PR News Pro

The How-To Resource for Communicators

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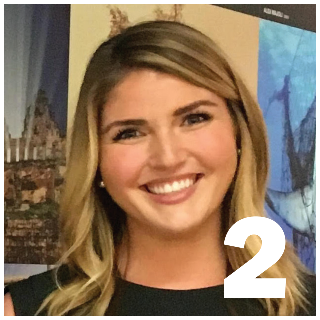

SOCIAL MEDIA

How to Use Social Media to Gain the Attention of Journalists in a Crowded Environment

The media's fascination with Donald Trump's candidacy began in 2015. It continued in 2016, when during the 24 weeks of presidential primaries (Jan. 1-June 7) "there was not a single week when Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, or John Kasich topped Trump's level of coverage," a July 2016 study from the **Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy** says. Even after Cruz and Kasich quit the race in early May, essentially ceding the race to Trump, the businessman received more coverage than either Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders, the Shorenstein report says. Jump to the past two-and-a-half months and communicators can legitimately be forgiven if they feel like social media platforms and the media have adopted a philosophy of "all Trump all the time."

Add the noise of Trump coverage (or over-coverage?) to one of the PR pro's perennial headaches—how can I break

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TRAINING

BY MORRY SMULEWITZ, HEAD, U.S. PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ABBVIE

How PR Can Play a Role in Training Employees to Be Brand Ambassadors

Last year, I moved. That meant along with changes to my billing address, my favorite coffee shop and my go-to dog park, I also switched cable TV providers, sending me down a month-long rabbit hole of technician visits, troubleshooting phone calls and frustrations of every kind.

Technicians would show up on the wrong day. When they arrived, they'd have the wrong equipment. Installers visited who couldn't troubleshoot followed by troubleshooters who couldn't install. Even complaining was difficult: I couldn't tell a cable company employee from a third-party contractor.

At the end of my rope, a friend advised that I needed to have my malfunctioning cable boxes rebooted.

So I poured a **Grey Goose**, took a deep breath, dialed the 800 number and settled in for another evening of agony. This was it, I told myself. If the reboot failed, I would opt out of cable TV for good and settle for a life of **Netflix**. Assuredly this was a First World problem.

As I learned from the woman with a lovely Southern accent who answered the phone, the call center was located in Alabama. While we waited on the technology—rebooting a cable box is the technological equivalent of watching paint dry—we swapped stories about our kids and aspirations

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How Millennials Can Help Your Brand Succeed and What They Seek in Return

As you seek entry-level talent for your organization do you wonder what college students are learning and how it is priming them for PR careers? To inform you, the senior executive, about this we asked newly minted PR pros Farley Fitzgerald, communications manager, **National Geographic Society**, and Ariel Miller, account manager, **INK PR**, to share their thoughts. Their former professor, Dr. Julie Lellis, also provides insight on how good academic programs should shape our generation's best communicators.

Farley Fitzgerald, Communications Manager, **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

1. We are digital natives. Farley Fitzgerald: We recognize the value of staying current on the latest social media and digital platforms. We're not only using social media to build our personal brands, but we also became aware in college how social can be applied in professional settings. For example, we understand that although most journalists still prefer to receive information via email, **Twitter** may be a top tool to track news trends and research media opportunities. I came into my job with experience using **Facebook Live** and **Snapchat** and an understanding of how they can be used to get out messages.

Dr. Julie Lellis, Associate Professor, Communications, **ELON UNIVERSITY**

Julie Lellis: College students generally love social media because it enhances their social lives. My job is to show them how what they already know about it can be used to bolster communications goals and objectives. My goal is to have students depart with a basic understanding of ethical decisions—what to post or what not to post. While social is about immediacy, I urge students to slow down and look critically at what works or doesn't for brands.

2. We want to understand the business. Ariel Miller: I learned very quickly that PR no longer just equals media relations. To reach business goals, most of our clients are looking for integrated programs that incorporate social media, email marketing and many other activities that fall outside the traditional PR umbrella. We're also starting to hear and use more marketing concepts—like KPI's, for example—which we establish at the onset of any program and use to track our goals. Coming into my current role with a strong familiarity of business concepts has been critical, especially as the definition of PR continues to change and we see the field evolve in a more integrated direction.

