

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Contents

Content Creation

Professional Development

Dialing Up More 'Serialized' Content: There is No Stop and Start, Just Go

For the last several years PR agency **Peppercomm** has worked with Nikon to promote the **Nikon Small World** photomicrography contest, which features up-close-and-personal views of everything from algae and bugs to beautiful landscapes. Previously, Peppercomm deployed its PR

efforts around the winning entries, which offered a relatively small window—perhaps a few weeks or so—to get the word out and pitch the media to cover the contest and the results. But in the last two years, Peppercomm has taken a much different shot at promoting Nikon's photomicrography competition.

Rather than a garden-variety PR campaign—and the limitations that are inherent

in such a strategy—Peppercomm has turned the micrography competition into a year-round event.

The agency keeps the momentum going for the contest via the Nikon Small World website and myriad social platforms.

For example, each entry turns into content that Peppercomm spreads throughout the appropriate online channels as well as offline vehicles such as print

publications covering photography and science.

The effort features regular posts online about the competition and information about topics that are relevant to the participants. Peppercomm also ties the photographic entries to specific events on the calendar, such as Valentine's Day (a romantic shot) and April Fools' Day (a humorous picture). By sharing every single entry, each

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

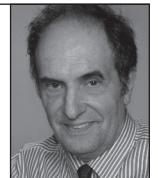
Seven Things You Will Learn in This Week's Issue of PR News

1. PR execs need to produce more "serialized" content. (p. 1)
2. The link between social media and ethical conduct is likely to become more pronounced in the years ahead. (p. 1)
3. Sugarcoating information to try to put a positive spin on a negative situation is a no-win situation. (p. 2)
4. The average "millennial" mom has an average of 3.4 social media networking accounts, versus 2.6 accounts held by moms overall. (p. 3)
5. Finding a PR program that serves an entire community is a task that may require a good deal of troubleshooting. (p. 5)
6. Content may be "King," but distribution is "Queen" when it comes to your content-marketing strategy. (p. 6)
7. Marketing partnerships could include joint media and analyst roadshows, tweet chats and guest blogging. (p.8)

► The Ethics Advisor

By Emmanuel Tchividjian

Communicators Must Adapt Old Conduct Rules For Social Media Age



Talking about ethics and social media is like discussing ethics and automobiles or ethics and electricity. There is nothing intrinsically moral or immoral about social media. Social media platforms such as **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Tumblr** and others are mere communication tools. Yet social media is an unprecedented phenomenon that greatly influences our daily lives, particularly in the developed world.

The number of people involved in those communications platforms is astounding. These days there are very few human activities that do not have, or soon will have, an app of some kind. Future progress

in technology will most likely facilitate the development of new social media platforms. We can reasonably expect that social media will continue to expand at an accelerated pace for several years to come.

Social media is very much part of the public relations offering. Most of our clients request some social media application in the programs we propose. What is, or should be, the role of ethics in this new environment?

The question is particularly pertinent for those involved in public relations and concerned about ethical conduct because the potential harm that we may inflict on others, directly through

our PR activity or indirectly through the media, is significant.

There have been a number of stories about disastrous results that were the direct consequences of unethical use of social media.

For instance, in July 2008 an Ohio teenager committed suicide after nude photos of her appeared on the Internet. She had originally sent those pictures to her then boyfriend.

After they broke up, the ex-boyfriend emailed the photos to a large number of students at the high school they both attended. This led to severe harassment; she was ashamed

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► How To...

Internal Communications

By Liz Guthridge

Grow the Lines of Communications



Consider these seven habits that ail many companies:

1. Sharing information “on a need-to-know basis” to protect corporate secrets.
2. Withholding information to be more efficient.
3. Avoiding saying anything so as not to worry people.
4. Staying silent to avoid acknowledging a problem that doesn't yet have a solution.
5. Sugarcoating information to try to put a positive spin on negative situations.
6. Saving time (especially leaders' time) by staying quiet.
7. Keeping information under wraps as a power play.

Up-to-date, actionable data and information helps knowledge workers perform their jobs. Yet, leaders and managers often don't see it that way.

For example, one of my clients expressed frustration with several plant managers. Most of them are ex-military baby boomers who have worked almost their entire careers under the “need-to-know” principle, which restricts access to information.

These managers are comfortable with the status quo, yet the archaic need-to-know principle causes complications on several fronts. Even companies that have more open communication practices are grappling with similar obstacles, related to power imbalances. Here are three ways to improve communications.

► More Transparency

Today employees at all levels can independently interact with business partners outside their plant's walls.

The business partners—

co-workers, clients and suppliers—operate under the assumption that the employees know what's going on inside their own organization.

These business partners question employees' business acumen and judgment when employees are in the dark about mission-critical work, such as hiccups in the supply chain or the outsourcing of a business process.

Furthermore, the partners expect the employees to use their brains to help the partners solve problems and get things done.

When these employees aren't able to contribute as much because they don't have the context or the details to make educated decisions, the business partners get frustrated with the black hole swirling around them.

► Respect and trust

Inside the organization, tensions exist between employees and managers. Younger employees in particular complain to each other and colleagues who work at other locations that the withholding of information makes them feel like children. They add that they resent not being trusted by senior staff and, in turn, have less respect for their managers.

The declining levels of respect and trust can lead to higher levels of disengagement or apathy. That can hurt productivity, as well as quality and customer relations.

► Encouraging sharing

Managers who are information undersharers have got to start communicating interesting and useful information.

While that's easier said than

done, it is feasible to change managers' behavior. One effective way is to tackle the “will, skill and hill” simultaneously.

This three-prong approach takes into account managers' motivations (the will) and their ability (the skill), while helping them overcome actual and perceived barriers (the hill).

From the “will” perspective—the motivation—explain to managers that they have the power and the autonomy to be the go-to people for ensuring their employees have the tools of their trade.

As for “skill” perspective—the ability—managers need contemporary communication training. Managers need to learn how to share content, listen better and help people take action with information.

To help get over the “hill,” managers need support. Give them tools that are easy to access and use, such as agendas for team meetings, talking points and frequently asked questions and answers.

By addressing the will/skill/hill simultaneously, you help managers adopt new ways of working. If you then recognize and reward managers for their new actions, they will start to build new information-sharing habits.

The transformation won't happen overnight, yet small steps can add up to positive change. **PRIN**

CONTACT:

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

Editor's Note: PR News will not be published on July 8, in honor of Independence Day. We will be back with a full issue on July 15. The issue will feature the debut of a new column on internal communications, by Frank Ovaitt, president-CEO of the Institute for Public Relations. We also have a new column on millennials launching in July. Happy Fourth.