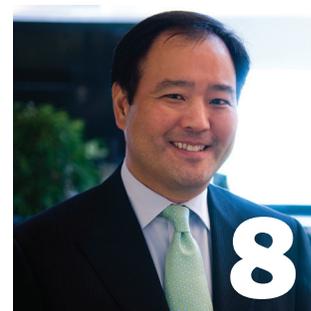


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SOCIAL MEDIA

Grubhub's Recipe for Summerlicious Content: Mix Data-Driven Stories With Trends and Shake Well

We hear about pivoting fairly regularly in Washington, D.C., usually when things aren't going so well. That's hardly the case with **Grubhub**, which offers users the ability to get meals delivered from 55,000 restaurants; the brand also gives customers the option of ordering food and picking it up at a restaurant. Last week a **Morgan Stanley** analyst upgraded Grubhub shares to overweight (yes, that's an ironic use of language) due to the brand's having gobbled up a three-course meal of competitors recently.

A MIX OF DATA AND TRENDS

Yet pivoting also can be done intentionally, from a position of strength. This is critical to Grubhub's social media content strategy, senior social media manager Mallorie Rosenbluth tells us. While Grubhub is "a data-driven company... [and] we're constantly looking at data telling us what dishes people are ordering," she insists on being flexible enough to cover "what's going on in the world."

Continued on page 3

CASE STUDY

BY LINDA RUTHERFORD, VP, CCO, SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

How Southwest Responded to a Crisis Under Unthinkable Circumstances

Around 1 p.m. on July 20, 2016, customers started sending tweets to **Southwest Airlines**, concerned they couldn't check in online or use kiosks at airports.

By 2 p.m. the failure was located—faulty equipment at southwest.com—and resolved; however, all flight activity had to be halted until key systems could be restored. By 3 p.m. flights resumed with solid indications that recovery was imminent. But was it? Data backlog hampered airline operations for three days.

On day one, airport personnel used manual check-in/boarding procedures while waiting for system recovery. Customers unable to print boarding passes couldn't travel. The

result was lines at ticket counters and gate areas; customers couldn't be contacted due to issues with our email system.

The technical outage lasted approximately 13 hours before all systems came back. Repairing operational impacts took considerably longer; it was days before Southwest was operating normally—after canceling more than 2,000 flights over four days (of about 19,500) and inconveniencing thousands of customers. The scale of issues was "unprecedented in American aviation," the *Dallas Morning News* wrote.



Continued on page 6



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Published weekly by Access Intelligence, LLC
 9211 Corporate Blvd, 4th Floor
 Rockville, MD 20850

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AUGUST 31, 2017
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LUNCHEON**
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**THE DIGITAL
COMMUNICATIONS
MARKETING SHOW**
OCTOBER 17- 19, 2017
 MIAMI, FL

B2B Brands Posted 33% More Videos on Facebook in First Half of 2017

PR News readers know the concerted effort **Facebook** has engaged in to promote video on its platform. Provided exclusively to PR News, the latest **Shareablee** data regarding consumer engagement with B2B brands' posts on Facebook will be heartening to **Mark Zuckerberg** and company. For 2017's first six months B2B brands posted 33% more videos and video views rose almost 40%, says Shareablee's **Ron Lee**. This suggests video's growth continues and that there's room for B2B brands to increase video content in their social media efforts, Lee says. Overall B2B brands enjoyed a 14% rise in con-

sumer engagement year over year. Engagement is referred to as actions on the table below. It is defined here as reactions, comments and shares of posts.

Data integration brand **Informatica** maintained its top slot on the list with a 67% jump in Facebook fans, Lee says, and a 14% rise in consumer actions per post. Note **Pulte Homes'** impressive consumer actions per post figure, up 159% year over year. Facebook really will like this: Pulte's 78% growth in consumer engagement was due in large part to an increase of 500% in video posts. ■



SOCIAL SCORECARD

TOP B2B BRANDS ON FACEBOOK – H1 2017

Based on Total Actions (reactions, comments and shares)
 Data provided exclusively to PR News by Shareablee.

