

# PRNews

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With warm regards,



Diane Schwartz  
SVP & Group Publisher  
PR News  
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## MEDIA RELATIONS

# 85% of PR Pros Say Media Relations Still Critical Yet Few Seem Willing to Adapt Much to Succeed

A theme heard often in communications is the maxim, “The more things change, the more they remain the same.”

This mix of the new and traditional is one of the motifs of a survey of more than 400 communicators being released with this edition. *PR News* and its **Media Relations Working Group** (MRWG)—23 PR pros analyzing media relations in the age of fake news, sensationalistic clickbait, influencer marketing and integrated communications—created the survey. [The MRWG members are listed on p. 5.]

In short, it found a majority of communicators appreciate that traditional media relations has changed in the digital age. For most, it's become much harder to obtain coverage for their stories. Still, an overwhelming number believe media relations continues to matter, although they concede communicators need to change to be successful at it. Surprisingly, the survey also shows few have shifted their media relations approach significantly.

### IS MEDIA RELATIONS NEEDED?



**Nati Katz,**  
Leader,  
Technology  
Practice, *BCW*

There are few industries that have changed more as a result of digital technology than media. Certainly the sobering numbers in the chart on this page indicate a significant amount of change, mostly decline in print and broadcast jobs. It is important to mention the chart excludes gains in jobs at digital-only outlets, though those have flattened in recent years.

A balanced view, of course, is that in

### The Shrinking of Media Jobs

50,400 (2016): News analysts, reporters and correspondents

45,900 (2026): News analysts, reporters and correspondents\*

5,700 (2016): broadcast news analysts

5,600 (2026): broadcast news analysts\*

44,700 (2016): reporters and correspondents

40,200 (2026): reporters and correspondents\*

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

\* estimated

many ways, it's easier than ever to be a journalist and a media relations pro.



**Michael Smart,**  
Principal,  
*Smart PR*

For example, digital technology has increased the ways PR pros reach journalists (as chart 6 on page 4 shows). “We certainly seem to have added the needed channels to identify whom we target and how we reach them,” says **Nati Katz**, technology practice director at **Burson Cohn & Wolfe** (BCW) and a member of the MRWG.

And as pitching guru **Michael Smart** wrote in these pages last September (*PRN*, September 12, 2017), Earlier in the 2000s “many of the top-tier media (at least the ones I was pitching) still didn't reliably use email. To get their attention, you had to actually call them...and to even

Continued on page 2



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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

**WEBINAR:**  
**HOW TO MANAGE A CRISIS ON TWITTER**  
**JUNE 13, 2018**  
 1:30-3PM ET

**GOOGLE BOOT CAMP FOR COMMUNICATORS**  
**JULY 19, 2018**  
 NEW YORK CITY

**SOCIAL MEDIA SUMMIT**  
**AUGUST 9-10, 2018**  
 SAN FRANCISCO

Continued from page 1

# Is Media Relations More Difficult Now?

know whom to target, you had to actually read their work regularly, because the online archives weren't reliable enough at all outlets to pull up their recent work before a particular pitch."

In sum, Smart believes "pitching is actually

easier now than ever."

By the same token, journalists have an easier time. They can reach sources, conduct research, check facts, create graphics, work with photos and compose and publish stories at a rate they could only dream of prior to the digital age.

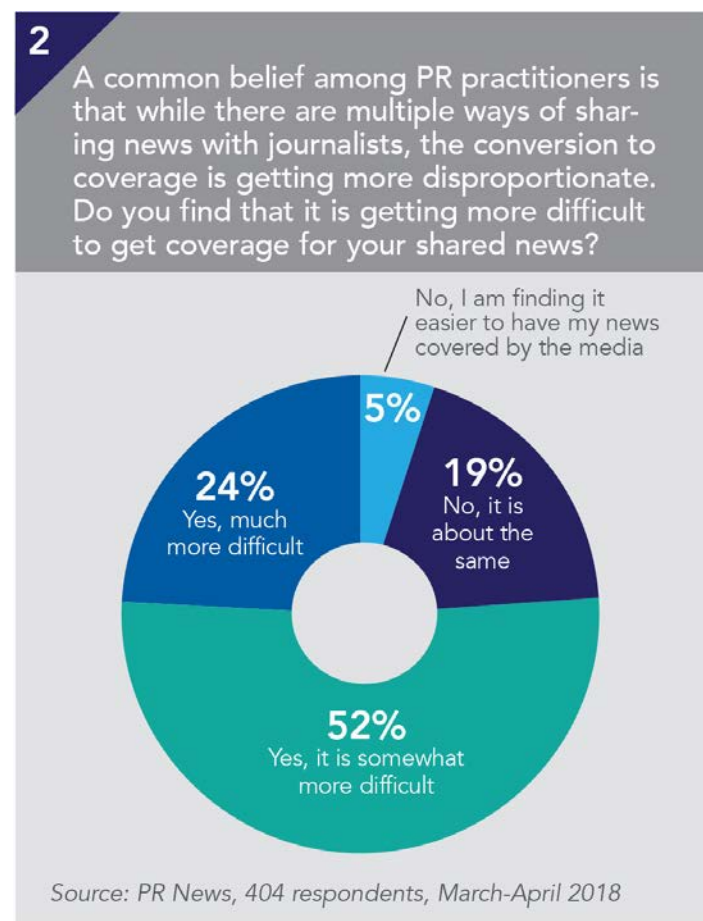
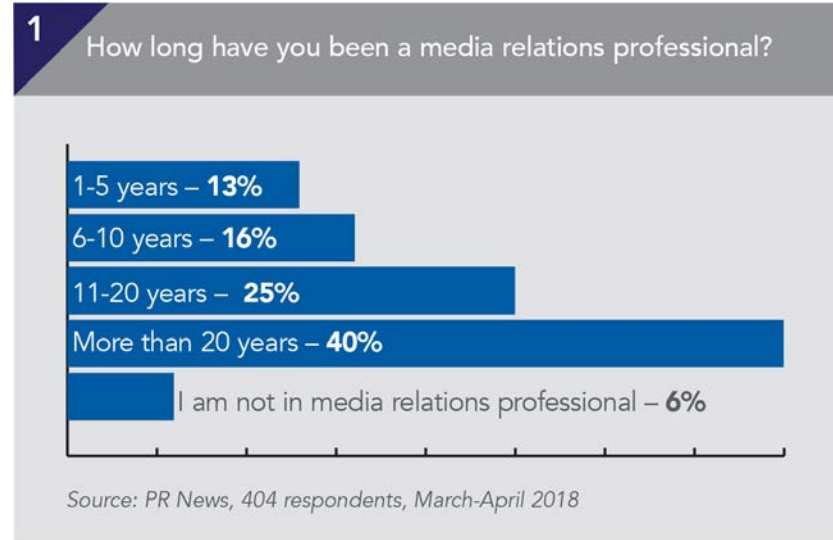
More often, though, we hear the popular wisdom that digital media has decimated traditional print media. Does anyone younger than 30 read newspapers anymore? As such, is it worth the return for communicators to invest time and effort to attempt to gain earned media coverage?

And then, of course, brands have other options to communicate their news and stories.

For example, with brand communicators having the ability to generate and publish material and send it directly to targeted audiences via digital technologies, isn't it better to skip traditional media and establish a brand news/storytelling operation? Certainly several iconic brands, such as **Coca-Cola** (PRN, February 6, 2017), **Microsoft** (PRN, April 24) and **Starbucks** (PRN, April 3, 2017), have taken this route and received acclaim for doing so.

