

PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Media Relations

Digital PR

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Time to Adopt the Newsjacker's Motto: Always Be Prepared

When backup signal caller Tim Tebow was sent to the New York Jets, the famed New York Midtown institution, the Carnegie Deli, announced that it had concocted a sandwich in his honor. The "Jetbow" is a 3.5-pound monstrosity filled with corned beef, pastrami, roast beef, American cheese,

lettuce and tomato on white bread, reported the *New York Post*.

In Nov. 2012, as President Obama was set to visit Australia, the chief minister of the Northern Territory announced that it would provide "crocodile insurance" for the commander-in-chief (as if rising gas prices aren't enough of a threat).

Call it what you will—piggybacking, newsjacking or

real-time marketing—the fact is, taking some breaking news that is not yours and making it your own has been going on in one form or another since the dawn of media relations.

Now, however, because of digital/social PR and the 24/7 news cycle, this already solid PR strategy has become even more effective, given the bountiful news popping up around the world—and Google Alerts.

The practice has come

to the PR forefront to such a degree that marketing/PR guru David Meerman Scott has written an e-book about it: *Newsjacking: How to Inject Your Ideas Into a Breaking News Story and Generate Tons of Media Coverage* (Wiley, 2012).

In the past, says Scott, media relations pros have taken advantage of newsjacking in a couple of ways: 1) leveraging an event that you know is

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(DID YOU KNOW?)

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

1. A prime example of "news-jacking" is the "crocodile insurance" offered to President Obama while on a trip to Australia. (p. 1)
2. Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines are smaller industry players that use social media to connect with customers. (p. 1)
3. Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest is a prime example of a PR stunt with longevity. (p. 2)
4. "Activist consumers"—empowered by social media—are demanding more ethical behavior from businesses. (p. 3)
5. In 2011 Barefoot Wine and the Surfrider Foundation teamed up to clean 21 beaches nationwide. (p. 4)
6. Speed is the essential ingredient for successful real-time communications. (p. 6)
7. The lack of a consistent message is the biggest brand killer communicators face today. (p. 8)

► Social Media Report Card

Two Smaller Airlines Build Strong Social Customer Bonds via Thoughtful Content

When promoting a service like travel to a niche market, many components come into play, such as media relations, advertising and marketing campaigns. While all are important to connect with target audiences, social media takes center stage when it comes to engaging with consumers and transforming them into effective brand ambassadors. This is especially true for the aviation industry as it faces the unstable landscape of fluctuating gas prices and a tough economy.

Through a savvy combination of social media tactics, PR professionals can effectively convey the benefits travelers will experience while flying with an airline. The messaging

must clearly convince travelers they will benefit more from flying a specialized, niche airline rather than a more general, mass-market competitor. Social media, if used correctly, adds value to specialized brands by providing a glimpse of a company's services, differentiators and advantages that will create an emotional bond with their customers.

It's essential to get loyal customers to become vocal about their experiences through sites such as Facebook and Twitter in order to effectively use social media. A well-executed social media campaign will not only attract the attention of new consumers, it will also encourage current

customers to urge others to fly with the airline through social media sites.

The following is an analysis of two smaller players in the airline industry that have a specific audience and their use of social media. **Alaska Airlines** flies to many destinations in North America and still uses the features the brand was founded on, such as its caring customer service, to continually appeal to customers. **Hawaiian Airlines** only flies from the Western U.S. and South Pacific to the Hawaiian Islands, and heavily relies on social media to connect with customers.

We assessed both airlines' social media strategies by

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► How To...

Brand Marketing

Launch PR Stunts With Lasting Power

It used to be that stunts were a mainstay of PR. Over time they came to be considered passé. But smart PR practitioners are realizing they can extend the life of a one-off stunt via online channels and the viral nature of social media. **Procter & Gamble's** Charmin Times Square portable potties are a great example. They've become iconic in the digital age and have generated ongoing traditional and social media buzz year after year.

With celebrity endorsements getting harder to come by and more expensive, and traditional media difficult for established brands to secure, smart communicators and marketers are maximizing existing content, events and traditional fodder online. But, many of the novices doing this work came up in a social media world; they aren't often grounded in the need for a long-term strategy that fits their client brand's personality and heritage. It's important to make sure that a stunt—as cool and viral as it seems—is based on the client's core business objectives. And, it needs to be integrated into the full marketing campaign to give it a longer shelf life.

