

# PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

February 27, 2012

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Issue 9 Vol. 68

Contents

Digital PR

Social Media

## 10 Points of Pinterest: 'Inspiration Tool' Has PR Pros Pining Away

Within the last few months, an upstart social media platform has come on like gangbusters, becoming the fastest Web site in history to garner 10 million visitors in a month. Journalists and the digerati have been gushing over this site and, perhaps more significantly, naysayers have chimed in about

copyright and privacy issues. So if you haven't heard about Pinterest, we're elated about your recent rescue from that coal mine in Mongolia.

For certain, Pinterest has some PR pros waxing eloquently about it. "It's a great visual medium, an effective touch point for influencers, a valuable information aggregator and a perfect platform for sharing," says Brittany Mohr, account supervisor at

Fleishman-Hillard in San Francisco.

But this seamless platform that copies, collects and organizes favorite images from across the Web is still a question mark for many brands.

"Brands are waiting to see how people are using it," says Nadina Guglielmetti, VP of digital strategies at Waggener Edstrom. In addition, PR pros may be hesitant to add another social platform into a crowded

mix. "How will you feed this beast, and do you have the infrastructure and budget to handle it?" asks Guglielmetti.

Media companies appear to have those questions figured out. Alison Dempsey, senior social media manager at Parenting.com, the print magazine's digital outpost, has seen page views and referrals to their Web site increase 60% in January 2012 from December

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### (DID YOU KNOW?)

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

1. Pinterest has attracted 10 million monthly visitors faster than any other Web site. (p. 1)
2. Nearly 80% of event planners using social media to promote their events, and another 14% plan to do so in 2013. (p. 2)
3. Over half of adults 18+ say they log in to Facebook once a day, or more often. (p. 3)
4. Of the big three mobile apps, users spend the most time per day on Facebook, with Twitter second. (p. 3)
5. Pinehurst Resorts turned to PR to help resurrect the once-majestic Pinehurst No. 2 golf course. (p. 4)
6. Photographers and bloggers are complaining about the theft of their work by Pinterest users. (p. 6)
7. Just like branding back in the Old West, the term still means a claim on territory and identity. (p. 8)

### ▶ PR Council Roundtable

## Internal Comms, Social Media Cause Sleep Disorder Among Corporate PR Pros

If we were to venture a guess, a number of things keep a PR professional awake at night: Navigating the 24/7 media relations landscape, keeping the C-suite on message, keeping tabs on competitors and figuring out how to do more with a reduced PR budget.

In this latest installment in *PR News'* series of roundtable conversations with our three PR Councils (agency, corporate and nonprofit), our corporate PR Council members discuss the PR challenges that cause them to toss and turn at night. Communicating to internal stakeholders and effectively integrating social media into the PR mix are two challenges that could lead to

an Ambien. The three participating Corporate PR Council members who participated in this discussion were: Shannon Jenest, director of PR at **Philips Consumer Lifestyle**; Steve Kipp, VP of communications at **Comcast**; and Kelley Benander, senior director, global corporate communications, at **Levi Strauss & Co.**

**PR News:** What keeps you up at night with regard to PR?

**Shannon Jenest:** Social media definitely keeps me up at night. I feel that Philips is in the middle of the pack with regard to social media strategy and our overall work in that space. What we're looking at

now is the shared responsibility and ownership between consumer care, marketing and PR when it comes to managing social media conversations. Currently, marketing is responsible for making the promise to consumers, consumer care keeps the promise and PR sits between the two of them as a buffer. Obviously, there are conversations happening every day about our brands, and they affect our net promoter score, which Philips takes very seriously and is how we measure our overall success.

Then we're looking at different social listening and monitoring tools. There are a million agencies out there, and

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## ▶ Charting the Industry

# Social Media Now a Fixture for Live Events

A survey released in February 2012 from engagement marketing firm **Constant Contact** finds that social media has become a critical communications tool for small businesses and nonprofits that plan events, with 77% of event planners currently using social media to promote their events, and another 14% planning to do so in the next year.

While the survey also reports that event planners still rely heavily on e-mail, online event marketing tools, Web sites and print advertising to promote their events, 78% of survey respondents believe that social media is an important marketing tool for their events.

