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CRISIS

MillerCoors' CCO on What Makes Large Brands Vulnerable to Crises

It seems a given that communications has risen in stature recently. As communicators are expected to take the corporate temperature, their influence has spread throughout a company. That's one of the conclusions contained in the **Arthur W. Page Society** report, *The CEO View: Communications at the Center of the Enterprise* (2017). This has led CEOs to increasingly rely on chief communications officers (CCO) "not just for occasional counsel and advice, but also as key lead-

ers and contributors playing a critical role alongside other C-Suite members in creating and implementing company-wide strategy," Page president Roger Bolton has argued in our pages (*PRN*, May 15, 2017).

This rise in prominence of communications and PR led **MillerCoors** CCO Pete Marino to return to the discipline after working in other areas. Indeed, Marino reports to MillerCoors CEO Gavin Hattersley. "One of the reasons I wanted to come

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MEDIA PITCHING

BY MICHAEL SMART, PRINCIPAL, MICHAEL SMART PR

How Your Attitude About Yourself as a PR Pro Can Sink Your Media Pitches

A journalist hailed one pitch as "the best pitch I have received. Ever, actually."

The other got posted to the recipient's **Facebook** and **Twitter** feeds as an example of how *not* to pitch with the hashtag #cringeworthy.

My followers shared these two pitches with me recently, a few days apart. What struck me was how *similar* they were. The PR pros who wrote them don't know each other, but they were both using the same approach to grabbing the attention of their target journalist. Both did it well, in my opinion.

The key difference boiled down to one word in the "bad" pitch that dramatically shifted the perspective (and subcon-

scious) of the reader. It created a totally different feeling in the reporter who received it than what the PR pro intended. I'll explain that below, after I walk you through the "good" pitch.

THE 'GOOD' PITCH

This example comes courtesy of Adam Yosim, whom I met last month when he attended my *Perfect Pitch* workshop in his hometown of Washington, D.C. Adam had left the broadcast journalism ranks a few months ago. He was a bit hesi-



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Consumer Engagement With Brands' Video on Twitter Up 300% in Q4

Prior to the election of President Donald Trump, the headlines about **Twitter** were mostly dire. The platform was unable to grow users and by extension advertisers. Looking at the headlines and stories today about Twitter and they're almost always about the latest presidential tweet. People who hadn't heard of Twitter are well aware of the platform now thanks to news about the president's proclivity for tweeting. Talk of Twitter's dire straits has subsided considerably in the last few months.

Interestingly, as we've seen in our recent editions (PRN, June 12 and 19, 2017), Twitter's growth spurt has come from an unexpected

source: Video, according to **Shareablee** data provided exclusively to PR News.

For B2B, B2C and nonprofits in Q4 2016 (October 1 - December 31), consumer engagement, or total actions, defined as the sum of reactions and comments on Twitter, increased 8.6% year over year. Video actions, though, jumped nearly 300% during that time period. This follows a trend where video quickly is becoming the dominant form of content across social channels.

As for nonprofits on Twitter, there was a significant lack of competition for **Wikileaks** in terms of consumer engagement, as the chart shows. ■



SOCIAL SCORECARD

TOP NONPROFIT BRANDS ON TWITTER – Q4 2016

Based on Total Actions (likes and retweets)
 Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareablee.

Source: Twitter

RANK	BRAND	TOTAL ACTIONS	TOTAL CONTENT	ACTIONS PER CONTENT	TOTAL AUDIENCE
1	Wikileaks	10,880,904	781	13,932	4,163,732
2	ACLU Nationwide	1,132,800	974	1,163	414,966
3	PETA	774,819	1,698	456	759,890
4	Human Rights Campaign	410,735	1,286	319	663,334
5	Planned Parenthood Action	316,678	710	446	260,320
6	Mercy For Animals	312,818	2,695	116	249,955
7	Save the Children	230,128	523	440	2,099,223
8	UNHCR	193,467	1,354	143	2,070,476
9	peta2.com	181,625	2,263	80	102,898
10	To Write Love On Her Arms	180,724	651	278	292,062

MillerCoors' Blog Addresses Competing Brands

back to communications was because the industry was changing for the positive," he tells us in part II of an interview that coincides with Page's latest *New CCO* podcast. [Part I of the interview ran in *PR News*, June 26, 2017. The podcast is available at: <http://bit.ly/2rTn1rm>] "When I started in the mid-1990s, communications was definitely the proverbial red-headed stepchild of whatever function it was part of..."