A Dec. 12, 2011, *Wall Street Journal* story, "PR Stunts in a Digital Era," features a young PR firm that promoted a retail account by wearing prom dresses around New York City for a month, culminating with a fake prom at a hip NYC hotel. Although this is very clever, it would be even smarter to keep the momentum going with ongoing contests to find the coolest holiday dress, the best nightclub dress, the most romantic Valentine's Day outfit and other similar ideas. That way, the retailer's name stays with its target audience all year long.

Snapple has done it right many times. Its stunts always

reflect its hip, young and offbeat personality. And the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest on Coney Island has become a classic PR stunt that has actually morphed into a long-term brand campaign.

MAKE A STUNT LAST

It's a very exciting time to be in PR. We can and should learn from the great marketers' and PR folks' past successes. But, the question we need to ask ourselves as we brainstorm for the next big thing in Times Square or Grand Central Station is, "How do we make this one-off stunt work hard for the brand all year long?"

The answer is to give it legs. No more are PR stunts relegated to just a one-off event with the hope of B-roll footage making it on to broadcast for a few days of prolonged life. With the explosion of the Web and its global reach, an event has the potential to live on indefinitely, if you plan and execute it properly. Here are some tips on how to maximize a PR stunt in the digital world:

- 1. Conceive the right strategic stunt.** Every brand has a personality and a target audience. Ensure the stunt stays true to the core brand values and will be impactful to its audience. Be creative and make it big, but don't stray from your client's strategy, or else you risk doing more harm than good for the brand. Although you want the stunt to be a bit outrageous to be effective, you also want to convey your message clearly.
- 2. Sell it to the client or internally.** Develop a foolproof plan that clearly outlines the concept, how it fits into the overall brand strategy and provides details about the execution of the stunt and measurable media results/impressions. Determine how else the client might want to maximize the stunt

with other marketing efforts, and build it into the plan. For example, you might consider print or online advertising to build buzz around the stunt, or perhaps it makes sense to tie in to a retail location or promotion (like offering discounts timed to the event in order to help drive retail traffic).

- 3. Execute it flawlessly.** Even the most creative, well-thought-out plans can backfire if you aren't careful to consider all possible variables. For example, Snapple's ingenious idea to create the world's largest popsicle in Times Square turned into a disaster when the sculpture melted into a gooey mess all over the street. Although the concept was creative and strategic, something as seemingly minor as not considering the weather (it was 80 degrees that day) and how fast the 25-foot popsicle would melt caused the stunt to fizzle into a flop, as the streets were closed off and firefighters were called in to clean up the sticky mess.

- 4. Extend its life.** Once you have all the ingredients of a successful PR stunt, take it to the next level by making it viral. Tease the event online. Post photos, footage and information about the stunt on the brand's Web site and social media sites. Tweet and post key messages before, during and after the event to create viral buzz.

Encourage fans to do the same, and create ways to continue the conversation through strategic and relevant contests, promotions and special offers. The stunt will then take on a life of its own. **PRN**

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► Quick Study

Trust in Government and Business in Downward Spiral; Data Deficiencies Hinder Real-Time Marcom Decisions

► **As Access to Information Increases, Trust Decreases:** A study by Hill+Knowlton Strategies reveals a significant deterioration of trust in government and business since 2010, as less than one-third of those surveyed trust the government to do what is right (30%), and just 35% trust corporations to do what is right—down from 53% and 45%, respectively, in September 2010. Other findings include:

- More than half of Americans (52%) feel they have more access to information about the business practices of corporations, but only 30% feel like it is easier to hold companies accountable for their actions.
- 90% of those surveyed cited a “friend or family member” as the most trusted source of information on policy or product issues. In fact, less than four in 10 say they would trust boards of directors (39%), company spokespersons (30%), government officials (30%) or CEOs (30%).
- Less than one-third trust the government to do what is right (30%), and just 35% trust corporations to do what is right.

Source: Hill+Knowlton Strategies

► **Marketers Don’t Have Sufficient Data:** According to the Columbia Business School and the New York American Marketing Association’s “Marketing Measurement in Transition Study,” marketers’ desire to be data-driven is not yet matched by a consistent effort to collect the data necessary to make real-time decisions. In fact, 29% report that their marketing departments

have “too little or no customer/consumer data.” The study findings mirror data shortcomings with PR. Study highlights include:

- 39% of marketers say that their data is collected “too infrequently or not real-time enough.”
- Marketers today are still much less likely to collect new forms of digital data like

customer mobile device data (19% collect it) and social media data (35%), than they are to collect traditional customer survey data on demographics (74%) and usage (60%).

