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Brand Changes Mean Having New Conversations

PR campaigns that take years to coalesce

Spring is in the air, and so are significant changes at some of the most popular brands. These are not marginal changes where a press release and a few media hits will suffice to get out the message, though. They are major breaks from the branded past that require long-term communication strategies and

a sustained effort by PR pros to communicate those shifts to consumers, media and other stakeholders.

For example, **Burger King** earlier this month said it was dropping soda from its Kids Meals. That announcement came on the heels of a decision by **McDonald's** to stop using certain antibiotics in chicken. In a similar move designed to cater to increasingly health-conscious consumers, **Nestlé**

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BY THE NUMBERS

Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of communication within your company as a whole?

Very satisfied	14.9 %
Somewhat satisfied	33.5 %
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17.8 %
Somewhat dissatisfied	20.7 %
Very dissatisfied	13.1 %

Source: 15Five

INSIDE JOB: PR pros need to do better job internally, says a new survey. One-third of workers are "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the quality of communication within their companies, according to a survey of more than 1,000 full-time employees across the U.S.

DID YOU KNOW

- 1. PR should be busy before and during significant branding changes. (p. 1)
- 2. What brands do after saying "I am sorry" is critical to recovery. (p. 1)
- 3. Insight from psychology can help attract influencers. (p. 3)
- 4. Using SMART tools to help sales executives leverage PR. (p. 6)
- 5. Levi Strauss fits multiple disciplines into PR. (p. 7)
- 6. Edelman's Fontanez on unleashing entrepreneurial spirit. (p.7)
- 7. The Week in PR: Starbucks' Shares Rise as it Doubles Down on Race. (p. 8)

▶ Image Patrol

Fixing Reputation All in the Recovery

A sharp contrast in crisis management

Two major international brands screwed up big time in the last month. How each handled its crisis is a classic lesson in 'how to' and 'how not to' communicate after a misstep. Full disclosure: I have personal relationships with both brands. While I never pay retail, whenever I'm in Goodwill I'll buy pretty much anything from Dolce & Gabbana that fits. What is more, this article was written on a Lenovo Yoga computer, which I adore. There is plenty of research that says those prior relationships influenced my response to both blunders. The

data show that anyone with a prior positive relationship with a brand is much more likely to give it the benefit of the doubt. Which I have.

However, in an era where every day brings us a different version of 'I'm sorry,' it isn't the apology, but the steps you take to recover that matter most when you're trying to recuperate from a mistake.

LENOVO

For years Lenovo had been loading laptops with "bloatware" programs that software manufacturers paid it to preload onto their computers. Customers hated it, but manufacturers, trying to squeeze every dime of profit out of their products, loved it. Until

someone discovered that one such program, called Super Fish, opened a gaping hole in your computer's security system, allowing pretty much anyone to steal your encrypted data and passwords.

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By Katie Paine

PR Advice from the Pros

"Don't forget to breathe."

Read more great advice in PR News' Best PR Advice Compendium prnewsonline.com/prpress





Group Editor, Matthew Schwartz, 212.621.4940, mschwartz@accessintel.com

Editorial Director/Events, Steve Goldstein, sgoldstein@accessintel.com Graphic Designer, Yelena Shamis,

yshamis@accessintel.com

Group Content Manager, Richard Brownell, Rhrownell@accessintel.com

Writer/Editor, Brian Greene bgreene@accessintel.com

Director of Market Development, Laurie M. Hofmann, lhofmann@accessintel.com

VP of Marketing, Amy Jefferies, aiefferies@accessintel.com

Marketing Coordinator, Rachel Scharmann, rscharmann@accessintel.com

SVP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz dschwartz@accessintel.com

President & CEO, Don Pazour Chief Operating Officer, Heather Farley

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Tom Martin - College of Charleston

Group Subscriptions - Laurie M. Hofmann, lhofmann@accessintel.com

Additional Copies & Article Reprints -Contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295; info@wrightsmedia.com

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Phone: 888.707.5814 • Fax: 301.309.3847 e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com **New York Editorial Office:**

88 Pine Street, Suite 510, New York, NY 10005 Phone: 212.621.4890 • Fax: 212.621.4879

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New Conversations

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USA said last month that it is dropping artificial flavors and FDA-certified color from chocolate bars, which include Butterfinger and Nestlé Crunch. The new candies hit shelves this spring, and will feature a "No Artifical Flavors or Colors" tag.

