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SPECIAL ISSUE: 2016, PART II

As promised in our previous special issue on November 16, here's the second part of our look ahead to 2016. We trust it will help you plan for the New Year and that your year will be terrific. Your final issue of 2015 will be next week.



PREDICTIONS

BY KATIE PAINE, CEO PAINE PUBLISHING

PR in 2016: Tumbling Silos and Heated Competition for Talent

[Caution: The sky will tumble, mountains will crumble. If you're afraid of change, 2016 will be a miserable year.]

Round about this time of year, we all seem to look back at the previous year and mumble something about good riddance and then predict wonderful things for the coming year. For me, it depends how you feel about change. I'm the type who can't wait to see what's around the next bend, but if

you're one of those people who doesn't welcome change the way most people greet their morning coffee, you might want to find a cave to hide in because 2016 will be, if nothing else, a tumultuous year of change for those of us in the communications industry. Here's what I predict will happen.



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COMMUNICATIONS

BY BOB PEARSON, PRESIDENT, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, W20 GROUP

4 Insider Views of the Forces That Will Change Public Relations in 2016

One of the keys to evolving the communications function at any company or agency is to step back and think through what we can and will do better or differently each year. For this look-ahead issue of *PR News*, I asked leaders in the communications and marketing world to share what is important to them as they look toward 2016.

THE INFLUENCE OF SPEED

It is clear that several forces are influencing and shaping our world with speed. Those forces speak loudly. More than 50% of all content is consumed via mobile phone. The other force is the sheer volume and impact of video, whether

it is **Facebook's** 8 billion views per day or the compression technology improvements that make it easy to view video anywhere, anytime on any device.

Here is what **Torod Neptune**, vice president of corporate communications and public affairs at **Verizon** said about this.

"Digital video will play a much more significant role in overall brand content strategy. As mobile continues to expand even further, the convergence with more capable, ubiquitous and lower cost networks will make short-form video



Continued on page 3



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How the Gig Economy Will Affect Your PR Team in '16



Should 2016 be as unpredictable as 2015, communicators and marketers will be thrown a bevy of assignments with little warning.

While predictions about the economy in 2016 rarely agree, those brands that emerge from the economic morass next year will confront their often understaffed marketing departments with new assignments without providing them new staff. Being asked to create content for a website launch within 60 to 90 days or sooner is the new normal. Get used to it.

Fortunately another trend expected to continue rising in 2016 is the gig economy. "This transition is nothing less than a revolution," *The Atlantic* wrote recently, adding, "We haven't seen a shift in the workforce this significant in almost 100 years when we transitioned from an agricultural to an industrial economy." By 2020, 40% of American workers will be independent contractors due to the gig economy trend, a study from **Intuit** predicted.

ORGANIZATION IS KEY

The rise of the gig economy means smaller PR teams, at brands or agencies, can supplement themselves, adding considerable talent to their skillset without requiring heavy overhead. As the subhead above says, organization is critical. Making sure phone numbers, email addresses etc. are accurate is drudgery, yet a trade show, product launch, acquisition or even a crisis are examples of times when smaller teams will be glad their freelance rosters is current and that the gig economy exists.

Here's a checklist to help you take advantage of the power of the gig economy to augment your team:

1. Get Professionals on Board Now: As you build your team, make sure each consultant has signed a W-9 and a current consulting agreement, which should include payment and NDA terms. I find December is a good time to update my roster, which includes name, rate, specialty area, current work samples and bios. It's also a good idea to send your consultants an updated style guide and SEO keywords for the new year.

2. Building is the Start: Once you've found experienced consultants you should frequently update your roster with new talent. It's one way of avoiding a costly and rushed mis-hire.

3. Specialty Contractors:

▶ Video Support:

Most small PR teams lack a video staff, so it's important to have several video support sources when the need arises for video content for **YouTube**, a website or media training.

▶ **Web CMS Developers:** Many brands want their websites in **WordPress** and you may have a WordPress developer in-house. But what if they want **Drupal**, **Joomla** or **ExpressionEngine**? You need to have pros who know these resources, too.