- Just 14% of the social networking users are tying them to financial metrics. **PRN**

Source: Columbia Business School/ NY American Marketing Association

Social Media Puts Businesses Under the Microscope

UNETHICAL COMPANIES WILL BE PUNISHED

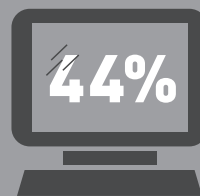
70%
OF CONSUMERS AND
77%
OF AMERICANS

SAY THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO “CENSURE UNETHICAL COMPANIES BY AVOIDING THEIR PRODUCTS.”

ON THIS QUESTION, CHINA LED ALL COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY:



OVER 90%
OF CHINESE SHARE THE SAME BELIEF.



OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THE GREATEST CHANGE AGENT IN THE FUTURE WILL BE “THE PEOPLE, EMPOWERED BY SOCIAL MEDIA”—MORE THAN TWICE THE NUMBER WHO CHOSE POLITICS OR CORPORATIONS.

SOCIAL MEDIA EMPOWERS CONSUMERS...

...AND INFLUENCES THEIR HABITS

41%

OF GLOBAL CONSUMERS SAY NONBRANDED BLOGS OR SOCIAL MEDIA HAD CHANGED THEIR MINDS ABOUT AN INTENDED PURCHASE OVER THE LAST YEAR—

A 51% INCREASE FROM 2007!



A new Euro RSCG Worldwide PR study, “Blueprint for a Sustainable Brand,” finds that activist consumers—empowered by social media—are demanding more ethical behavior from businesses.

Source: Euro RSCG Worldwide PR

PRNews

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Barefoot Wine & Bubbly Shows Its Heart and 'Sole' Through Beach Cleanup Partnership and Media Outreach

Company: Barefoot Wine & Bubbly
Agency: Hunter Public Relations
Timeframe: Fall 2010 - Present

Not all wine brands align themselves with pristine Napa Valley-like landscapes and upscale tasting events. For more than 20 years, **Barefoot Wine & Bubbly** has crafted its unique image by making wine fun and by supporting nonprofits and local communities through donations of time, money and, of course, wine.

In 2007, Barefoot and **Hunter Public Relations** channeled this tradition of sipping alongside great causes to develop the Barefoot Wine Beach Rescue Project, a

program that highlights the brand's passion and spirit for two things: bare feet and clean beaches.

It's hard to have barefoot fun on beaches when so many are closed or posted as unhealthy. That's why Barefoot rolled up its pants and got its toes wet—literally—by partnering with the Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans and beaches. The partnership goes beyond just ocean beaches that flank the coasts, however, and strives to keep pristine areas among rivers and lakes across America "barefoot friendly."

What makes the Surfrider Foundation the ideal partner

FOUR TIPS FOR HAPPY AND HARDWORKING VOLUNTEERS

You've spent months on your communications plan to earn media coverage and attract volunteers for your community event. Now that you have volunteers ready to get dirty for the cause, don't miss an opportunity to inspire them to become brand ambassadors. Matt McClain, marketing and communications director for the Surfrider Foundation, provides four tips to do just that.

- 1) Tap Into Your Volunteer's Passions:** The adage that people protect what they love holds true, says McClain. The Surfrider Foundation's activists are generally beach enthusiasts, and protecting the ocean is part of their lifestyle. "You want people to equate the brand with what they're doing while volunteering," says McClain.
- 2) Have a Team of Vocal Leaders on Site:** On-site events require a well-detailed game plan. "There's nothing more frustrating as a volunteer to show up and receive no directions," says McClain. "If you don't have someone providing clear directions like, 'Here's a bag and gloves, and we're going a quarter-mile down the beach in this direction,' you're leaving people up to their own devices."
- 3) Keep Things Animated and Dynamic:** If leaders can't keep people activated and moving, volunteers won't be enthusiastic, says McClain. Events have to be authentic, engaging and fun for everyone.
- 4) Be Appreciative:** The immediate sense of accomplishment from volunteering is a motivating factor for people to share and consider your brand above others, says McClain. "So take a group shot and e-mail volunteers the picture and encourage them to share it among their networks and say, 'While everyone was sleeping in I was out cleaning up the beach,'" says McClain.



Photo courtesy of Hunter Public Relations

For the June 4, 2011, Chicago cleanup effort at the Navy Pier, Barefoot Wine and Surfrider Foundation volunteers combed the beach for trash, and afterwards enjoyed free Barefoot Wine and a concert.

for Barefoot? Elizabeth Windram, brand manager at Barefoot Wine & Bubbly, says Barefoot identifies with Surfrider's grassroots approach of bringing attention to local causes through community activism. "It mirrors the path that Barefoot takes with its fleet of local wine representatives, known as 'Barefooters,' who spread the word about Barefoot Wine while giving back to their local communities," says Windram.