This argument seems more compelling in light of the chart illustrating a decline in the number of reporters and by extension news outlets. From there you can make the case that with fewer reporters and outlets it makes the PR pro's job tougher to find a home for stories.

It's in this environment PR News and its MRWG asked communicators during March and April about the need for traditional media relations, how communicators' interplay with media has changed (or not) and what issues they are encountering when they attempt to obtain coverage for

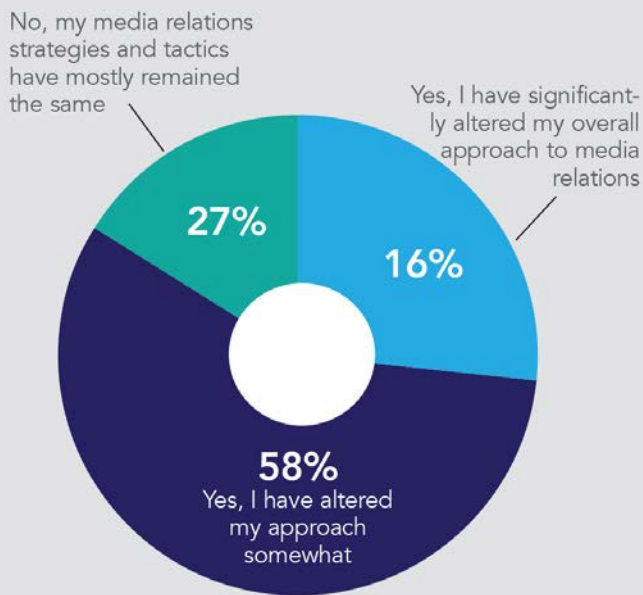


**3** What are the top 3 reasons why getting conversion to coverage for your brand is now more difficult?



Source: PR News, 404 respondents, March-April 2018

**4** Have you altered your overall approach to getting coverage for your brand or clients over the past three years?



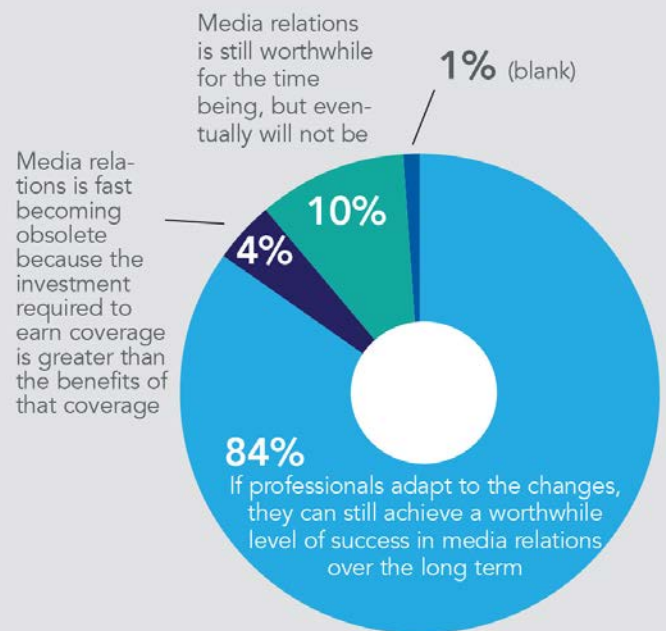
Source: PR News, 404 respondents, March-April 2018

their news and other messages. Respondents also were asked about if and how they've changed their media relations tactics and strategies.

**MORE DIFFICULT**

As you can see in chart number 2, more than 75% of communicators in our survey associated the phrases “much more

**5** Which of these best describes your outlook on the future of media relations?



Source: PR News, 404 respondents, March-April 2018

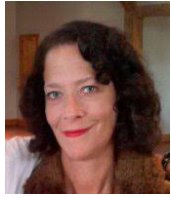
difficult” and “somewhat more difficult” with the act of gaining media coverage for news.

A total of 24% said it is “much more difficult,” while 52% termed it “somewhat more difficult.”

A small but significant 19% believe earning coverage today is roughly similar to what it was like in the pre-digital era.

Continued on page 4

## HOPEFUL MESSAGE



**Maggie McMahon**  
Media Specialist,  
MultiVu

Some good news: Look at chart 5 and you see the single, largest group of respondents for any question in the survey, a cohort of 84%, is optimistic about the future of media relations as a useful tactic in PR.

It is important to note, however, the wording of this question. This overwhelming majority agreed that **adaptation to changes** is needed to allow PR pros to be successful in media relations, a traditional part of communications.

As MRWG member **Maggie McMahon**, a media specialist at **MultiVu**, says, “Media relations has never been more challenging, yet it remains a vital component of PR.” For McMahon, to break through the “heavy news cycle and reach shrinking newsrooms requires more thought and effort.” Emphasis must be placed on “relationship-building with media, strategic timing and storytelling around a brand.”

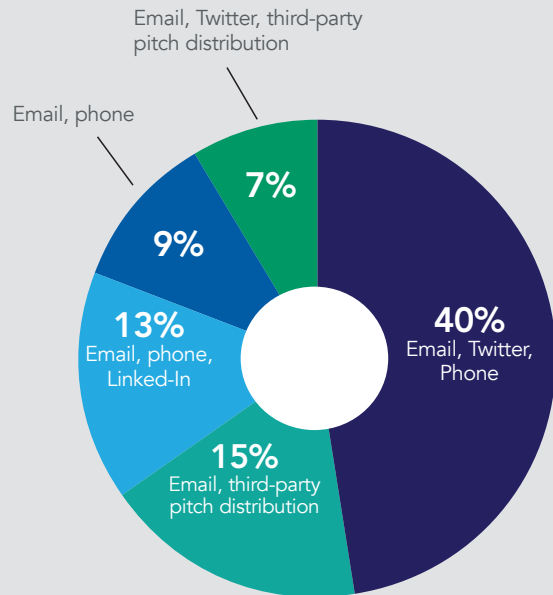
## SLOW TO CHANGE

Fine, so the message seems to be change your approach to media relations and pitching, right? On that score the survey’s results are open to interpretation.

Nearly one-third of respondents (27%) say their media relations tactics and strategies have remained mostly the same (see chart 4).

6

What are the top 3 you have found to be most effective in reaching as well as drawing attention of media personnel? [Select just three] \*



Source: PR News, 404 respondents, March-April 2018

## HOW THEY’VE CHANGED OR HAVE NOT

Surveys can be limiting in that they ask people to respond to multiple-choice questions with pre-written answers.

To overcome this, the *PR News*-PR News Media Relations Working Group (MRWG) survey allowed those who responded that they’d changed their media relations tactics to describe in writing how they’d done so. Nearly 300 replies were received.

An overarching theme was the heavy use of social and email to connect with media. Just 1 respondent eschewed social for phoning media, another touted face-to-face encounters with journalists.

In assessing the responses, **Burson Cohn & Wolfe**’s technology practice leader and MRWG member **Nati Katz** said, “It is not a shock that a vast majority of voices attest to the shift toward digital, social and paid as a hedge against shrinking newsrooms. The surprising factor is the scope and size of this shift.”

He added, “It seems many PR pros have given up or deprioritized traditional media relations in favor of paid.” While this makes sense in terms of targeting audiences, it poses a risk to PR. “Once digital, social, and interactive firms acquire the right talent to tailor content, the need for PR media relations expertise may be drastically undermined.”

His suggestion: “A hyper-interactive approach to [media relations], where no single channel has more value over its alternative.”