Ariel Miller, Account Manager, **INK PR**

JL: Educators certainly see the value in preparing students for the reality that PR supports business goals. Our program requires students take at least one of a few selected classes in the business school, and many of our students choose to minor in business. I help students examine the marketing process so that new hires can come to you with an ability to see how PR shapes the future and reputation of a business.

3. We know how to network and want your support in continuing to do this. FF: Although classroom experience and a solid GPA can help students land jobs, we understand early on that internships and networking are the best ways to gain real-world experience.

Internships helped me apply the skills I learned in the classroom to real-life experiences. I started to understand what it's like to work in the industry before I graduated, which was critical. Networking, whether through internships, industry groups or personal contacts, allowed me to make solid connections with endless opportunities. Young PR pros want to continue networking after graduation. In addition, they will seek jobs with companies that enthusiastically support professional development.

JL: Preparing students for the profession includes helping them build and refine their online presence, portfolio pieces and connections with the industry. I definitely want PR pros at all levels to be part of the educational experience for my students. Connect with your local colleges and universities to find the best programs and identify potential talent. ■

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Build Relationships on Social, Pitch With Email

Ashley Hennings, Head, PR, **CLASSPASS**

through the clutter with my message?—and you can see why so many communicators are focused on how to attract journalists' attention. With this in mind, we asked PR pros about best practices for social pitching. We also inquired of journalists about pitches that attract them.

Relationships and Targeting: Mary Baker, senior PR manager at corporate performance specialist **CEB**, and Ashley Hennings, head of PR at **ClassPass**, a fitness company, emphasize using social to build relationships with reporters as a first step. Pitching comes later. "I like to develop relationships, particularly when I don't have news to share," Hennings says. Less is more when it comes to pitching, she adds. "I'm a fan of quality over quantity," preferring to develop deep relationships with a few reporters "who cover my beat and my company" instead of sending press releases to a long list of media.

Relationships are so important to Baker that she uses social to keep up with reporters she worked with from previous jobs (hers and theirs). "You never know when one of your experts may be able to serve as a source" for a journalist, she says, "particularly in today's media landscape where beats are increasingly broad and changing and one-off assignments are common."

Both Baker and Hennings use several social channels, but tend to engage with media more on **Twitter**. Hennings creates Twitter lists, arranging them by topic, issues, industry trends, consumer press and trade press. She makes it a point "every day to spend about one hour in the morning reading the news…and seeing what people are talking about…I know it sounds incredibly obvious" but it helps her develop relationships. "If there's a chance to engage with [a reporter on social] I'll do that." She'll retweet articles and tweet a comment in response to reporter's tweeted-out article. "I find that when I go to back to that reporter and I have [news] to share, they're more responsive." Hennings uses **Instagram** to check on reporters' personal interests, which she slips into conversations when meeting with journalists face to face. Building a relationship with a journalist "is almost like dating someone, you have to invest the time…I want to know what they care about," she adds.

Mary Baker, Senior Manager, PR, **CEB**

Baker says, "I will often reach out to reporters who have tweeted that they are seeking sources or information." If it's a reporter with whom she has a relationship, "I will email them directly but include in the subject line that I'm responding to one of their tweets." Hennings says she also responds to journalists who use social to seek sources.

Kristen Page-Kirby, Senior Arts Editor, **WASHINGTON POST EXPRESS**

Pitch Selection: Once the relationship has begun, how does the pitching work? Much of it is done via email. Baker often leads with exclusive data CEB has generated. "We always lead with insight and use our data to be proactive," surprising or provocative, she says.

Both she and Hennings prefer short pitches. "My goal is to keep it short, sweet and clear," says Baker, who often uses bulleted lists of data in email pitches "if I have a lot of data points/insights to share or if I'm trying to show that my expert can speak to a variety of topics." She'll also bold and italicize information to call attention to something specific. Says Hennings, "I only put the most important details in the pitch…when I have an exclusive for someone, I tell them."

A Journalist Responds: Many of Baker's and Hennings' points resonate with *Washington Post Express* senior arts editor Kristen Page-Kirby. For one, she prefers email pitches. "Email is where I organize my stories," she says, and "I don't pick up my phone." She also prefers to work with PR pitchers she's met through Twitter, "those who respond to me after I've tweeted out a story."