▶ **Event Publicity:** Planning ahead is critical. Approaching trade shows usually mean frenzied activity in this area.

▶ **Social Media Experts:** We all have this in-house, but perhaps more bandwidth is needed, so have resources to back up your internal team.

▶ **Mergers & Acquisitions Communications:** December is a very heavy M&A month for many industries. Even though you may have M&A specialists on your team, it's often a good idea to have consultants ready to add in December.

4. The Rule of Three's: A good rule of thumb is to have at least three freelance specialists for each service area. One way to build your roster is to ask for referrals from consultants you employ. You can also earn points from them when you refer them to other consultants who might hire them to do overflow work. One of the best places to find new specialists is at industry events and association conventions. In fact, some associations, such as the **IABC**, has a Special Interest group of Independents, which is extremely useful.

Finally, remember to do a post-project briefing with team members, full-time and gigers, to review what worked and what didn't. Maintain a lessons learned folder for each project.

Perhaps my best advice is to always be on the lookout for talent. New professionals enter the gig economy daily with differing skill sets. In all communications, people are your assets. You need the best in-house staff and the best consultant roster in your market. ■

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Stop Content Pollution, But Champion Innovation

(e.g. **Twitter**, **Vine** and **Periscope**) one of the most effective and impactful tools for communicators. A big catalyst here will be the creative use of shareable video by presidential candidates in the 2016 elections.”

MEASUREMENT: INFLUENCING ATTITUDES

A related trend to what Torod shared is how we measure all of this activity, so I asked **Chuck Hemann**, global digital analytics manager at **Intel**, what he sees as a key insight related to measurement. Here is what Chuck added to the conversation for 2016.

“There are attitudinal shifts during a campaign, so we need to optimize toward those shifts. It’s not purely a post-campaign perspective that we want to get. Probably one that is applicable to us, but likely applicable to all, is a shift in focus about how we measure.... We entered this year with a mandate to shift the way we measure from a purely behavioral perspective [think clicks, efficiencies, etc.] to how do our campaigns change the attitudes that we want to change. There’s a decreasing interest from senior executives to know how many clicks something received, though, in certain contexts it can be important, but rather how we influenced attitudes and ultimately drove conversion. It’s important to also note that this doesn’t necessarily apply only to digital media. It applies to digital, social, on-domain, native advertising, all of it.”

MIND THE PLANET: AVOID CONTENT POLLUTION

Knowing that digital video, particularly short-form, is increasingly important and our measurement of behavior must evolve, we often can make the mistake of rushing to simply churn out more content. That rarely is the answer, however. Being smart about how we tell our story always matters, which is why I asked **Andrew Bowins**, vice president, corporate reputation at **Samsung Electronics America**, to share his views. Here are Andrew’s insights.

“In 2016 communicators need to look in the mirror and decide if they have become content polluters. In the frenzy to be brand publishers and leverage digital channels we may have forgotten the basic rules of PR: communicate with purpose; target your audiences and be relevant. Pull

back the throttle a little, embrace data to understand your audience and shape content that actually stirs a desired reaction.”

This sounds like a great combination of what Torod and Chuck are teaching us. It’s also a reminder to avoid content pollution, one of my favorite phrases.

There’s a decreasing interest from senior executives to know how many clicks something received...but rather how we influenced attitudes and ultimately drove conversion.

BUILDING YOUR TEAM, DIVERSITY, INNOVATION

I then asked **Dorothy Jones**, chief marketing officer at **Interstate Batteries**, to reflect on what we need to do to build great teams and the most innovative environment. Here is what Dorothy said:

“There are two important areas that affect our business today. We must embrace diversity in the workplace, which we view as gender, ethnicity and experience. When we do this, we have millennials and boomers learning from each other, we improve our cultural relevance, we have more depth of experience and we’re a truly authentic team. This benefits our customers directly and it is the best environment for all of us to grow professionally and personally.”