For example, he espouses campaigns that include sponsored content on traditional mainstream sites such as *The Economist*, *Wall St. Journal* and *NY Times* etc, plus proactive social multimedia and multichannel campaigns. “It is only this strategic manner that can sustain a PR and communications core expertise in the new media age,” he says.

Katz was “pleasantly surprised” to see mentions of relationship building

and “increased devotion to the identification and relevancy of targets.”

Many respondents said they are investing in getting to better know their targets and, more important, tailoring stories to their targets’ needs. Several said they think about how stories can provide value to targets’ readers.

To that end, Katz said, “I am delighted to see...many PR practitioners have either drastically reduced or completely dropped...generic press releases” as a way of drawing attention to a story opportunity.

Many attested to personalizing their pitches, including revising length, style and depth to make them more straightforward and brief.

On the downside, Katz said few respondents wrote they’d aligned the stories they pitch with media’s subject needs. Further, he saw little evidence PR pros are significantly changing how they handle media relations. ■

Looked at with a glass-is-half-full approach, the survey can be a source of hope. In this light, nearly three-quarters (74%) of communicators have “significantly” (16%) or “somewhat” (58%) changed their approach to media relations.

On the other hand, a sobering view can be interpreted as alarming: 85% of PR pros have only “somewhat” or barely at all changed their media relations tactics in the face of a significantly altered atmosphere that seems to require change.

## BLAME IT ON SMALLER NEWSROOMS

As Smart wrote, “Most PR pros don’t actually take advantage of the new avenues for success...almost everybody in this business simply defaults back to the same essential process their predecessors used...blast out a news release to a big list of media and hope for a response. The only innovation is that today’s generic pitchers use email instead of blast-fax software.”



**Kandace Foreman,**  
Deputy Director,  
Marketing &  
Communications,  
D.C. Public Library

MRWG member **Kandace Foreman**, deputy director, marketing & communications, **District of Columbia Public Library**, agrees with Smart about the need for PR pros to adjust their tactics to succeed.

“To be successful,” she says, “PR practitioners have to be amenable to change. This willingness to be flexible in how pitches are approached often means a switch in strategy as well.”

Of particular concern to Foreman is the popularity of email as a pitching mechanism, which is illustrated in chart 6. Journalists, she says, say they get hundreds of emails daily, “which means emails go unread.”

Her recommendation is a good **Twitter** pitch. “It is more likely to make the news cycle. And the probability increases when the pitch has supporting elements, such as pictures or a video,” she says.

**Ryan George**, AVP, marketing and communications at **1st Global** and a MRWG member, is optimistic about the future of media relations. He’s aligned with the 84% who believe media relations remains important, but “I don’t feel the need to qualify” how much must change to succeed.

For George, “As long as there are readers, viewers, followers and audiences, building and maintaining relationships with the gatekeepers will be essential for communicators. I fear we may be losing sight of the importance of that to our success.”



**Ryan George**  
AVP, Marketing/  
Communications,  
1st Global

## ...BUT NO REASON STANDS OUT

The results in chart 4 seem to inform some of those in chart 3. As you can see, answers to the question why it’s more difficult to gain coverage are many and none dominates.

The largest group, at 25%, nowhere near a majority, sees shrinking newsrooms as the culprit. Other responses stem from that.

For example, 17% say journalists have had to become generalists, implying there are fewer well-informed reporters to take PR pros’ pitches. And 12% say media is no longer interested in telling great stories but instead the desire for clicks is what motivates reporters. 11% believe the media has become too sensationalized. As a result reporters seek scandalous items as opposed to “nuts-and-bolts industry” stories. ■

## The PR News Media Relations Working Group

We thank the members of the PR News Media Relations Working Group who joined PR News editors to create the media relations survey you read about in this article. They are listed here alphabetically.

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**Rachael Collins**, Account Executive, Peppercomm

**Nancy Condon**, VP of Media Relations & Web Services, FINRA

**Phil Cynar**, Senior Communications Specialist, Allegheny Conference on Community Development

**Rayhan Daudani**, Senior Communications Specialist, Dominion Energy

**Kellie Didigu**, Media Relations Specialist, Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia

**Kealey Dorian**, Media Relations Specialist, Love’s Travel Stops

**Jane Esworthy**, Senior Director, Public Relations, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

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**Becky Frost**, Senior Director, Corporate Communications, Instructure

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**Alice Good**, Outreach and Digital PR Manager, Clearlink

**Nati Katz**, Director, Technology Practice, Burson Cohn & Wolfe

**Natalie Matthews**, Media Relations Manager, American Dental Association

**Maggie McMahon**, Media Relations Specialist, MultiVu

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# 11 PR Professionals Look at How PR and Marketing Are Converging—or Not

A trend in PR and marketing is the growing overlap between the two. While in some companies strict demarcations remain between PR and marketing, many firms have found it important for the heads of PR and marketing to at least be aware of each other's priorities and plans. As **Page** (formerly The Arthur W. Page Society) argues, the chief communicator's role increasingly has her/him working across multiple parts of the enterprise.

In some companies, of course, the chief marketing officer is the head of PR, although this arrangement doesn't necessarily guarantee members of the two departments work closely.

With this background, we asked senior brand communicators how they differentiate their PR efforts from those of their marketing communications colleagues and queried senior PR firms how they advise their brand clients on this issue. Below are their edited responses.



**Stacey Tank**  
VP and CCO, The Home Depot

PR takes the lead on anything related to journalists. Marketing takes the lead on paid advertising. In the middle, we find owned media, influencer strategy, social media, experiential, sponsorships and beyond. People who grew up in PR seem to inherently understand how to generate organic buzz. They are scrappy and creative in stretching a dollar. They understand how to protect and build brand reputation.

Marketers know how to drive sales. They are skilled at harnessing AI to hone insights that ensure their dollars work as hard as possible.

The truth is, we are much better together, and the lines are messy. That's a beautiful thing because we often wade into less-charted waters, learn from each other and improve our ability to think holistically about all the ingredients that drive a home run campaign.

I want all of my employees to be able to wear both of these hats, making them more versatile over time.



**David Chamberlin**  
SVP & CCO, PNC Financial Services Group

I agree with **Stacey Tank** in that it certainly is becoming an interesting world in terms of who handles what, PR or marketing? With the advent of social media, the lines between PR and marketing started to blur a great deal and even to some degree prior to that in certain respects. At **Bank One/Chase** from 2003-2006, we used PR to help sell and drive awareness, consideration and purchase in limited cases building integrated communications programs.

In the agency world that I left almost three years ago, the lines are blurring rather quickly as PR agencies move into marketing and advertising and advertising/marketing firms try to move into PR. I would argue PR firms have it

easier because they can hire creative and planners and better understand various stakeholders, for example regulators, policy makers, media, influencers, bloggers, customers, employees, etc.

Traditionally, of course, marketing is supposed to sell and PR changes behavior. The challenge I give my team is, 'How can we insert PR to make people aware' of our brand? With banking, PR can only go as far as the application for, say, a credit card or checking account. With other brands, such as **Starbucks**, PR can go all the way to selling you a cup of coffee.

It's important to look at the work of Page, the former Arthur W. Page Society, and how it defines the CCO. In short, it argues the CCO is a strategic business leader and counselor charged with protecting and building the brand's reputation through communications; an integrator of the various parts of the company and the C-Suite; and a builder of digital engagement systems.

Another source is **Richard Edelman's** thoughts on what he calls evolve, promote and protect. He believes communicators must be full partners with marketing. For example, with evolve, he points to **CVS**, which took a big step and stopped selling cigarettes, showing how the brand is moving forward. On promotion, he means storytelling. Protect, he says, goes beyond crisis management. It means communicators need to hold the brand accountable for promises on things like human rights and product safety.