Pete Marino
CCO
MillerCoors

Ironically, though, communications' stature has risen due, in large part, to the need to contain crisis and protect brand reputation. To paraphrase Dickens, "It's the best of times for communicators because it's the worst of times." For Marino, "a lot of [PR's rise] has to do with the role and impact that social media has played for brands...when you think about reputation management and what Warren Buffett said, ("It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it."), that 5 minutes is probably down to about .5 seconds today... communications needs to be the eyes, ears, heart and soul of the company...because...the court of public opinion is much more influential and punitive than the court of law can be."

WHY PR BLUNDERS STILL HAPPEN

True, social media's ability to amplify a crisis fast has made communicators a hot commodity. A question: If CEOs know the importance of communications and how quickly social can go on the attack mode, why are PR disasters, such as **United Airlines'** incident with Dr. David Dao, still happening? "Certainly there always are going to be one offs or two offs," he says, adding, And "enlightenment [about communications' importance] is still to come for some companies."

"The way United correlates with [MillerCoors] is that anytime you have a company with thousands of employees, you're at the risk of someone having a bad day, someone getting set off on the wrong thing," he says. "The company needs to take responsibility for all of it." While Marino believes "in many situations the person who instigates [the incident] has to be partially responsible, the brand has to stay above the fray or you're back on your heels all the time."

Going deeper, he says, "I almost guarantee the commu-

nications function at United gave its leadership team swift and accurate advice that probably would have taken out a lot of the vitriol from the [public's] response very quickly." What prevented United from responding quickly and well, he says, likely stemmed from union and H.R. concerns.

Following from that we ask about messaging at MillerCoors. You have a message you want to disseminate, how do you do it? "For us, issuing a press release is mostly to get something on the record," he says. "We'll ask, 'What's the best way to get this ball rolling?' We might pitch it to a reporter or several or put it on the blog."

THE MILLERCOORS BLOG AND TRANSPARENCY

Speaking of MillerCoors' blog [millercoorsblog.com], Marino emphasizes transparency. "We don't want people to think we're trying to dupe or deceive them in any way. We, MillerCoors, have a perspective on the beer industry, whether it's our brands or competitive brands, and we want to make sure we're putting our point of view out there." Writing about competing brands may be unusual, although "everything we do on the blog goes past [the] legal [department]."

A perusal of the blog shows it's fairly even handed. A recent lead paragraph mentioned how beer sales began the summer sluggishly, including those of category leader **Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI)** and MillerCoors. Another story discussed ABI's interest in rolling out a Halloween-themed label for Budweiser in October. The story ends with, "Budweiser has been losing volume and share so far this year, according to **Nielsen**. Volume was down 9.2% during the four weeks ended June 17 as it lost 0.4 points of category case share."

A favorite question that **The Home Depot** CCO Stacey Tank asks on the Page podcast is "What would you do with an unlimited budget?" We ask Marino for details. "I'd build out a newsroom to help frame and underscore the narrative of the MillerCoors organization and the American beer business." He'd staff it with "serious, ambitious people who can write with specificity and clarity. And most often they'd have reporting background." They'd also have digital and analytics experience, he adds. ■

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Pitching Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

tant about pitching because he knows from personal experience how infuriated some journalists get when they receive irrelevant and sloppy pitches.

We worked through the material together and he saw how applying his eye for a good story and customizing a message for an audience can actually help his target journalists do their jobs better. As a former journalist, Adam possessed these skills. Adam's energy shifted from reticent to enthusiastic.

