PR NEWS

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CONTENTS

MEASUREMENT

Strategies to Find the Right Metrics to Measure Your Company's ROI

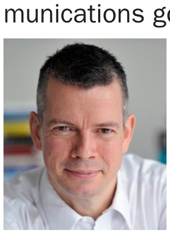
[**Editor's Note:** This is fourth in a series of **Intrado Digital Media**-sponsored articles about measurement. The previous three articles appeared in the November 2019, December 2019 and January 2020 editions, respectively, of PRNEWS.]

Say what you will about the digital age, but it's never been easier to measure. Nearly everything communicators do professionally leaves a digital footprint, and thus is measurable.

So why address the topic of finding the *right* metrics for your company's ROI? Wouldn't it be simpler to measure everything communicators do? You'd likely spend your day doing nothing but measuring.

MEASUREMENT'S PATH TO INSIGHTS

More important, though, choosing random activities to measure is unlikely to offer wisdom that can be applied to communications goals or your company's objectives.



Jon Meakin
West Coast Lead,
Global Head of
Strategic Services
Grayling

"You don't measure everything, because you don't need to," says **Jon Meakin**, West Coast lead and global head of strategic services at **Grayling**. "You need to boil it down to a few things that really make a difference" to your goals.

As Johna **Burke**, global managing director of **AMEC**, the international measurement group, says, "My angle on the 'right metric' for a company's communicators will always be [to choose metrics that track with] what that the communicator is trying to accomplish."

When you don't know what your communications goals are, metrics aren't going to be helpful, Burke says, emphasizing the importance of ensuring goals are agreed upon at the outset of a campaign.

Johna Burke
Global MD
AMEC

An additional reason to choose the right metrics is that measurement and analysis are valuable in large part because they yield insights that may change the way communicators and their companies behave.

"So many of us," Meakin says, "tend to think of measurement as something you do only at the end" of a campaign. "Certainly, it's important to measure what's happened" at the end of a campaign, Meakin concedes. "But the next question has to be, 'What can we learn [from the data] for the next time? How can we iterate for the next time we do this?' What we should be doing is making measuring more *pre*scriptive and less *de*scriptive."

PROMOTING A MEASUREMENT CULTURE

In fact, Meakin believes one way to promote a measurement culture is to encourage PR pros to start asking "the right questions" during the planning stage of an effort. "You can't separate measurement from planning," he argues.

Too many PR pros, of course, continue to measure success according to the thickness of "their news clips book."

Instead, a better question to ask at the outset of a media relations effort, for example, is, What does the media landscape look like? Which media platforms are our customers

Continued on page 2

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Editor, Seth Arenstein, sarenstein@accessintel.com
Graphic Designer, Yelena Shamis, yshamis@accessintel.com
Senior Content Manager, Sophie Maerowitz, SMaerowitz@accessintel.com
Senior Content Manager, Mark Renfree, mrenfree@accessintel.com
Content Manager, Nicole Schuman, nschuman@accessintel.com
Content Director, Erika Bradbury, ebradbury@accessintel.com
PRNEWS Publisher, Tom Larranaga, tlarranaga@accessintel.com
SVP, Marketing Group, Dan Hanover, dhanover@accessintel.com
Divisional President, Kerry Smith, ksmith@accessintel.com
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Phone: 888.707.5814 · Fax: 301.309.3847
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Continued from page 1

Do Media Results=Business Outcomes?

frequenting? How can PR's activities help the company in its effort to grow revenue?

"I encourage people to think about what matters most to your organization or the client's organization. Then start thinking about designing programs that move the needle against those things and how you can measure them."

THE TOUGHEST MEASUREMENT ISSUE

Ben Chodor
President
Intrado Digital Media

It sounds relatively straight forward: tie media results to business outcomes. Yet that's "one of the biggest pitfalls in PR measurement," says Intrado Digital Media president **Ben Chodor**.

For example, he cites a company that places a page-one article in the **New York Times**, "a PR win in anyone's book," he says.

"But I challenge PR pros to look more closely at what happened *after* the coverage. Did audiences and influencers share the article broadly? Was there an increase in product orders? Did web traffic spike?"

The gap between PR results and their impact on a business "is probably the most overlooked metric in the industry today," Chodor believes.

One of the reasons, he says, is because such tracking "requires alignment with marketing data that communications professionals may not have access to or may not be used to analyzing and reporting against."

CUMULATIVE EFFECT

Another issue that plays into this example, adds Meakin, is that purchasing is "a cumulative thing…most people don't make a buying decision after reading one article."

The page-one article is fantastic, but "there are several touchpoints [in a buying decision]… Are you reaching potential buyers with marketing? Are you publishing content on social media that your audience is going to see? You have to try to measure where that page-one article figures into the mix of all things you did during the course of a year. That's a fool's errand."

That's not to say you can't measure the influence of the article. You could conduct audience research and see how/if your target audience has changed its opinion based on media placements. You could also track traffic back to your web site, particularly if the article had a link.

Another example from Chodor helps demonstrate finding the right metrics for ROI.

Let's assume Technology Company A is an early-stage start-up, Chodor says. It is entering a crowded and highly competitive market. The company has tasked PR to launch its brand, raise visibility and position its executives as thought leaders in the industry.

For most PR pros, one of the first metrics that might come to mind in this example would be quantity of coverage over a specific period of time, such as three months or six months.

In addition, communicators might look at metrics surrounding the quality of articles or other published content, says Chodor.

For example, where were the media placements published? Were they in top-tier publications or trade publications? You could get more granular and ask, were they toward the front of the publication or buried? Did the coverage accurately reflect the company's narrative? Were top executives quoted?

While those metrics are useful and deserve analysis, for a start-up, quantity and quality of coverage tell only part of the story.

FINDING THE RIGHT METRICS

"These metrics are unlikely to demonstrate true ROI against business outcomes," Chodor says. In short, these metrics will fail to demonstrate true market impact.

Instead, Chodor recommends the company look at metrics surrounding: web site traffic, followers of the company's social channels, social mentions, lead generation, content downloads and inbound sales inquiries.

Says Chodor, "It's important to remember that PR can be a dotted line to the metrics listed above." In addition, he notes a strong PR campaign contributes to "overall brand lift and should help feed the marketing/sales funnel."

Other softer metrics for PR can include an analysis of: PR coverage alignment with company/product messaging and value proposition, share of voice (in this case, the company would want to see incremental increases over time vs. share of voice domination immediately, feature coverage vs. mentions of the company, type of coverage).

A combination of the qualitative and quantitative metrics listed here "will paint a pretty clear picture of PR performance and ROI," Chodor says. ■

New PRSA Chair Envisions PR's Broader Role, Advocates for MBA Over Comms Grad Degree

[**Editor's Note:** This article is part of a series that features interviews with senior PR pros who have begun a new position recently. This month's interview is with **T. Garland Stansell**, who became **PRSA**'s chair Jan. 1. A 30-year communications veteran, Stansell is CCO of **Children's of Alabama**, the pediatric health system in Birmingham. He's had a series of leadership positions with PRSA, including treasurer (2018), secretary (2017) and at-large member of the board of directors (2015-16).

His priorities as PRSA chair include broadening training for the group's 30,000 members so they are able to move easily between PR, marketing, advertising and social media.

During the interview he also emphasized the importance of practicing PR with an ethical underpinning. In addition, he advocates that those considering a graduate degree in PR think about pursuing an MBA instead. The business degree, he believes, will better equip PR pros to go beyond 'a seat at the table' and propel them to credibility within the boardroom. As it's Black History Month, we also asked about diversity and inclusion. His edited responses follow.]

PRNEWS: What issues are top of mind for PRSA's members, and how are you addressing them?

T. Garland Stansell
Chair, PRSA
CCO,
Children's of Alabama

T. Garland Stansell: There are a few things. One is the convergence of disciplines. Part of PRSA's strategic plan, which we just launched [for 2020-2222], looks at the convergence of disciplines.