As Page and Edelman argue, PR is an integrator and plays in a much wider swath than marketing. PR talks to employees, policy makers, regulators and investors, for example. Marketing traditionally talks only to customers and prospects. The challenge for PR is can you show up as a businessperson and then evolve, promote and protect and use assets such as the Edelman Trust Barometer to help your brand?



**John Walls**  
Director, Corporate Communications & Public Relations,  
Neiman Marcus Group

While marketing and PR exist separately as part of the "paid, earned, shared and owned" content distribution matrix, the two are symbiotic from a corporate perspective.

We're all familiar with the arrangement where often PR either reports to marketing or works in tandem with it. Regardless of alignment, PR's communications objectives and strategies complement those of marketing, ensuring all customer-focused activities are collaboratively executed to achieve a common business goal.

That said, PR executes a number of tactics to reinforce its function's importance, underscoring the value strategic communications yields when executed effectively.

First, strategic communications guards the reputation of a company. PR is the first line of defense protecting the mis-

sion and vision of the organization while navigating internal and external issues. PR works with senior leaders to provide valuable direction that determines the best course of action, works diligently to resolve issues, and builds the reputation of the company and the trust of the public.

Second, as professional storytellers, PR constantly is rediscovering not only what makes the organization unique, but how its leaders embody that essence. Communications professionals have the rare opportunity to regularly interact with and guide an organization's senior leadership.

What differentiates a communications director from a marketing director is not just the level of access they are granted to executives but the opportunity they have to evolve them into embodiments of a corporate vision and mission.

PR leaders help shape the world's leading authorities to become and be seen as true experts in their respective fields. As executives create road maps reinforcing their vision, strategic communicators help them refine messages for internal and external audiences and work tirelessly to establish their credibility.

Last, measurement and reporting validate the efforts of strategic communicators, providing the data points necessary to justify the value PR provides to an organization. But we must become diverse in the way we track success beyond reporting the number of impressions and placements only.

PR pros must dive deeper into secured and organic coverage, providing a critical analysis that is useful to the organization. As PR ROI is challenging at times to demonstrate, it is critical to provide reports touching on various data points, including sentiment, key messages, programs and campaigns covered, executives mentioned, visuals featured, hyperlinks included, etc.

Data is power. And PR pros need data to tell an internal story about what media are responding to and what customers are seeing.



**Kathy Bloomgarden**  
CEO, Ruder Finn

Communications no longer differentiates between traditional marketing and PR, or even advertising for that matter. We don't advise clients to differentiate, but rather we advise them to integrate. Communications

“ PR and marketing are much better together, and the lines are messy...that's a beautiful thing. ”

- Stacey Tank, VP/CCO, The Home Depot

campaigns are most effective if they take a 360 degree approach, and if messages, images and content are synergized across multiple online and offline platforms.

As the marketing and PR industries continue to become more integrated, to be successful, PR will need to take on more data-driven, analytics-based decisions while marketing will need to focus on authentic and independent content and messages. In both cases, we can no longer put out a campaign and just watch it run. There needs to be an established measurement process early on, so that we can continually review and measure real-time data from the campaign (from impressions to shares to sales) and make adjustments to content, channels or other components accordingly, to achieve maximum results.



**Maggie O'Neill**

Partner & Managing Director, Peppercomm

The definition of PR and marketing communications continues to blur, and therefore their roles at brands are blurring. Regardless, brands continue to be challenged to differentiate PR—especially ROI—from other market-

ing communications disciplines. To help them we recommend:

- ▶ PR is rooted in storytelling for the customer/consumer not just the brand;
- ▶ PR drives true brand reputation not just a product or a campaign; and
- ▶ despite a very blended media world, the value of an earned media placement still outweighs that of an owned or paid channel spend; and can be further impactful as it is leveraged across multiple channels.

*Continued on page 8*

## PRNews' Digital Awards

PR News' Digital PR Awards celebrate the year's most outstanding digital communicators and campaigns in a variety of media such as video, website design, mobile apps and more. If you or your organization executed a campaign that turned heads, generated clicks, drove revenue or inspired your audience, we want to hear about it!

**Learn More:** [prnew.se/digital-awards18](http://prnew.se/digital-awards18) | **Questions?** Contact Jessica Placencia at [jplacencia@accessintel.com](mailto:jplacencia@accessintel.com)

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**Jenny Nuber**  
**Partner, kglobal**

I tell brands to think of PR as the toolbox and marketing as one of the tools, along with branding, social media, media relations etc. A successful PR strategy integrates the work of marketing. While the marketing team might have different goals, say increased sales or customer acquisition, for example, the messaging it is putting out needs to support the company brand and reputation. If all the tools don't work in coordination, you have a PR problem.

Here's how to make sure that doesn't happen:

- ▶ **Everybody uses the same message platform.** Make sure you have one and update it regularly. Each team can have its own supporting bullets, but the way everyone talks about the company, its brand, and its differentiators is the same.
- ▶ **Talk to each other. Frequently.** Marketing should know what internal and external communications is saying, doing, and planning for.
- ▶ **Collaborate.** Sometimes the latest marketing campaign is exactly what the traditional media staff need to know about to get ink. Don't work in a silo, leverage the good work that is happening across all teams.



**Natasha Kennedy**  
**Global Managing Director, Research, Analytics and Measurement Practice Group, FleishmanHillard**

PR plays a critical role in business, engaging employees, educating shareholders, connecting communities, driving sales and managing the organization's reputation across all stakeholder audiences.

To do this successfully, it's crucial to develop authentic communication with those stakeholders so you understand what they care about or need most, and how your organization can respond and deliver. Developing an intelligence system that regularly monitors these audiences' actions and feelings, in addition to collecting feedback from customer service call centers, sales conversations and employee channels, will help create one single point of view so PR is always poised to offer guidance and quickly activate.

By understanding what makes the organization's key stakeholders tick, and continuing to monitor their engagement and adjust course accordingly, PR pros can gain a seat at every strategy table working with senior leaders to manage the organization's reputation, risk and revenue drivers. Organizations must lead with an authentic voice. PR supports this connection.



**Andrew Bowins**  
**SVP, Communications & Industry Affairs, Entertainment Software Association (ESA)**

As others have noted, the line is blurred in this modern age of media. Marketing and communications are symbiotic but unique. The modern communications pro has to

meld traditional PR tactics with digital engagement and real-time engagement while driving advocacy through earned media. It's not just pay and play or push and pray when it comes to engagement. Creating advocacy and third-party endorsement is the true craft of the communicator. Marketing can then build on this and amplify it through direct engagement. It's the golden age of communications if we as a profession don't mess it up.



**Matt Neale**  
**Co-CEO, Golin**

The ability to navigate the public aspect of PR never has been more important. After all, it's the public we want to reach with our messaging, and marketing can't do that without a PR strategy.

Why? While we know how important it is for brand marketing approaches to promote themselves, their services and ideas, it's a waste of time if the message isn't relevant to the audience.

Brands first need to earn the loyalty of consumers to build a foundation for a symbiotic relationship, keeping consumers wanting to come back. Then, they become brand ambassadors, which is a brand's dream, telling stories more authentically and influencing purchase power without spending any of the advertising budget.

But paid still holds a special place. Once the earned-first results are achieved, it's the marketing communications initiatives that help build a channel-specific strategy to support our ever-changing cultural and media landscape. This is the magical sweet spot where the ideas have passed the "BS test" with the public—so we know the messages will land—and then they can be amplified using customized content on digital, social and paid advertising platforms.