“Event communications has evolved. It’s no longer just direct mail invitations, phone calls and simply hoping that people will come,” said Chris Litster, VP and general manager of event marketing for Constant Contact. “Now it’s social media conversations, real-time communication and online video—true engagement across platforms to create a holistic event experience from start to finish.”

### FOREVER EVENT

Social media is certainly firmly integrated in **Pollock Communications’** event efforts for clients, says Marcie Klein, senior VP at the New York-based agency. The key to social media, says Klein, is that they extend the life of an event, as “everything lives forever online,” she says.

Pollock often will deploy an event-specific blog, Twitter account, YouTube channel and Facebook page to generate pre-event excitement and buzz for a client’s event.

During an event, Klein recommends deploying a location-based service like Foursquare to show friends and their followers exactly where

they are and what they’re up to. Integrating Facebook into the mix, giveaways and/or coupons can be offered. And then there’s the specific Twitter hashtag associated with the event that aggregates event buzz and feedback in real time (a tactic that’s regularly executed at *PR News* events).

The study also asked respondents about their event/social media goals for the future. Two-thirds of respondents would like to use social media to reach more people, 65% hope to gather feedback from past event attendees, 63% would obtain new/more event attendees and 62% look to remain engaged with past event attendees.

### TRADITIONAL RULES APPLY

Whatever the goals may be, Klein offers a couple of tips to make social media efforts seamless for event campaigns:

- Be respectful of your brand

and consumers’ social media space. “Brand ambassadors and guests can tweet fun, interesting updates to followers during an event,” says Klein. “But don’t forget, the same offline media rules apply to social media channels: Be interesting and relevant and don’t overdo it.”

- Ensure your social media activities serve the overall brand strategy and personality, and that they are all linked together seamlessly to support your brand story.

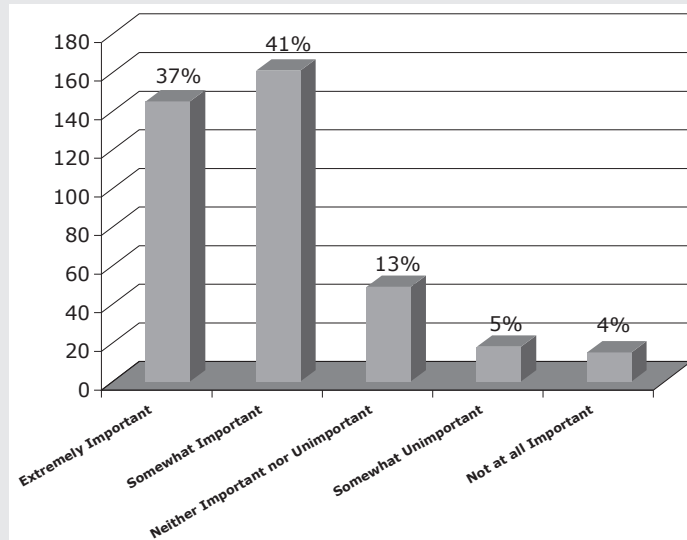
“The combination of social media with other event marketing platforms can be powerful, and today’s tools make it easier than ever to integrate them together,” says Litster.

Just make sure you use these platforms judiciously. **PRN**

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## Social Media Critical for Event PR



The bulk of event planners say that social media is “extremely” to “somewhat” important for their event efforts, underscoring the need for social media’s integration with tradition event outreach.

Source: Constant Contact

# Americans Put Their Trust in Media—Some Outlets More Than Others; Hispanics More Social Than Other Groups

► **Majority of Americans Trust the Media, Including Online Sites:** No longer relegated to trusting the accuracy of their one daily newspaper or watching Walter Cronkite, today the public has a plethora of ways to catch the news. But do people trust online news sites, cable TV outlets, blogs and the like as much as they trusted Cronkite back in the 1960s and '70s? Yes, according to a Harris Poll taken in Jan. 2012. Looking at trust in general, majorities of Americans (between 60% and 73%) say they trust seven different media outlets to get them news fairly and accurately—including nightly broadcast news and local papers. But the difference is in just how much trust they have in specific outlets. Further findings include:

- Three in 10 Americans say that ABC (63%), NBC (63%), CNN (61%), the Associated Press (59%) and PBS (59%) all provide news that is fair and unbiased all the time or occasionally. But, like with the media in general, the public leans toward “occasionally,” rather than all the time, as three in five say PBS is fair and unbiased all the time, while just one in five says the same for the other four media outlets.