With so much at stake, brands approach shifts carefully. Nestle's PR and marketing teams worked on the project for several years before the reveal, said Lisa Gibby, VP of corporate communications for Nestlé in the U.S., adding that the two disciplines also worked with the company's dietary, research. procurement and manufacturing units regarding

'The team also briefed key opinion leaders and developed important answers to key questions about artificial ingredients in order to be responsive in real time," Gibby said.

To track consumer reaction, an 800-number, consumer services' mail/email and social media platforms have been deployed to spark two-way conversations with consumers.

Indeed, when brands and organizations make major changes, consumers are key to the PR strategy [see sidebar].

Take Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus, which earlier this month announced that it will discontinue its elephant act-comprised of 13 traveling elephants—by 2018. The elephants will be sent to the Center for Elephant Conservation in Florida.

After initially getting out the word via an exclusive story in the Associated Press, the PR strategy now has shifted to the local level. The circus's PR team is fanning out across 115 cities in the U.S. where the troupe appears, working with local media to spread the news.

3 Tips for When Brands Make Changes





Jacqueline Kolek

- ▶ Align the messaging. In today's interconnected age of digital media, brands need to ensure that they are telling a consistent story across all paid, owned and earned platforms. For example, CVS took a bold step in removing tobacco products from its stores last year. This was a critical moment for the brand to evolve into a wellness company and required an integrated approach. For example, had CVS offered health and wellness tips on its Facebook page yet kept profiting from the sale of harmful tobacco products in its stores, the brand messaging would have fallen flat.
- ► Engage and empower internal audiences. Internal audiences offer the best litmus test of the potential success of a new brand direction. If internal stakeholders don't believe in the new direction, no one will. Ensure that all messaging programs include internal communications elements that inform and educate employees. Frequent internal roadshows, surveys and other listening efforts can provide the best insight into how well the new brand direction is being understood-and any changes that should be made.

Jacqueline Kolek, partner and managing director, Peppercomm, wrote this article. She can be reached at jkolek@ peppercomm.com

"We have to proactively answer questions revolving around: 'I have tickets for soand-so date. Will the elephants be there?" said Steve Payne, VP of corporate communications for Feld Entertainment, parent company of the circus. "We also need to be forward-looking: What does this transition mean for the circus? It's also a great opportunity to talk about our conservation program."

With any dramatic change to the brand, it's crucial that communicators help develop the overall strategy and drive the arc of messaging.

"We need to be there from the beginning, provide the checkpoints and review how to express the communications," said Maureen Healy, VP of customer communications at UPS, which this month introduced the tagline, "United Problem Solvers," replacing "We love logistics," which the company used since 2010.

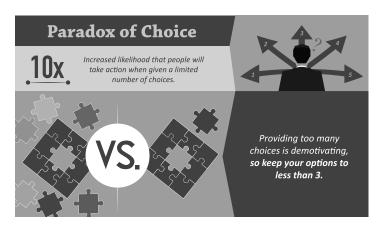
The new marketing campaign focuses on customer testimonials and less so on UPS' products. "It's a matter of going deep into other disciplines to draw out the creative," said Peggy Gardner, director of PR. "It's an opportunity to have a different conversation." PRN

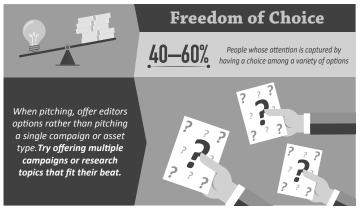
CONTACT:

Lisa Gibby, lisa.gibby@ US.nestle.com; Peggy Gardner, pgardner@ups.com; Steve Payne, spayne@feldinc.com

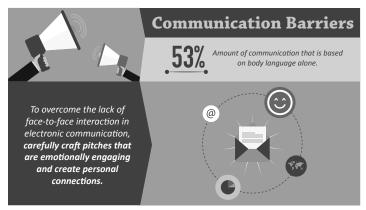
The Psychology of Influencer Marketing

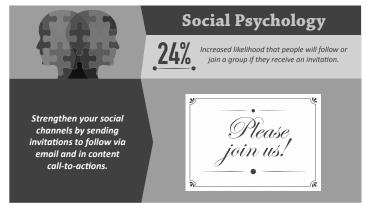
Influencer Marketing is one of the biggest challenges facing communicators. Unlike some audiences that brands and organizations cater to, influencers are not monolithic but are a loosely affiliated group of individuals who can have a pivotal influence on PR's ability to drive conversation and spread the word. But getting people online to share information about your company's products/services or values requires a different mindset than blasting a press release to a similar demographic or giving a presentation to likeminded people. Below are a few ways to boost your content promotion tactics by using insights from psychology, with compliments to BuzzStream and Fractl. PRN











Source: BuzzStream. Fractl

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Image Patrol

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Eventually Lenovo admitted its error and alerted consumers how to uninstall Super Fish [see chart below].

DOLCE & GABBANA

When I heard the BBC announcer utter the words

"Elton John" and "Dolce & Gabbana and boycott" in the same sentence, my eyes rolled, sure that this was another celebrity kerfuffle breaking out on **Twitter**. Domenico Dolce, one of the founders of D&G, was quoted describing children

conceived through in vitro fertilization (IVF) as "synthetic" and expressing disapproval of same-sex families.

Elton John, who is raising two children conceived via IVF, went ballistic and called for a boycott of the D&G brand. Within days Victoria Beckham, Courtney Love, Ricky Martin, Martina Navratilova, Kelly Cutrone, Ryan Murphy, Al Roker and other celebrities had all very publicly joined the boycott.

D&G took what most crisis experts would counsel is the

Lenovo

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	D-	When a major Chinese consumer company has a recall or an "oops" moment, it's bound to attract a ton of publicity. In this case, the media moved on within a week, a sign of good crisis management.	When considering how to respond to a crisis, remember that it's not just your reputation that drives media and customer perceptions. Reaction will be driven by existing perceptions about your industry, your nationality and your management.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	D	While initial responses were weak and evasive, an open letter from Lenovo's CTO Peter Hortensius went a long way to provide customers with information and solutions to solve the problem. CCO Jeff Shafer also was a very effective spokesperson.	Your first response will be remembered the longest, so make it good. Decades of research shows that abject apologies, owning the problem, expressing contrition and providing a solution are the fastest ways to make a crisis go away.
Communication of key messages	С	Initial communication was dismal, and, unfortunately, typical of many large high-tech companies when confronted with a technological glitch. However, after seeming tone deaf and clueless in the early days of the crisis, the communications team eventually took charge and shifted the tone of the coverage to more clearly communicate Lenovo's contrition and steps it was taking to correct the problem.	To end a crisis quickly, it is critical that the chief of communications be involved very early in the process. While technologists and lawyers certainly need a seat at the table, control of the war room and all crisis communications should be handed to the best communicator in the company.
Management of negative messages	D	Lenovo's early missteps were almost universally reported in the subsequent coverage. The fact that computer security is one of the media's hot buttons of late contributed to the furor. A number of stories suggested that greed was at the root of the problem, accusing Lenovo of padding its profits through software licensing deals.	Negative messages always have the longest legs, especially when they feed into existing myths and/or prejudices toward "big business" or your company in particular. As you select your response, be very aware of the hot-button issues that will cause the media and, in particular, social media to go haywire.
Impact on customers	С	A majority of the most vocal complaints came from tech pundits and security experts. The average customer likely was satisfied by the quick fix sent to all registered customers.	Customers have little time to deal with fixes, regardless of how serious the problem is. If you make recovery simple and fast, they'll be more likely to forgive you faster.
OVERALL SCORE	D+	Back in the 1980s, Intel had a similar problem with a fundamental flaw in its Pentium chip. It listened to the techies and not its customers, until 60 Minutes showed up on its doorstep. The flap went on for months and cost the company millions. Lenovo came close to making the same mistake, but managed to shift gears fast enough to make a full recovery.	Your crisis communications plan needs to be constantly updated to stay on top of both consumer concerns and media frenzies. Do what you need to do to respond as quickly and transparently as you can.