For someone who receives "about 100 emails" daily, Page-Kirby urges pitchers to structure their email in the style of journalism's inverted pyramid, with the most important information at the top. "I'll take a well-written, organized pitch over a clever one" where she has to search for details of *why* she's being pitched, Page-Kirby says. Peg your pitch to a

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How Employees Sometimes Provide the Best PR

about life. She had recently completed an MBA in health care administration (my business), and she wanted to quiz me about my work in the pharmaceutical industry.

After two reboots and more than one hour, we hung up. Not a single technical problem had been solved, but my issues with the company had vanished. No, it wasn't **Zappos**, but it was the best corporate PR I have ever been on the receiving end of.

EMPLOYEES AS AMBASSADORS

In an era of social media, news fragmentation and always-on communication, it is hugely naïve to believe that a company's executives can or should remain the sole face and voice of a company. Yet that is how many organizations view PR.

We invest in messaging sessions and coaching for those atop our companies, but beyond routine onboarding with new hires or educational sessions on the company mission, organizations too often forget that every employee, every team member is an ambassador, as critical to the brand as a celebrity spokesperson or executive.

GIVE AN INCH, GET A MILE

There is a rich history of companies that have up-leveled by training their employees to serve as ambassadors of the brand they represent:

- **Dell** has trained 9,000 employees to use social media via its Social Media and Community University that focuses on helping employees build a personal brand while, at the same time, reflecting the values of the company. That effort has paid off, particularly in recruitment, as would-be hires have 9,000 more windows into the company.

- **Southwest** has long been lauded for allowing staff more than a little leeway, especially around in-flight announcements—some of which have gone viral. That's paid off, not just in customer loyalty, but employee loyalty, too: Southwest made last year's *Forbes* list of companies most beloved by its employees.

- Every employee at Zappos, no matter where they land at the company, spends two weeks in the call center where the primacy of the customer—the core of the company's magic—is illustrated firsthand. Customer service isn't just part of the company. At Zappos, it is the whole company, and training efforts are oriented that way.

This isn't a new trend. In the pre-internet age, the venerable outdoor catalogue company **L.L.Bean** established a reputation based on customer service. Legend has it that its call centers had one persistent source of inefficiency: People who called just to chat with the army of friendly souls who manned the phones. That's the kind of problem that you want to be known for having.

INVESTING IN YOUR NEW AGENCY

Empowering employees as the public face of a brand is not just an opportunity for companies with strong customer-service chops, though. Any organization can benefit by ensuring that employees have the tools to fly the company flag any time they interact with stakeholders. And while the specifics vary across industries and companies, there are a handful of actions that will enable employees to convey to others why the company they chose to work for is, in fact, the greatest.

• **Make communications a part of the onboarding process.** Getting new staff on board is more than reviewing corporate policies, it's an opportunity to teach new faces to identify their audiences and equip them with the tools to convey why they are dedicated to the company (and their role within it).

• **Make social media policies about permission, not prohibitions.** Social media presents a unique opportunity to arm employees with the skills and power to use social networking in a positive way. When listing do's and don't's, spend more time on the do's.

• **Encourage expression.** The same voices too often seem to dominate company intranets or group chats. Communicators need to work with HR to make sure that these online gathering places are welcoming to all, so that critical voices are heard.

• **Explicitly ask for help.** Communications and public affairs departments should be unafraid of asking a broad range of employees for help plugging into their network. If there is a glowing article about the organization or an insightful blog post from the C-suite, that's an opportunity to ask staff to consider sharing. If employees are proud of where they work, they'll welcome the chance to highlight the good work being done.

• **Avoid being stingy when it comes to company logo swag.** Yes, it's a small thing, but while the goal is not to create human billboards, employees deserve a shirt, water bottle or even backpack adorning the company logo. They usually return the favor by sporting their wares with pride.

When we think of raising the public profile and image of our companies, the reality is that it doesn't always take executive-level spokespersons or big-idea consultants to make a difference. When I was at the end of my rope with the cable company, it wasn't the C-suite or a slick communications campaign that made the difference.