- Over half of U.S. adults say Fox News, (54%), Yahoo News (53%), MSNBC (52%) and CNBC (52%) provide fair and unbiased news all the time or occasionally, and half say the same about *The Wall Street Journal* (50%) and *Time* (50%).
- Just under half say *The New York Times* (48%) and Reuters (48%) provide news that is fair and unbiased; about two in five say the same about the *Washington Post* (42%), NPR (41%), *Newsweek/The Daily Beast* (39%) and one third about the Huffington Post (33%).
- Democrats are more likely than Republicans to think that 15 news providers are giving them news that is fair and unbiased. Republicans are only more likely than Democrats to think that about two news providers — Fox News (75% vs. 39%) and *The Wall Street Journal* (51% vs. 50%).

Source: Harris Interactive

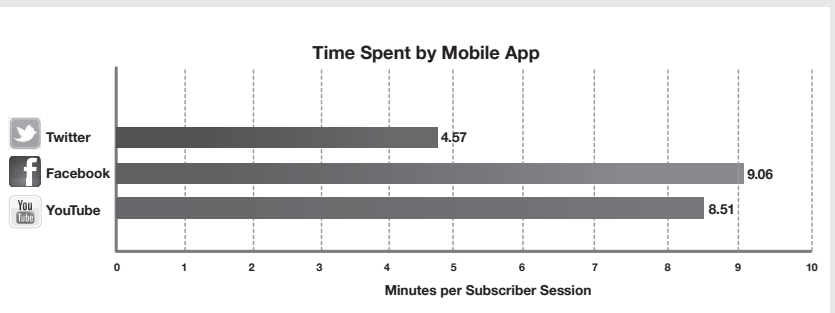
► **Hispanics Keen on Social Media:** While the majority of adults in the U.S. have at least one social media account—over half of adults 18+ (54.5%) say they log in to Facebook once a day or more often—Hispanics are even more likely to log in once per day or more to Facebook and other online platforms, says an **American Pulse** study conducted in Feb. 2012. Specific findings include:

- For Facebook, 60.7% of Hispanics log in once a day or more often, followed closely by African-Americans (60.3%) and Caucasians (53.7%).

- For Twitter, 35.4% of Hispanics log in once a day or more, compared to 28.9% of African-Americans and 12.6% of Caucasians.
- Pinterest (for more on Pinterest, see page 1) has also gained popularity rapidly—15.2% of adults 18+ say they have an account (for comparison, only 11.1% have an account with check-in site Foursquare). Hispanics appear especially “Pinterest” in the photo pinboard site, as 28.5% say they have an account.

Source: American Pulse

## Of the Big Three Mobile Apps, Users Spend The Most Time on Facebook



The average mobile data subscriber uses the Twitter app for under five minutes per session and spends nearly twice as much time on Facebook, says a Feb. 2012 study by Bytemobile. YouTube sessions are similar to Facebook, but subscribers use much more bandwidth watching YouTube, says the study.

Source: Bytemobile

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Questions: contact Saun Sayamongkhun at [saun@accessintel.com](mailto:saun@accessintel.com)

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# Influencer Communications and Content Creation Make Pinehurst No. 2's Restoration Campaign a Hole-in-One

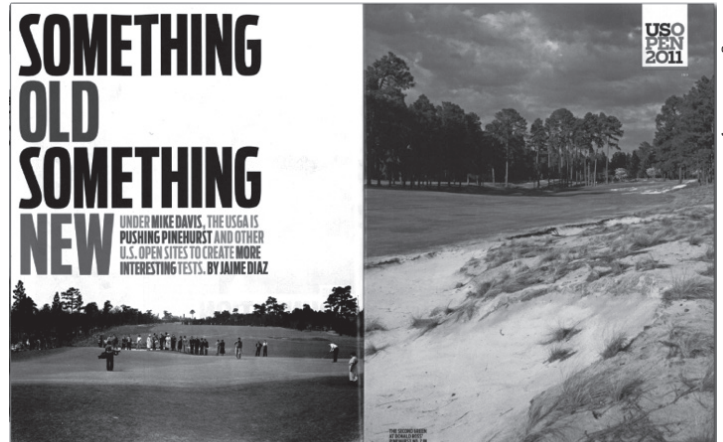
**Company:** Pinehurst Resort  
**Agency:** Conover Tuttle Pace  
**Timeframe:** March 2010 - Present