Four days after the workshop, he sent me the success story. He explained that he was targeting a reporter for an important trade outlet. As part of his research, he noticed that the reporter had tweeted about a colleague bringing a French press to a Friday editorial meeting with the hashtag #FrenchPressFridays.

So he included “#FrenchPressFridays” in the subject line of his pitch email. He explained that he's also a French press fan who uses the device to make cold-brew coffee. Then he introduced his client—which is wholly unrelated to coffee—and explained a large contract it had won recently and why it's important enough to warrant a story.

THE BEST PITCH, EVER

She replied: “Hi Adam, this is the best pitch I've received. Ever, actually. So thanks for that!” and then asked some questions that led to booking the story.

To be sure, I've heard journalists complain about PR pros lazily inserting a reference to a recent tweet as trite. But the positive reaction shows that Adam researched this reporter properly and pushed the right buttons to make this approach appealing instead of off-putting.

Unfortunately, that pesky word, and the attitude it represents, is what turned the other pitch from one with promise to one held up for scorn.

THE 'BAD' PITCH

Before I go further, I want to state that I believe the journalist in this case was unfair and unprofessional. If he didn't appreciate the pitch, he could have simply deleted it and moved on. If he felt like there would be some teaching value in sharing it on social media, he should have at least omitted the PR pro's name and email address. Veteran tech journalist Harry McCracken extended this courtesy when he famously posted bad pitches to his Facebook page.

WHY WAS THIS A 'BAD' PITCH?

That aside, what set off the reporter?

This pitch also used a clever subject line to attract attention and entice the reporter to open it. And in this case, the subject line actually related directly to the point of the pitch, which was to highlight an expert on Generation Z:

“GenZ will drive political establishment cray cray. Here's how.”

This playful style isn't for everyone, I know. But I respect

the PR pro's attempt to make his pitch stand out in a cluttered inbox. And that much obviously worked—the reporter opened it, right?

Here's where things went wrong. The first sentence after the greeting is:

“OK, I apologize for using the words ‘cray cray’ in an email subject line. Forgive me on that? It's cringeworthy indeed.”

The key word here is “apologize.” Why use anything in a pitch if you're going to apologize for it?

Can you see how the apologetic tone immediately creates a feeling of desperation around this pitch? The PR pro used a trick to get the journalist's attention and then decided to backtrack.

I can relate to this feeling easily, because I used to have to do it. The importance of having confidence while pitching was a subject we discussed in an early column (*PRN*, May 22, 2017). I'll admit, though, it took me a while to become a confident media pitcher. Early in my career I felt the PR pro/journalist dynamic was entirely uneven—the journalist had all the power. I was just a peon begging for a morsel of attention.

In Adam's case, he crafted a great subject line. Own it, don't apologize! Follow up with something like, “Did that Gen Z lingo get your attention? Even though many find such slang annoying (including me, FWIW), we may need to get used to it—by the 2020 election, 30 million Gen Zs will be ready to vote...”

OWNING IT

Now go back to Adam's pitch with the similar playful, creative subject line. Adam had a tougher hill to climb, because he didn't have anything to do with the story idea he was pushing. But there's no apology there—he just owns it, explains the connection and moves on.

That's because Adam has learned that he can provide immense value to the right journalists: those who are stressed out every day because they have to find the exact kind of content that Adam has access to. Adam knows he just needs to find the right targets and clearly convey the relevance and usefulness of the information he has.

Researching your targets and crafting your pitch are certainly important. But those two skills flow naturally when you rid yourself of the mindset that you're a pest and replace it with a desire to serve your target journalists.

That's how you write the best pitches. Ever, actually :). ■

CONTACT: *Michael Smart is the media pitching coach PR pros seek when they want to boost media relations success. He advises everyone from Fortune 10 brands to nonprofits and sole proprietors. Learn more at: michaelsmartpr.com*

PR Firms' Utilization Rate Misses Mark

In our June 26 edition, we told you about the yearly **Gould+Partners** benchmarking study that showed PR firms struggling last year to reach 20% profitability. Large firms (revenue of \$25 million and more) led the way at near-20% profitability, mid-sizers (revenue of \$10 million to \$25 million) were respectable at about 18% and smaller firms trailed at 13.5%.