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worst possible response: a combination of attack and scapegoating. At first, the company said the quote had been taken "out of context" (shooting the messenger) and then called for a boycott of Elton John's music due to his lack of tolerance

of Gabbana's beliefs. Worse, Stefano Gabbana then posted "Je Suis D&G," implying that the boycott was the equivalent of murdering French cartoonists, and called Elton John's stance "fascist." Gabbana's statements only inflamed the Twitterverse

and encouraged more celebrities to eschew the brand.

Eventually Stefano Gabbana admitted that the controversy was starting to hurt sales, and unless the company figured out a better recovery strategy soon, it will be a very long

time before it's seen on the red carpet again. PRN

CONTACT:

Katie Delahaye Paine is CEO of Paine Publishing. She can be reached at measurementqueen@gmail.com

Dolce & Gabbana

Criteria	Grade	Comments	Advice
Extent of coverage	F	This crisis was a superfecta of hot topics: same-sex families, celebrity, fashion and entertainment—what could possibly go wrong? Everything. And D&G made it far worse by injecting the even-hotter issue of free speech.	When your crisis starts with celebrities involved it's hard to avoid getting worldwide coverage. But you can make a crisis much worse by ignoring the environment in which you are communicating and not following basic rules of good crisis management.
Effectiveness of spokespeople	F	Not only did D&G's founders spark the crisis, they tried to put it out with fire. Throwing torches at celebrities annoys the public and attracts even more media coverage.	The best response would have been for the person who started the crisis to apologize and walk back the comments. The next best option would be to put as much distance as possible between the brand and the cause of the crisis.
Communication of key messages	F	The only message that broke through the brouhaha was that Dolce & Gabbana made very expensive clothes that are worn by celebrities. Unfortunately, those terms were most frequently used in the same breath as the word "boycott." When D&G had the opportunity to mitigate the problem it threw rocket fuel on the flames, comparing Sir Elton John to "fascists" and itself to martyred cartoonists.	In the arc of any crisis, there may well be an opportunity to get across your key messages. Make sure you are listening very carefully and can respond instantly. Whatever you do, don't use the opportunity to attack your accuser.
Management of negative messages	F	Celebrities influence other celebrities. Indeed, the negative messages about D&G's comments and attitude were quickly spread by additional celebrities and their fans (60,000 agreed to boycott D&G within hours of Elton John's post). It wasn't long before Kelly Cutrone circulated a controversial D&G ad from 2007 portraying gang rape and group sex, suggesting that D&G's moralistic tone was hypocritical.	The fastest way to get a negative message to go viral is to have celebrities talk about it. Scandal and celebrities invite media attention, so if you want to keep your negative messages out of public earshot make them boring and as invisible as possible.
Impact on stakeholders	F	By day three, Stefano Gabbana admitted that the backlash could hurt sales.	The better known your CEO becomes, the bigger target he or she becomes. One of the problems with celebrity CEOs is that they tend to intermingle their personal beliefs with their business or brand. That quickly becomes a very big problem for investors and customers, especially when the CEO speaks without thinking of the influence his comments will have on the brand.
OVERALL SCORE	F	In the long and rich history of celebrity flubs D&G's is among the worst, not just because the wounds were self-inflicted, but the company intentionally exacerbated the problem.	If you can't keep your CEO's ego or rogue opinions under control, make sure you have a well-trained (and alternative) spokesperson to help you get out your messages, and an up-to-date resume in your back pocket.