North Carolina's Pinehurst Resort, and its signature Pinehurst No. 2 golf course, has been on the bucket list of most serious golfers since 1895, having served as the site for more major golf championships than any other course in the U.S. Over the last two decades, however, No. 2's reputation has steadily diminished, and this slide has become evident in major golf course rankings. That's why, in March 2010, Pinehurst hired PR agency **Conover Tuttle Pace (CTP)** and unveiled a project to reinvent the course and reshape the resort's image as a lifetime's destination for some, and a yearly staple for others.

## BACK ON COURSE

Varying philosophies and updates over time had turned a course revered for uniqueness into one that Pinehurst officials said had come to look, feel and play like too many other courses. Once a staple in the top 10 of *Golf Digest's* biannual rankings, the course fell from the top 10 in 2001 and plummeted to 32nd in 2009-2010, and *Golfweek* and *Golf Magazine* each followed suit. While rankings may boost or damage ego and pride, they can also correlate to the bottom line, as Pinehurst depends on No. 2's image, success and revenue to fuel the resort.

In hiring renowned golf architects Ben Crenshaw (winner of the 1984 and 1995 Masters) and Bill Coore to restore No. 2, Pinehurst sought to recreate the unique experi-



Media coverage about the restoration of revered and historic golf course Pinehurst No. 2—like this story by influential golf writer Jaime Diaz—led to a resurgence in bookings at North Carolina's Pinehurst Resort.

Images Courtesy of Conover Tuttle Pace

## GOING LONG TERM: TIPS FOR SUSTAINING A PR CAMPAIGN

When PR pros and their clients lay out campaign goals, singular media hits may prove effective at moving the needle, but long-term placements build and sustain momentum and impact the bottom line. So how do you keep the run of success going? Here, Brian Heffron, SVP and partner at **Conover Tuttle Pace**, gives four sure-fire ways:

- **Plan for it:** Don't just circle one date. Use the whole calendar. When mapping out a campaign, identify relevant milestones from kickoff to conclusion and create a series of micro-campaigns aimed at keeping a spotlight on your story.
- **Break out the binoculars:** Look ahead to the coveted December issues of glossy magazines. Pitching long-lead publications can lead to stories months down the road. Stay on top of editorial calendars far enough in advance to take advantage of them.
- **Tease your audience:** A campaign is not simply one big media splurge and a lot of follow-up coverage. Success depends on spacing your coverage before, during and after the big moment. Tease the audience and build excitement with whispers, leaks and previews.
- **Seize the day:** More precisely, seize the news of the day. In almost any industry there are daily developments that spark debate and chatter. Leverage them for the good of your campaign.

ence that once inspired reverence. PR goals included:

- Deliver third-party commentary and testimonials to create significant anticipation and excitement for the "new" No. 2.
- Turn No. 2 back into a "bucket list" trip for golfers and increase bookings.
- Influence golf magazine raters, drive traffic to Pinehurst.com and to Pinehurstnumber2.com.
- Engage with golfers during and after the project through social and traditional media.

The return to the course's original design, which incorporated natural aesthetics of sand, hardpan and native wiregrass that befit the area, was drastic, says Kerry Andrews, director of marketing communications at Pinehurst. "With such radical changes, our strategy was to tap key influencers and experts in golf course architecture that would recognize and respect the concept," says Andrews. "If we could get influencers to experience the course first-

hand, then even golfers who may be less appreciative of the architecture would read about its merits. That was the trickle-down effect we were looking for."

Golfers may not understand what makes a great golf course—they rely on media, pro players and officials to tell them. To drive a significant repositioning of No. 2 through media coverage and course rankings, the combined four-person communications team would engage these influencers to wield their power to spread the story of No. 2's revival.

## REACHING GOLF DRIVERS

The team identified over two-dozen magazine writers, newspaper columnists, bloggers, freelance writers and TV personalities. While some worked for major publications, others had considerable, passionate followings on their blogs and social media accounts—but each had platforms to deliver impactful, educated commentary.

