

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line

January 19, 2015

prnewsonline.com

Issue 3 Vol. 71

Better Use of Data Analytics a Major Theme at CES '15

The 'Internet of Things' goes mainstream

Brad Williams, president of the North American technology practice for **Weber Shandwick**, is a veteran of the **Consumer Electronics Show (CES)** in Las Vegas. Previously a senior communications exec at **Yahoo** and **eBay**, he has been attending the annual exhibition and conference for many years. The last few rounds were somewhat mundane, Williams said. But this

year's CES, which wrapped up January 9, was different.

"This year it felt like there was more energy and it was very growth-oriented," Williams said. He stressed that the "connected home," "automotive technology" and "wearable technologies" may have reached a tipping point in how the gear used in these areas applies to the marketplace and business communications.

"Those are the first three legs of the 'Internet of Things (IoT)," he said. "That's the macro trend from this year's show: an explosion in connectivity."

Page 6 ►

BY THE NUMBERS

Where competitive advantage has been achieved as a result of data-driven marketing:



Source: Forbes Insights / Data Driven and Digitally Savvy: The Rise Of The New Marketing Organization, 2015

DID YOU KNOW

1. The traditional model of attracting top talent doesn't work anymore. (p. 1)
2. Brand reputation is no longer driven solely by PR messaging. (p. 1)
3. Social media engagement among the telecom companies has declined. (p. 2)
4. For communicators, owned content is often hiding in plain sight. (p. 3)
5. More and more CEOs are demanding "behavior change." (p. 4)
6. For many PR execs the so-called work-life balance is probably a myth. (p. 5)
7. Communicators need to better understand "digital body language." (p. 8)

► Employee Communications

By Gary Grates



A New Frontier for Brand Advocacy

Staffers help balance internal arguments

The New Year often is a time of reflection and forward thinking. What will 2015 have in store for organizations in terms of employee engagement and customer connectivity? What can we use and leverage from 2014 to inform and advance approaches and tactics? We know customers, employees and other stakeholders will continue to see more information at their fingertips and a rapidly increasing number of platforms where they can express opinions, both good and bad. In this landscape, the tradi-

tional model of attracting and retaining business and talent simply won't work.

A brand's reputation no longer is driven solely by paid content and messaging, but by relationships informed by all stakeholders involved with the organization. These relationships are enhanced through a more sophisticated view of just who are the most effective influencers.

During the past two years we have heard top CEOs predict that social media will replace websites and call centers as the primary tools for customer interaction.

And why not, with at least 53 percent of B2B buyers following the social media conversations of vendors

regarding products they are considering for purchasing.

Then there is the always-pressing issue of employee recruitment. Companies that prioritize the employer brand in 2015 are 250 percent more likely to rate overall talent acquisition efforts as highly effective and

Page 7 ►

PR Advice from the Pros

"If it is to be it's up to me."

Read more great advice in PR News' Best PR Advice Compendium prnewsonline.com/prpress





Inserting ‘Behavior Design’ into Your PR Effort

An emerging area PR pros can help fill

PR professionals always are concerned with boosting their value to a company and driving bottom-line results. Today, much conversation in PR revolves around converting readers into customers so they can add to the bottom line rather than just receive a message. In addition PR is being asked to do something else: Design experiences that will induce stakeholders to take action. More specifically, PR is expected to help stakeholders behave in ways that will reach outcomes the CEO wants.

Tactics may range from helping employees collaborate on a new project to recruiting community members to serve as advocates to improve the company’s reputation. As a result, PR is expanding the services and value it delivers to an organization.

As PR interacts more with stakeholders directly, it is increasingly providing support and information and encouraging them to act. When a stakeholder’s experience is positive, chances are that he or she will be hooked and more committed to getting involved with the organization.

DEMAND FROM CEOs

User experiences designed to change behavior often are concentrated in consumer-oriented markets.

Take healthcare, where medical professionals help patients adopt changes in diet, exercise and stress levels to improve their health and wellbeing.

For most sectors, though, the field known as behavior design is a relatively new discipline. No business function

has emerged to apply the principles of behavior design—as formulated by the founder of the field Dr. BJ Fogg—to lead the charge to help stakeholders (employees, partners, investors, vendors) change their behavior in a systematic way.

Yet, a growing number of CEOs are seeking behavior change. This vacuum represents an enormous opportunity for communicators.

PR pros have an important skill necessary for the practice of behavior design: their ability to communicate effectively, attract individuals’ attention and get them to focus on a specific message.

To spur people into action, behavior design mixes compelling messaging with psychology and system-design thinking.

THIS YEAR’S MODEL?

Attention and awareness aren’t enough to spur action, however. When urged to act, humans generally default to doing nothing because they are “mental coach potatoes,” says UCLA psychology professor Dr. Matthew D. Lieberman.

As he explains in his 2013 book, “Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect,” (Crown) “If there’s a way to avoid exerting effort, [humans] almost always do.”

Against so much resistance you’ve got to get stakeholders to act in a systematic way, especially if you want them to repeat the behavior.

Based on the Fogg Behavior Model, you need to ensure that three elements converge simultaneously: motivation, ability and a trigger.

If any of these three elements is missing, a new behavior can’t form and a

message won’t get across. The result is you have thrown good money after bad.

To get started designing a behavior change, ask these key questions:

1. What’s the win? What is the specific, well-defined action you want people to take? And is it a one-time action or a behavior for a period of time?

For example, my win is to get you to read—just once—this article to become more aware of behavior design and its power.

Your win may be to find employees who will serve as amateur videographers to tell a number of your company’s stories in a real, authentic manner on the firm’s YouTube channel.

2. What motivation do individuals require before they will act? Do they need to feel pleasure or pain; hope or fear; or social acceptance or rejection? These three core motivators influence people the most concerning behavior change, Fogg says. Besides assessing which motivator will stimulate them, consider whether they need a nudge or a lot more influencing.

3. How much ability do individuals need? Once you have their attention, their awareness and their consideration, what else do they need to act? Time? Money? Physical or mental energy? Peer pressure? If so, how much? Does the action require them to do something familiar, different or totally new?

4. How easy is the first step? This is where most behavior change breaks down. It’s hard for people to make the effort. As we said above, we’re couch potatoes at heart.

Just because people have the will (motivation) and skill (ability), they won’t get off the couch and get over the hill—especially if they perceive the knoll to be a mountain that’s looming in their way.

Instead, they need a smooth path. How can you simplify the steps? And what triggers—or prompts—can you provide, such as alerts, lifelines and other support rooted in communications?

5. What’s the reward? This makes people feel good about their action, which is especially important if you want them to continue the behavior, as the brain will start rewiring itself after repeated behavior.

The prize can be minimal—pure recognition—especially if you make the action “simple, social and fun” (as Fogg recommends). However, if you are requesting individuals to do something just once, such as complete a form, you usually can get higher participation by providing an incentive.

In a sense, behavior design’s goal of getting people to take action or change their thinking to reach a desired outcome has long been PR’s endgame. It stands to reason that using the concepts and approaches of behavior design can enhance your PR effort, make it more systematic and elevate your standing as a PR professional. **PRN**

CONTACT:

Liz Guthridge is the managing director of Connect Consulting Group. She can be reached at liz.guthridge@connectconsultinggroup.com