▶ On Topic By Liz McClellan

How PR Can Take a Seat at the Revenue Table

Work 'SMART' to align with sales and finance

When PR takes a backseat to lead generation efforts in an organization, the strategic value of communication is masked behind a larger marketing umbrella. Don't let this happen. Sales and finance rarely give PR the revenuegenerating credit it deserves. This makes PR particularly vulnerable to budget cuts.

PR needs to bridge what is a chronic disconnect and take its seat at the revenue table. Here's how:

Align with sales. PR must be included in weekly sales calls and planning sessions. Members of the PR team must know what deals are in process and enable them to progress. Align with sales to understand the target audience and how to engage it.

Understand titles, industries and attributes of these ideal targets and show sales how PR can develop relationships. Know where targets' watering holes are and find opportunities to connect there.

Create a strategy to get your company's name in front of targets; think thought leadership, not promotion, and communicate and collaborate regularly with Sales along the way.

Help to accelerate deals.

Imagine you are targeting VPs of XYZ brand and they are in your pipeline with a high propensity to close but haven't yet signed. This is an ideal time to accelerate the sales process by interviewing these prospects.

Write blog posts featuring them or pitch stories to media about them. You will gain their attention and build stronger relationships that facilitate the sale.

Put skin in the game. To add credibility to your effort, create service-level agreements using the SMART goals principle:

Specific. Target a specific area for improvement, in this case it could be XYZ

Measurable. Identify/quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress

Assignable. Assign a specific accountable party

Realistic. State what results can be achieved realistically, given available resources

Time-related. Specify when result(s) can be achieved

Sample service-level agreements could include the following scenarios:

- ► PR will aim to get x placements with a target audience within a specific timeframe and, in return, sales will post, tweet x times.
- ▶ When sales closes a deal, the rep will ask that customer for a video and written testimonial.

PR will work to get x quotes or testimonials from the target audience within a specific timeframe to be used for prospecting and website content, for instance.

Introduce an incentive program. Consider adding an extra incentive for video vs. written content. Incent behaviors you want to drive.

- ► For customers and prospects who provide video, you will create a copy they can use for marketing.
- ► PR regularly will create sample posts, tweets, etc. that the sales team can use. In

return, sales agrees to post x number of times.

► For prospects with a greater than 50 percent chance of closing, PR will work to get a bylined article or media mention in a targeted publication your prospects read.

Help sales execs leverage publicity. PR is responsible for generating publicity for your company in the form of bylined articles, quotes in staff-written pieces, external blog posts and other social mediums. All of this content is earned media, which boosts credibility.

These are power tools in a sales person's arsenal that will differentiate your brand. Too often salespeople are unaware of their existence or uneducated about how to skillfully leverage them. Don't let this happen.

Be proactive and invest your time in teaching your sales reps how to leverage PR assets strategically during the sales process.

Schedule monthly meetings with sales to highlight publicity pieces your team has generated and work with reps to show them where each piece of content could be used to engage the prospect.

For example, for a prospect that is newly sales qualified, recommend a bylined article that talks about an industry challenge your offering addresses, which this prospect is facing.

If the prospect is further down the sales pipeline, an article quoting one of your customers is going to get her/his attention and advance the sale, especially if this customer has been offered as a reference.

The point is to understand the buyer and where he/she is in the purchasing process and deliver PR content that

resonates and influences his/ her decision.

Reward the right behavior. In addition to teaching your sales team how to leverage content, you should create a program to reward those who do it well.

Make it a friendly competition among the reps. Provide useful content to move the needle and your salespeople will become internal brand ambassadors.

During company meetings, take a few minutes to recognize these people as models of what can be accomplished.