Todd Graff, a VP at CTP, says the team recognized that traditional media would be

much more vested in a big-picture story of the restoration of No. 2 as part of a current trend story in golf, while bloggers and social media could help extend the conversation throughout the project. To build momentum, the team created a varied, tactical PR plan:

► **On-Site Visits:** Construction began in March 2010, and in June 2010 the team began inviting influencers to visit No. 2, tour the project and speak with designers Coore and Crenshaw. About 18 influencers visited independently, including *Golfweek* architecture editor Brad Klein and *Golf Digest* architecture editor Ron Whitten, among others.

► **Content and Microsite:** A dedicated microsite, [pinehurst-number2.com](http://pinehurst-number2.com), was created to serve as both a media center and a consumer landing page. The site housed fact sheets and background information on the course's history and compelling content, such as regularly updated photos, information, trivia and video—including commentary from the project's designers Crenshaw and Coore, as well as reigning U.S. Open champion Graeme McDowell and USGA president Jim Hyler. Videos were also posted to Pinehurst's YouTube and Facebook pages and pitched to bloggers.

Graff says that landing coverage in the traditional golf outlets required different strategies and timing windows for their deadlines—whether it was during construction or later during the launch (see sidebar on sustaining a PR campaign). “In the beginning we had mapped out a strategy of ‘who do we want to talk to, and when,’ and part of that mix was weighing traditional versus digital media to help a provide steady stream of coverage through the project,” says Graff.

While construction took place from fall 2010 through

spring 2011, there were tractors and cranes on site, and not much news to pitch. To fill in the gaps, the team created content in the form of photo updates, videos and interviews to deliver to bloggers and place on Pinehurst's digital channels to extend the conversation.

► **Press Events:** Two press conferences were held, the first in November 2010, before the course closed for construction, and the second in April 2011 upon its reopening. More than 20 targeted influencers covered the first event and more than 60 covered the second, including 10 TV networks, including the Golf Channel.

The press conferences played a significant role in validating the project, generating excitement and driving action from target audiences, says Graff. Influencers helped shape opinions that appeared in hundreds of feature stories and more than 400 total placements (delivering more than 150 million impressions) in national, regional and local media, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Departures*, *Forbes*, *Golf Channel*, *Links*, *Golf World*, *Golfweek*, *Golf Digest*, *Bloomberg*, *Associated Press* and TV stations and newspapers across the Carolinas.

For Andrews, the most problematic aspect of the campaign was that PR wasn't brought into the fold from the start. “We didn't have an opportunity to seed it well with media and membership prior to the construction as we would have liked, and after scrambling to put a plan in place, we had to go back and do some damage control with them once the process started,” said Andrews. “But it made the PR work that much more critical, and more important than any amount of advertising.”

Graff says he would have started media outreach much earlier—to have possibly earned

more advanced bookings in March and April of 2011 in addition to the bookings that flooded in during May and June. The campaign still provided a dramatic boost in business:

● **Bookings:** A month before the reopening, Pinehurst booked more than 1,000 advance rooms in a single week—the first time that happened in more than three years. Leisure room nights increased by 6%, and group room nights by 8% while phone inquiry volume increased 20%.

● **Web site traffic:** [Pinehurst.com](http://Pinehurst.com) traffic was up more than 46% from 2010, and [Pinehurstnumber2.com](http://Pinehurstnumber2.com) received more than 115,000 visits.

● **Course rankings:** While rankings won't be updated until spring 2012, Whitten, who runs *Golf Digest's* rankings, said, “Post-changes, Pinehurst No. 2 will eventually make its way back into the top 10.”

● **Social media:** 5,000+ tweets about the No. 2 restoration were received. Facebook “likes” increased by 28% and influencers also helped drive more than 125,000 views of No. 2 restoration videos.

Today, the team continuously seeks feedback about the course so they can continue to produce content and keep the buzz going. In 2012 the focus has shifted toward branching out into more lifestyle and travel publications that generally don't cover golf or Pinehurst on a regular basis.