Dorothy went on to add that, “We must all be champions of change and reinvention. We need to stay ahead of the curve and build a culture of innovation, which strengthens our companies or agencies.”

I agree with Dorothy and will add what I say to those I mentor. Stay curious and keep learning every year. Learn a new language, read up on topics that are brand new, take on responsibilities that make you nervous at first and keep challenging yourself to grow intellectually and physically, reshape your habits to be the best communicator in the business that you are capable of becoming. ■

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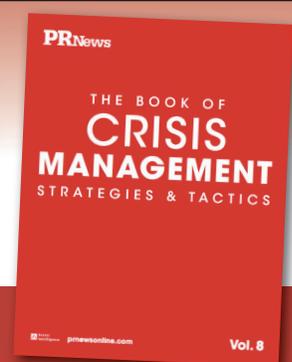
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Questions? Contact Laura Snitkovskiy at laura@accessintel.com
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For 2016, Technology's out, Human Insight's in

1. Silos Will Tumble: For years most corporations have kept a nearly insurmountable wall between internal communications and external, never mind all the usual barriers between social and traditional media monitoring. The new reality is that those boundaries already have melted in the minds of your customers. In 2016 consumers will continue to expand their use of mobile and social platforms, ignore traditional media sources and instead turn to each other and their apps when they make buying decisions.

The good news on the measurement front is that media-monitoring companies are getting good at social listening. Technology is making it much easier to bring social and web analytics into the PR dashboard. The big step forward in 2016 will be the integration of internal communications metrics into those dashboards.

2. Brands Will Bumble, Content Marketing Will Crumble: Brands will, of course, bumble along, making mistakes while trying to navigate the new merged environment, confusing what PR does well – build relationships, create true organic engagement – with marketing. The result? Content marketing will hit the saturation point. The people brands are trying to reach simply will ignore everything most companies spew.

3. Recruitment Will Rumble: The biggest problem no longer will be cost cutting but recruitment. The PR talent pool was never that deep and many senior pros are looking to retire. At the same time, the rapidly recovering economy is making jobs, many of which have remained vacant for too long, even harder to fill. As corporations step up hiring, it will take longer and be much more expensive to find true talent. And with increased competition on the recruitment side, organizations will need to focus on their culture and reputation, or they'll be spending a lot more on salaries. Where the money goes, metrics follow – look for more budgets shifting dollars to internal, culture, reputation and CSR measurement.

4. Standards Leave the Rumble Seat, Head to the Driver's Seat: When the **Media Rating Council** (MRC), in partnership with the **Word of Mouth Marketing Association** (WOMMA), the **4As**, the **Institute for PR** (IPR) and the **IAB**, finalized its *Social Media Measurement Guidelines* there was little fanfare. There should have been a lot. The MRC is Congress chartered and all major brands and organizations back it. What does it do? It tells organizations that SELL media for a living exactly what they can and cannot do.

The MRC issued definitions of “reach and impressions” that essentially reinforced our belief that most of the numbers thrown about are at best “potential” impressions. So, if you're on the buying end of social media, you now have standards with which you can hold agencies' and media's proverbial feet to the fire. And it doesn't stop there. The MRC document outlines agreed-upon nomenclature, definitions and best practices for a host of commonly misused metrics for social media.

To further bolster the rigor with which social media can and should be measured, in 2016 the IPR Measurement Commission will complete its validation of the Conclave's social media measurement standards, validating the standards

around sentiment and engagement.

5. Measurement Vendors Will Stumble: On the measurement side, the merger mania of the past few years will lose favor with customers and investors. Numerous customers will express frustration with bad data, inaccurate metrics and revamped interfaces. They'll start the RFP process searching for better vendors.

“**Consumers will continue to expand their use of mobile and social platforms, ignore traditional media and instead turn to each other and their apps when they make buying decisions.**”

6. Marketing Will Grumble, but Cost-Effectiveness Metrics Will Replace bad ROI: For years, marketers and their bosses have flung around ROI without ever calculating it correctly. Mostly they made up silly equations such as “the value of a like” or used AVE to attempt to put a “value” on social media and PR, while continuing to use bad math and incomplete cost calculations to determine the ROI of direct mail and paid media.