Sometimes, all that's needed for game-changing PR is a committed call center employee who really cares. ■

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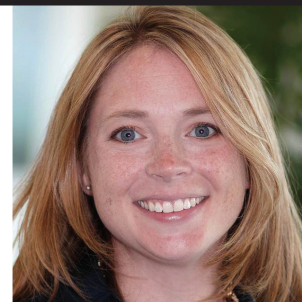
BY KRYSTA PELLEGRINO, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ABBOTT MEDICAL OPTICS, AND MICHAEL SULLIVAN, CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIST, WEBER SHANDWICK



I Can See Clearly Now: Abbott Uses Clarity, Levity to Make LASIK Appealing

Jargon in the communications business can be hard. It shouldn't be, however. And we're not just talking about PR terms—the SMTs and the EPKs and whatnot—but the phrases and positioning of various industries.

Fast-food outlets are QSRs (quick service restaurants) that deal in LTOs (limited time offerings). Smart watches aren't wearables (what with all the baggage that word carries), but fitness trackers. Terminology gets increasingly difficult in highly regulated industries, like healthcare and finance, where federal agencies like the **FTC** and **FDA** understandably monitor what you say and how you say it.

These aren't just a steep learning curve; they make our job hard. PR, at its core, is translating a company's story into something that consumers and journalists can digest easily. The other element is the PR pro must render this translation while sacrificing as little nuance as possible, which is tough when the nuances are specific and very technical.

Content is one of the best tools in your toolkit to tell your brand story the way you'd want the press to write it, but the better you immerse yourself in the world and jargon of your or your client's industry, the harder it is to draft content that is accessible and approachable for the general public.

Abbott was facing just such a problem. It wanted to re-engage young adults with the prospect of getting LASIK surgery, a highly technical and FDA-regulated procedure. It turned to **Weber Shandwick**. Together, the companies navigated the challenges of un-complicating a nuanced and intimidating product and learned a lot along the way.

SOME CONTEXT

To understand what Abbott did and the lessons it can teach similar programs, some background is needed. Following the 2008 financial crisis, there was a steep decline in the number of LASIK procedures in the U.S. While the economy has recovered slowly, procedure rates haven't. There are good reasons for this. Trendy eyewear brands have made glasses cool again. But more significantly, it's still an expensive, uninsured procedure. Entry-level wages for millennials have stagnated, effectively removing LASIK from the vision correction consideration set. A lot of people also are scared of having eye surgery. No judgments there.

Abbott needed a program to make LASIK top-of-mind again in an unobtrusive and relatable way, head off some of the stigma and put into context the negativity often associated with the procedure, and drive considerers to become planners and planners to become patients.

With those goals in mind, we launched *Eyeful* (www.eyeful.xyz) on **Tumblr**. Below is what we learned along the way.

NO B2B, B2C, JUST H2H (HUMAN TO HUMAN)

As communicators, we sometimes become fixated on the space our companies or our clients occupy. From a holistic operations perspective, sure, it's important to know the different tactics you'd employ for reaching a supply-chain manager as opposed to a suburban mom, 18-35. Don't forget, though, manager and mom are people. And they're probably not even that different—chances are they frequent the same outlets for coffee and binge-watch the same **Netflix** shows.

The point is just because someone's job is business facing doesn't mean he or she responds to language that is similarly stilted or dispassionate.

By the same token, while a small percentage of the young adults we try to reach with Eyeful might care about the differences between excimer and femtosecond lasers (and for that small percentage, we have a pop-sci-style story called "What Is a Laser?"), the majority of our content needs to package LASIK in more inviting terms.

An idea could be to sell the end-state of LASIK as seen through the eyes of someone who's had it. Another option: Raise awareness about the cumulative frustrations of having

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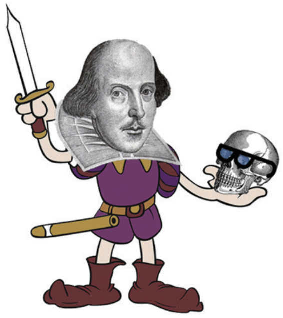

The Eyes Have It: A funny graphic used at Eyeful. Source: Abbott

to wear contacts or glasses.