Source: f

RANK	BRAND	TOTAL ACTIONS	TOTAL POSTS	ACTIONS PER POST	TOTAL FANS
1	Informatica Corp.	1,511,940	387	3,907	172,855
2	Pulte Homes	932,140	75	12,429	92,050
3	Lennar	703,013	345	2,038	1,153,787
4	Ericsson	575,359	330	1,744	543,673
5	FedEx	514,380	154	3,340	2,043,307
6	Lockheed Martin	489,296	360	1,359	476,822
7	Amazon Web Services	460,040	1,923	239	229,135
8	The Boeing Company	372,272	52	7,159	992,643
9	Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate	274,672	349	787	281,706
10	Pantone	268,072	132	2,031	571,632

In Storytelling, Talk to People, Not Prospects



Mallorie Rosenbluth,
Senior Manager,
Social Media,
Grubhub/
Seamless

Her modest editorial team meets weekly to discuss trends “outside our four walls that we can get ahead of.” So while a recent **Instagram** post featuring delicious-looking avocado toast was created “because our data showed that dish trending,” a series about fried eggs was made to order. “We knew that around the country it was sweltering... so we created a blog post around the theme, ‘It’s so hot you could fry an egg on the sidewalk.’...Our take was that we could do a roundup of the eight best fried egg dishes from Grubhub that can be enjoyed in the comfort of air conditioning.”

A variant on the above is when data goes against intuition. “Everyone’s going to order wings [for the Super Bowl], right? We looked at the data and it showed Indian food was trending.” That data informs future content creation, she says.

This formal and informal mix explains Grubhub’s social content strategy. It’s an eclectic pastiche of data-driven content on the usual platforms, such as **Instagram**, **Facebook** and **Twitter**, as well as email and *The Crave* blog. Grubhub uses an editorial calendar to “plan content for particular days,” yet there’s room for content created more quickly from trends, such as the fried egg example above. Rosenbluth takes pride in the speed her team can turn around a trend-based piece of content. “We can do it in hours or days.”

CONTENT PILLARS AND LEANING IN

The formal portion of Grubhub’s content comes from planning meetings. About eight weeks in advance of a campaign the team creates “content pillars,” Rosenbluth says. “They’re the categories of content that we want to address...the focus areas...the lean-in points.”

Takeaways

1. Use an editorial calendar, but be flexible enough to respond to trends quickly
2. Use a mix of data-driven content and ideas that your team sees trending
3. Listen to your gut, but if data proves you wrong, adjust your content

Storytelling: Start with Engagement, Business Goals Come Later

For storytelling, Rosenbluth advocates “taking off your marketing hat and just understanding people as people, not just as business prospects.” This ensures brands tell stories that are engaging. “We then create iterations and executions that will achieve our business goals. We don’t create for the business goal and then back the story into it. That never works.”

1. Understand the challenge you’re trying to overcome
2. Take a consumer insight: Get inside the mind of the audience, understand the motivations and lean into its existing behaviors
3. Develop the message—or story—that brings to life how you’re leaning into the behaviors
4. Outline the metrics of success and channels available to tell the story
5. Iterate off the initial story so the executions are optimized for channel and desired result

As opposed to trying to change behavior, Grubhub is more interested in enhancing consumers’ normal behavior. For its recent Summerlicious campaign, the thinking was summers are busy times. “People are running around...dropping kids off at camp...soccer games...taking trips...and delivery of [food] is one of the last things they think of...many people just grab [whatever food] is in front of them. So we try to get them to consider ordering [from Grubhub] as they run from place to place...to enhance their life,” she says.

Still, she won’t let these pillars snuff out spontaneity. “I like to call them the places we get to play in.”

The brand’s thinking on storytelling always starts with goals. “Not every piece of content is designed to drive a conversion. Some are designed to bring people into the funnel or to raise brand awareness,” she says. “From there we develop extensions of a basic story, or concept, that work for each channel and the multiple goals of a campaign.” [See sidebar above] ■

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PRNews
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MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIES & TACTICS

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5 Steps That Will Make Your Content Marketing Program More Successful



Content marketing can be a powerful tool to support a business, but often execution falls short and so results like leads or sales suffer. Normally what's missing is a direct link to the business or service the content is meant to sell. Content marketing often lacks input from the frontline sales teams its meant to support. Instead content originates from teams that think at a brand level, instead of using a mindset focused on customers and relationships.

The reason we market content is to provide a valuable resource to the audience. Unfortunately, content marketing often follows a different set of guidelines and regularly is used to test the latest technology or format or, even worse, is added to the mix as an alternative to earned media. I suggest a return to basics, supplemented with smart use of data that will drive results. Here is a five-step plan to follow:

1. Know what you're selling and how it's sold: This sounds elementary, but indulge me. It's important for program leads to put themselves into the shoes of target audiences and know what needs content is meant to address. Often this key step is overlooked. A visit to **Twitter** proves this.