The 20% profit mark is the accepted level, says Rick Gould, managing partner, Gould+Partners. Labor costs were the main culprits at the 101 U.S. and Canadian firm surveyed, he says. Industry average profitability was 15%, down slightly from 15.3% in 2015.

This week we delve deeper into the study, which will be released next month. As you can see in the top table, CEOs at firms specializing in travel and digital PR commanded the best rates. For PR executives (non-CEOs), the highest rates belonged to those in beauty/fashion and real estate.

Billing rates averaged \$486/hour for CEOs of agencies with \$25 million or more in revenue and \$272/hour for agencies with less than \$3 million in net revenue.

Productivity—measured by billable time utilization—has been far below optimal levels, Gould says. Executives are billing at 84.1% of their theoretical yearly capacity of 1,700 hours, the survey says [see lower table]. Some account executives are billing at an average of as high as 95%, others are averaging 70%.

The goal should be 90% at least for account staff not participating in management and bringing in new business, Gould says. Nearly all the firms in the survey that reached 20% profitability boasted executives who were billing at 90%, he adds. ■

Billing Rates by Specialty (2016 Results)

Specialties	# Respondents	President CEO		Account Execs.	
		#		#	
		2016	2015	2016	2015
1. Healthcare	40	354	365	163	158
2. Tech	35	356	362	161	159
3. Financial/Investor Relations	31	375	378	167	159
4. Consumer	30	366	340	160	146
5. Crisis	40	339	364	159	156
6. Sports/Entertainment	14	373	340	178	171
7. Beauty/Fashion	15	371	341	181	154
8. Economic Development	19	313	314	157	156
9. Professional Services	22	303	310	159	149
10. Food & Beverage	25	363	360	154	150
11. Public Affairs	33	336	358	163	161
12. Travel	24	379	344	167	154
13. Real Estate	16	357	353	171	162
14. Digital	36	378	368	160	158
Average All Firms		354	355	158	155

Source: Gould+Partners

Average Rates & Utilization- 2016 vs. 2015

	Average Billing Rates 2016	Average Billing Rates 2015	Average Utilization 2016	Average Utilization 2015
President/CEO	\$ 354	\$ 355	33.0%	36.2%
EVP/SVP	\$ 324	\$ 315	54.7%	58.9%
VP	\$ 273	\$ 269	67.3%	67.1%
Account Manager	\$ 225	\$ 224	76.4%	77.3%
Senior Account Executives	\$ 186	\$ 185	83.0%	85.0%
Account Executives	\$ 158	\$ 155	84.1%	89.0%
Account Coordinators	\$ 120	\$ 117	81.1%	84.8%
Blended Rate	\$ 196	\$ 197	—	—

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDEBOOK

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Navigate Google's Ad Grants Program and Drive Results for Nonprofits



Google AdWords can be a powerful tool to leverage as part of an organization's online search strategy. As nonprofits often have limited budgets and resources, **Google Ad Grants** (www.google.com/grants/) provides eligible nonprofits an opportunity to build and execute AdWords campaigns at no cost. While there are limitations on ad placement and maximum bids, Google Ad Grants can be a powerful tool to help nonprofits drive results, increase awareness and drive business outcomes.

PRE-PROGRAM PLANNING: ESTABLISH GOALS

Similar to any marketing and communications effort, your Google Ad Grants program should be tied to your organization's strategy. It is important to establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Based) goals that will help gauge your success. For example, goals could include increasing volunteer sign-ups by X% via the web or raising site traffic by Y% to your web site's donation page.