But with better data and more sophisticated platforms, helped by a wave of data analysts and new PR grads forced to take business courses, increasingly communications departments will be investigating the cost effectiveness of all their activities. First on the chopping block may be direct mail, which not only wastes entire forests but increasingly is seen as horrible for the environment. Once data reveals that the real costs doesn't match the real-dollar returns, organizations will see the efficiency advantages that PR and social media bring. Further jumbling of the paid media world will occur as ad-blocker apps become the norm on cell phones. Ad-blocker apps like **Peace**, **Purify** and **Crystal** offer freedom from ads for a small fee (\$3.99 in one case). In its first two months, one app earned \$150,000+ in revenue.

7. Technology Will be Humbled: The technology and data all-you-can-eat buffet that has engorged the communications landscape will lose its appeal as clients realize all those fancy tools and piles of data are worthless without trained, knowledgeable human expertise to interpret it. [See #3 above.] Organizations will invest more in talent and human-based insight and dial back technology investments until such time as they can digest what they have already. ■

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3 Tips for B2B Communicators to Build Stronger Customer Relationships



Taming tangled supply chains and explaining the arcane are the daily handiwork of B2B communicators. But as their companies face uneven prospects for growth across global markets, B2B marketing and PR pros are paying closer attention to their customers, whose buying process can be especially onerous as it involves layers of decision makers.

How can business communicators deepen relationships with customers in 2016? By creating brand experiences that keep customers moving forward on their purchase journey and proving the business is a worthy partner. Here are some top priorities for B2B communicators:

1. Customer Insights: Nearly three-quarters of business buyers go online to learn about products before making purchases, according to **Forrester Research**. But B2B digital campaigns often can fall short of sales expectations because meaningful customer intelligence hasn't been used to inform brand messaging and media selection. For example, while the Net Promoter Score (SM) serves as a popular benchmark for consumer loyalty and a predictor of sales, it may be less accessible for B2B pros who fail to understand how to align it with their complex supply streams.

To produce data that's more meaningful for B2B online strategies, communicators must address the customer experiences of a broader set of stakeholders. In the B2B world, that vast group may span raw material providers, original equipment manufacturers, distributors and resellers, along with the end user. Such a robust data set could yield more accurate customer profiles and useful insights for marketers—about not only specific customers' willingness to endorse a brand to others, but also their preferences on product features and brand engagement.

2. Workplace Culture: Consider **Volkswagen's** recent hire of the company's first integrity czar in re to revelations of widespread emissions-test rigging. Unlike other auto industry crises related to faulty engineering or poor fiscal management, the collapse of VW's worldwide sales generally is blamed on its broken corporate culture.

In working with B2B companies, where exposure to risk increases exponentially based on the size of the supplier base, customers want to see proof that their safety and trust are part of the brand promise. A good example is **ABB**, a provider of power and automation technologies that touts its integrity portal right on its website. The company even showcases its integrity app, which counsels employees about ethical situations.

3. Sustainability: For B2B companies operating within consumer supply chains, compliance with environmental, social and governance (ESG) requirements is a serious matter due to safety and legal concerns. But ESG issues also touch customer loyalty.

Yet not enough B2B businesses that supply consumer product manufacturers or retailers are aware that they can be a better partner to customers by extending their ESG narratives beyond professional audiences to include the general public. For example, despite increased advances in green industrial technologies and processes, the **G&S Sense & Sustainability®** Study found that Americans did not rate highly the sustainability reputation of the manufacturing industry, which came in last in rankings as compared to top marks for agriculture and food and beverage industries. Broadening B2B audiences is especially important for companies that have worked primarily with trade media that focus on product profiles, instead of business or consumer media that can explain the company's role in its community and the world.