Companies often create long videos of individuals in suits talking about their institution's extensive history in a certain sector. The language follows what the marketing/communications lead *wishes* its audience would say about the company, yet it has zero connection to how sales pros sell.

Rather than make long-form commercials, consider reviewing sales aids, pitch books and other frontline materials to create a series that's useful versus promotional.

2. Plan for micros, not macros: In defense of their bottom lines, some media companies have instilled a horrible idea into brands: Bigger = better. The idea of reaching a small, focused group is sacrilege to large media-buying companies because it hurts their bottom line. The audience for many companies, however, may be small and focused.

With information from tools like **Salesforce.com** and others, companies know their important leads and decision makers and can go directly to them. So if you want to connect with CTOs of mid-market to large-cap companies about #cloudcomputing, consider pulling a list of prospects from a sales database, find out where they are online and use custom targeting to reach them. This efficient method will slash budgets and allow funds to be reallocated to other programs.

3. Review results, be nimble and prepared to pivot: Another equally common flaw of content marketing is that many campaigns tend to offer basic information. At best this content's core group of sharers and engagers are from a brand's marcom and agency teams.

It's clear we live in an age where information about our audience is readily available with a few searches, but paid

audience analysis tools can offer a wealth of important data. A few key trends can be spotted and form the basis of a useful piece of content that will pay dividends across the business. Sales teams should be polled to find out if their clients are sharing the content or if it shows up in their **LinkedIn** feeds.

As a campaign matures a simple question should be: Are we reaching our audience? If not, change direction asap.

4. Know whom you're selling to: As we know, in today's digital world, everything we do leaves a data footprint. And while George Orwell is angrily spinning in his grave next to his porcine friends, some form of Big Brother is here. As marketers and communicators we can use this information to our advantage and create new and different ways to reach audiences through all channels available.

If the data shows that a subset of our audience likes a certain sport, then this intel should be sent to sales for use as an icebreaker. Use it next to devise a content plan.

5. Event hashtags are a TV commercial: If your sales team is attending a key trade show, its clients likely are, too. Nearly every event has a hashtag meant to centralize conversation and be a hub for content sharing, reflection, advertising and networking. The hashtag also provides a way for individuals who couldn't attend the event, but often look like those who did, to follow what's happening at it.

Finding the balance between offering content useful to followers and something connective and interesting to conference attendees is an untapped white space of potential that most brands, regardless of category, are still discovering.

I didn't invent this way of thinking about content marketing, but I will continue to champion it. Brands and their marketers are facing a new reality: Social media has created a level playing field for brands, media companies, buyers and sellers. Breakthrough content can come from anywhere and anyone. Content marketing is all about being useful, valuable and relevant to target audiences. Marketers are charged with finding ways to create something that offers real value. ■

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Note: Hear more from Snyder during PR News' Digital and Marketing Communications Show, Oct. 17-19, Miami, FL. For information: <http://tinyurl.com/y8gmj2>

Takeaways

1. Content marketing should be sales-driven, but not be a sales pitch.
2. Offer content that provides true value to target audience members.
3. Make sure your content is aimed at decision makers.

Social Media Through the Eyes of a B2B Marketing Communications Pro



Editor's Note: In this regular feature we ask PR leaders to tell us about people who've influenced their career, the best advice they've received and trends they've spotted. This week's interview is with Heather Dueitt, director, marketing/communications, at **NoteVault**.

- ▶ **Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.** This is something I heard at **Edelman** in NY, when I sat three rows away from Richard Edelman. It's always stuck with me. A follow-up to this is to do one thing that scares you each day; don't be afraid to try things and pilot something. And don't be afraid to ask a question or demand something from your agency. Just because something is the industry trend, why not try doing it a different way? In the last six months I've really taken this advice professionally and personally. Especially because we don't have big budgets like some of our competitors, we have to be a little more creative.
- ▶ **Create an open environment where anybody feels comfortable bringing up ideas and providing feedback.** At Edelman when we did brainstorming we'd bring in every level of employee and interns. Some of the best ideas came from fresh minds who were slightly outside of what we were dealing with. Then you pilot the idea, build parameters and measure it. You have to be comfortable with failure, which is still something that's difficult for me, but sometimes you have to fail so you can learn from it and build an even stronger program.
- ▶ **Not every social channel is for every brand.** If a brand is at the beginning [of a social media effort], pick one [channel] that makes sense for your brand and give it a try. Determine the value of each channel and where you're going to spend your time. And make sure [what you're doing on social] is measureable. Set smart goals, because it can be such a time suck. It's the same with content marketing. We download our SEO and top keywords and we back into our social content. Even if you're just tweeting about

something, make it SEO-focused...make social work for you just a little bit more.