We are no longer looking at PR in its own bubble. Communications professionals now find themselves doing more than traditional public relations, but also extended public relations, which includes marketing, advertising and all facets of communications.

What we are hearing from members is that this convergence sometimes creates challenges in the workplace. Certainly, some of our members are not prepared for convergence, since they've never operated in some of these other disciplines.

Along those lines, we're also looking at how we might better prepare students, our **PRSSA** members, to not operate in a public relations bubble, but instead to get outside of that silo and to understand more about marketing and advertising and all communications facets.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE 24-SECOND NEWS CYCLE

The other issue we hear about concerns the rapid proliferation of technology. Because of technology, we now have social media and a more global perspective. At one time the news cycle was 24 hours. Now it may be 24 minutes or, in some cases, 24 seconds.

That leads to the need to respond quickly [to media]. In some cases, tech is changing the way communications professionals do their jobs. You see AI coming. What does that mean for the way we'll be communicating in the future?

Those are two of the biggest challenges. There are a few others, such as doing more with less. Similar to shrinking newsrooms in the media landscape, there also is shrinking staffing in corporations and agencies. Or, at least, if they're not shrinking, they're not adding staff, and they're expected to do more with less.

PRNEWS: We spoke with a group of students and grad students at a recent PRSA event and were shocked to find out that they had little knowledge of communications measurement. None of them knew of the Barcelona Principles, and they were unsure of a measurement requirement on their curriculum. Does that surprise you?

Stansell: Measurement continues to be a challenge. On a professional level, we are finding measurement and the need to show ROI continues to grow, particularly if we are going to effect change within our organizations.

From the perspective of the agencies, we have to do a better job of measurement and showing progress.

Continued on page 7

BY ESTHER-MIREYA TEJEDA, SVP, HEAD, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & PR, ENTERCOM

What Does Diversity & Inclusion Have to Do with Your Crisis Plan? Everything

[**Editor's Note:** To mark **Black History Month**, PRNEWS highlights diversity and inclusion (please see pages 8, 15).]
Can you truly excel at corporate reputation management and crisis communications without diversity and inclusion? I continue to pose that question to business leaders everywhere, as we continue to see just how inextricably linked these two areas are.

Diversity and inclusion has been seen as a *nice to have,* but it is actually a *must have* in an environment of two-way communication between brands and consumers.

Today, nearly everyone can have a public voice via mass reach, self-publishing platforms on social media and issues can escalate to national attention in a matter of minutes.

PR CRISES – THE AVOIDABLES

In the past few years, we have seen major brands experience significant disruption due to completely avoidable PR crises.

Take, for instance, the **Pepsi** ad featuring **Kendall Jenner** in a scene that evoked the **Black Lives Matter** movement (full disclosure: I used to work at **PepsiCo**) or the **Starbucks** viral video showing police officers arresting two African-American patrons for no discernable reason at a store in Philadelphia.

Gucci also faced intense criticism for launching a sweater that harkened back to blackface, as did **Prada** for using blackface dolls in a store display in New York City.

Then there was the **Dove** ad depicting a black woman transforming into a white woman, presumably after bathing with Dove shower gel. The list does go on, in fact.

THE NEW REALITY

In today's world, there is no such thing as containing a crisis. Anyone with internet access and a social media account has a platform that can reach thousands, if not millions, of people with the click of a post.

And, amidst an increasingly charged sociopolitical environment in the U.S. and globally, tolerance for cultural insensitivities or bias is at an all-time low.

More than ever before, consumers are demanding that the brands they patronize behave in ways that align with their social and political values. When that does not happen, people take to the streets – or, in our new reality, to Twitter.

For example, the incident at the local Starbucks in Philadelphia became a national headline after a video taken on a patron's mobile phone was posted online and went viral. #BoycottStarbucks became a trending hashtag and the rest is headline history.

THE COST OF PR CRISES

When incidents like these occur, organizations jump into crisis mode, calling in their corporate reputation and crisis communications teams to navigate the issue.

The exact amount of total dollars spent engaging PR and crisis teams may not be public information, nor may be the metrics on how the disruption affected revenue in the near-term and corporate or brand reputation in the long-term. However, it is certainly more than they would have lost or spent if an incident had been avoided altogether.

In some cases, the reputational damage of crisis impacts revenue for years after an issue is out of the headlines.

WORSENING STATISTICS

We have all seen the stats on diversity in the public relations industry. According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics** (2019), 89.8 percent of all PR practitioners in the U.S. are white, 8 percent are African-American, 1.4 percent are Latino/a, and 0.4 percent are Asian-American. As you can see in the chart, this is a decline in diversity from the year before. Instead of getting better, our industry is getting worse.

DIVERSITY AND CRISIS

How does this relate to crisis management? If companies had diverse teams at the onset, there is a fair chance that incidents like these would have never happened.

As communicators, we are problem solvers as much as problem avoiders. It is our job to assess risk and protect the reputation of brands we serve. If an organization's PR team does not reflect the ethnic makeup of its consumers, there is a tremendous opportunity for failed risk assessments.

Simply put – less diversity means more bad judgement calls. There may be no standard way to measure the total revenue protected in each crisis a PR team avoids, but a dollar saved is a dollar earned.

DIVERSITY AS A BUSINESS INVESTMENT

So, where do companies want to invest their efforts? The options are: upfront, to build diverse teams that can effectively assess risk and avoid costly crises or at the outset of a crisis to put out fires that cost money, resources and reputational damage.

My vote is for investing in building properly diverse teams that set up the company to succeed and grow in today's dynamic and unforgiving marketplace. It is smarter to avoid reputational damage than it is to fix it later.

However, it is not enough to simply hire diverse teams. Once the team is in place, there is work to be done on inclusion, empowerment and retention, but that is a topic for another essay. ■

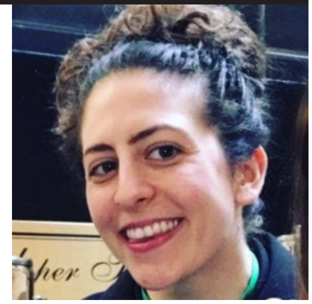
CONTACT: *Esther-Mireya.Tejeda@entercom.com*

US PR Practitioners by Ethnicity

2019		2018	
89.8%	White	87.9 %	White
8%	African-American	8.3%	African American
1.4%	Latino/a	5.7%	Latino/a
0.4 %	Asian-American	2.6%	Asian-American

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Dept. of Labor

BY SOPHIE MAEROWITZ, SENIOR CONTENT MANAGER, PRNEWS



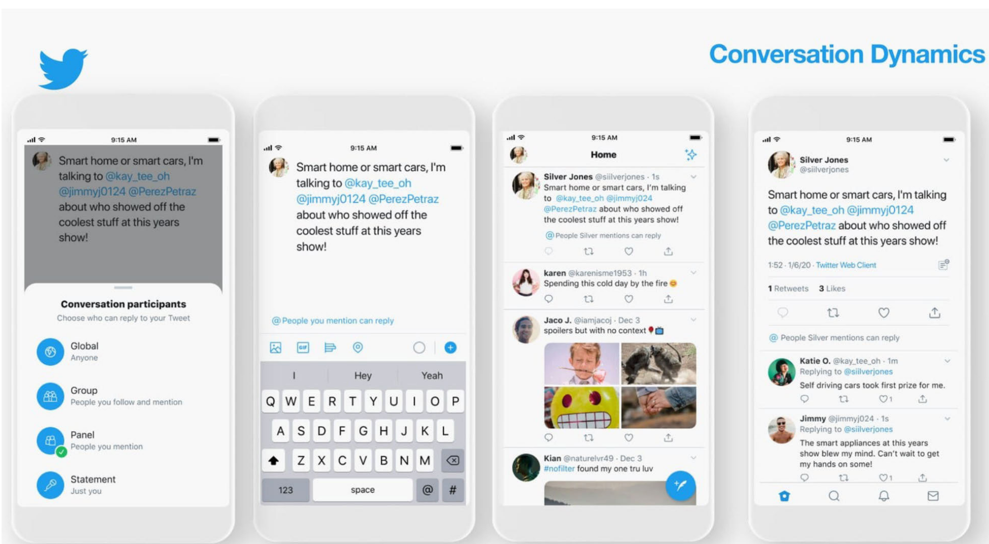
Spring Ahead on Social: Social Media Updates for Communicators to Watch

With the start of the year, social media platforms released features that should help communicators with planning for these tools. **Twitter**'s reply-blocking experiment and **Facebook**'s war on deepfakes should offer communicators more control over trolls and bots. Less clear is the impact of Facebook's new feature that allows users to delete data other sites have collected about them. Meawhile, **Instagram** released features to assist with organization and reporting.