And, as No. 2 prepares to host both the men's and women's U.S. Opens in 2014, the team is preparing to answer the question of whether it's ready to host events of that caliber. **PRN**

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## PUTTER BOY'S WORLD TOUR SIGNIFIES PR INNOVATION IN GOLF

The golf world is well-known for its conservative ways, but social media is starting to change that—at least for PR efforts.

In Feb. 2012, **Conover Tuttle Pace** and **Pinehurst Resort** launched a Facebook initiative featuring Putter Boy (pictured), the North Carolina resort's famous statue that sits on the Pinehurst putting green (and course logo)

in honor of his 100th birthday. To capitalize on one of the most recognized golf brand logos in the world, the team is sending a 4-inch replica of Putter Boy around the globe—a la the **Travelocity Gnome**—to pose in the foreground of photos of famous locales to be shared on social media (starting in New Orleans).

They are also asking fans to submit ideas for other locations as well as submit photos of their own. Todd Graff, VP at CTPM, says the goal of the “Where is Putter Boy?” campaign is to “try and do something offbeat that helps spread the brand and encourages people to engage.”

Each week they will post photos of the touring replica and ask fans to identify the location as a way to connect with golf fans worldwide. Though simple, the campaign features the principles of most successful Facebook initiatives—it's fun, engaging and goes beyond the usual corporate Web site.



# 10 Points of Pinterest

► Page 1

2011. “Pinterest isn’t far behind our Twitter results,” she says.

Numbers like that get brands excited. That’s why Monte Lutz, SVP at **Edelman Digital** in Los Angeles, recommends first playing around with Pinterest on your own. “Create some boards, figure out how the wall works and repin

some things,” says Lutz.

Just be sure to credit all of your sources. And even then that might not be enough. Photographers, photo stock houses and bloggers are complaining about theft of their work for Pinterest, says Allison Fitzpatrick, advertising, marketing and promotions partner

at law firm **Davis & Gilbert**.

Another problem: All of that pinning takes away time for your recently established (and still barren) Google+ page. What’s a PR pro to do?

Here are 10 Points of Pinterest from communications pros who know a thing or two about pinning. **PRN**

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1

### Use Pinterest for What It Is

“This is an inspiration tool,” says Waggener Edstrom’s Nadina Guglielmetti. “For brands, Pinterest can help build a personality. Blending PR around branding is becoming really important, as long as you’re not forcing a sale.”

2

### It’s All About the Visuals

“One of the great things about Pinterest is that it’s full of amazing imagery,” says *Parenting*’s Alison Dempsey. So plan accordingly: The *Parenting* print team has two features coming up with Pinterest in mind.

3

### Do a Photo Check

Think your brand isn’t visual enough? After you load the Pin It applet into your browser, go to your own home page and press Pin It. “You’ll be surprised at the number of photos on your site,” says Edelman’s Monte Lutz.

4

### Identify Your ‘Pinfluencers’

Find out who is pinning your content, reach out to them and start a relationship, says Lutz. “Then, pin content from influential bloggers in your space. “It’s a way to deepen relationships with them,” he says.

5

### Pinterest Goes Beyond B2C

Salesforce.com uses Pinterest to showcase its brand personality for employee recruitment, says Guglielmetti. AMD features computer products that carry their chips, as well as other products that it likes.

6

### Use the ‘Pin It’ Button

Few brands have added this button to their sites, which is a mistake. “Adding Pin It will be one more option—along with Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube and others—for people to share your content,” says Lutz.

7

### What’s the Frequency?

*Parenting*’s Dempsey and staff pin a few times a day, 5-10 times per session. Plus, you need to know when to pin: “We pin more in the evening since parents go online after the kids are in bed,” says Dempsey.

8

### Create Contests

For clothing retailer Lands’ End’s Dec. 2011 contest, participants created Pinterest boards featuring their favorite Lands’ End items. The company gave \$250 gift cards to the 10 winners who made the most interesting boards.

9

### Don’t Hawk Your Products

Pinterest is about connecting with your community, says Lutz. Whole Foods highlights recipes, but it also covers recycling and gardening tips on Pinterest. “You’re not walking into the Whole Foods store,” he says.

10

### Consider Your Critics

It won’t be all pretty pictures on Pinterest. Already a board has been set up by a political group mocking the expensive hotels used by the Romney campaign. “And where politics go, industry will follow,” says Lutz.