**Anthony DeAngelo**  
**Senior Director, Media Relations, APCO Worldwide**

As we know, stakeholders and audiences are changing constantly and becoming harder for PR pros and marketers to reach.

Effective communications efforts can't be split along PR and marketing lines; they have to be integrated, digital and deliberate. This goes for brands and organizations in just about any industry you care to name, from selling cars to mounting a campaign about automotive safety.

You need to make sure your audiences see a clear, concise message and that there's coordination and collaboration across the C-Suite in those efforts. ■

**Note to Subscribers:** Would you like an important question of yours put to a group of senior communicators in an upcoming *PR News* Roundtable?

If so, please contact our editor ([sarenstein@accessintel.com](mailto:sarenstein@accessintel.com)) with your submitted question(s). If we pick your submission, you will be acknowledged when it runs in a future edition of *PR News*.

# Two PR Pros Recommend Tools to Improve Your Instagram Content on a Tight Budget

Each month we'll be asking communicators to unload their toolkits and tell us what falls out. In other words, What do you use to do your job?

There's no better duo to begin this feature than **Manu Muraro**, founder of **Instagram** training and social media agency **Your Social Team**, and **Danielle Brigida**, national social media manager at the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**. The two spoke during an information-packed session on Instagram during last month's **Social Shake-Up Show** in Atlanta (*PRN*, May 15). Their edited responses to our question about what they use to enhance Instagram content are below.

## THE CAMERA AND A GREAT HACK



**Manu Muraro**,  
Founder, *Your Social Team*

**Manu Muraro:** I am not a professional photographer, but I use a **Fujifilm X-T10** to take higher-quality photos. A professional camera will run in the neighborhood of \$1,000. The lenses are even more. So, yes, we're talking about an investment. I recommend you learn to take great phone photos before investing in a professional camera and lenses.

If you have **Apple's iPhone 8 Plus** or **X**, you can access the phone's **Portrait** mode, which can be an amazing way to get the blurry background that looks oh so good. But remember to do this in natural light. The feature works poorly unless there's a lot of light illuminating your subject.



**Instagram Stories is your best weapon against the increasingly challenging algorithm.**



- Manu Muraro, Founder, *Your Social Team*

### Energizing Your Instagram Feed

#### Manu's Recommendations

Fujifilm X-T10 camera

Use Portrait mode on your Apple iPhone 8 Plus or X

Use Focus mode on Instagram Stories

For Editing: A Color Story, Snapseed, VSCO, Lightroom



Her Obsession: Unfold



Others: ImgPlay, Adobe Photoshop, Over, Canva

#### Danielle's Recommendations

For Editing: Snapseed, Adobe's Photoshop products such as Lightroom, Premier and Spark;



Others: Flickr, Splice (for video), Canva, VSCO, Afterlight



For Monitoring and Scheduling: SproutSocial

Sources: Manu Muraro, Danielle Brigida

If you're working without the latest iPhones, I have a hack for you. Open **Instagram Stories** and use the **Focus** mode to take portraits in natural light. Then instead of adding to Stories, you can save it, edit it and use it wherever you want (Instagram Stories included). This works only for living subjects, but it's a great hack!

*Continued on page 10*

## GOOGLE BOOT CAMP

FOR COMMUNICATORS

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## FAVORITE APPS ON A BUDGET AND ALWAYS EDIT

Let's talk about our favorite apps, which are very helpful to create great content on a budget. The more variety in your content, the better your engagement. That's why I try to use various apps when creating content.

First and foremost, you ALWAYS need to edit all your photos. Even when you think your photo is perfect, it can be improved and this makes a difference.

My favorite photo-editing apps for phone are **A Color Story** and **Snapseed**. A Color Story is great for the basics and also has excellent filters and effect. Most packages cost around \$2.99, so you won't break the bank.

Snapseed is great for detail editing, like adding a little brightness to that dark corner of your photo without overexposing the rest of it. Many other apps have similar features, so try different ones like **VSCO** and **Lightroom**.

## AN OBSESSION

My obsession is **Unfold**. I only use it for Instagram Stories but you can use it for any platform if you wish. It allows you to create a montage of videos and photos in a single image and it makes the coolest Instagram Stories, which is your biggest weapon against the increasingly challenging algorithm, by the way.

The best part is that it's free, or you can pay 99 cents for the black background.

Another free app I use a lot is a very simple one called **ImgPlay**. I use it to create photo slideshows, gifs and stop motion. It's very easy to use but you need to make sure all photos are the exact same size or you will get white bars in different parts of your video, which, as you can imagine, looks bad.

And when using it for stop motion, make sure the image is aligned. Most times I try to shoot it that way, but if needed, I will use **Adobe Photoshop** to align them.

And last but not least it's **Over**. Similar to the popular free app **Canva**, Over creates great graphics with your images or Over's. It costs \$9.99/month, but is well worth it.

### Danielle Brigida

Since Instagram is a team effort here at @USFWS, I polled my colleagues. I received several of the suggestions Manu mentioned already.

I was surprised that most of the time none of us has



**Too much editing of Instagram photos could be obvious and we could get carried away quickly. The best editing is subtle.**



- Danielle Brigida

National Social Media Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



**Danielle Brigida**, National Social Media Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

to do much editing of our photos, mostly slight changes on the Instagram iPhone app itself. I think this is because we have encouraged our staff photographers to upload and share their work on our **Flickr** accounts already edited (you can find those photos there). Sometimes the images may need a little boost in exposure or saturation. And at times we'll also edit video before uploading a story.

Here are a few of the tools we use: Snapseed, Adobe products (**Photoshop**, **Lightroom**, **Premier** and **Spark**), **Flickr** editing (desktop/mobile), **Splice** for video, Canva, VSCO and **Afterlight**.

## KEEPING EDITING SLIGHT

Most days, though, our Instagram team engages in slight tweaking and avoids filters. Since our focus is on wildlife, over-editing could be obvious and we could get carried away quickly. The best editing is subtle. We also avoid adding too many words to images because they wouldn't be 508 compliant without repeating them in the text.

Our team uses **SproutSocial** to monitor, track stats and occasionally schedule Instagram posts. We search regularly on Instagram for the hashtag #wildliferefuge as well as actual locations to find new community members to engage. ■

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# PRNews WRITER'S GUIDEBOOK

**PR News' 2nd Edition of The Writer's Guidebook Focuses on Everything from Press Releases to Speeches and Social Media**

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# Ambien Loses No Sleep on Roseanne; Purdue Hooked on '80s Crisis Tactics



In any compelling story there has to be a hero and a villain—and today's corporate crises are fitting right into that narrative. If a crisis doesn't have an easily definable villain—**Travis Kalanick** at **Uber**, **Elizabeth Holmes** at **Theranos** or a hero like **Market Basket's Arthur Demoulas**—they'd be out of the news cycle in minutes, not having movies made and books written about them. Whether we like it or not, the media and ultimately the public will declare heroes and villains.

Take two recent brand crises, the cancelation of the reboot of **Roseanne Barr's** TV series on **ABC** and mounting lawsuits against **Purdue Pharma** for its role in the opioid crisis. Barr is an obvious villain, since her **Twitter** habits may have flown under the radar for many of us, but were not a secret to her employer. But in all the brouhaha, a surprise hero emerged: **Sanofi**, manufacturer of **Ambien**, which rebuffed Barr's excuse that her statements were the result of "Ambien tweeting."