TWITTER

At **CES 2020**, **Twitter** product lead **Kayvon Beykpour** outlined a change that will allow users to determine who can reply to their tweets. The update is still in the testing phase, but it would be a major shift in the way conversations unfold on Twitter. Users would be able to divide replies into four groups:

- Global: Anybody can reply
- Group: People you follow and mention can reply
- Panel: Those mentioned in the tweet can reply
- Statement: No one can reply



To The Four: Examples of options users can employ to regulate their Twitter conversations. Source: Twitter

While the change likely will benefit brands beset with large groups of detractors (especially during a crisis), some have voiced concern that the update effectively would censor critics and seed fake news.

"Bad actors spreading misinformation may block fact-checkers from holding them accountable," said **Tom Garruto**, director of operations at marketing firm **Social Edge**.

RATIO NO MORE

WIRED coverage of Beykpour's CES interview noted the update would end the phenomenon of the *ratio*, where negative sentiment outweighs positive in the replies section.

Tom Garruto
Director, Operations
The Social Edge

A ratio signals an unpopular or offensive opinion – perhaps the only kind of high-volume engagement that brands like to avoid. It is feasible, though, that without ratios, brands would be slower to recognize messages that miss the mark. This amounts to a loss for Twitter's social listening and monitoring capabilities.

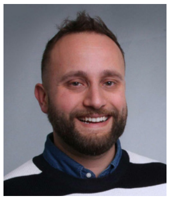
With corporate-reputation building and protection being a central part of the PR pro's remit, communicators may need to institute workarounds so they can adequately monitor the social conversation on Twitter.

In addition, brands will need to be selective with their newfound power to silence critics, or risk being deaf to their own mistakes. It's almost an "Emperor's New Clothes" conundrum.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

TROLL-FREE TWEETING?



Justin Buchbinder
Director,
Social Media
Finn Partners

Some communicators welcomed the change, of course.

"When my colleagues and I heard about the upcoming ability to hide replies, we started dancing through the hallways," said **Justin Buchbinder**, director of social media at **Finn Partners**. "The troll-clogged Twitter-verse is a nightmare. All it takes are a few bots or unhinged basement-dwellers to take a conversation in a chaotic direction."

TWITTER CATCHING UP

Buchbinder added that **Instagram** and **Facebook** have long since rolled out responses to control audience response – this is simply Twitter playing catch-up.

Another plus: With more control over replies, communicators would have a new format for conversation among thought leaders and brand accounts. "I'm already thinking about how we might be able to use the panel option for unique conversations, like banter between podcast hosts and guests to promote upcoming episodes," The Social Edge's Garruto said. "The interview format really jumps out at me.

INSTAGRAM

This platform's new features (below) should prove useful to communicators, whether they're seeking a tamer inbox for direct messages, information on which posts garner the most followers or the ability to gate content by demographic.

Growth Insights: Communicators will be able to track follower growth by post and story. Business accounts can view follower growth over time, by day or by week. This is a Godsend for attributing spikes in follower counts to effective messaging or creative. Buchbinder of Finn Partners noted that the additional growth metrics will be particularly helpful, given the difficulty of increasing Instagram follower counts.

Secondary Inbox: Previously, business accounts received all DMs in the same inbox, translating into an organizational nightmare for some. With the update, inboxes are separated into two tabs: Primary (for messages you'd like to see first) and General.

Age Gating: While Instagram announced it would be hiding content about weight loss from the pages of underage users in 2019, the platform is not offering age-gating controls.

This feature should act as a failsafe for brands advertising regulated products, while ensuring ad dollars are not wasted on viewers outside a target age demographic.

Instagram's handing over the keys, however, could come at a cost: If a brand is under fire from regulators for age-inappropriate content, it can no longer shift blame to the platform for such an oversight.

FACEBOOK

As fake news continues to plague online discourse, **Facebook** says it has taken a step to deter the spread of doctored content. In a blog post, **Monika Bickert**, Facebook's VP of global policy management, outlined the company's plans to fight manipulated visuals.

Monika Bickert
VP, Global Policy
Management
Facebook

For several years, communicators have feared the damage done to brands and public figures they represent via the propagation of deepfakes. These are videos and photos that use machine learning technology to replace faces and objects with false, but realistic, images.

Facebook's third-party fact-checkers will remove deepfakes that violate community standards, Bickert wrote.

Those that remain will be demoted in the Newsfeed and are prohibited from running as ads.

Luckily, content that fact-checkers flag will carry warnings alerting users. This plays into Facebook's new education effort to help users, particularly news organizations, avoid further spread of false visuals. The thinking seems to be that if users are exposed to deepfakes, they can inoculate themselves against future deception.

Communicators can take a free detection course at: https://reut.rs/2RYDGbd

A PLUG FOR TRANSPARENCY AND CONTROL

As we went to press, Facebook, in a post from chief **Mark Zuckerberg**, announced a feature that will allow users to see data other sites have gathered about them.

Supplied to Facebook, the data is derived from users' interactions with sites, such as opening an app, searching on an app, making a purchase, adding an item to a shopping cart or using Facebook to log into an app.

Facebook says it uses the data to target "more relevant" ads to users and suggest groups and businesses to them. For example, after you've surfed a site for shoes, Facebook receives that information and sends you shoe ads.

Most important, the new tool, called Off-Facebook Activity, allows users to clear data other sites have collected about them, Zuckerberg wrote in a post on Jan. 28, which Data Privacy Day. The move is part of Facebook's attempt to quell outrage over the **Cambridge Analytica** data scandal.

"One of our main goals for the next decade is to build much stronger privacy protections for everyone on Facebook," Zuckerberg wrote. "We know we have a lot of work to do here, which is why this is such a priority for our teams, and for me personally." The tool took time to develop, "because we had to rebuild some of our systems to make this possible."

Zuckerberg believes the tool's debut "marks a new level of transparency and control." In addition, Zuckerberg wrote that Facebook, during the coming weeks, will show nearly 2 billion users a prompt "encouraging them to review their privacy settings."

A GOOD FIRST STEP

Facebook has a history of making grand-sounding announcements that turn out to be not quite as advertised. This one, though, seems largely legitimate. It's a good first step, said the **Electronic Frontier Foundation** (EFF), which encouraged

Michael Lamp
SVP, Digital
Hunter

other players in the space to follow Facebook's lead. That said, it's far from complete transparency.

It "doesn't come close" to covering all the ways Facebook collects and monetizes data, EFF said. In addition, a survey showed 75 percent of U.S. adults don't know how to address ad preferences on Facebook. The tool, while useful, puts the onus on users to act. Most won't.

For **Michael Lamp**, SVP, digital, at **Hunter**, Off-Facebook Activity is "definitely a major development," though he wants to see how it plays out in execution. It also presents a challenge for brands that "rely on Pixel targeting to remarket to consumers on Facebook."

He notes, however, that consumers who use the tool frequently "are likely averse to advertising in the first place."

In addition, other social platforms that retarget ads may take advantage of this opportunity, notably **Pinterest**, "based on its reputation for driving clicks."