PRE-PROGRAM PLANNING: TACTICAL SET-UP

Once you have established your goals, you will want to assess your digital infrastructure and make necessary updates before creating an AdWords campaign. This process should begin with an inventory of your organization's digital assets or content archive. While this may be a tedious and time-consuming step, it will provide you with a wealth of content to pull from and ensure that you are delivering information people want and need in a format that solicits the best response.

CREATE AND/OR UPDATE LANDING PAGES

Now that you have a better understanding of your digital assets, it is essential to look at the landing pages that you intend to drive traffic to through your ads. Too often, nonprofits make the mistake of driving all traffic to their organization's home page. To achieve your goals, you will want to be strategic as to where you send visitors with your ads.

If the goal is to increase volunteer sign-ups, for example, your ad should take visitors to a landing page that provides information on volunteer opportunities. Build out such a page if your organization lacks one prior to campaign launch.

Consider reviewing each goal, then map out content needed to meet these objectives. The ultimate goal is to employ existing digital assets to create landing pages that convert visitors in alignment with your objectives.

CONDUCT KEYWORD RESEARCH

As you build out your landing pages, it is also important to conduct keyword research in parallel. Ideally, your target keywords will be embedded within your landing pages and eventually in the ads you create.

To get started, consider using a keyword research tool such as Google's Keyword Planner. Tools like these enable

marketers to search for additional and relevant keywords that may not be top of mind. For example, if your organization works on childhood hunger, you could use "child hunger" as your initial search term and see what additional results surface.

As you are given a max CPC bid of \$2 within the Google Ad Grants program, the competition for some keywords may be too expensive, which makes it essential to have a long list of keywords. While creating your keyword list, you will want to make sure these words appear on your various website pages, which will make the ads you create more relevant.

PROGRAM EXECUTION: CAMPAIGNS

After doing the appropriate campaign planning, you can set up your AdWords campaign. As a best practice, consider creating separate campaigns for each of your goals. For example, if you have goals around volunteers, donations and e-newsletter sign-ups, create separate campaigns for each.

Every campaign is comprised of one or more ad groups. An ad group contains multiple ads that share the same set of keywords as well as a theme.

The number of campaigns and ad groups you create should be dictated by your business objectives. As a guide, however, ad groups should contain 15-30 similar keywords.

PROGRAM EXECUTION - CREATING ADS

As Google Ad Grants allows for text-based ads only, make sure your ad copy is as succinct, relevant and impactful as possible. Start with headlines that are ultra-relevant to user searches. To do this, create ad variations that include your exact keyword(s). Every ad should have at least three variations, incorporating different keywords in each version. Review the performance of all your ads monthly and remove the worst performer. Be sure to replace the ad removed so that you are always cycling in new material for optimal success.

Within the ad copy, consider using statistics to capture attention. As you are unable to include images, compelling statistics could be very powerful in telling your story. Statistics in your ad should be carried over to the landing page where you are directing traffic. Doing this will make your ad more relevant and content easier for the search engines to find.

Perhaps most important, your ad needs to include a clear CTA. What will a user gain by clicking on your ad? Every ad should answer this question in no uncertain terms. Be sure your ad directs users to a specific landing page on your site that relates to the ad content. If a user clicks your ad, the content delivered should not surprise him/her. Having landing pages directly connected to your CTAs also will help increase conversion rates. ■

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A 3-Part Plan for Brands to Engage With and Defeat Fake News



The term fake news, or #fakenews, has become ubiquitous. That ubiquity has brought increasing concern by corporate executives that their brand may someday become a target.

News articles on several sites in mid-November 2016 reported **PepsiCo** CEO Indra Nooyi urged supporters of then-elected President Donald Trump to “take their business elsewhere.” The stories mentioned that Trump supporters were calling for a boycott of PepsiCo products.

The problem is Nooyi never uttered that quote and the call for a boycott was fabricated, too. Nooyi actually congratulated the president-elect on his win, although in an interview with the *NY Times* she mentioned how the campaign’s vindictive tone was upsetting. Regardless, PepsiCo’s stock fell 5.5% that month. Pepsi is not alone; fake or false news touched brands like **New Balance**, **Facebook** and even the Pope.