Create a leader board for sales and make sure this metric is included with the C-level dashboard. If your budget allows, run contests and give additional incentives to exemplary reps.

If PR fails to align with sales, PR will be vulnerable. when budget cuts are being made. But it does not have to be. With a structured plan in place, backed up by metrics (not "fuzzy math") and supported and valued by sales, you'll have a solid case.

PR can be a powerful marketing tool that builds credibility and facilitates the sales process.

It's time for PR to implement this unique value proposition, to align with sales and produce real dollars that bring value to the table. PRN

CONTACT:

Liz McClellan is CMO of North Plains Systems. She can be reached at lmcclellan@ northplains.com

No Success Without Risk

Mory Fontanez Exec. VP, GCRM, GM, Edelman Digital, D.C.

- ▶ 100%, my inspiration was my mother. She was a single mom and woke up every morning at 5:30 to take the bus to the train to go to her job at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. She was first generation and was learning the language. Just watching that work ethic and how she did that with such cheerfulness.
- ► Edelman also has a played a really big role in my success. I think it's because our culture here matches the way I am rewarded or feel empow-

ered, which is to have that entrepreneurial spirit and ask people to think about what's best for the business and the client instead of just handing them a template.

That really works for me because I like to have the space to think openly and take risks. I don't think there can be success without risk.

► I am now General Manager and Lead Divisional Practice in the D.C. office and also Global Client Relationship Manager (GCRM) for Hewlett Packard. Both of those are fantastic opportunities and big risks. From the GCRM side, any time you devote your entire career to one account that can

feel like a risk, although it's been great. Then the risk of stepping into the digital practice role...also could be frightening...but it has really paid off. Underlying all this is that I happen to be a single mother. So I see any big opportunity inherently as a risk because...I need to balance my time, to make sure my children are getting my full attention.

► I'm always looking for entrepreneurial spirit when hiring. Someone who wants to start something that they're really excited about or who has a passion for a specific area...try to be authentic, be yourself... it leads to better relationships with clients and colleagues. PRN



[By Mory Fontanez as told to PR News]

[Mory Fontanez was honored during PR News' Top Women in PR luncheon February 27 at the Grand Central Hyatt NYC.]

CONTACT:

Mory Fontanez, fontanez@edelman.com

▶ Silobusters

Bring New Disciplines Into the PR Fold

Kelly McGinnis Exec. VP + CCO Levi Strauss & Co.

Kelly McGinnis became executive VP and CCO of Levi Strauss & Co. in 2013. The move came 18 months after Levi Strauss hit the reset button following years of no growth. From the get-go McGinnis—who reports directly to Levi's CEO Chip Bergh—instituted four principles that have guided communications strategy and enhanced integration.

► Establish the right team and build credibility across the organization by demonstrating that PR is aligned with the business. Since McGinnis joined the company, there has been a 30 percent turnover in the corporate affairs team, for example.

► Be the eyes and ears of the company. "We must always rely on multiple stakeholder inputs and perspectives to inform our recommendations," McGinnis said. "Without those inputs, it's just opinion."

► Align behind a core narrative—based on the company's long-term business objectives and make the PR team's effort align with that agenda.

► Find like-minded thought partners across the business who share your vision and want to work with you toward a common set of goals.

McGinnis has put these tenets into practice to build more cohesive messaging.

For example, last week Levi Strauss introduced its Lifecycle Assessment Update, a sustainability report catering to the company's supply chain and other stakeholders.

What's key for communicators: Executives from a variety of disciplines had an important stake in the report, getting more people vested in PR's value. "From our Sustainability experts to our ecommerce and Marketing colleagues, who are using every tool in their tool box to activate a consumer campaign, asking jeans owners to wash their jeans less," McGinnis said. "Doing this in such an integrated fashion is a step up for us."

Another way Levi's is boosting integrated communications is by involving researchers at its Eureka Innovation Lab, an R&D facility.

