needs and information they most want to receive. Reviewing best practices (i.e. HR benefit information always is important), surveying employees or measuring click rates of news items can help communicators decide what remote employees crave. Items with high click rates should be included in each newsletter to remote employees. Remember that providing information from a top-down perspective only will lead to a less-than-optimal result.

6. The Basics: Keep in mind sometimes all people really need or want is understanding. For many remote employees acknowledgement of the complexity of their position is vital. Usually they know the upsides—the immense independence they enjoy, as well as the chance to exercise judgment. They wonder, though, does anyone in the home office understand the downside? Always being the person who decides, implements and follows up is tough. They wonder if anyone knows their name, or recognizes their contribution. Make sure you do, or someone meaningful at the home office does. ■

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Tim Duncan: Centers on Press Release


Interns Exposed to Sun and PR Leaders


Ashley White, VP, Uproar PR

1. Full Court Press (Release): It's almost become de rigueur for sports superstars to take a retirement victory lap: Announce you're retiring the following year and spend your last season being showered with gifts and accolades from opposing teams when you visit their venues for the final time. It's fine when you're no longer at top form. It's a different matter when you club a home run or sink a basket to defeat your opponent, which hours earlier presented you with a custom-built rocking chair and a **Harley**. 40-year-old **David Ortiz** has done that all season. His 22 home runs and league-leading 34 doubles have given the Dominican his best first half in Boston. Basketball star **Tim Duncan**, also 40, would have none of the swan song hoopla. The reason you're reading about the **Spurs'** center here is because of how he decided to retire July 11: via a 538-word press release. It was a quaint reminder of how news announcements were made 19 years ago, when Duncan began his pro career. It also was authentic to the taciturn Duncan, who preferred to let his prowess on the court speak for him. Not only that, at a time when pro athletes' social media accounts often compete with their employers' channels for attention, Duncan chose to forego **Twitter**, **Facebook** or special athlete blogs. Instead his sole employer, the San Antonio Spurs, posted the release on its site, along with video tributes. The release, like Duncan, was direct and devoid of superlatives. Its first line: "San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan today announced that he will retire after 19 seasons with the organization." The next sentence says it all: "Since drafting Duncan, the Spurs…had a .710 winning percentage… the best in all of" pro sports during "the last 19 years."

2. M&A: MediaMiser purchased **Agility** from **PR Newswire** July 14. MediaMiser expects the acquisition will result in growth in Europe and N. America as it adds Agility's global media contact database capabilities to its media monitoring, distribution and measurement solutions. **Cision** completed its acquisition of PR Newswire last month. – **Grey Group** acquired a majority stake in **Easycom**, an ePR and social media agency in China. Easycom's client roster includes **L'Oréal**, **Philips**, **Kiehl's** and **China Merchants Bank**. – Marketing agency **Midnight Oil** of Burbank, CA, entered a definitive agreement to have visual marketing communications firm **Imagine!** of Minneapolis acquire it. Midnight Oil will continue to operate independently. The transaction is expected to close in the third quarter of 2016. – **Finn Partners** said July 13 it acquired **Greenfield Belser**, a D.C.-based brand strategy and creative services firm. Co-founder **Burkey Belser** will become managing partner of Finn's Greenfield Belser division.

3. News Bits: The famed **Barcelona** soccer team misread the social conversation. After its star and arguably the world's best footballer, **Lionel Messi**, and his father were found guilty in Spain of evading $5 million in taxes, Barcelona sought to mount support with a #WeAreAllLeoMessi push. Not a good move. The Twittersphere erupted in anti-Messi messages. A #IAmNotLionelMessi campaign was started. "We are NOT Messi," read one angry tweet. "We pay our taxes." The charges against the Messi boys stemmed from revelations of shell companies in The Panama Papers. – It's not a surprise that women dominate communications departments in corporate America. It's less known that many of those departments have women leaders. A report from **The Conference Board** says 59% of manufacturing companies and 70% of financial services firms have women helming their communications departments. By contrast, women hold just 14% of the top five leadership positions at companies in the S&P 500, *CNNMoney* says. – You have to like the exposure **The PR Council** provided to interns recently at its 2016 InternFest, held on the rooftop of **Havas PR** in NY. More than 100 interns attended the indoor/outdoor barbeque. In addition to networking, they heard from Havas CEO **Marian Salzman**, **Makovsky** MD **Denise Vitola** and **Jen McClellan**, senior director, corporate communications & finance at **Burson-Marsteller**, among others. An added treat: a CEO raffle, with the six winners getting a chance to meet for 1 hour with a CEO, including: **Matthew Harrington**, Global COO, **Edelman**; **Heidi Hovland**, Global CEO, **DeVries Global**; **Maureen Lippe**, CEO, **Lippe Taylor**; **Andy Polanksy**, CEO, **Weber Shandwick**; **Marian Salzman**, CEO, Havas PR; and **John Saunders**, president/CEO, **FleishmanHillard**.

4. People: FleishmanHillard named **Kris Balderston** president, global public affairs and strategic engagement. **Robert Hoopes** was tapped as GM, FH Washington, D.C. – **Lewis** said **Stephen Corsi** began heading its U.S. operations as EVP July 1. He replaces regional EVP **Morgan McLintic**, who is leaving Lewis after two decades. – **Uproar PR** of Orlando promoted **Ashley Moore** to VP. She joined Uproar three years ago. ■