Yet this "only increases the value of truly earned brand coverage on Facebook," he says. PR pros, Lamp believes, "should remember the micro-lead opportunity of pitching for coverage on Facebook when conducting media outreach." ■

CONTACT: *SMaerowitz@prnewsonline.com*

Continued from page 3

It *is* shocking that at the university-level students are not looking at measurement. We're hoping that through our work this year with PRSA professional advisors and academic advisors, and through the universities where we have PRSSA chapters, we can at least start a dialogue. Our goal is some movement toward [ensuring] students [are] better prepared.

We find the students are pretty good at technologies because of the world they live in. But how they *use* those technologies in communications is lagging behind.

PRNEWS: You spoke earlier of the news cycle and how sometimes it's 24 seconds. Do crisis communicators need to respond that quickly?

Stansell: There's an expectation from the media, and the public, that a spokesperson or a company has to respond quickly. If we, as communicators, can respond quickly in a way that is truthful and ethical and provide useful information, then we should. But that's not always possible.

We live in a media-gratification world, but it's OK to say, "I can't speak to that or provide information at this point. I will get back to you as quickly as I can."

The important thing is to be sure you're providing facts and that they're truthful and credible, with honesty and an ethical underpinning.

ETHICS AND RESPONSE TIME

Where the challenge comes, especially for electronic media, people want to be first with the story…if we don't give [media] an answer sometimes they go to an eyewitness or some other person or organization to provide an answer that may not be credible or correct. And then you find yourself having to manage misinformation. That's the risk you take.

It's imperative that any messaging we're sharing with media, employees and the community is based in ethics and fact. In the long run, that's the best approach.

PRNEWS: How does PR regain credibility? The age-old question: How does PR get a seat at the proverbial table? Is it by having a solid understanding of how business works?

Stansell: Yes. I would say for students, if they have the opportunity to have a business minor when they're getting their communications degrees, it would really be great.

If they're going to graduate school after getting a communications undergraduate degree, instead of getting a masters in communications, it would be good to get an MBA. They'll be better able to position themselves in the market, with a firmer understanding of communications decisions.

Businesses are more and more discovering that communications is a strategic imperative. So senior communications managers need [to have] a good business understanding.

We're finding that it's not enough to have a seat at the table corporately, but a seat at the table at the board level. [Having a strong understanding of business] can make a real difference for the communications person operating at that level. They're not able to operate at that level if they don't have a proper understanding of how business operates.

PRNEWS: If you could get every PRSA member in a room and give them a message about 2020, what would you say?

Stansell: Have the courage to change and to lead change Sometimes organizations and individuals are afraid to change. But change is happening all around us. So, change can happen to us, or we can help effect the change and guide it in a productive direction.

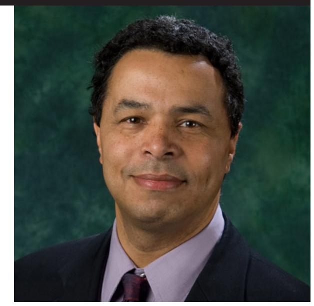
The other thing, and it's another of our strategic priorities, is to look at diversity and inclusion, which also takes courage. Diversity exists. We're in a diverse world. But it's really up to us as communicators to decide what we do about diversity. The really important piece is inclusion and how we promote inclusion among diverse people and ideas.

Part of that involves civility and how we, as communicators, promote civil discourse. People are moving away from the ability to discuss differences of opinion in a productive, civil manner. As communicators, we can help promote civil discourse about how to include all opinions, which are not inherently bad; they're just different. ■

CONTACT: *rod.granger@prsa.org*

BY NEIL FOOTE, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL BLACK PR SOCIETY/PRINCIPAL, NEIL FOOTE COMMUNICATIONS

Steps Communicators Can Take Now to Promote Diversity and Inclusion



[**Editor's Note:** In observance of **Black History Month** we highlight diversity and inclusion. In addition to the essay on this page, please see pages 4 and 15-16 for more.]

One of the frustrating things for communicators about the divisive and contentious times in which we live is that one word used in the wrong context or a picture taken in an unexpected awkward moment could go viral instantly.

Similarly, when it comes to diversity and inclusion, we have to be more diligent and hypersensitive as to how best we tell the stories of our companies and clients.

With an increasingly diverse and multicultural audience, there are three steps we should take into account.

BE INTENTIONAL

Diversity and inclusion don't just happen. You have to make a conscious effort to create a mindset in your corporate culture that diversity and inclusion is tied directly to the mission, vision and values of your organization.

Howard J. Ross, the longtime social justice advocate and diversity consultant, urges companies to create a shared sense of purpose. Companies need to have established plans to recruit, hire and nurture a diverse team that goes beyond normal channels.

> "Diversity and inclusion don't just happen. You have to make a conscious effort to create a mindset in your corporate culture that diversity and inclusion is tied directly to your organization's values."

GET OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

A key action to take is to get out of the office. Visit black colleges, universities with large black, Latino/a and Asian-American populations. Engage in conversations with groups representing diverse civic and community organizations and ethnic media.

Even if you don't have a diverse team – perhaps especially if you don't – you need to think about what you can do to push your staff to think about how to share information with multicultural audiences.

As Ross says, "People need to be able to make the mental leap from diversity – which can be almost an accidental or unintentional characteristic of your workforce – to an invested, emotional connection with inclusion."

BE CREATIVE

Don't get stuck. Since most cities are more diverse than ever, it's essential for in-house PR teams, external PR firms and other communication pros to develop story pitches that may appeal to diverse markets. One way to do this is to craft content that highlights diverse individuals.

Create collateral that reflects a diverse audience – pictures, infographics, videos, memes. Have PR teams conduct a content analysis of media to analyze how race and gender are portrayed in newspapers, magazines, websites or television news.

Take that extra step to avoid the rainbow multicultural picture just to appease a customer segment. Faux diversity is worse than no diversity at all. There's a very good chance that you will instantly be called out on it on social media, ultimately negating your effort to tell a good story.

CHECK YOURSELF

Look around your office. Take a mental snapshot. What do you see? If everyone looks the same, you've got work to do.

Perhaps a few readers will argue, "Well, I don't need to reach a diverse audience." Or else, "My clients don't aim their products and services at diverse audiences. Why do I need a diverse team?"

If you're saying that or some variation of it, I repeat what I wrote above: You need to get out of the office. Take a walk or a drive to a part of town where you don't work or reside. Either do this by yourself or find someone to give you a tour.

MEETING DIVERSITY

If you're sitting in a meeting and everyone looks the same – age, gender, race, ethnicity – then invite someone in who could offer a different point of view.

It's perhaps that person who can help you avoid using images or videos without any diversity. They also may help counsel you about phrases, words or images that could easily offend others.

How many times have you produced a video or collateral that includes men only? Women only? Only white people?

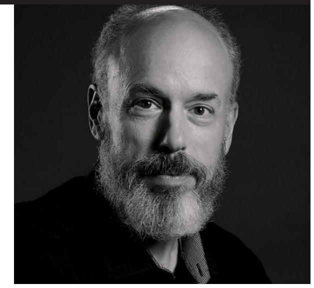
Consider this: If you choose to ignore a strategy that embraces diversity and inclusion, think of the opportunity cost of not reaching huge swaths of customers who chose to go elsewhere because they do not believe you are interested in talking to them.

I'm talking about taking that one extra step to communicate in a way that will cultivate a culture where everyone feels they are welcome. ■

CONTACT: *footecomm@gmail.com*

BY AYAZ MALIK, MANAGER, ENTERPRISE MARKETING EXCELLENCE, ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS CORP.
AND BOB PEARSON, STRATEGIC ADVISOR, W2O GROUP/CO-AUTHOR, 'CRAFTING PERSUASION'

Three Areas of Excellence to Drive Your Content Daily



[**Editor's Note:** This is Part II of an article about storytelling. The previous article appeared in the January 2020 edition of PRNEWS. It continues a PRNEWS series that introduced and explained the ABCDE model, which helps PR pros create and tell stories. ABCDE refers to Audience, Behavior, Content, Delivery and Evaluation. See PRNEWS July 2019 (**Pearson**), October 2019 (**Knight**) and December 2019 (**Tazzia**). As you might recall, the model developed when PR pros taught **US Department of State** staff the principles of storytelling.]