## Cheat Sheet

### ⇒ Quick Tips for Successful Pinning on Pinterest :

- To avoid any legal hassle, be sure to credit all of your pins.
- Get other departments in your business to create their own boards and pin.
- Monitoring comments is fine, but noting what people are repinning is critical.

### ⇒ Where to Learn More:

The Ultimate Guide to Pinterest, by Michael Litman (Slideshare: slideshare.net/litmanlive)

A Scrapbook on the Web Catches Fire, by David Pogue (NY Times, 2/15/12 issue).

150 Brands on Pinterest, Type-A Parent (typeaparent.com/150-brands-on-pinterest.html)

Pinterest Terms of Use (copyright issues, pinterest.com/about/terms/)

**Editor’s Note:** Mark your calendars for *PR News*’ March 27 webinar, “Pinterest Power: How to Broadcast Your Brand’s Story Visually,” featuring experts who will tell you how to get the most out of this hot social platform (details to come on prnewsonline.com).

# PR Council Roundtable

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every one of them has a way to track and analyze sentiment and conversations. So that's really what keeps me up at night—what is the best social media structure given our limited internal resources and striking a balance between traditional and social media.

**Kelley Benander:** Two things keep me awake. First, measuring our work—are we measuring effectively enough? And second, our ability to quickly act on reputation issues, particularly ones that crop up via social media.

**Steve Kipp:** Like Kelley, there are a couple of things that keep me awake. From the employee communications side it's trying to find a way to reach our employees. Our frontline technicians that are out there installing/repairing cable, for example, have limited access to e-mail and are only in their home office talking to a supervisor maybe once per week because they are serving the customers. So finding a way to reach them is key because they are the face of Comcast. So, I'd say that's certainly one of the biggest things that keeps me up.

And to echo Shannon, social media is also something that has come to the forefront. I think Comcast is one of the leaders in listening to the customers, responding to the customer via Twitter and through social media outlets. But a customer at any moment can do a blog post or a tweet that could catch fire, and you have to be prepared for that.

**PR News:** What are you doing to meet the challenges of communicating with your employees?

**Kipp:** You would think that employees would want to be

communicated with by text message or e-mail. But what we're finding in our surveys is that our employees want to communicate face-to-face with their supervisors. So we're carving out time for our supervisors to talk to these employees directly. It's very grassroots—not about creating a newsletter, a SharePoint site, text messages or a video, although we do all of that, too.

In addition, it's not all about top-down communications. I'm trying to get our folks to think about listening to employees—whether they are expressing something on an intranet, a question via e-mail, at an event or on a conference call. We're figuring out the different ways employees can express their concerns or share best practices, and then making sure their concerns and suggestions get to the right people.

**Jenest:** We put our CEO, Bret Furio, on Twitter. Bret wanted to use the platform to create an intimacy with himself and the employees. He felt like he could tweet about work and personal stuff, and share quotes that would inspire the employees. Of course, I said that first, people need to be on Twitter to follow him; and second, it's a public platform.

So we put a live feed of Bret's tweets on our intranet. When people opened the page they could see his most recent tweets. We encouraged employees to get on Twitter and participate in the conversation with Bret. And this has been very effective. We have 180 employees who are very active in conversations with him.

**PR News:** Kelley, how much time do you spend on employee communications within Levi's, and how do you best engage employees?

**Benander:**

We spend a good deal of time on internal efforts, at least 10 hours per week.

We've found that high-touch, visual engagement tactics that bring company issues to the forefront work the best. It's about connecting employees to worthwhile community projects, and having internal contests that increase employee interest and morale.

**PR News:** What about your employees and social media? Do you have a social media policy in place?

**Jenest:** Yes, we had a 65-page document that we edited into a few digestible pages with some tips and tricks so that people would actually read it. We've had a few moments of learning so there have been opportunities to remind people what is appropriate, but no major social crises that have caused any great duress.

**Kipp:** We've had some moments of learning, but for the most part it's been smooth. We try to encourage employees to participate, to be excited about who they work for and try not to squelch too much, but we haven't had any major incidents related to employees and social media.