It’s clear brands must have a plan to combat a fake news attack. This plan should be, at least, four-fold and encompass digital media, PR, influencer marketing and social media—employees in each discipline should be ready to engage at a moment’s notice.

The faster a brand can combat the fake news, the better the results will be for mitigating its impact.

DETECT: FIND THE NEWS BEFORE THE REST

The first step in a brand plan for fake news is to find the news before your competitors or others can spin it. This means you need to have an always-on monitoring approach for mentions of your brand. This approach should include:

- ▶ Software that is constantly monitoring for brand mentions. A simple tool is **Google Alerts**. Other tools for this task include **IFTTT** (for advanced monitoring) or **Talk-Walker**.
- ▶ An influencer network that is working on your behalf constantly. You’ll want to retain influencer talent that monitors media outlets, blogs and social media channels for your brand name. When an influencer finds something that seems inflammatory or otherwise harmful to your brand, the influencer should have a process to flag the content to a team that monitors for such an attack.
- ▶ Social media page monitoring that works continuously, 24/7, and flags a relevant manager when a piece of false, unsubstantiated or otherwise unknown piece of news content arises.

DIRECT: RESPOND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

Once someone has flagged a piece of content as particularly malicious or damaging, a brand will want to substantiate the claim. To substantiate, review the link. Determine if it has been picked up on more websites, shared or otherwise seems to be gaining traction. At this point, the social media, digital marketing and PR teams should meet to discuss

the potential response pattern. Once the decision to respond has been made, a brand should:

- ▶ Post responses across all relevant social networks and owned channels, sharing that the information is false.
- ▶ Reach out to local and national media to refute the claims.
- ▶ Engage deeply with influencers to share that the information is false, thank those who flagged it and prepare a statement or request for influencers who wish to help

DEFLECT: GROW YOUR VOICES

Once a brand has responded to the fake news, it must then amplify the response in a counterattack. This means pulling all possible levers to share the truth. At this point, you don’t need to mention or reference the fake news but you want to share information that would make the fake news look even more fake. To do this:

- ▶ Position digital advertising spend to promote your social media post.
- ▶ Consider the use of advertisements on social and web properties to offset the news cycle.
- ▶ Activate your army of social media influencers. If a brand has used fake news and trolls to spread news, you similarly can use your cadre of social media influencers to combat the other brand or organization’s news. It is important, however, that these are influencers you have spent time with, have confidence in and developed loyalty with. They should be the same influencers you employ to monitor for your brand. These influencers then help you suck the air out of the fire of fake news—they post your positive news spin, call out those who shared the story, engage in a dialogue and point interested people to your official statement.

Using the above approach of detect, direct and deflect will position brands well in the event of a fake news attack. The most important thing to remember is to share the truth in a way that reduces the ability for the fake news to breath. Your messaging must be simple, straightforward, and easy to share.

Note: Fake news is deliberately fabricated information made up with the intent of changing public opinion regarding a specific target. False news is news that started with a kernel of truth and, like happens in the children’s game of Telephone, became twisted after numerous retellings across various media platforms. It is less malicious than fake news, but not less impactful. ■

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Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

1. Platform Prater: You can't say **Facebook** chief Mark Zuckerberg and crew aren't listening. Addressing a significant pain point, **Facebook** said in a June 30 post it's added a slew of features to enhance the experience of advertisers. One of the features, Landing Page Views, lets advertisers know the number of users who've clicked on an ad and subsequently visited their mobile landing page. Another new feature lets advertisers know whether or not a visitor who clicks on an ad had done so previously. These features are part of a larger effort that will be rolled out periodically. The platform ran afoul of marketers last year when it admitted it had been inflating average video view time figures for a while. – **Instagram** is following parent **Facebook** in fighting vitriol posted on the platform. In a June 29 post, Instagram says users can access a filter designed to block offensive content by clicking the "..." settings menu from the profile and scrolling to tap "Comments." The filter will work on comments in Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, French, German, Russian, Japanese and Chinese, as well as English.