In contrast, when concerns about opioid addition began to surface in voter surveys back in 2015, there was no obvious villain. The epidemic was attributed to a host of causes: doctors over-prescribing, loss of middle-class jobs, bad medical care, NAFTA, lack of adequate mental health workers—so many villains no one knew quite where to point their collective finger. And then along came revelations about the perfidies of the privately held pharmaceutical giant **Purdue Pharma**.

## SANOFI

First let's examine the crisis management involved in the firing of **Roseanne Barr**, and her attempt to attribute blame for her racist tweet on the sleep medication **Ambien**. On a Tuesday night in late May, she tweeted a series of derogatory comments that reflected racism and bizarre conspiracy theories relative to **Chelsea Clinton**. Within hours several members of her staff had quit, Twitter was raging with horrified reactions and advertisers were getting nervous.

By 11 am Pacific Time, fewer than 8 hours after the original tweet appeared, **ABC Entertainment** president **Channing Dungey** announced the cancellation of Barr's series. Channing's statement was followed by a personal tweet from **Bob Iger**, the CEO of **Disney**, retweeting Dungey's announcement and adding his comment: "There was only one thing to do here, and that was the right thing."

In her initial explanation Barr said she was "Ambien tweeting," blaming her stream of 240-character slurs on a lack of sleep and the sleeping aid **Ambien**.

Despite her apologies and explanations, the nature of her tweets made it easy for her to fit right into the role of villain. And her bosses came out as heroes for quickly taking action to cancel the show, despite its huge ratings and solid advertising base.

But it was **Sanofi**, manufacturers of **Ambien**, that really came out on top, taking a giant leap forward for the world

of crisis communications with its response within hours of Barr's blaming her tweetstorm on **Ambien**.

Trigger alert to corporate lawyers—you may want to stop reading now.

## WHAT A TWEET

Typical pharma (and frankly most corporate communications departments) would have chosen to lie low and hope to avoid fallout from the kerfuffle. At best most might have tried to distance themselves by saying one shouldn't be tweeting while taking **Ambien**. Instead **Sanofi** issued one of the wittiest 280-character comebacks in corporate communications history: "People of all races, religions and nationalities work at **Sanofi** every day to improve the lives of people around the world. While all pharmaceutical treatments have side effects, racism is not a known side effect of any **Sanofi** medication."

Instantly the crisis had a hero, and when the incident is cited in text books and corporate communication classes for years to come, **Sanofi** and **Disney's Iger** will be used as examples of the best in crisis management.

## PURDUE PHARMA

In contrast, **Purdue Pharma** will follow tobacco companies, **Wells Fargo**, **Volkswagen** and **BP** into the textbooks for how *not* to manage a crisis. What these brands share is a toxic corporate culture making them inevitable villains in the face of crisis.

**Purdue's** problems began more than a decade ago, when it was charged with and eventually pled guilty to a felony charge for "misbranding" (i.e. downplaying the addiction risk of) **OxyContin**, despite the fact there was no scientific evidence to back up the claim it was "less addictive."

Meanwhile in 2006, investigators from the **Justice Department** and reporters kept running into data showing **Purdue** knew when it launched **Oxy** that the drug had uniquely addictive properties, but it failed to properly disclose any issues. According to news reports, **Purdue** also was aware it was frequently being crushed and snorted as a way to get high as early as 1996. That hadn't stopped it from continuing to wage an aggressive promotion campaign for the drug as "less prone to abuse and addiction than other painkillers." For reasons that remain opaque, the **Bush** Justice Department settled the case against **Purdue** in 2007.

More recent investigations revealed an inordinate amount of the drug was ending up in small rural counties. News reports surfaced that in 10 years, drug companies shipped nearly 21 million opioid painkillers to one rural county in West Virginia, population 2,900—more than 7,200 pills for

*Continued on page 12*

every person there. These news reports prompted congressional investigations that are ongoing, but fraught with the usual political logjams.

In the meantime, states and counties lost patience. With

human and financial costs mounting, states as well as individual counties and municipalities are following the script of the lawyers who took on big tobacco in the '90s. As of this writing states and municipalities have filed more than 100

## Sanofi

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	B	Given that “Roseanne” was one of the highest-rated shows on television and watched around the world, it’s not surprising the bad news was everywhere within minutes. What is surprising is the legs the crisis has maintained. In part through the actions of President Trump and other groups sympathetic with her opinions, it remained top-of-the-fold news through an entire week. If Sanofi was hoping it would all go away it didn’t, but the good news for Sanofi is that its tweet became part of the narrative and thus its message got a lot more exposure than it might have otherwise.	If you’re planning for a crisis these days, you need to design your response based on the current political and cultural narratives. You must account for what your competition or the opposition might do to prolong the situation.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	A	Sanofi’s messages were right there in the tweet and did all the speaking for the Ambien brand.	In any crisis, your Twitter account will become your de facto spokesperson, so make sure that its voice is authentic and human, and that whatever you say contains your key message.
Communication of key messages	A+	Sanofi accomplished in 243 characters what most companies fail to do in most of their press releases and/or briefings. Its response conveyed both a perfect statement of a cultural message as well as a product message.	When responding to a real or potential threat to your brand, all eyes, pens, cameras and microphones will be on you. The key to success is to boil down your response to the length of a tweet and make it easy to forward in any medium.
Management of negative messages	A+	As soon as I heard about Barr’s “Ambien tweeting” my heart went out to the PR team at Sanofi, imagining them all running for the war room. What made the response so brilliant was not just the words, but the surprise of the tweet. By doing the unexpected, the team owned the upside of the news cycle.	In today’s never-ending cycle of crises, the media and your stakeholders have come to expect the predictable response. Doing the unexpected might be the most effective thing you can do.
Impact on employees and potential employees	A	By avoiding taking sides and expressing a core belief, not only did Sanofi avoid alienating existing employees, but by saying that all its employees work hard to “improve the lives of people around the world” it also made a strong statement that will be very attractive to potential recruits seeking positions at a socially responsible employer.	Today’s talent considers a company’s corporate culture and ethics among the first considerations for taking and staying with a job. It is therefore of utmost importance to communicate where your company stands on crucial issues.
Impact on stakeholders and customers	A	The brilliance of Sanofi’s response is reflected in the fact that its stock price jumped up a full point after the tweet came out.	Three of four consumers expect the companies they buy from to stand up for social justice, according to a slew of research, including a recent Cone CSR report.
Overall score	A	The combination of content and timing of Sanofi’s responses was impeccable, and the efficacy of that approach is reflected in the stock price as well as so many media outlets quoting the tweet verbatim.	If you can silence your legal beagles for long enough to come up with a unique and surprising statement that is humble and reflects your core beliefs, your response will be much more effective.

lawsuits against Purdue and other pharmaceutical manufacturers, with more suits coming every week.