**Kelley Benander**  
Levi Strauss & Co.



**Steve Kipp**  
Comcast



**Shannon Jenest**  
Philips Consumer Lifestyle

**PR News:** Do you have a crisis plan for social media?

**Kipp:** I would say a social media crisis plan is a traditional media crisis plan on steroids in terms of the speed of which a crisis can occur. In terms of planning, it's more about being hyper-vigilant. Using all of the tools that are out there to make sure you have your ear to the ground, seeing things as they unfold and then reacting as quickly as you can. Or in some cases, before it unfolds. For us, the No. 1 takeaway is not to have our heads in the sand, be out there listening and to not be afraid to take part in dialogue with the customer. **PRN**

*[Editor's Note: For more content about employee communications and social media, visit PR News' Subscriber Resource Center: [prnewsonline.com/subscriber\\_resources.html](http://prnewsonline.com/subscriber_resources.html).]*

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## ✓ Measurement Tip of the Week

**Don't measure your work after the fact. Start every campaign with clear goals and objectives for what you want to accomplish, and then select tools and metrics that will deliver against your plan.**

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# A Cowboy's Guide to Branding and Ethics



When I was starting my career in PR, the conversation was all about reputation management. Now it's all about branding. Branding is being applied not only to products, but to organizations and individuals. Here's a secret: Branding is *not* new.

Growing up in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas, branding was a hot topic of conversation at least once or twice a year, at least to those in the business of raising, buying and selling livestock, especially cattle and horses.

Branding had been around pretty much since that area of the United States was settled. It referred to a means of marking property. With no fences to speak of, the livestock tended to go pretty much wherever the grass or food was. In order to keep your property separate from those of your neighbors, one created a "brand" or mark that distinguished yours from the others and burned that mark on pretty much everything you owned—from livestock to fence posts.

As often happens, the meaning stretched and grew to include the actual land to which you had a claim and the people who lived there. You rode for, were loyal to, would defend and even fight for the brand. You, in essence, identified yourself with the "brand."

By identifying yourself by that brand you, in effect, you

became responsible for and identified with the quality of the product it offered, the manner in which it was viewed in the community and how it treated those who created and communicated it.

The "brand" became a short-hand way of describing your reputation, your character and your ethics. It was based on a pretty simple philosophy: Your word was your bond. If you said you would do something, you did it. Most contracts were built on a handshake, and they weren't often broken; at least not with impunity. You stood for what was right, and there wasn't but one definition of right.

## BECOMING A LEADER

As I grew up watching and participating in livestock roundups and working with cowboys and farmers, it became clear to me that while each member of the herd and the team was important to the ultimate outcome—providing product—there were a few leaders, members who through their independence, force of will or sheer size inspired the others to follow their lead. They became the difference between success and failure.

For you to be one of those leaders in your particular crew, it is necessary to take control of your future and build your own individual brand. In doing

so, you can inspire others to follow you. And in the current economic environment, one should always remember that the brand for which you are now riding may change, either because its makeup changes or because you choose to join a different brand.

## BUILDING A FOUNDATION

This means that each of us must create our own foundation of beliefs, ethics and behavior by which to live. While circumstances may change and take you many places throughout your career, one truth remains constant: You are still going to be you when you get there.

Most of us begin building the foundation of who we are and what we believe long before we begin our career. We learn these from family, friends, social and religious organizations. We model our behavior on these leaders. Some of us learn early, some late, some too late and some never.

Regardless, we all establish our own personal, individual brand. That brand is what controls our professional career, our personal success and the reputation we carry with us and ultimately leave behind.

An individual brand is affected by many elements. Here are some things to ponder as you attempt to create a positive brand for yourself and the

organizations with which you affiliate:

- **Don't accept a course just because the boss says it's OK.** Neither the law nor the public will buy "I was just following orders."
- **Be true to what your gut tells you.** If it's not right, you shouldn't have to try to talk yourself into it.
- **Invoke the Mama Rule.** If you don't think your mama would approve of what you are doing, don't do it.
- **Greed is the greatest enemy of ethics.** There is not enough money in the world to buy back your reputation once it is gone.
- **Tell the truth.** Then you don't have to remember what you said.

Your brand travels with you always. How do you want to be known and remembered? Simple truths are the most evident. There is no such thing as "situational ethics"—just times when the lack of ethics gets you into "situations." **PRN**

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