THREE WAYS TO DRIVE A STORY EVERY DAY

We live in a world where what we do each day matters. How we create content, how we engage with our audiences and how we call audibles on what to do next can make or break success for brands.

We call these three areas **Content Stewardship**, **Continuous Engagement** and **Decision Support**.

CONTENT STEWARDSHIP

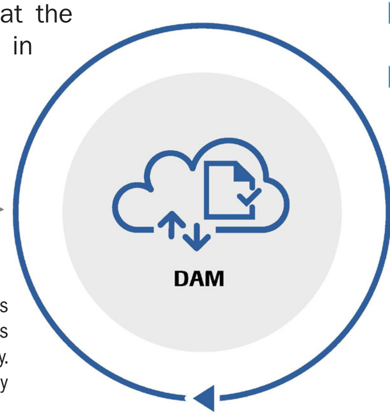
Stewardship of content will become one of the most critical marketing and communications competencies in the future (see Figure 1). We will connect the dots in order to learn the skills to create, prepare, store, distribute, publish and optimize content that is user- and channel-specific. It can also scale to country markets.

Great engagement is linked directly to a story's quality and relevance, as well as the target audience's perceived value of it. Content Stewardship means that we obsess over the power of our stories and don't confuse action with success. Achieving our business goals defines success.

A Digital Asset Management (DAM) solution will be required to sustain this type of robust content ecosystem, which is consistently maintained, evolves over time and is effectively curated. Think of it as a combination of your library and brain for stories.

It can also include persona user journeys, smart taxonomies, smart tagging and additional automation, based on analytics and insights that enable the right content to be available to the right users, at the right time. And, of course, all in near real-time.

Figure 1



Three-Peat: Content Stewardship, Continuous Engagement and Decision Support are areas of excellence that can drive a story every day. Critical to the DAM strategy, they are particularly useful as the digital landscape shifts rapidly.

Source: The authors

Content Stewards will focus on substance and will not chase the latest tech solution/platform. Your DAM will deliver current, accurate and consistently branded content; users can easily find the content they want and need, and they can automate the lifecycle management of the content. The value to the company is compliance with regulations and policies, strong governance and knowledge transfer and an enhanced user experience. DAMs are darn good.

CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT

Continuous Engagement is a way of life (see Figure 2). Considering today's rapidly evolving tech platforms, the demand for more 24/7-relevant and compelling content continues to rise. Content on-demand and proper search are expected as a matter of convenience – when, where and how users want them.

Today's search and voice-activated assistants fill knowledge gaps where we have questions and help us navigate the world more easily.

The role of the influencer is also increasing in importance. For most industries, this means customers are increasingly looking to and trusting peers, advocacy groups and their networks for information before they directly engage with a company. Traditionally, customers received a lot of information from companies. Today, we share content and partner with our customers to tell a similar story.

Continuous engagement is a requirement of our audience. Already it is dramatically altering the primary focus of today's marketer. It means our insights should enable us to continually improve our story and outreach; we can keep refining our personas for target audiences, and we realize what content should be created that does not exist today.

Continuous engagement will be optimized with an organization's investment in five key areas:

- Content platforms that permit creation, preparation, storage, curation and governance;
- Engagement platforms that permit both distribution and publishing;
- Interaction platforms that enable marketing automation;
- Transaction platforms that enable CRM (customer relationship management); and
- Analytics solutions that deliver actionable insights.

The results are efficiencies across the board, ranging from improving how affiliates

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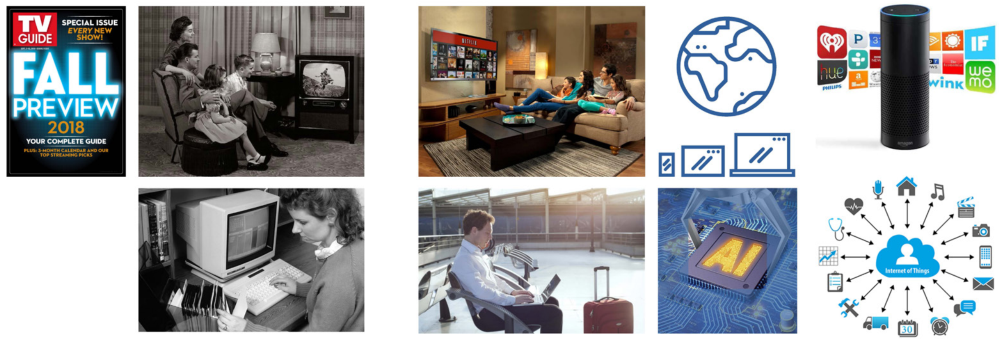
Figure 2



Always On: Forget campaigns and appointment viewing, Malik and Pearson write. Instead, think continuous engagement and 24-7 deployment. The ability to offer just-in-time content access and delivery have become key parts of the end-game.

access content to lowering the cost of acquiring customers, and to making it easier to protect and promote the company's reputation.

DECISION SUPPORT

Decision Support refers to solutions and insights an analytics team provides for marketers and communicators to make informed decisions that influence plans (Figure 3). It's the equivalent of glasses, allowing us to see what matters to customers and how we can improve. It is equally important to store insights, so we build cumulative intelligence.

Another plus is the ability to mine data and insights to understand where content can be inserted into conversations and micro-moments. This allows communicators to meet targeted audiences where they want to engage with us.

There are four key benefits to Decision Support:

1. We become continually smarter about our audiences.
2. We make better decisions via insights from analytics.
3. We save, and can reallocate, resources and time.
4. We correlate marketing spend to revenue.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

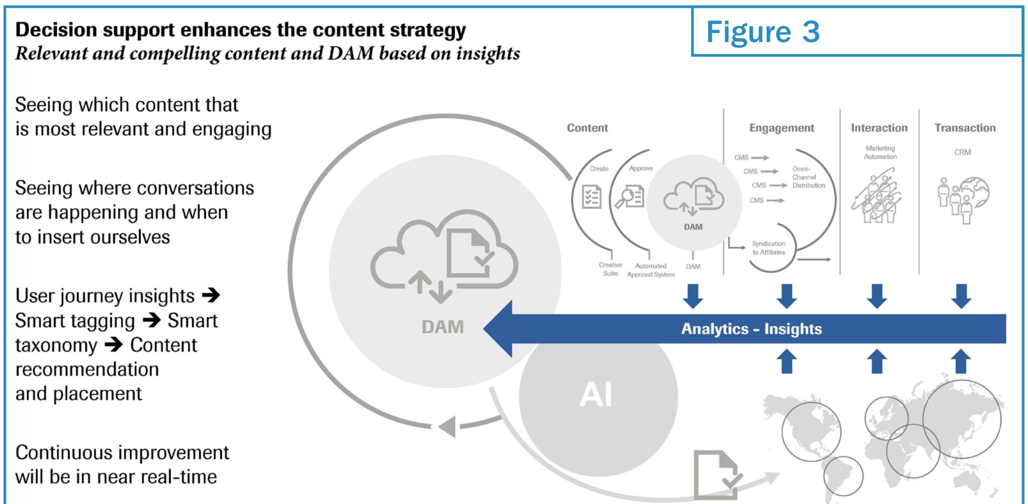
- Assess the marketing maturity of your organization. Understand the levers you need to pull on an individual and organizational basis to enhance maturity, and then drive the right incentives, accountability and measures to ensure adoption and maturity.
- Leverage contemporary learning and development approaches by enabling real-time and continuous learning experiences for marketers and communicators.
- Focus on knowledge transfer. Ensure best practices, processes and tools are codified and institutionalized so they endure and have change, governance and lifecycle-management built in to the organization's systems
- Assess and align marketing and communications organizations to fit the new paradigm and align roles and responsibilities. Pay special attention to roles that are needed or do not exist in the company. (For example, data librarians, storytellers, interaction drivers, engagement drivers, etc.)
- Ensure your marketing technology stack is on track. To enable your new marketing and communications ecosystem and ensure it is well integrated, focus on identifying subject matter experts to properly nurture and evolve the technology platforms.
- Invest in a team that is forward-looking. Change occurs via humans. Who will move the ball forward, test new online solutions and help adoption occur?
- Ensure there is a focus on analytics and actionable insights. This is a must.
- Pay attention to organizational change management, to ensure effective implementation and adoption of solutions and other changes.