Purdue's standard response is the crisis communications version of a very dry martini: 9 parts vigorous denial, 2 parts "we will fight this in court," topped with a tiny garnish of "we regret the crisis." It created a "Get the Facts" web page in response to the crisis in 2016 but the last time it was updated was more than one year ago. Just this past February, Purdue

announced it would no longer "promote opioids to prescribers" and referred all questions about opioid products to the medical affairs department (i.e. lawyers.), but the link to *that* website has expired. As a result Purdue Pharma and its executives collectively have donned Darth Vader masks. The public has found its villain. ■

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## Purdue

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	F	Purdue Pharma's continual denial of responsibility for the crisis and its reliance on the courts for vindication have kept the company and its products in the headlines for more than a decade.	As we know, silence always prolongs a crisis, especially when your lack of response sparks lawsuits from all over the country. If you have bad news to announce, get it over with all at once; do not prolong the crisis by a steady drip of press releases.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	F	If you read news reports you might wonder if Purdue had a spokesperson. Turns out it does, but even his responses have been either "decline to comment" or issuing a statement via a press release.	Press statements or canned corporate statements fail to inspire trust. The public trusts people it can relate to. If you ever hope to have credibility, you need to respond with a real, live, authentic, credible spokesperson.
Communication of key messages	F	The company's key messaging seems to be taking a page from the playbooks of the tobacco companies, saying only, "We did nothing wrong, but are willing to settle amicably." Clearly whatever terms have been on the table are not amicable.	When evidence is mounting against you, you're way better off to meet it head on, acknowledge what you can and try to move on. Digging in your heels and winding up in court will only prolong the crisis and damage your reputation further.
Management of negative messages	F	There doesn't seem to be any attempt to manage the negatives, other than to issue the occasional "statement." As a result every story rehashes every accusation back to 1996.	When all those cameras and microphones are pointed at you, it would be a really good time to manage the negatives, set realistic expectations and perhaps even put an early end to the crisis.
Impact on customers and potential customers	F	If it isn't already, by the time these lawsuits have been settled the Purdue Pharma name will have become so toxic that doctors won't dare prescribe anything with its brand on it and will be scrambling for alternatives.	Negative coverage is long remembered, and when your brand is tainted it will take years to recover. If you are in an industry where your peers' recommendations drive decision making and all everyone is hearing is negative news, chances are your customers will be looking for an alternative.
Impact on employees and potential employees	F	Since Purdue Pharma is privately held, it doesn't have to worry about shareholder backlash, but it does need to attract talent, which won't be easy. Glassdoor says only one in five employees would recommend the company (compared to 65% for Sanofi), and only 11% see a positive business outlook. Overall ratings have been dropping since the beginning of 2017	Today's talent expects companies to be ethical and to address social issues. When lawsuits accuse you of the opposite, the best and the brightest will look elsewhere for a job. If you're stuck issuing statements, and legal is winning all the battles, you might want to join them.
Overall score	F	There's a reason they call cases like Purdue's "textbook examples." Crisis communications courses for decades to come will be using this as an example of what to avoid when handling a crisis.	You can't solve or even ameliorate a 2018 crisis by using techniques that may have worked in the '80s. If you don't want to permanently tarnish your brand, you need to stand up to the legal team, find a credible and authentic voice and use it to save your reputation. If that's not possible, find another job.

# How to Create a Four-Tiered Funnel That Can Help With Social Storytelling



Have you seen this question, or maybe even asked it: “What are the top three metrics you use to justify your social media team?”

It’s impossible to answer because it’s the wrong question. It’s a trick and a journey down the rabbit hole to lots of guessing and vanity metrics that don’t really MEAN anything.

What’s the right question? There are several:

- Who is my audience?
- Where is my audience?
- What do I want my audience to do AND/OR how can I help it?

These questions help you set clear goals. Goals that are distinct to your business, your needs and your social media followers’ needs. Without clear goals, you will never be able to show success or justify any social media tactic. Driving sales is a lot different than building a brand, which is different from getting likes. All these are puzzle pieces that need to fit together to show a clear picture of your social media program.

## STORYTELLING WITH METRICS

Measuring social media return on investment (ROI) doesn’t stop there. You need to take your goal and metrics that provide insight to those goals and tell a story. Metrics isn’t just a numbers game—it’s also an exercise in storytelling.

I asked the WeAreCisco social media team to think in an entirely new way about reporting metrics with the advent of the company’s new fiscal year. Every single channel has goals directly tied to business outcomes **Cisco** cares about. Plus, the team now feels it drives business needs, that it has value and can influence business decisions.

How? It uses the sales funnel and storytelling. Let’s talk about the sales funnel first. What does the sales funnel have to do with social media? Everything. First, it helps you set goals. Clear goals. Goals that drive to business needs.

## THE SALES FUNNEL AS SWEET TEA

Understanding the sales funnel is like understanding how a Southerner (like myself) makes our favorite drink, sweet tea. To make sweet tea to please a discerning Southern taste, you need to make it in a glass jar. Glass jars usually have small openings – but in true Southern style, you need to get lots of sugar into that tea. So, you use a funnel, which allows you to pour ALL THE SUGAR into the funnel, which then lets it get into the tea and not all over your counters. (Sticky southern counters attract sugar ants.)

“ Metrics isn’t just a numbers game—it’s also an exercise in storytelling. ”

The sales funnel takes a big audience (like lots of sugar) and

## The Talent Funnel



Source: Carmen Collins, Cisco

guides it through the steps to becoming a customer (like filling that jar of yummy sweet tea).

While you’ll see the sales funnel depicted different ways, our team uses it in its simplest form (see graphic).

The team looks at goals in these 4 pieces of the funnel:

**1. How much awareness are we creating?** This is the largest part of the funnel (remember all the sugar?). Social media spends a lot of time getting people into the funnel and through the process. For our team the process is about helping key talent pools understand how Cisco is using technology to help change the world and how our culture is critical to making Cisco an amazing place to work.

In looking at this part of the funnel, we identify key social media activities we want to employ that we think will help us entice candidates further down the funnel. Then we look at those activities and decide which key performance indicators (KPI) will show us if we’re successful (or not).

After that we look at how those activities impact Cisco’s bottom line. These are the outcomes that such activities help with. Things like:

- ▶ Share of voice (in the mix of our competitors, is talent talking about our culture in comparison?)

- ▶ Brand awareness—are we improving on lists like **Great Places to Work** and **Glassdoor**?
- ▶ Employee participation in our employee advocacy programs—happier employees are employees who stay and refer other happy employees.

**2. How much demand are we generating?** This part sits a little farther down the middle of the funnel, and tells us that of the people we have reached with our employee-generated culture content, how many of them are engaging with us, checking us out on different channels and commenting on and liking our posts?

Again, for this part of the funnel, we look at what social activities we think will get current and future talent engaged with us. Things like:

- ▶ Engagement rate (how many of the people we reach are paying attention and responding?)
- ▶ What type of engagements are we getting? Are we reaching the talent we want to reach?
- ▶ Are employees telling the external story we hope they are?

**3. Are we converting?** This is the bottom and skinniest part of the funnel. All of the great social tactics and engagement are worthless unless we can affect things like how many clicks we can drive to our Careers website and how many of those clicking people are applying and successfully being hired?

This is where the rubber hits the road for the company's bottom line. The metrics we track here can show us:

- ▶ Time to hire/cost of hire. If our social activities can help recruiters get more responses when they reach out to talent, or talent is more apt to request an interview, we can show how we influence talent acquisition costs. Plus, we can show our efforts are resulting in higher quality hires.
- ▶ Are we influencing employee referrals? That can have a zero cost to the company, as well as retaining an employee.

**4. Do we have passionate advocates?** This part of the sales funnel can be equated to having the finished glass of sweet tea over ice. Are our employees happy, are they advocates on our behalf and are they helping people find the funnel at all stages?

You may think advocacy is only a part of the funnel in a business like mine, where you're talking about hiring employees. But you've been misled! If you have a product, and the best sales team on the planet and your employees aren't "eating their own dog food" (using and enjoying the product) that will affect sales. Skip this part of the funnel at your risk.

## TREAT METRICS LIKE CONTENT

Now you can see how storytelling comes into play.