In an uncertain environment, some B2B companies will falter by adopting a business strategy of deep entrenchment with scaled-back communications or a business-as-usual approach with an absence of confident risk taking. Smarter B2B companies will continue to innovate, especially in the way they do business with known customers. By removing barriers in customer journeys, business communicators can clear a path for sales success in 2016 and beyond. ■

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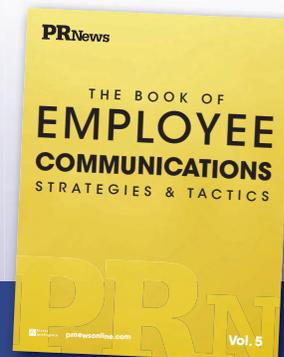
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How Healthcare PR Can Keep Pace With a Rapidly Changing Sector



The pharma sector is losing its heroic mystique. An industry that pioneered vaccines against diseases endangering billions finds itself facing the ill-wind of public disdain.

Regardless of whether some of the pricing and business decisions of recent months have been justified, patients and policymakers are disappointed and bewildered.

This price obsession has led to Congress dumping **Turing**, **Valeant** and **Gilead** into the same Senate hearing lineup. The congressional paintbrush of alleged greed spares no one.

From a health communications vantage point, soon there will be no escaping public conversation around cost. Suddenly on the heels of Affordable Care and Medicare Open Enrollment, and with all Americans being invited, enticed or fined in order to ensure health-plan participation, society wrings its collective hands about the cost of our insurance, pharma products and provider services.

The old escape door was to talk value, the burden of research and even that cost to the patient differs from cost to the payer. This approach to deflecting the pricing problem to another health sector will fly no longer. In fact, society responds by saying, “If your R&D model is no longer working successfully, why do we need to subsidize this approach?”

PR firms in pharma mimic their client-base responses. Instead, health PR pros should shift from a long-standing knee-jerk response: “It costs \$1.2 billion and takes 10 years to bring a new compound to the market” message and project the brand’s enlightened voice to bring something new to the table – understand the urgencies and anxieties of the patient, provider, payer and policymaker environment.

The country’s health system – where employers shoulder the burden for providing employees with health insurance – is highly fragmented. As employers change health plans to contain costs, employees often are forced to switch their primary care physician. In a system lacking portable electronic medical records, consumers must reinvent themselves: new forms to fill out, new medical histories to convey and new prescriptions to request. This can only lead to a disenfranchised consumer/patient. Plans, providers and pharma companies also find this constant change disruptive.

At the same time, physicians seeking to use the latest therapies have their own system-wide frustrations.

Patients and payers desire medical innovation; however, the moment the **Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) approves a drug and its price is announced, the lens through which consumers interpret value is cost. Health public policy and communication gurus must now take the helm and guide internal client audiences to seek a new path to success and sector-to-sector collaboration by opening discussion around price sensitivity. They even should point to new pricing models that reflect medication impact from drugs that manage better to arrest disease (and extend quality life). Plans are recognizing that “dreaded” formularies can be platforms to

educate their customers on the cost/care/access balance.

The health environment is seeking PR game changers.

What will PR firms with large health disciplines need to provide clients to be at that table as counselors, planners and creative leaders? While the challenge of health-sector reputation may be unsolvable, brands can rise above the sector morass. As we see from the recent media storms, doing the right thing is the best route.

Here are four suggestions for PR pros seeking to be part of an essential conversation:

1. Be a Lifelong Learner: New science, treatments, reimbursements, formulary structures and ways of communicating demand constant updating of skills. Millennials are outpacing Boomers demographically and that means a knowledge shift in how the health system will operate, communicate and how it will evolve to meet a new generation’s expectations. There are plenty of free and high-grade reports available to study. The time to begin is now.

2. Remember Everything is Discoverable: Transparency is an everyday PR requirement. While information can be marked “confidential” and “for planning purposes only,” every plan and email is subject to discovery and becoming part of a congressional inquiry – especially documents shared with outside entities for background. The old adage remains true: “If you don’t want to see it, hear it or read it, don’t say it!”