- ▶ **Google+ is one of the channels that people just don't touch.** But from a search perspective and organic search it lasts longer and helps push up your results. That's a trend I'm starting to see other brands embrace. People overlook Google+ because they only look at the engagement element of it. You want likes, sure, but in a B2B context we're really trying to get [visitors] to go to our blog content or our website, where we can communicate in a longer form. So it's that click-through that is my ultimate metric from an engagement perspective. You can have 300 likes, but if nobody's clicking through or reading the content, what value are you providing?
- ▶ **LinkedIn Groups is the most effective platform for our business...our sales team members and I are posting valuable content into the different industry groups.** That leads to conversations with users or people who could be potential prospects. It's getting a bit spammy so we make sure to share content that provides value. It's not just "sign up for a free trial." It's "here are the top trends that we see in the construction industry." Yes, our audience is on **Facebook** but they're not wanting to communicate with us about software when they're looking at their granddaughter's pictures. We don't want to force that on them.
- ▶ **Never use being the only woman in a room as a crutch because then you're always going to be leaning on it.** It's still challenging and shocking, though. What's gotten me to excel is that I'm analytically driven. You're going to have doubters and naysayers, so I just present the facts. I always have the facts stand behind me even when people take a different angle. ■

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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDEBOOK

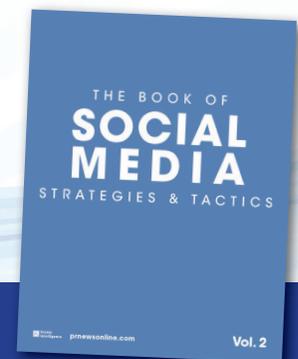
In PR News' Social Media Guidebook, the challenges of planning, executing and measuring successful social media campaigns are met with eight chapters on everything from Snapchat to live streaming to blogging.

Chapters include:

- Measuring and Communicating Social Success
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Live Streaming

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prnewsonline.com/social-media-guidebook



How Southwest Responded to Parallel Crises

At the heart of this crisis was our biggest challenge: How could we provide targeted communication to customers and employees when our main channels for doing so were down?

One additional challenge: Just hours before the technology outage, our communications team soft-launched the Southwest Community external blog—an expanded, more interactive version of the *Nuts About Southwest* blog. We had a robust communication strategy for the soft launch, but that changed the moment our website went down. We regrouped with a plan to turn this negative into an opportunity.

PLAN FOR THE UNEXPECTED

We regularly review crisis plans and conduct drills to prepare for a variety of situations. Our crisis communication objectives are: Demonstrate success in responding to the issue and our concern for anyone who may be affected; defuse conflict or controversy; and reduce pressures facing Southwest Airlines as a result.

Business objectives in a crisis include: Preserve our reputation and brand; protect the business by operating safely, maintaining service quality and consumer confidence/loyalty.

On July 20 at 3:15 p.m., we provided leaders with the first of many listening/measurement reports about the situation.

We use a Potential Operational Problem (POP) method. POPs provide updates and a forum for discussion. They were set into action immediately. Throughout the next few days, Southwest leadership activated on 17 POP calls. These calls informed the cross-functional team about communications needs and helped determine next steps.

Even with POPs, it took our 63-person communications team weeks to work through crisis-related efforts.

PARALLEL CRISES

Initially, communication strategy focused on informing customers of the outage without an ability to send messages via email, text or phone, since these systems were impacted.

We also quickly recognized the need to focus on the internal crisis, as employees were significantly disadvantaged since they, too, were unable to get to their final destinations.

Strategy drove tactics, which focused on keeping employees, customers and media informed early and often on not only their preferred channels, but also new platforms.

Key internal and external messages fell into categories:

1. How Southwest employees were processing travelers during the outage and providing crucial information for travel.
2. Traveler and crew reaccommodation and aircraft repositioning in the days following the outage.
3. Apologies and make-goods for employees and customers.