When you are able to build excellent stories via the ABCDE model, you are well on the way to success. Still, like anything in life, our ability to plan, integrate, learn and scale what we do makes all the difference. This is why the discipline to "CE-IT through" (CEIT, or Content, Engagement, Interaction and Transaction, discussed in our first article) is an important companion model. It's not as sexy, but it is equally important for brand and organizational success. ■

Note: Ayaz Malik's views are his and not made on behalf of **Roche**.

CONTACT: *ayaz.malik@roche.com bobpearson1845@gmail.com*

Figure 3



You Can Always Improve: It is critical to measure communications and change where necessary. Data can lead to insights.

BY DR. ROBERT PASSIKOFF, PRESIDENT, BRAND KEYS

The Key Role of PR in the Tap-on-the-Platform-of-Your-Choice Era

A decade ago there were fewer than one billion social network users. Last month, that number was 5.2 billion. Social network usage is expected to increase 20 percent during the next 12 to 18 months, according to Brand Keys' 2020 Customer Loyalty Engagement Index. That user growth has fueled the rise of additional social platforms.

Internet access and social networking have increased consumer expectations an average of 18-20 percent year-over-year (YOY). Estimated growth in consumer expectations for 2020 is estimated at 26 percent, significantly higher than in previous years.

Brands and platforms, though, manage to keep up only with about 6 percent of consumers' expectations. This leaves a large gap between what the rising number of online users expect and what brands are seen to deliver.

This year, consumer expectations will translate to a desire for new, more agile social platforms. More social network users and interactions also will fuel the desire for platforms, or places, to meet. The increase in social networking and platforms will lead to increased consumer demand for more topics to connect with and to share, as well as an increased opportunity for PR pros and marketers.

MARKETING MOBIUS STRIP

Think of the situation as a Marketing Mobius strip. Growing consumer behavior leads to increased expectations, which lead to more platforms created to meet those expectations, which increases consumer behavior, which leads to more frequent online social and retail behavior.

It doesn't hurt that marketers always seek the newest thing to engage consumers, who have come to expect this. In part, this is why it is estimated that alternative social platforms will increase 30 percent YOY. This will lead to openings for PR pros to leverage stories.

History shows that expectations beget new – and higher – expectations. Consumers shop online. They share, search and learn online. And they expect access to everything in a nanosecond. They have come to realize, though, that they don't have access to everything in a nanosecond.

EXPECTING SHOPPABLE POSTS

When they have questions, consumers search. But expectations are so high that they don't really want to search for something when they see it online. They want to tap on an image and gain access. Where is it and what's in it? What clothes are those people wearing? How much do they cost? Tap on an image and learn everything about it. Consumers expect that. In other words, they want shoppable posts.

Core B2C platforms, such as **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter**, and B2B platforms, like **LinkedIn**, are at various stages of meeting consumer expectations. They are adopting or developing shoppable strategies that make them more competitive with online retailers like **Amazon** and **JD.com** of China. Estimated YOY growth in shoppable posts is 100 percent.

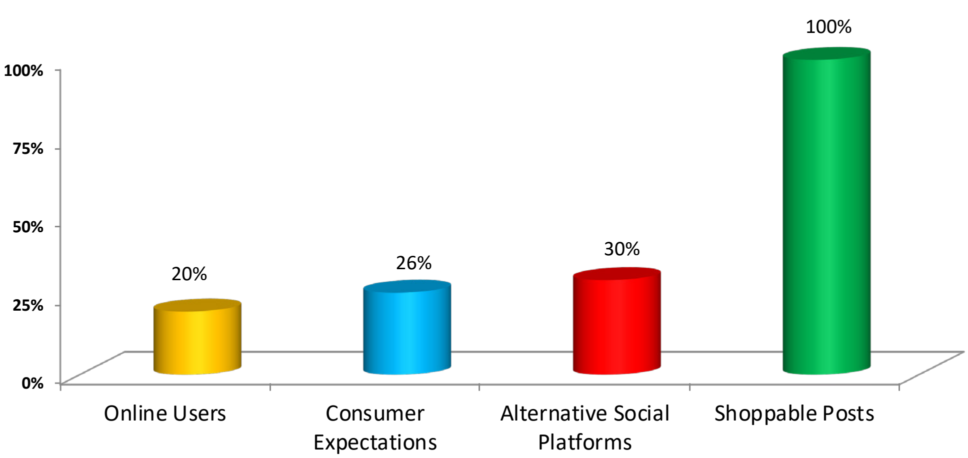
Alternative e-commerce platforms like **TikTok** allow brands to engage consumers who are migrating from older sites to those that better meet their expectations. Amid a maturing online marketplace, tech companies are working to make everything more transactional. Shoppable posts are the off-ramp for *having* to shop in a store.

Given the abundance of online social and retail platforms, and their estimated growth, more options mean consumers are going to expect more (26 percent more). Those increased expectations will force them to consider new, alternative platforms or else force brands to offer shoppable content to compete.

TikTok's ads, for example, have a "shop now" button connected to UGC that redirects users to a microsite.

Instagram allows retailers with the **Shopify** network to embed point-of-sales items within posts.

Estimated Increases in Online Users, Consumer Expectations, Alternative Social Platforms, and Shoppable Posts



Source: 25th Brand Keys Customer Loyalty Engagement Index, 2020 (62,474 US consumers, 16-65 years old)

Continued on page 13

BY MARK WEINER, IPR MEASUREMENT COMMISSION/CHIEF INSIGHTS OFFICER, CISION

Eight Steps to Help Communicators Arrive at Actionable Insights

PR pros recognize the advantages of data-informed communication: most subscribe to a platform and they have more data available to them than ever before.

More and more corporate PR departments employ dedicated data scientists, as do some mid-size PR firms. As PR evolves, the objective for communications measurement, analysis and evaluation advances similarly.

Today the goal is *actionable insights* for better business decision-making.

But what qualifies as an insight and what makes it actionable or useful?

For one, "insights incite." They provoke. Insights demand attention and spark the communicator to respond. The foundations for useful insights are good data, critical thinking and sector expertise.

The desired output requires consideration, compels action and enables measurement for continual improvement. As such, the goal extends beyond real-time, dynamic visualization and even applied Artificial Intelligence to uncover what the numbers mean to your business and which actions should be taken to improve it.

1. MEASURE...AND MEASURE RIGHT

Every PR situation requires its own approach. However, every useful communications research program holds these data elements in common:

- **Quantitative Data** means "how many." This may mean "the number of survey respondents" or "audience reach."
- **Qualitative Data** reflects the tone and sentiment indicated in a survey response or in a social media post.
- **Comparative Data** indicates performance versus competitors, past performance and objectives.

Measure right may be a matter of *what's good enough*. For example, automated media analysis may be *good enough* for routine social media listening when the volume of content is too high.

When, though, the stakes are high – an emerging crisis, for example – the benefit of expert human validation provides greater accuracy and the potential for deeper insights at the speed of decision-making (not necessarily real time).

2. ASSESS EXEC PREFERENCES, PRIORITIES

Actionable insights require relevancy. Knowing the predilections of senior executives and the objectives of the enterprise – and then focusing on them – improves the likelihood that research findings will resonate.

