

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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CSR

Employee Communications

With CSR in the Mainstream, Companies Look to Leverage Employee Volunteers

As companies weave CSR efforts into the business fabric, they are increasingly tapping into their most precious resource: employees.

And why not? According to the 2012 **TBWA** Worldwide Social Activism Study, seven in 10 young adults age 20-28 are social activists; one in two

donates time to support causes he or she cares about and three in four activists would seek employment with a company that supports a social cause.

As the economy's needle slowly moves towards the positive and companies bring younger talent into the fold, this propensity towards social activism and volunteerism is bound to become mission critical.

And not only are employees

more eager to volunteer for community projects throughout the globe, they are willing to give their hard-earned cash. Take financial services company **Amerigroup**. In 2011, the Amerigroup Foundation donated \$2.3 million to charities, of which \$89,700 was granted to organizations on behalf of associates who donated funds or volunteered time to the charity of the associate's choice. In 2012,

that matching gift amount was about 20% more than the year before, with \$107,472 donated.

In the hours volunteered, Amerigroup employees gave more than 20,000 hours of their time in 2011 and in 2012 tracked at about 30% more. It helps that Amerigroup's mission is providing healthcare solutions. "Social responsibility and community engagement are not just part

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

Seven Things You Will Learn in This Week's Issue of PR News

1. Three-quarters of young adults would seek employment with a company that supports a social cause. (p. 1)
2. A Paradisus Resorts Facebook contest encouraged fans to post images of their romantic moments. (p. 1)
3. Industry analysts are market visionaries and must be engaged peer-to-peer. (p. 2)
4. In 2012, paper catalogs influenced in-store and online holiday retail purchases more than social media platforms. (p. 3)
5. Dell employees who volunteer for 10 or more hours each business quarter receive a \$150 cause card to redeem in the Dell Make a Difference online community. (p. 6)
6. Texas Instruments' Facebook engagement has risen 140% in the past year. (p. 7)
7. First-person pronouns used across an organization marks a culture of ownership. (p. 8)

Social Media

Digital PR

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As Social Media Evolves, Facebook May Hold the Most Promise for the Future

Hardly a day goes by without one of the major social networks rolling out a new program, altering an algorithm or adding another search tool.

Last week, for example, Facebook introduced Graph Search, a new feature designed to help users search for information that has been shared with them. Facebook, which now claims more than one billion active users, continues to periodically launch new applications in its efforts to generate revenue. Yet however things shake out in the next few years for the social networking giant, Facebook may hold the most promise for PR execs who want to position their brands for the future.

"I like to say Facebook is

the storytelling trifecta," says Wendi Leggitt, director of DKC Connect, a division of PR agency **DKC**. "It's the platform that seamlessly merges photos, videos and written messages to create powerful, compelling stories for brands."

Unlike its social networking rivals, Facebook "allows consumers to become part of that story to shape the brand narrative, which also makes it very powerful, very adaptive and unique in the social space," Leggitt adds.

DKC Connect's communications efforts on behalf of **Paradisus Resorts** helps to illustrate the impact that Facebook can have on PR campaigns. Last February—timed to coincide with Valentine's

Day—DKC Connect created The "Paradisus Love Story" contest on the resort's Facebook page. The contest encouraged the brand's target audience and fans to upload images of their favorite romantic moments for a chance to win a four-night stay at the Paradisus Resorts location of their choice.

Fans shared images of their dating, engagement and wedding stories, many of which happened at Paradisus Resorts. Fans also commented on each other's photos, complimented stories and shared their own feelings on love. The two-week contest resulted in 8,339 new Facebook fans and 15,445 page views.

The contest brought more

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For an Ownership Culture, Pass the Pronoun Test

Can you pass the pronoun test? What about your leaders, work colleagues and other employees?

The pronoun test is not a trick grammar quiz. Instead, it's a simple diagnostic tool for assessing the health of your organization.

Former U.S. Labor Secretary and now University of California, Berkeley professor Robert Reich devised the test, which Dan Pink explained in his best-selling book, "Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us."

TAKE OWNERSHIP

Here's how to apply the test:

Listen carefully to the pronouns people use when they talk. If you hear first-person pronouns, such as "we," "our" and "us," congratulations. Your organization passes the test; you have more of an ownership culture.

When individuals use first-person pronouns, people view themselves as active participants rather than sideline spectators.

So when you're implementing strategic initiatives or making other major changes, you're better prepared and positioned. You've got a head start for getting people involved and taking appropriate action.

BE RENT-FREE

However, if you hear more

third-person pronouns, such as "they" and "them," you've got a different situation on your hands. You not only have people sitting on the sidelines, but you also may have people who view themselves as renters, not owners.

Reich goes farther and says that "they" suggests "at least some amount of disengagement and perhaps even alienation."

From the perspective of implementing strategic communications initiatives or making other major changes, you may have to move a mountain to reach the apartment building of renters you're working with. Then you'll probably need to persuade them to get off the couch and get involved.

Keep in mind that people may not be conscious of the pronouns they use. And they may not know they're being tested—even though they may like to ace all the quizzes they take. For example, take these three incidents.

1. A panel discussion on entrepreneurship, sponsored by Northwestern University and its McCormick School of Engineering, featured a panelist who was a serial entrepreneur. More than a year ago, Twitter bought his start-up.

The individual kept referring to his employer, Twitter,

as "they."

Wonder when he'll bolt to start another venture?

2. During a conference call with all salaried workers, the president of a consumer product company didn't refer to the pronoun test; instead, he addressed the behavior.

As the president was closing the monthly Change Checkpoint Call, which provides updates about the company's transformational change, he complimented one of the participants.

On this call, an individual had shared his experiences—and successes—working with teams in the new matrix organization. He used all first-person pronouns in his account. After reinforcing the importance of teamwork, the president then added in his closing remarks for the call, "This is your company. If you say 'us' and 'them,' you delay the transformation."

How's that for being direct about the importance of first-person pronouns?

3. During a People-to-People lecture in Cuba to a group from the World Affairs Council, an esteemed Cuban professor discussed the economic reforms the country is undergoing. Throughout the discussion, the professor kept referring to "they" instead of "we." Does he really believe in the change and whether

citizens can play a role?

LISTEN UP

Now it's time to listen to the pronouns you, your leaders and your co-workers use.

And even more important, what actions do you take based on what you hear?

If you hear mostly first-person pronouns, celebrate. Point out the phenomena to your co-workers and leaders. Take pride in how your culture is more "we" than "me."

Now let's look at the opposite. What if you hear mostly third-person pronouns? Getting people to move from "them" to "us" is harder than switching from "me" to "we."

Start by calling attention to the third-person pronouns with your colleagues and leaders. Discuss ways you can role model first-person pronoun use. Look for opportunities to talk about what it may take for people to think more like owners rather than renters.

With attention and action, you can improve your pronoun test performance. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Liz Guthridge is managing director of Connect Consulting Group, a coaching and consulting firm. She can be reached at liz.guthridge@connectconsultinggroup.com.

PRNews

Writing Workshop: *PR Writing for the Super-Charged Workplace*

Is there a shortcut to producing first-rate PR documents? Absolutely. In this powerful (and entertaining!) half-day session, you'll learn a template-based method to create PR documents that connect with the audiences you need to reach. The session is led by Georgetown University Director of Writing Michael Long, renowned speechwriter and popular writing educator.

Register online at www.pnewsonline.com/writingworkshop2112013.html.

February 11 • 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. • The National Press Club, Washington, D.C.