We wanted to make sure to strike the right tone, in the right place, at the right time. Leadership was quick to apologize to customers and thank employees, who were not only trying to figure out how to do their jobs, but also doing their best to accommodate stranded/delayed customers.

Southwest Airlines was live. Published by Brooks Thomas (?) · July 21 · 25.9k views

We were live earlier discussing our technology challenges. What you'll find in the stream:

- Rebooking information
- Current state of our Operation
- What caused yesterday's outage
- System recovery

Southwest Airlines @SouthwestAir · Jul 20

We are aware and investigating current issues with our systems. We will keep you posted as we have more information to share.

Southwest Airlines @SouthwestAir · Jul 21

Most of our systems are back online this morning. Here's an update and an apology on our technical challenges: community.southwest.com/t5/Southwest-S

Southwest Airlines @SouthwestAir · Jul 20

Here's an update on today's technical challenges and how we're approaching the beginning of the day tomorrow.

southwestair Following

25.9k views 4w

southwestair UPDATED Saturday July 23, 11:15 a.m. CDT:

As we continue to recover operations, flexible travel accommodations are in place through Tuesday, July 26. We apologize for the lack of updates here on Instagram. Please click the link in our bio for information on rebooking.

UPDATED Friday July 22, at 11:15 p.m. CDT:

Here is a message from our Chief Communication Officer, Linda Rutherford:

Good evening,

I wanted to provide you with a Friday night update on our Operation. This afternoon, we were able to catch up and fully assess the state of our Crews

Living Social: Southwest depended on social, including its COO on Facebook Live, to transmit messages during the outage. Source: Southwest Airlines

TACTICS

To reach employees with information they needed to serve customers we utilized text messages, email and digital signs; organic, employee-created **Facebook** pages and groups; and intranet blog posts.

Externally, we leveraged Southwest's social media properties. The Social Care Team had all hands on deck to quickly respond to customer inquiries coming in through multiple social media accounts. Customers reaching out to us hourly equaled what we see during an entire day.

MEASURING

We began providing communication measurement reports moments after the first customer tweet and included a holistic view of the internal and external landscape (volume, sentiment, response, etc.). Measurement reports continued twice daily for a week.

The communications team distributed the first Listening Center Alert—an email to key internal stakeholders—to inform leaders and team members of the outage's initial impact. Our first Listening Center report was distributed to leadership shortly after conversation began on social media. These were sent several times daily and encompassed all social updates.

A comprehensive executive report tying communications metrics to business metrics (i.e. NPS, Brand Monitor, etc.) was completed immediately following the crisis, and an update was compiled two weeks later.

Customers were frustrated, but appreciative of quick information. Southwest mentions accounted for more than 48% of all airline conversation on social media from July 20-27.

Our three Facebook Live videos reached more than 4 million people. We experienced a 273% increase in video views on Southwest's Facebook page that week, compared to the previous week. There was a 43% increase in @SouthwestAir mentions that our Social Care Team handled. New Facebook fans on July 20 grew 3,500+, compared to our average of 1,500 daily.

In traditional media, there were 5,000+ mentions. Our communications team fielded calls from all major national media outlets and hundreds of local media outlets.

Customer Relations fielded 55,000+ emails and phone calls. The *Brand Monitor Survey* showed brand commitment took a hit during the outage...but core customers remained loyal. There was a temporary drop in Net Promoter Score, but it rebounded quickly following the crisis.

Employees battled long hours on the front lines serving frustrated, delayed customers. Once our intranet recovered, traffic to the employee blog increased 10% during the outage as employees sought information. Communications distributed 200+ messages on company channels. We saw 80,000+ outage-related page views of intranet posts and moderated 1,000+ employee comments—the largest number ever received on the employee blog. Sentiment was neutral to negative; employees were frustrated, tired and seeking answers.

THE NEW SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY

Our plan to drive engagement on the Southwest Community blog the day of launch was unnecessary, as we utilized it to communicate messages about the outage, which ultimately led employees and customers to become early adopters.

As customers discovered the new Story Submission Form functionality, positive stories of employees going above and beyond arrived. We repurposed them into testimonials. Make timing work with you, not against you; seize the opportunity.