Most senior executives want to know:

- What are the latest developments in our marketplace?
- What trends do we see?
- To what degree are political, policy and regulatory uncertainties influencing our business? How?
- How are we attracting and retaining our best talent? What developments threaten our position as an employer of choice?
- Is the senior leadership team operating as effectively as it can?

Most communicators want answers to questions such as:

- Who are our target audiences? To what degree do we reach them now – and how?
- What are our intended messages? To what degree do target audiences credibly identify them with us?
- Which channels most efficiently deliver our intended messages to our target audiences?
- How do target audiences interact with our media channels, and to what effect?
- How are we meeting – or beating – our objectives?
- Are we investing our communications dollars wisely? How can we improve?

3. SEGMENTATION EMPOWERS ACTION

Audience segmentation analysis enables the communicator to operate with precision. A by-product of attribution technology and analysis, target audience data makes broad decision-making more manageable by isolating smaller sectors with more specific tactics.

The resulting rise in performance should reveal a similar increase in efficiency as you do more with less – and for less.

4. CONTEXT DRIVES DECISION-MAKING

Good research, analysis and evaluation simultaneously reveal and add substance to the circumstances forming and surrounding an event, a trend or an idea.

Similarly, they uncover the terms by which these triggers can be understood and assessed for decision-making. Begin your PR cycle with a landscape analysis to appraise your business, competitive and regulatory environments.

Using the landscape analysis to formalize measurable objectives sets the stage for action. It provides context to your performance relative to objectives, competitors, peers and your own historical trends.

If the communicator detects a shortfall or an opportunity, he can act to reinforce the advantage or remediate a deficit. Contextual insights and interpretive analysis (rather than descriptive analysis) disclose the degree to which your findings matter and the extent to which they influence the enterprise.

5. COMPELLING VISUALS REINFORCE INSIGHTS

While data-informed insights drive action, presenting useful insights in such a way that executives will find engaging, accessible and digestible enables easier cognition, adoption and execution.

Visuals without the *what*, *how* and *why* mean nothing, of course. When done properly, infographics combine data-informed storytelling with visual appeal and digestibility.

6. BUILD A SOLID OPTIMIZATION PLAN

The Six Sigma philosophy of continuous improvement applies *DMAIC*, an acronym referring to a data-driven quality strategy for improvement that reflects five interconnected phases: **Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve** and **Control**:

- **Define** the audience, the barrier to success and the process to be improved.
- **Measure** relevant data by integrating from a wide variety of sources.
- **Analyze** data patterns in order to reveal gaps and to prioritize opportunities.
- **Improve** performance through actionable insights.
- **Control** the process for continuous improvement by monitoring the situation over time, versus competitors and best practices.

7. BREAK DOWN ORGANIZATIONAL SILOS

A PR challenge may require more than a PR solution. As business counselors, we must remain open to the possibility that a challenge may be better served from another group within the enterprise. By sharing actionable insights throughout relevant parts of the business, we uphold the profession and defend our roles as business assets.

8. HIRE SMART

W.E.B. Du Bois, the scholar and activist, said, "When you have mastered numbers, you will, in fact, no longer be reading numbers any more than you read words when you read books. You will be reading meanings."

Technology provides speed, accessibility and consistency, but without the proper set-up and ongoing management, technology alone is not enough.

The actionable insights process requires people who understand the business and who possess a combination of communications expertise and data science acumen.

Actionable insights require smart people to find the right data, to translate it into data-informed stories that communicate risk and opportunity and light a path for improvement through action. ■

CONTACT: *weiner@prime-research.com*

Continued from page 11

SOCIAL SHOPPING AND MORE

Over the past two years, all the major players have created formats where online users can make purchases within the creative itself, even if they weren't online to shop initially.

Tap on an item, and the price appears. Click on a price, and up comes product information. Tap on the information, and a link arrives. Tap on the link, and you're shopping. The concept of a shoppable post gives consumers the opportunity to buy immediately. Could consumers expect anything more?

Yes. They're going to expect a seamless blend of social and retail. This will entail PR crafting the correct messaging.

What will engage consumers more and more will be broader, more general, and more engaging than retail alone. Engagement *is*, of course, about awareness, but mostly about emotion. And emotion is the doorway for making something desirable and, when designed properly, eminently shoppable.

START SMALL WITH SOCIAL AND E-COMMERCE

Half a decade ago, you could argue that consumers needed time to get used to shopping on mobile devices. But with more than 85 percent of U.S. shoppers making purchases online, it's a given that they'll do it from their phones. And with those expectations a given, it will be the tap-on-your-platform-of-choice trend for the foreseeable future.

This is a big idea, but brands should start small, beginning with social networking and their websites. They need to merge their social content and e-commerce initiatives.

And, remember those 5.2 billion online consumers? With the continuing growth of social media and e-commerce, synergy between the two will be massive. Amalgamation will be the next big thing for online platforms, particularly new social networking platforms.

Native integration will make it easier for consumers to tag and shop. In addition, it will make finding product pages easier, more instinctive and immediate.

This promises to make online experiences more relevant, engaging and customizable. Again, this is a formula tailored for PR. It also provides a foundation for PR to create more favorable brand imagery.

PR AND ANALYTICS

Shoppable analytics should point the way to prioritizing the products PR professionals need to attend to and which clients want shoppable posts. Content that engages consumers is broader (and less specific) than retail or pure PR alone.

Today, engagement is about creating awareness and emotion. This is ideal for PR. Awareness and emotion lead to the doorway of something that's attended to and desired. It's thus eminently sociable, sharable and shoppable. The idea of shoppable posts gives consumers the opportunity to purchase immediately.

Over the past two years, the major players created formats where online users and social networkers can make

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

purchases in the creative itself. And that's even if they weren't initially online to shop, but just to share.

Shoppable ads on new platforms specifically designed to accommodate them have the added advantage of providing visitation, attention and image-management efficacy. They provide nano-second measures of consumer attention, engagement, viewpoints, behavior and sales.

Most brands already have access to social and lifestyle content. And yes, a lot of it is siloed and not designed for commerce. PR can help to segment and repurpose this content. Consumer-generated and influencer content almost always yield material that can be used both socially and commercially. This all promises to make online experiences more relevant and engaging for consumers, which, in turn, will fuel demand for additional social and retail platforms, all of which will have more shoppable ads.

And, not-so-coincidently, this will generate greater visitation and visibility for platforms, and profits for brands. ■

CONTACT: *robertp@brandkeys.com*

ROUNDTABLE

Advance Work Seen as Key in Crisis Communications and Choosing ROI Metrics

[**Editor's Note:** For our semi-regular roundtable feature, we've shifted things a bit. Instead of asking a single question, we've put several queries to senior communicators. As PRNEWS prepares for its Crisis and Measurement Summit in Miami later this month, we asked questions of three of its scheduled speakers.]

PRNEWS: Can you tell us something that communicators can do today, *before* a crisis, that will help them work better with legal during a crisis?

Chris Chiames
Chief Communications Officer
Carnival Cruise Line

I'm a proponent of practicing "crisis dress rehearsals" every day. To do this, you cultivate relationships with stakeholders daily, so that you have a reservoir of goodwill and credibility for when you need it. The legal team is an ally, client and stakeholder all rolled up into one. If you show an aptitude for respecting the nuances of the law and legal process, that will go a long way to building a mutual respect and a constructive working relationship.

Jon Goldberg
Chief Reputation Architect
Reputation Architects Inc

The most important thing is for legal and communications experts to start forming a relationship before there's ever a crisis. Coming to the table for the first time once the battle already is underway creates an unnecessary additional layer of conflict at a point when there's more than enough conflict to go around and precious little time to debate decisions.

Each side needs to understand how the other prioritizes and navigates a complex and evolving set of risks, and what success looks like through their lens. That clear, two-way understanding is essential to keeping legal and reputational risks in the proper balance and achieving the best outcome for the organization or mutual client.