MAKE PEACE WITH THE APPROVALS PROCESS

Every content engine has its back and forth among writer, editor and publisher—branded content often even more so. But when the content is highly technical, the process is made that much more complex. Sometimes you need to get a subject-matter expert involved to vet the verbiage. Other times you need to get an entire standalone department involved whose sole purpose is reviewing content.

In healthcare, often there is an MLR (medical, legal and regulatory) review. The consensus: It's a beast. It takes several business days and has the unfortunate tendency to flatten out some of the character of flavorful language.

This is not to disparage MLR. Review is important—each (medical, legal and regulatory) is a universe unto itself with its own important nuances; their partnership keeps our message accurate and compliant. It's key to establish early on, however, that the MLR review should be an ongoing conversation, not a unilateral dictum.

On Eyeful, we engaged MLR very early to get buy-in on the tone and tenor of content we intended to produce. We also solicited MLR input on the preferred way to refer to certain things, assuring our language was within its comfort zone. In fact, MLR was involved at the strategic planning stages of the program. This allowed us to act more tactically about what could be approved quickly and seamlessly, and built co-operation with the MLR department for when we needed its advocacy down the road. The result: We turned the dreaded review process into a partner and fellow stakeholder.

GET VISUAL

At the risk of stating the obvious, nobody likes long, uninterrupted blocks of text. (The irony of stating that in the present context isn't lost on us.) A report from **Buzzsumo** says articles with an image every 75–100 words receive twice the number of social shares as articles with fewer images.

This poses a particular challenge for very technical products and services. How many ways can you visually represent personal finance, a tech solution or a life-changing drug?

The tendency when a topic is challenging is to write one's way out of the problem. Unfortunately, this is contrary to the way people consume information. The advice here is to be more open to telling your story visually. Use data visualization, motion graphics, video featurettes or whatever services the story best. And define a visual ID that is unique.

To fit our wry editorial voice, we prefer funny images and GIFs. If we can't get something funny, it must be striking for another reason. If it's not supporting the content in a meaningful way, that's a problem. As with other parts of your brand, your visual ID is another way to stamp content as yours.

SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY WHERE YOU HAVE IT

One lesson we learned early: It might not be advisable to write about anything you feel you should be able to write about. One of our launch stories was a travel article: "7 Other Natural Wonders You Have to See With Your Own Two Eyes." Readers found the pivot to LASIK jarring within a story ostensibly about travel. It was bait-and-switch trickery, they said. We felt it was a compelling, ownable piece of content.

From that point, we made sure every headline contained "glasses," "contacts" or "LASIK" to hammer home that we were going to discuss vision correction. By listening to our readers (we monitor comments daily), we learned what topics we had the authority to write about.

In the same way you should develop a POV on imagery; have guardrails, or brand filters, dictating what you can discuss in your content.

Conversely, because you're writing with authority, and you have the authority to talk about your complicated product or service, doesn't mean you should approach your writing stiffly, in an attempt to defend your authority.

We feel we write with authority about what it feels like to get LASIK, how various lasers work, what the recovery process is like and even what 20/20 vision is, all with the levity and approachability of a fluff piece like "An Open Letter to My Contact Lenses." It is our belief that you can keep your tone consistent and still be the smart one in the conversation.

WANT THE READER TO DO SOMETHING? ASK

PR sometimes has a problem being direct. We change hearts and minds, racking up impressions and engagements, but rarely do we flat-out tell people to buy the damn thing.

As your content makes a case for a product or service, also make a clear call to action (CTA). Ask your reader to do something specific, they're more likely to do it. Using a CTA can move a complicated subject from the abstract into the concrete. Readers are no longer solely thinking, now they're also doing. Even soft, inviting CTAs like "learn more here" keep readers in your conversion funnel and engaged with more content, further demystifying your confusing subject.

For Eyeful, we urge people to consult a doctor. Each story includes a natural segue to read more information about LASIK or find a doctor in the reader's area, using Abbott's Find-a-Doctor tool. Visitors we referred to the tool were seven times more likely to conduct a search than visitors coming from all other digital tactics combined, so we've seen a definite value in asking directly.

This is content doing its job: engaging readers with information, and inciting them to take an action. It can do its job for you too if you remember to define content and visual parameters, work closely with internal reviewers and stakeholders to develop a process, give your reader a clear CTA and, above all, remember your reader is a human too.