3. Know Prices for Similar Therapies: New therapies often come with a price that reflects their value. Being a new product is no longer a pass to outprice the category. Suddenly consumers, payers and media are reacting to pricing that surprises – look at the cholesterol category and even life-extending cancer drugs. Don’t wait until FDA approval to begin to define product value. Establish brand value through science and recognize that payers are part of the market’s checks and balances.

4. Collaborate in a Diverse Market: Payers, providers, pharma, patients and policymakers play different roles within the market dynamic and their objectives are different. That said, everything will converge at the point-of-care, namely the patient. Beyond plan discounts and co-pay cards to reduce the patient cost burden, think about ways to bring the other sectors to your program’s planning table. The consumer is worn-out from hearing that someone or something is an obstacle to access. Plans that envision sector-to-sector collaboration will become the next big idea. ■

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10 PR Trends for 2016, From Mobile Optimization to Blogger Outreach



[Editor's Note: We're pleased to present Ronn Torrossian's annual Top 10 predictions. Ronn's article in our Nov. 23 edition recapped his 2015 predictions.]

Predicting the future is an integral part of a PR pro's responsibilities. This industry transforms rapidly, and as the role of technology increases, those changes keep coming faster. It is essential to recognize the value of traditional PR techniques, though newer trends may enhance them. Still, a crucial part of making a successful PR pro is understanding how these changes will touch our industry next year.

1. Mobile Optimization: Since the emergence of smartphones, mobile has become a major force. In spite of this, many PR pros still fail to fully comprehend the extent mobile platforms can be exploited. Thanks to improvements in tracking data, and the innovations of app creators, the potential to track and influence engagement is amazing. This growing realization of mobile's potential leaves most clients wanting to include a mobile channel to achieve their goals, but it is not a magic wand. Similar to trends in online marketing, better results occur when mobile is used with a purpose, rather than producing an app for the sake of having an app.

2. SEO: As **Google's** search algorithm evolves, PR pros need to look for the next big changes. Today, PR is irrevocably connected to SEO, and understanding how SERPS work becomes more critical. Online content will only become more competitive. As Google becomes better at ferreting out spam while driving engaging content, it becomes increasingly important to position clients as a trusted resource, rather than an opportunistic advertiser jumping on the online bandwagon. Engagement is the future and that means providing real value.

3. Writing Good Content Matters: While value-laden content is critical for SEO, excellent writing is critical for grabbing attention. Social media has become a titan, and the importance of attention-grabbing headlines enmeshed with value-laden content is not to be underestimated. PR pros and agencies must determine how best to drive online advertising, but the need for impeccable skills in advertising copywriting remains as important as ever.

4. Social Content Creation: The holy grail of social content creation is a formula for creating viral content. To achieve this end, various marketers' efforts become shocking and entertaining. Technology changes, people do not, however, and neither has the importance of tracking. With tracking being easier than ever, for 2016 the focus should not be on creating viral content, but rather on how good your content is at creating engagement. It is no longer enough to be a good storyteller, because in a flooded marketplace of bombastic storytellers, being useful can be even more valuable than being entertaining.

5. Analytics: The importance of analytics is growing. Proprietary data has become more important, as have tracking, analyzing and acting on industry trends. With the emergence of big data tapping into global mobile platforms, the ability to segment data into smaller groups is going to be especially important as it will enable a brand's message to become more specific, increasing effectiveness and engagement.

6. Speed to Information: In 2016, staying ahead of information will be critical, as those with information before it starts trending will have a competitive advantage. Access to information and industry news gets easier, so there is no room for professionals who are unable to stay current. The Internet is laden with tools and facts, so awareness of innovations isn't just necessary, it's critical.

7. Programing: As tasks become more specialized, and the need to stay on top of industry trends only increases, having a working knowledge of programing might seem impossible. If it is, don't be surprised if your company lags. The backbone of 2016 will build on tracking platforms, content management platforms, social media platforms and app development. While it's not important to be an expert, it will be crucial to manage and create innovations for brands.