LESSONS LEARNED: MORE INSTAGRAM

Hindsight is 20/20 and there always is room for improvement. With our omni-channel approach, we leaned heavily on social channels—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the Southwest Community. If we could get a do-over, we would use Instagram earlier. We chose not to, since we typically use it for visual storytelling and disseminating visual information. So, naturally, Instagram wasn't top-of-list as a customer-service platform. We soon recognized that was an oversight. It was decided to test it as a source to issue travel advisories.

Instagram could have provided an additional source of information for customers and employees and guide them to Community or the Facebook page for more information.

Our collective reach was in the millions and we saw spikes in positive sentiment. We've been recognized for being the first company to utilize live streaming to communicate during a crisis.

We turned to Facebook Live to satisfy multiple needs: First, to answer the numerous media inquiries coming into

SWAMedia.com. Facebook Live allowed us to triage media inquiries, control the message, show sincerity and give everyone the same information at the same time. Second, we had a social need to connect with customers (whose mentions were now piling up into the tens of thousands).

We didn't have much information that first night when we went live from our social media listening center, other than we were in the process of drawing down the operation. Being open about that, coupled with visible emotion during our first Facebook Live video, gave us the first indications of positive sentiment. People were upset with us, but they were met with an apologetic face, delivering a very authentic message.

In the morning, we decided to go live a second time with our chief operating officer. From the first stream, we learned we needed to lead with the most actionable info for travelers before examining the cause and its fix. Then, we needed to explain why—despite a cause being in place—it was taking so long for operations to recover.

We saw another boost in positive sentiment and a slight lull in Social Customer Care mentions. Let's be clear—volumes remained unmanageable, but customers appreciated the information, transparency and humility.

When it was determined we weren't reaching quite as many people as hoped, we boosted this stream with paid media. This was the only budget used in this crisis response, and cost \$14,400.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

When you've planned for the unexpected, key players know their roles. But, as the crisis drags on, the team will need support and rest. Activate your entire team and designate clear roles.

"Tell it all and tell it fast" isn't easy when you're dealing with a complex issue that's evolving as you speak. In the rush to get out information, don't speculate. Give frequent, factual updates. Note: Quickness can sometimes be the enemy of accuracy. Tell the truth about the situation and get to the why behind it to the extent that you can. Explain the cause, the effects and what you're doing to make it right.

DOCUMENT IT ALL

There likely won't be a communication plan on paper (or time to create one) when you're in the thick of it. Strategy is evolving, too. To remain consistent and bring organization to the situation, document every single touchpoint. Southwest used approximately 160 forms of communication tactics over a four-day period. We believe our careful records will be invaluable as we plan and drill for future emergencies.

Be human. Raw emotion and genuine concern are key, and should show in your messaging. Make sure customers and employees know you recognize what they're going through.

Find a way to leverage every available channel. In the heat of the moment, it's hard to think beyond your typical, go-to, "safe" channels. You should. We had never used Facebook Live, but this was definitely the right time to take that leap. ■

CONTACT: @SWAfollower

1. No Room on the Bench: As you know, when it comes to PR crises, once your brand is under the Klieg light, it's difficult to move back into the shadows. Take beleaguered **Uber Technologies**, which has been a regular in these pages for the past few months. Earlier, the issue concerned **Honda** Vezele cars Uber leased to its drivers in Singapore last year despite knowing they contained a defective part and had been recalled (*PRN* Aug. 8, 2017). This week it's a suit from **Benchmark**, a major Uber investor, against former CEO/founder **Travis Kalanick**, who was forced to resign in June due to the company's unseemly culture. In short, Benchmark wants Kalanick off the board. Lost in the headlines of Kalanick's resignation was the fact that he retained a board seat, though it



Travis Kalanick, Former CEO, Uber Technologies

was not the CEO board seat. The Aug. 10 suit accuses Kalanick of fraud, breach of contract and fiduciary irresponsibility. Before his ouster, Kalanick negotiated with the board to allow him to add three seats to the eight-member board. When he resigned Kalanick gave up his CEO seat and took one of the three new seats. Benchmark says in its suit it would never have agreed to the three-new-seats deal had it known more about some of Kalanick's misdeeds. Essentially Benchmark is claiming Kalanick hid the cultural issues at Uber and so negotiated the seat deal fraudulently. As if all this isn't enough, unconfirmed media reports have Kalanick controlling Uber behind the scenes, complicating the firm's search for a new CEO.