2. Why Network Communicators Have Headaches: In a story indirectly related to the **Facebook** ratings item above, did you see the July 6 *WSJ* article about TV networks intentionally misspelling the names of nightly news shows so that ratings for low-rated nights, such as the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend, can essentially be discarded? Instead of watching *Nightly News* did you realize you might be vuing *Knightly Newz*? Fine, these spelling tricks basically are legit when it comes to manipulating **Nielsen** ratings, but what do they mean for brand

reputation and authenticity? Damning: Network execs assure reporter **Joe Flint** that doctored ratings are used "only for publicity purposes" and advertisers are able to obtain accurate ratings. Ouch.

3. Post Time: Here's another best-times/days-to-post survey, this one from **CoSchedule**, which says weekends rule, especially for B2C. An interesting tidbit, since 80% of the country lives in the Central and Eastern Time zones, if a U.S. audience is your target, those are the time zones to keep in mind. Best posting days/times for **Facebook** are Sunday (9am), Thursday (1pm), Friday (2pm) and Saturday (3pm). Best times are Sunday (9am), Thursday (1pm), Friday. For **Twitter** the magic happens Sunday (noon) and Wednesday (3pm). **LinkedIn** rocks most from Tuesday-Thursday, with peak posting hours being before and after work. The best formula, though, is to use analytics to measure times and days that are prime time for your target audience.

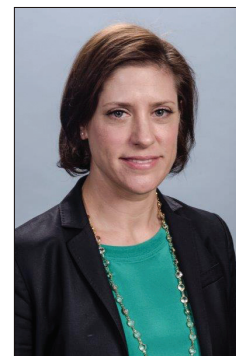


Joey Amato, Principal, Agency33

4. Growth: **Gatesman** of Pittsburgh acquired **Noble Communications**, adding offices in Chicago and Springfield, MO. – **Agency33 Public** of Nashville opened its doors, specializing in publicity tour press and focusing on LGBT business. Former **Sony** and **Webster PR** exec **Joey Amato** is principal. – **ARPR** added a San Francisco office to locations in Atlanta and New Orleans. – Healthcare PR group **Huntsworth** of Britain acquired **The Creative Engagement Group**, which includes creative agencies **WRG**, **The Moment** and **Just Communicate**.

5. Study Haul: While some brands are reevaluating the use of paid influencers, particularly those who come with a hefty price tag, a study from **Allison + Partners**, *Powerful Connections*, says influencers can help cause-related efforts. Of those who follow digital influencers, 35% engaged with a cause due to an influencer's recommendation. Of those, 51% made a donation to the cause and 37% volunteered with the organization in question. – A survey from PR firm **Greentarget** and **Zeughauser Group** affirms what communicators have long known: Content overload is a big issue. This particular survey looks at in-house counsel; nearly all of them polled say they suffer from information overload. Still, CMO at law firms plan to release more content, the survey says, yet a majority have yet to define their content strategy. This reminds us of what **American Chemical Society** senior video producer **Elaine Seward** counseled in *PR News* June 19 referring to video content (but it applies to all content): Make sure your content is authentic, "adds to the conversation" and that you "personalize it".

6. People: **eBay** communications VP **Claire Dixon** is joining **VMware** as CCO. – Former *WSJ* staff writer and **Netflix** corporate communications chief **Ann Marie Squeo** is headed to **IBM** as VP, communications. – **Bioasis Technologies** named **Catherine**



Catherine London, EVP, Corporate Communications, Bioasis Technologies

London EVP, head of corporate communications and investor relations. – **Lewis** named former **Fleishman-Hillard** exec **Robert Collins** SVP. He'll lead Lewis' Boston office. – **Current Marketing's** Chicago office named **Leah Hattendorf** SVP, planning (photo, p. 1) and **Matt Sulzer** as creative director. In NY, **Sarah Anderson** (photo, p. 1) joins as EVP, integrated media. ■

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