One thing humans like more than being informed is being delighted, so delight them. ■

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news item or an upcoming event, she recommends. And get to the important details fast. You have about 25 words to make your point or your pitch will meet the delete function on Page-Kirby's computer. Don't even get her started on pitches outside her beat, which she receives often. "It shows a total lack of research" on the part of the pitcher, she says.

A tip: Make sure you provide a link to usable art. And be available once you've sent the pitch. "That drives me crazy… I might need to fact check with you," she says. And please don't vanish after the story is in print or online. Tweet it to your followers, which increases engagement.

Master pitching coach Michael Smart of **Smart PR**, a former journalist and regular contributor to this publication, concurs with much of Page-Kirby's insights.

Journalists, he says, have two questions "burning in the back of their minds" when they open your pitch: *What is this?* "They want to know what you have to offer. What it is, in a nutshell." And *Why are you contacting ME about this? Why will my readers/viewers care?* These questions seem obvious, he admits, but top PR pros often fail to answer them promptly in pitches.

Michael Smart, Principal, SMART PR

His explanation of why this happens is interesting: "When you're too close to your subject matter for too long, you don't even realize that you've lost the ability to get out of your own head." ■

Editor's Note: Hear more from Baker, Hennings, Page-Kirby and others during the *PR News* webinar, *How PR Pros Can Engage With Journalists on Email and Social Media*, March 13, 2017, 1:30pm ET or via tape. For more: http://bit.ly/2IkYXtb

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MEASUREMENT

How To Turn Metrics Into Engagement

As PR pros know, measuring the effectiveness of social media posts can be tricky. Many measurement strategies emphasize vanity metrics like reach, impressions, shares or retweets, but those KPIs can be misleading. Just because a tweet is re-tweeted multiple times doesn't mean users actually are clicking on the link found within. So communicators must separate quantitative and qualitative metrics—volume vs. quality—for a more complete picture, says Danielle Brigida, national social media manager at the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**.

Recently, a one-year-old post—about watching out for hummingbird nests when trimming trees—suddenly lit up the Service's **Facebook** analytics. "It was so popular we decided to take some of the questions in the comments thread and create a blog post around them," Brigida says. "Seeing an old post start circulating again, reading through those comments, wondering what content we can create is…valuable."

The Service acted similarly when Brigida spotted recurring questions about poaching. This resulted in the creation of a new webpage.

Brigida uses quantitative data to understand not just what story to tell, but how to tell it best. For instance, she recently looked at the Service's posts about monarch butterflies and noticed the top posts featured multiple butterflies. "It shows that's what pulls people in," she says.

When Brigida wants to convey her social media successes to supervisors, metrics such as shares and likes often are highlighted. But qualitative data also can be a useful tool to demonstrate the power of social media.

Danielle Brigida, National Social Media Manager, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

"Anytime I can answer a question, I put it in a 'Power of Commenting' folder that shows how these interactions can help," she says. "If I can give somebody a good resource, or if they have a complaint, even just to tell them that I heard them is important." The folder is used to help train others about social media best practices. It's also shared with customer service and helps inform improvements on the Service's website. Another use for it is to demonstrate to senior management the importance of a dedicated social media presence.

A common mistake organizations make with social media measurement is placing too much emphasis on eyeballs. "It's pretty common to get wrapped up in the big numbers and not necessarily the qualitative stuff that can spark a conversation or a new piece of content," Brigida says. "But social media isn't just about reach, it's really about listening."

While having a content plan—and charting its effectiveness—is important, organizations shouldn't be married to it. "People get very into the specifics of a content calendar and they forget the heart of this is about connection and being part of a community…so much of our job is figuring out what people need…that's largely why we're on social media." ■

– Jerry Ascierto is senior content manager of PR News

Note: *For more from Brigida attend the PR News Social Media Boot Camp and Measurement Conference, April 20-21, Washington, D.C. For information: http://bit.ly/2mQGMjK*