In the past two years McGinnis and her team have helped to bring the company's 30-person research team into the communications fold, resulting in stories about the



lab appearing in Fast Company, along with features on Good Morning America and CBS This Morning.

"Things used to be behind-the-scenes," McGinnis said. "But by integrating PR alongside the lab we've been able to ask our researchers to tell a story, with our visibility up dramatically." PRN

CONTACT:

Kelly McGinnis, kmcginnis@levi.com



Starbucks' Brouhaha.

Starbucks' CEO Howard Schultz has decided to double down on the company's "Race Together" campaign, apparently. At a shareholders' meeting last week, Schultz said: "Our intent is to try to elevate the national conversation. Because we're willing to jump into the deep end of the pool... I think others will follow us."

That choice of words may not help Starbucks contain the damage stemming from its "Race Together" campaign, which is designed to get the country talking about race relations. Some baristas are writing "Race Together" on customers' cups to stimulate conversation. The campaign has received withering criticism and Starbucks was blasted for what some described as a cynical ploy to sell coffee. Overkill? Starbucks' share price has reached record highs.

Takeaways for communicators are rife. Perhaps the biggest lesson is that if your brand or organization wants to tackle a hot-button issue, go for it, but expect a backlash (it's just a matter of degree) and leave yourself enough time to brace for unintended consequences

and some very unhappy people. Another lesson: It's a slippery slope when brands try to recruit (or shame) consumers into talking about a painful subject in a public setting.

What's Old is New (Again). Mainstream media sites are the most common type of content shared by CMOs (50 percent), according to a new survey by Leadtail. Social Insights: CMO Edition, took the pulse of 1,000-plus CMOs and marketing executives and brands and agencies in the U.S. and Canada, both B2C and B2B.

Key highlights for communicators: Cross posting of LinkedIn content to Twitter is up 200 percent, since 2013, and marketing executives are beefing up their tech chops, including consuming more content traditionally targeted to IT readers.

IBM-Twitter Meld. It's a wedding tailored for the digital age: IBM and Twitter. Announced late in 2014, the partnership rolled out its first products last week, developer tools and cloud-based data analysis services that mine Twitter data (hat tip to The New York Times).

IBM has been testing some of the tools with 100 companies, which revealed surprising discoveries, per

Business Insider. For example, bad weather can make people want to ditch their telecom service and loyal customers of a shop are more likely than occasional customers to stop shopping there due to changes in sales staff.

The partnership could prove a new plateau for companies that still are trying to figure out how to monetize Twitter. Big Blue's goal is to have 10,000 IBM employees with Twitter data-handling skills.



'Mad Men' Dining. Don Draper probably could sell snow to Eskimos, so plugging New York City's finest

restaurants should be a cakewalk. Nearly three-dozen top Big Apple eateries are participating in "Mad Men" Dining Week, which kicks off today (March 23). The restaurants will offer either a two-course prix-fixe menu or two 1960's-inspired cocktails. It's good PR for the advertisingthemed series as it kicks off its final episodes next month.

People Moves. MWW tapped **Bob Knott** as senior managing director for market leadership and issues management. Knott

previously led the corporate communications practice in the Americas for three years at FTI Consulting...CNBC veteran Jeffrey Pohlman has joined FleishmanHillard's New York office as a senior VP in the reputation management practice. During his 13 years at CNBC, Pohlman's investigative unit produced the company's first digital documentaries and also won a 2015 Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism...G&S **Business Communications** promoted Mike Samec to VP, digital strategy, from his previous position as director... Chris Hassall, former global external relations officer at P&G, joined APCO Worldwide as a member of the agency's International Advisory Council (IAC). As P&G's Global External Relations Officer, Hassall led a 1,200-person function with global responsibility for media and public relations, among other areas...Horn Group Inc. has promoted Debra Raine to partner. In her new role, Raine will continue to lead the agency's west coast business and plans to expand its international operations... Hill+Knowlton tapped Ellen Moran, former White House communications director for President Obama, as VP and GM of the agency's Washington, D.C., office. PRN



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