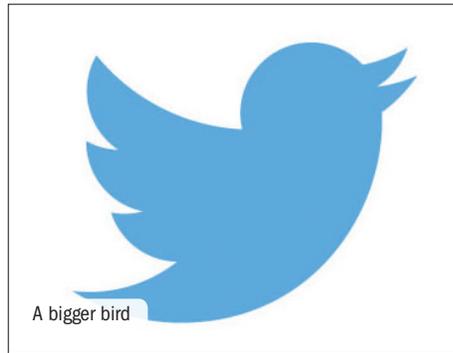
8. Virtual Teams: With 30% of the U.S. workforce self-employed or working for those who are self-employed, in 2016 it will be a fact of business that virtual will matter more.

Providing lower overhead and strong competition for the skilled jobs they fill, members of the gig economy will be a growing alternative to a brick and mortar workforce [see page 2]. Freelancers can be a useful addition to your team.

9. Video Editing and Production: Ever since the silent film, video has been one of the most engaging forms of media. This trend will continue. Thanks to the tracking on **YouTube** and various social media platforms, the PR industry can take full advantage of video to drive engagement. Video also is becoming less expensive to produce, easier to outsource, and has the added benefit of high click-through rates.

10. Blogger Outreach: Blogs increasingly are becoming more important. Bloggers break major news stories, they influence cultural change and even spawn multi-million dollar businesses. Plus, identifying those blogs that become the most valuable is easier than ever. ■

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Walmart U.S. CMO Stephen Quinn

1. Eagle has Landed: Your brand can do many things correctly in a crisis and it still may end up having weeks like **Chipotle** experienced, which included a share price falling (down almost 30% over 4 months), predicting lower earnings for Q4, the likelihood of negative same-store sales in Q4 for the first time since going public in '06, spending much time talking with health officials and monitoring inaccurate media reports. On the up side, PR pros are gaining a smorgasbord of lessons from the burrito maker's E.coli crisis. Last week was supposed to be a decent one for Chipotle, with brass unveiling a top-flight food-safety program at a **Bernstein** conference; it wasn't. A PR lesson Chipotle is grappling with now, senior executives said at the Bernstein conference, involves how to deal with misinformation in the press. Indeed, in preparing this piece *PR News* was surprised at the number of critical details media outlets and pundits were getting wrong. A few we saw: reports stating the 43 Chipotle outlets in the Pacific NW the brand voluntarily closed in early November and reopened about one week later were still closed; misspelling the surname of the brand's founder, chairman and co-CEO **Steve Ells**. A variation on the theme is a press foul that's a bit more excusable, but no less damaging to Chipotle. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) announces E.coli cases as they reach it. While the E.coli linked to Chipotle occurred during a window from mid-October to early November, local authorities varied on how quickly they sent info to the CDC. When the CDC announced these incidents on different days, some in the press mistook them for new outbreaks of E.coli. An understandable

mistake. In fact, there have been no new outbreaks. We can understand Chipotle's frustration. Still, at Bernstein, Chipotle chief creative and development officer **Mark Crumpacker** said the CDC would continue to report cases this way, which he called "unorthodox and unusual." (Finger pointing is never a good PR move.) He also said the CDC will, at some point, "label the investigation over," and give "the all clear," although there's no timeline and "I would not expect [the CDC] to be in a hurry to do that." (True, and since you called out the CDC in public, the folks there might *really* take their time, Mr. Crumpacker.) Later during the presentation, Chipotle confirmed what it hinted at last week (PRN, Dec 7): It will institute tougher procedures for local ingredients and it expects some current suppliers might not make the cut. Speaking of cutting, Chipotle said it's dicing certain raw ingredients (tomatoes and cilantro were mentioned) in commissaries as a food-safety procedure. Once cut, the foods are sanitized, sealed and sent to its restaurants. "We can't test every tomato," Ells said transparently at Bernstein, denying that would alter the taste of Chipotle's food, although prices might rise to cover the new processes, the brand's CFO **Jack Hartung** admitted. Once the E.coli crisis is over the company plans include full-page newspaper ads welcoming back customers and detailing food safety procedures. – Now for the news that monopolized Chipotle coverage: **Boston College** (BC) said some 100 students complaining of G.I. problems, including eight members of its men's basketball team, the Eagles, ate at a nearby Chipotle two weekends ago. Chipotle closed it Monday; students were tested for E.coli and norovi-