Mary Owusu
Vice President/Director,
Digital Strategy & Analytics
Mower

PRNEWS: What are a few of the most difficult issues communicators have with choosing the right metrics for their companies?

Measuring what happened and measuring what has been accomplished are not the same thing. It's incumbent on PR and communications specialists to recognize the difference and push for better, more meaningful metrics.

PRNEWS: How can they overcome these hurdles?

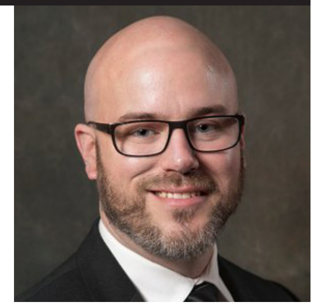
Owusa: Overcoming these hurdles requires a blend of technology and people. Without the right technological tools, much of PR metrics tracking is impossible. But just as important as the technology is the need for conversation. Sitting down with your client or your team to lay out the expectations of the PR campaign before launching it is key. This is where misunderstandings get aired, goals and metrics are settled on and alignment and accountability are laid out and agreed upon. ■

CONTACT: *CChiames@carnival.com jon.goldberg@reputation-architects.com MOwusu@mower.com*

Note: PRNEWS subs get a 33% discount on all PRNEWS events. For more about PRNEWS' Crisis and Measurement Summit, Feb. 25-26, in Miami, please visit: https://bit.ly/2UnZuzH

BY JARED MEADE, PRINCIPAL, RAYNE STRATEGY GROUP

Inez Kaiser: The First Black Woman to Found a PR Agency in the US



[**Editor's Note:** In our January 2020 edition, this column began its celebration of Black History Month with a remembrance of **Joseph Varney Baker** (1908-1993), who is believed to be the first black man to own a PR firm in the U.S.

This month, we offer the story of another pioneering figure in the history of communications. **Inez Yeargan Kaiser** was the first black woman to own a PR firm in the US. Like Baker, this PR professional deserves more recognition inside and outside the industry.

The similarities between Kaiser and Baker don't end there. Both had journalism experience before entering PR. Each also belonged to **PRSA** and were active in their communities and politics. Each of them forged their impressive careers while they struggled for basic rights that were denied them during much of their lives. Both Kaiser and Baker were involved in the civil rights movements and used their talents as communicators to get out messages about the movement.

This article is part of a series with **The Museum of PR** that celebrates PRNEWS' 75th anniversary.]

PR Trailblazer: Inez Kaiser (1918- 2016) was the first African-American woman to establish a PR firm.

A DIFFICULT START

Inez Yeargan Kaiser was born April 22, 1918, in Kansas City, Missouri. She came into the world only 53 years after the end of slavery, as the Great War was coming to its conclusion. It was a time when women had yet to win the right to vote, and Jim Crow ran rampant. Not exactly an auspicious time for an African-American child to begin life.

Standing in at a small, but powerful 5 feet as an adult, Kaiser would not allow circumstances to hold her back. She always lived her life by the words of author **Napoleon Hill**, who said, "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

In the 1930s, a time when most African-Americans weren't allowed to pursue higher education, Kaiser applied and was accepted to **Pittsburg State Teachers College** of Kansas and received a bachelor's degree in education, in 1941. She would later earn a master's degree from **Columbia University** and an honorary doctorate from **Lincoln University**.

FIGHTING BACK

Given the institutional racism that existed in the country at the time, Kaiser's path was anything but easy. During one of her classes at Pittsburg State, the instructor in a sewing course ordered all of the black students in the room to leave. The instructor didn't want them in the class.

"I'm not going anywhere," Kaiser responded.

The determination that Kaiser displayed during her undergraduate years would become a constant theme in her life. After graduating from college, Kaiser began teaching home economics. She taught for 26 years.

AVOCATION, VOCATION

At this point you're likely wondering, 'How did Inez Kaiser get into PR?' Good question.

In the mid-1950s, as a hobby, Kaiser began writing a column called "Fashionwise and Otherwise." The column was published in African-American newspapers across the country. Kaiser's column covered fashion shows in New York, California and at the **House of Dior** in Paris.

She also wrote a column in **The Kansas City Star** titled, "As I See It." In addition, Kaiser authored a cookbook, in 1968, called "Soul Food Cookery." It was the first cookbook to explore what we now consider a typically American cuisine.

ROOTS IN JOURNALISM

One morning in 1957, Kaiser decided she had done enough teaching. She typed a one-line letter of resignation. Again, the determination of Kaiser is impressive. She chose unemployment at a time when she had $13,000 in debt – the medical bills from her father's long illness added up quickly.

It was at this point that she decided to go into PR – a field she had never heard of – at the suggestion of an editor of an African-American newspaper.

That was the start of **Inez Kaiser and Associates, Inc.**, the first PR firm in the United States that was headed by an African-American woman. In addition, it was the first African-American-owned business in Kansas City.

GOOD ADVICE AND 7-UP

7-Up was Kaiser's first major account. The win is associated with a story that includes PR advice that rings true to this day. Kaiser acknowledged that she won the soft drink's business because a 7-Up executive liked that she admitted she didn't know the answer to one of his questions – but promised she'd get back to him within one day.

By the early 1960s, after securing 7-Up and other accounts such as **Sterling Drug**, **Sears & Roebuck**, **Lever Brothers** and others, Kaiser became the first African-American woman to run a PR firm with national clients.

POLITICAL LIFE

A lifelong Republican, Kaiser told "The Kansas City Star" in 2014 that she was a Republican, "because all the people who helped me get my business started were Republicans."

Continued on page 16

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4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850-3245

Continued from page 15

She advised Presidents **Richard Nixon**, **Gerald Ford** and **Ronald Reagan**. The Nixon administration sent her to represent the U.S. during an economic conference in Africa. She also served as an advisor to minorities in business during the Ford administration.

A PRSA FIRST

A trailblazer and civil rights activist, Kaiser was the first African-American to join **PRSA**. In addition, she was the first African-American woman to join the **Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.** She also founded **Del Sprites**, an organization that helps disadvantaged African-American junior and senior high school girls learn social graces, assisting them in pursuing higher education.

Kaiser earned many accolades, including being named the **National Minority Advocate of the Year** in 1997, Teacher of the Year by the **Missouri State Teachers Association** and the **Business Woman of the Year** in Kansas City.

HOMECOMING AT PITTSBURG

Kaiser received the **Eartha M. White Women's Achievement Award** for being a pioneer black woman in the fields of PR, fashion and food. Her alma mater, now known as **Pittsburg State University**, awarded her the Meritorious Achievement Award for outstanding leadership and achievement in PR.

> **"Always be thoughtful and thorough with your work. And try your best to develop a personal relationship with your clients."**

Determined: Inez Kaiser in an early photo.

A college scholarship program, the Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Award, was named in her honor by the PR division of the **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication**.

RELATIONSHIPS COUNT

In an interview with **The Museum of Public Relations in 2015**, Kaiser, who was in a nursing home at the time, offered these words of advice to those practicing PR: "Always be thoughtful and thorough with your clients. And try your best to develop a personal relationship with them."

Kaiser passed on July 31, 2016, aged 98. Her son, **Rick Kaiser**, donated his mother's papers to the Museum following her passing. The collection includes proposals she wrote for corporations and photos with presidents. There's even a copy of her famous cookbook, according to **Shelley Spector**, the Museum's co-founder and director.

The collection also includes the above-mentioned interview the Museum did with Kaiser in 2015. It is a charming and instructive audio interview that is available at the Museum's site: https://www.prmuseum.org/video-and-audio/#inez

Note: For more information about Inez Kaiser and other prominent African-American PR pioneers, visit The Museum of Public Relations and its site at: www.prmuseum.org ■

CONTACT: *jared@raynestrategygroup.com*