By using this format to set goals, it also becomes clear to us that we move in and out of various parts of the funnel at

## @WeAreCisco Social Media Metrics Map

Social Objective	Social Strategy	Social Activity	Social kPIs	Business Impact
Create awareness of Cisco as a GPTW	Expose general & targeted (paid) audience to TB content	Posts, photos, blogs... LIVE Snaps (* & \$\$)	Followers, Impressions, Reach, Views/ Unique, Blog metrics	Top of mind for talent, SOV, employer brand, happier employees
Generate demand for Cisco jobs	Generate engagement with TB content	Posts, photos, blogs, LIVE, Snaps (* & \$\$)	Engagements, Type of Engagements	Engaging top talent, employee retention/activation
Drive traffic to Cisco Careers/*applies	Drive target audience to website/*jobs	Posts *Paid	Link Clicks	Cost to hire, cost to retain goes down. Top talent
Inspire Cisco employees to share their LWYW stories	Activate TB, Ambassadors & all employees	UGC (EGC), Posts, Reshares	# Ambassadors #WeAreCisco metrics	Strong employer brand, referrals

different times. It's proof we must treat metrics the way we treat content. We become storytellers.

For example: Some accounts are very concerned with the question, "How many **Instagram** followers do you have?" (That's a top-of-funnel, awareness metric). Why would that mean anything to a business, if you don't also look at the quality of your followers? This means you need to see your followers actually look at your posts, which is monitored through engagement rate (a middle-of-funnel metric.)

## HOW WE TELL THE STORY

Here's how we would tell that story, using our Instagram channel as an example:

*We have 22K Instagram followers. What makes that number pop is not one of those followers was paid for. Posting compelling visual content and creating copy that makes us seem like we're humans not robots attracted those followers.*

*And followers care about our posts. We have 2-3x more followers than industry engagement standards. And through engagement, we can tell you exactly how many clicks we drove to our Careers site. Thanks to this metric we know you were asking about how many applies and hires we drove. We were able to go to the IT team and get tracking metrics all the way to the end of the process.*

Now THAT story will make it easy for our boss to explain to our boss's boss and our boss's boss's boss that we're helping the business by getting more share of voice, increasing the conversation about Cisco as a great place to work, becoming a top employer brand—which helps attract the best talent—lowering the cost of attracting talent and through advocacy helping retain the great talent we already have.

We tell the story using the funnel and the goals we've set as a team to prove ROI. ■

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# How Color Choice and Grid Layout Can Influence Engagement on Brands' Instagram Feed

Sure, it's not a secret: **Instagram** is a visual channel. Still, some communicators take this idea to a higher level. One of them is **Erica Campbell Byrum**, AVP, social media at **apartments.com**, as can be seen in these two slides from a recent PR News presentation.

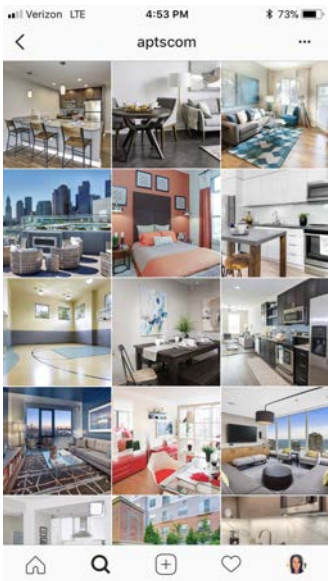
The upper slide illustrates options for brands' Instagram grid layouts. Beyond looking attractive, though, a layout will help visually organize a brand's Instagram feed, she says. "This also helps when organizing your content calendar because you will know exactly what type of photo you need to post and when."

From left, Traditional Squares are "super simple. Just post your photo, each square at a time." With Tiles, brands alternate between a photo and a quote. Vertical Lines usually

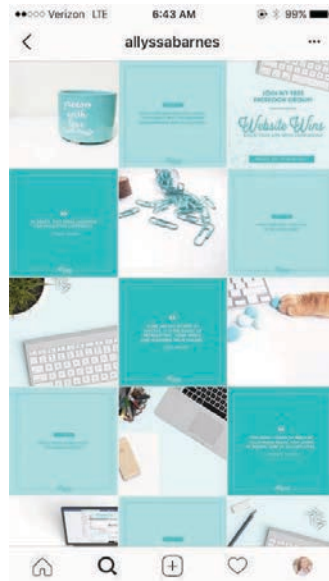
are composed of quotes on a solid background. Puzzle, she says, is an advanced layout. "The trickiest part of doing this layout is maintaining the high quality of each single image after you split it." In addition, "You want to make sure each individual photo makes sense on its own."

The bottom slide, which provides color scheme options, seems simple on first glance. It's not. Using photos featuring the same 3-4 colors helps brands maintain content consistency, which is critical, she says (*PRN*, May 29). Users are more likely to respond to Instagram feeds they recognize as familiar, she says. A color scheme "makes your overall feed look cohesive and the same colors give a consistent mood to your whole feed." ■

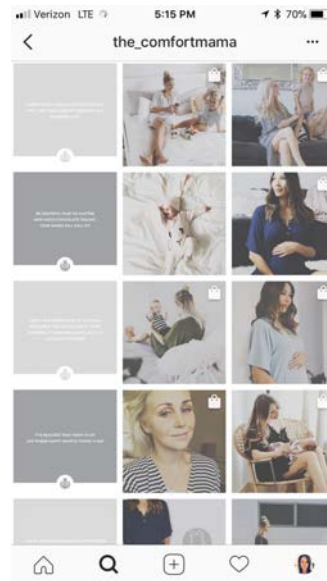
**CONTACT:** [ebyrum@costar.com](mailto:ebyrum@costar.com)



Traditional Squares



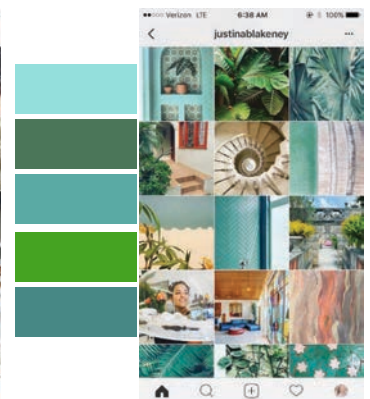
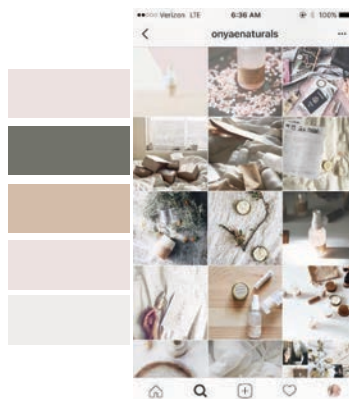
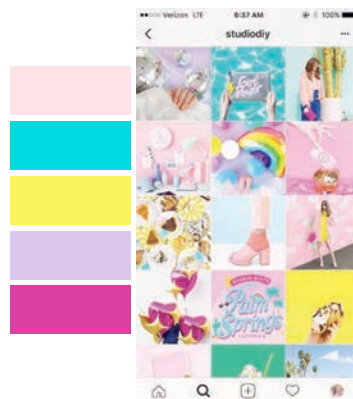
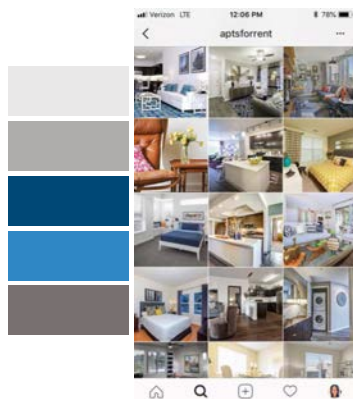
Tiles



Vertical Lines



Puzzle



Source: Erica Campbell Byrum, apartments.com