Anastasia Khoo, CMO, Conservation International


Torod Neptune, VP, Global Communications, Lenovo


Naureen Kazi, VP, Turner PR

1. Constant Vigilance: Last week we mentioned why communicators need to be monitoring employees' social media posts 24/7 (*PRNP*, March 6). This week's word of counsel concerns something more direct. Most business days **LinkedIn** sends a message with the subject line, "News About…" people in your professional network. What a great tactic to get us to open the email and then, inevitably, spend time on LinkedIn. Who doesn't want to know what people in your network are doing? Has someone been promoted? Moved to a new company? Written an article? Been quoted in the media? Indeed, the first item in the email featured an article about cybersecurity by someone in that field. The next item touted an announcement in a trade pub of a positive press release about the expansion of a company. The last item, alongside a picture of a former colleague, his face beaming in a photo, was the news that his company had just lost a major lawsuit. Not a strike against him personally, but as a corporate communicator, he was quoted in a newspaper article that LinkedIn's "Connections in the News" algorithm had spotted. "We are disappointed with the outcome and are considering our options," was the quote. His smiling face and the very unpleasant news alongside it made for an uneasy combination. Certainly it was not a story that was hidden—both my friend's employer and the other litigant are publicly traded and the news was covered widely. While LinkedIn says its algorithm will cross-check whether or not someone with a common name, like John Smith, mentioned in the news is the John Smith in your network, it won't edit out a negative story apparently. Communicators on LinkedIn should add this task to their growing to-do list: When you're quoted in a story you'd rather not see spread to your network, head to the top of your LinkedIn homepage, look for the Me icon and eventually you'll be able to adjust your settings.

2. Global Influencers: When it comes to regulating influencers, the U.S. **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) leads the way, but "the rest of the world, particularly the U.K., is catching up…which is not surprising given the explosion of influencer marketing over the last few years," attorney **Allison Fitzpatrick** of **Davis & Gilbert LLP**, tells us. The **Committee of Advertising Practice** (CAP) in the U.K. issued guidelines March 9, putting brands and influencers on notice regarding sponsored content. Fitzpatrick notes CAP prefers "advertising" or "ads" be present in influencer and affiliate marketing. "The FTC has provided influencers and affiliates with more flexibility regarding the language that they choose to make their disclosures, provided the language clearly discloses the nature of their relationship," she says. Still, she notes, the FTC "has advised that the words "affiliate link" or "buy now" may not be sufficient in disclosing an affiliate marketing relationship."

3. People: Best wishes to *PRNews Pro* friend **Torod Neptune**, VP, corporate communications at **Verizon**, who's joining **Lenovo** as VP, global communications Mar. 27. Neptune will report to CMO **David Roman**. Prior to Verizon, Neptune was SVP & global public affairs practice leader at **Waggener Edstrom Worldwide**. – **The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America** named **Sherry Pudloski** CCO. She will report to **Deanna Mulligan**, president/CEO. She joins from **Pfizer**, where she headed reputation, policy and enterprise communications, among other responsibilities. Prior to Pfizer, she was at **Novartis** and **Ogilvy**. – **Airlines for America** (A4A) named **Todd Burke** SVP, communications. The veteran airline communicator (**TWA**, **American Airlines**, **JetBlue Airways**) most recently was VP, communications, for **Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen**. He'll report to A4A president/CEO **Nicholas Calio**. – Several promotions at **Publicis Health**: **Alexandra von Plato** was named group president, **Publicis Health N America**, overseeing communications and media businesses. **Janet Winkler** was named chief strategy officer, Publicis Health. **Matt McNally** was named president, **Digitas Health** and chief media officer, Publicis Health. He'll continue to lead Publicis Health's media businesses, with **Jedd Davis** becoming managing director, **Publicis Health Media**. – Congrats to *PR News Pro* friend and contributor **Anastasia Khoo**, who was named CMO at **Conservation International**. She joins after a successful 11 years as CMO at the **Human Rights Campaign**. – **Shift Communications** promoted **Annie Perkins** to SVP. At Shift she's worked with **McDonald's**, **Rockport** and **Foxwoods Resort Casino**, among others. – To celebrate its 20th anniversary, hotel specialist **Turner** will open an office in Miami. VP **Naureen Kazi** will lead the new office. Kazi joins Turner from **Development Counsellors International**. – Congrats to **Lauren Reed**, **Reed PR**, upon becoming president of **PRSA Nashville**. **Amanda Murphy**, director, corporate communications, **Country Music Television**, is immediate past president. ■