

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Crisis Management

Events PR

Bay Episode Underscores Need For Plan When Something Goes Wrong

It was a scene that makes PR pros cringe: Hollywood director Michael Bay bolting from the stage during an appearance at last week's Consumer Electronics Show after the teleprompter failed. Bay was there with a Samsung PR executive to plug the company's new 150-inch curved

television. From a communications standpoint, it was a good idea (at least on paper) to have the director of the Transformer film series promote a new TV that would, er, "transform" television viewing.

It was an opportunity for Samsung to get its message out to CES attendees, many of whom are online influencers and early adopters of new technologies. But the buzz related to the event—with a healthy dose of

Schadenfreude via social media—was about Bay's meltdown, rather than Samsung's state of the art TV.

The episode underscores the challenges communicators face when producing PR programs and events, which are increasingly dependent on technology. The onus is on communicators to come up with a back-up plan that will not only mitigate any technical glitches (which will happen) but ensure that the overall message doesn't get buried.

Perhaps more important, it also points to some of the inherent problems PR executives must confront when trying to get the boss and other C-suite executives to carry the message and put their ego aside.

"When it comes to helping CEOs prepare [for events], PR execs have to say, 'You may not like this, but I'm here to save you from yourself,'"

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

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

1. Michael Bay's meltdown at the CES points to some of the problems PR executives face when trying to get top execs to carry the message. (p. 1)
2. When there's an agency-client conflict, tough calls must be made, and quickly. (p.1)
3. Video blogs are an effective ways to break down the walls between the C-suite and rank-and-file employees. (p. 4)
4. Most consumers (93%) said they take some type of action following a bad experience with customer service. (p. 5)
5. Third-party validation is critical in fighting the general public's misperceptions about a brand or PR campaign. (p. 6)
6. CEOs hardly do anything extemporaneously. (p. 8)
7. PR must step up to the plate and assume its rightful role in co-creating a strategic content blueprint for generating 'Revenue Marketing.' (p. 10)

► Media Matters

By Ned Barnett

In Agency-Client Conflicts, Tools For Resolution May Already Be In Place



Conflict is part of most client/agency relationships. But conflict resolution is also a major PR agency client service. Resolving inevitable conflicts between agency and client should follow the same pattern and pathway as resolving external conflicts on behalf of clients in their own markets.

When there's an agency-client conflict, tough calls must be made. Money and careers are at stake, and the agency's own reputation is on the line. This makes a win-win conflict resolution your goal, even while recognizing that this may not be possible. If not, it's up to the agency to

consider its long-term future when seeking the best solution to a bad situation.

There are several possible outcomes, ranging from publicly losing a client amid a chorus of negative publicity, all the way to strengthening the client-agency relationship—there's no one-size-fits-all solution.

Before considering other options, if the agency is clearly in the wrong, there is only one workable solution: honesty. Get on a plane, meet the client face-to-face, explain what happened, admit you are in the wrong, and apologize.

At that point, the resolution is up to the client, but even if

it goes badly, you've done your best to resolve the situation with integrity.

However, few client-agency conflicts are that black-and-white. Try to find a conflict resolution scenario that's as close to a win-win as possible. There are usually several factors involved.

First, frequently, conflicts are not about the apparent reason. The client may seem angry about a botched press release or a dropped ball, but the real issue may be the client's current financial situation, and its feeling that things are slipping out of con-

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▶ How To...

Digital PR

Internal Communications

By Liz Guthridge

Make Your CEO More Video Savvy



When Dean Scarborough travels, there's one thing he never leaves at home—his iPhone. And that's not because he's worried he'll miss a phone call. He needs his phone to shoot footage for his internal video blog, which allows him, the chairman, president and CEO of global manufacturing company **Avery Dennison** to engage with employees in an entirely new way.

Thanks to the new video series, "Dean's Download," Avery Dennison employees hear from their CEO firsthand, and in near real time, about everything from customer visits and trade shows to the company's most important business initiatives.

▶ **A new reel.** Dean's video posts, available on the company portal, are under three minutes long and designed to educate, inspire and express appreciation for Avery Dennison's global team. Each piece highlights the latest innovation or opportunity for the business he's visiting; team accomplishments that he's particularly proud of and what's next in sales, operations, or even strategy, for example.

"We're in the business of solving customers' problems. And the more of our 26,000 employees who we can bring into the conversation, the stronger our solutions will be," Scarborough said. Recently, Dean's video blog has featured the Labelexpo trade show in Brussels, Belgium; the Amazon Rainforest in Uaxactun, Guatemala and rice paddies in Yangzhou, China.

"We've gone from formal quarterly email messages and Town Halls to more frequent video blogs, discussion threads, employee socials and tweets from our CEO," said Heather Rim, Avery Dennison's VP of global corporate communications.

After getting Dean's video and photos, the corporate communications team may shoot additional footage to help tell the story. As needed, the team engages an external partner to do minimal editing. The result: a quickly produced clip that costs a fraction of a traditional corporate video.

▶ **Being 'In the know.'**

According to Rim, employees who are located in more than 50 countries are now more "in the know" about the company's most important initiatives, and more familiar with Dean. "When they bump into Dean at their site, they're far more likely to approach him and ask a question about the business, because they've already been part of the virtual conversation," she said.

Rim and her team helped the CEO design the video blog concept as an outcome of a "Beat" Mission.

The "Beat" is a volunteer opportunity introduced in 2012 to Avery Dennison's wired employees as a way to provide feedback and ideas to company leaders on key business issues. The goals were to gather insights from more diverse voices and develop a more open communication culture.

For one of the Missions, the CEO asked "How can I be a more effective communicator?" Interested Beat ambassadors answered: "Be more visible."

Video blogs, with their ease and speed, seemed the best solution, not just for the CEO but also the global corporate communications team. And since starting the video blogs, the CEO also is meeting more frequently with employees when he travels.

Behind the scenes, the seven-member global corporate communications team

has changed the way it operates to support Dean's Downloads, The Beat, the CEO employee visits and other programs that are helping reshape the Avery Dennison culture.

The team adheres to these five principles:

1. **Shift our mindset and our actions.** We're enablers, not creators. Employees are our storytellers. It's our job to help them tell their stories.

2. **Focus on simple-to-use tools and infrastructure.** We invite employees to join the conversation, including showing them how to use the tools.

3. **Make it easy for people to join the conversation.** We're creating a movement, not a moment, for employees to take part in conversations.

4. **Choose speed over perfection.** We want to encourage real-time, authentic conversations; we are not gatekeepers.

5. **Jump in and embrace the new way of working.** We are now champions of helping employees be brand ambassadors. We're on a new path, and we're not looking back.

"We're helping our employees engage in a new way of working and communicating," Rim said. "We certainly don't have all the answers, but we're learning and course correcting as we go, and having a blast along the way." PRN

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