rus, BC said. As we went to press, test results were pending. Still, a noted online sports information service Monday quoted "a basketball coach" confirming the stricken athletes had contracted E.coli. (How did the coach know?) And Chipotle's Crumpacker told Bernstein the students did *not* have E.coli. (How did *he* know?) Separately, a practiced communicator, Chipotle spokesman **Chris Arnold**, told media the day of the Bernstein event the Boston incident "looks likely that it is a norovirus... though nothing has been confirmed at this time." (Whew.) And Chipotle's debut at Bernstein of plans to be the industry leader in food safety? It received scant press. Instead, coverage mostly was sick BC students and falling share prices. Incidentally, Chipotle said monitoring since Nov. 1 shows 57% of its customer base is aware of the E.coli issue. As we said, plenty of lessons.

2. Platforms: In what seems a big win for PR pros, **Twitter** said 500 million logged-out users now will see the advertiser-purchased tweets known as Promoted Tweets. Those 500 million lack Twitter accounts but see tweets through **Google** and other apps. Now the total Twitter audience will see communicators' Promoted Tweets. Twitter has 320 million active monthly users.

3. People: G&S Business Communications named **Peter Donnelly** VP, creative. – **Walmart U.S.** CMO since 2007 **Stephen Quinn** will leave Jan. 31. Former **Target** CMO **Michael Francis** will step in to consult and perhaps work with Francis' successor. – **General Mills** named **Mary Lynn Carver** CCO/VP of global corporate communications. She succeeds the retired **Tom Forsythe**. ■

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- Best Tweet Content
- Best Use of Hashtags
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- Most Engaged Followers
- Promoted Tweet Campaign
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Instagram:

- Best Marketing Campaign
- Best PR Campaign
- Best Contest
- Best Photo
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WRITING WELL

How to Write Long- and Short-Form PR Content That Captures the Attention of Non-Readers

As Mark Twain said, "Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words." The trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie said something similar about playing jazz solos: "It's taken me all my life to learn what [notes] *not* to play." OK, but those are two of the greatest artists in America's history. What about when the rest of us try to create art with a press release, a speech for our executives or a tweet? What notes or, more precisely, words should we omit? What should we be thinking about as we approach the keyboard with a blank screen in front of us and the clock ticking overhead? We asked four PR pros with extensive writing backgrounds to provide tips and tactics. Interestingly, the advice of Twain and Gillespie offered was not off when it comes to PR writing.

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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

BY ANN MARIE van den HURK, PRINCIPAL, MIND THE GAP PUBLIC RELATIONS

6 Rules to Live by When a Social Media Meltdown Threatens Your Brand

Social media is unpredictable, explosive and often outpaces time itself. Social media is like a megaphone. It can broadcast the good, and it can turn whispers of discontent into yells that millions can hear.

No organization is immune to a social media meltdown, even if that organization lacks a presence on social networks. Are you prepared to manage a social media meltdown?

Most organizations do not have social media integrated into their crisis communications plans. And while crisis communications plans are seen as very beneficial, many organizations lack one. Organizations with plans in place recover faster than those without. Every organization needs digital integrated into its crisis plan.

While basic crisis communications applies to social media, you need to be aware of some conditions that are specific to social media and be prepared to address them.

1. Criticism: Do not censor criticism on your blog, Facebook account or YouTube channel unless it violates your stated community guidelines. This is a difficult concept for organizations to get accustomed to in the age of social media. Removing offending comments may lead to more, harsher comments.

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