2. Picture This: Taking time to assess a potential crisis situation and gather intelligence, especially when you're a brand with myriad locations throughout the country and the globe, are some of the lessons stemming from the embarrassing **Walmart** inci-



Elaine Seward, SR Video Producer/Social Media Coordinator, American Chemical Society

dent last week. A photo of a gun display at a Walmart store showed a sign above the guns that read: "Own the School Year Like a Hero." The photo went viral on **Twitter** Aug. 9, sparking outrage from the Twitterverse. Walmart quickly, maybe too quickly, apologized for the sign via Twitter and said it had been removed. Things got murky after that. Initially Walmart said the store was in Evansville, IN, as tweeter **Leeanna May** told *The Washington Post*. May said she'd snapped the photo that went viral. Not long after, a Walmart spokesperson told paper the brand was unsure which store had displayed the sign. A tweet from Walmart saying the sign was removed from its Evansville store was inaccurate, the spokesperson told the Post. In addition, it was unclear whether the photo was doctored. Walmart remained silent from Wednesday evening through early Saturday, as it gathered information. Saturday Walmart confirmed the incident was a hoax, although it released no other details. When it rains it pours for brands in a crisis. The story gave journalists the opportunity to remind readers Walmart is the country's largest gun and ammunition seller. Several also noted an incident last month when a third-party vendor used a racial epithet to describe the color of a wig it was selling on Walmart's online store.

3. Platform Prater: As noted on this week's page 2, **Facebook** chief **Mark Zuckerberg** has made video a priority. Last week it unveiled its redesigned video platform, simply calling it Watch. Blurring the line between online video and TV, Watch will emphasize video series, as opposed to individual videos. This will "push brands...to create consistent series with long-form content in

order to be featured," says **Tod Plotkin**, principal, **Green Buzz Agency**. Adds **Elaine Seward**, senior video producer/social media coordinator, **American Chemical Society**, brand content that follows "a narrative arc...over several episodes, will be more intimate for audiences." Watch will differentiate itself from video-centric sites by allowing users to comment in real time and chat with Facebook friends. Watch initially will be offered to a select group in the U.S. and eventually to all. – Search giant **Google** seemed to be floundering last week when it canceled a town hall meeting to discuss diversity issues that have consumed the brand since word leaked of a memo criticizing its policies (*PRN*, Aug. 8, 2017). Google said it halted the town hall because employees feared speaking in a public forum. The memo's author, engineer **James Damore**, was fired last Monday. Friday he'd authored an op ed in the *Wall St Journal* about his ouster.

4. People: Merck CEO **Ken Frazier** left a presidential advisory council August 14 to protest what he believes was **President Trump's** inadequate response to weekend riots in Charlottesville, VA. Hours later the president



Jon Iwata, Chief Brand Officer, IBM

tweeted, "Now that Ken Frazier...has resigned...he will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!" – 33-year veteran **Jon Iwata** was named **IBM's** first chief brand officer. – Congrats to *PR* News friend **Fenot Tekle** on being named director of corporate communications at **Facebook**. Tekle came from **LinkedIn** and previously was a communicator at **AMC** and **Netflix**. – **The Reis Group** tapped former *Associated Press* journalist **Beth Casteel** as senior counselor. – **Gavin** named former **Ketchum** hand **Chris Savarese** VP, client services. – Congrats to Detroit-based **Bianchi PR** on its 25th anniversary. ■

PRNews' Top Women in PR Awards

The Top Women in PR Awards recognize leaders and team builders who impact the discipline of public relations and continue to inspire the next generations of women to rise to the C-suite level.

Women who have made bold advances in creating communications strategies for brands, nonprofits and government agencies—managing crises, developing brand messages, protecting and building brand reputations and creating content for digital platforms in the past year will be celebrated at a winners luncheon in January 2018.

A blue-chip panel of communicators will judge entries on the following:

- Why should the nominee be included in PR News' Top Women in PR list?
- List three communications campaigns created or led by the nominee.
- How has the nominee's influence in PR extended beyond her own organizations?
- Provide three words to best describe this nominee.
- Have you worked professionally with the nominee and, if so, in what capacity?

Women of all titles and years of experience who work in communications for corporations, agencies, government organizations, academic institutions and nonprofits are eligible.

See entry information at prnew.se/topwomen17

Entry Deadline:
August 18
Late Deadline:
August 25

Have a top woman in mind?
Nominate her at prnew.se/topwomen17

Questions? Contact Jessica Placencia at jessica@accessintel.com.