For the 2011 edition of the Beach Rescue Project, the two organizations, with the help of local community volunteers, embarked on a tour of 21 cleanups, nationwide. Specific objectives included:

- Raise awareness by earning positive press coverage for the project.
- Recruit at least 50 volunteers at each Beach Rescue event.
- Tangibly demonstrate Barefoot is serious about keeping America's beaches barefoot-friendly.
- Engage Barefoot's target consumers by providing positive and memorable brand experiences at cleanups.

- Continue a national legacy program that Barefoot Wine sales specialists can activate at the retail level in order to drive sales and Surfrider local chapters can activate to drive local membership.
- Maintain a PR CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions) of \$5 or less.

BEACH RESEARCH

Proprietary research showed that Barefoot Wine's target consumers become loyal to products that support causes close to them. Additionally, the brand's "Barefooters" love beaches and shorelines—places that are inherently shoes-off locations. Barefoot also commissioned a survey in conjunction with Surfrider through **Wakefield Research** to learn about the habits and concerns of America's beachgoers, which showed:

- 75% of those surveyed gave their beach a grade of "C" when asked about overall beach quality.
- 37% of respondents said water pollution and debris has kept them out of the

- water.
- 98% of respondents said they see litter when visiting the beach, and 78% of beachgoers are willing to remove litter on their own and have picked up others' debris when visiting the beach.

Secondary research from Surfrider showed that each year, more than 25,000 beaches are either closed or posted as unhealthy, and that plastic is the most common type of marine debris and comprises 90% of debris in the ocean. Clearly, there was still work to be done by both beach and wine enthusiasts to protect these barefoot havens.

RESCUE STRATEGY

The combined 11-person communications team's strategy was to leverage Barefoot's fun personality and charitable heritage to connect with consumers, Surfrider members and distributors and retailers in their communities by creating opportunities to volunteer.

Gigi Russo, partner at Hunter Public Relations, says that in order to expand the beach rescue experience beyond the physical cleanup and earn wider support, the team identified folk/pop singer and songwriter Brett Dennen, a Surfrider supporter who was named by *Rolling Stone* as an "Artist to Watch" in 2009, to serve as spokesperson and performer at cleanups in large media markets.

In order to generate mainstream news and catch the attention of multiple audiences on and off the wine pages, the team kicked off the summer with Dennen and the Surfrider Foundation's communications manager Alexis Henry participating in a national radio media tour.

Throughout the spring and summer months, the Beach Rescue Project team set up four large-scale events, starting on May 21, 2011, in Washington,

D.C., and moving to Chicago, Seattle and Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and 17 smaller-scale cleanup events and volunteer appreciation celebrations.

MEDIA WAVE

To help increase awareness and turnout leading up to the program launch, Hunter PR conducted national and local media outreach for coverage of the project, targeting several beats including wine, lifestyle, philanthropy, music and the environment.

On the day of each event, local camera crews were invited on site to capture volunteers joining together to give back to their communities. In cities where Dennen was not present, local Surfrider Foundation chapter heads and Barefooters served as spokespeople for the Beach Rescue Project.

BEACH GREET

In each market, volunteers gathered to help clean their local beach/shorefront. Volunteers were greeted at a check-in table at Barefoot Wine and Surfrider Foundation branded tents where they signed in and received supplies for a safe cleanup. Participants were given a commemorative T-shirt and encouraged to wear it during the cleanup. After given instructions and safety precautions, volunteers took on the challenge of cleaning the shorelines, planting native greenery or sorting through the collected litter to separate recyclable items. After the two-hour cleanup, volunteers gathered to deposit their full bags and pose for a group photograph.

Following every cleanup event, volunteers 21 and over were invited to attend an appreciation celebration at a nearby venue to reward them for their good deed. Each event featured complimentary surf-inspired fare and Barefoot Wine, and at four locations, Dennen performed and participated in the cleanups.

Comprehensive PR Outreach Enables Volunteer Beach Cleanup of More Than 8 Tons of Trash

BWBRP 2007 - 2011 RECAP

YEAR	# OF CLEANUP EVENTS	~ VOLUNTEERS	~ TRASH COLLECTED (lbs)
2007	7	600	1,750
2008	4	525	1,575
2009	25	1,850	5,550
2010	21	1,250	3,750
2011	22	1,300	3,825
TOTAL	79 TOTAL	5,525 VOLUNTEERS	More than 8 Tons collected

Barefoot Wine, the Surfrider Foundation and close to 6,000 volunteers have participated in beach cleanups since 2007, enabled by comprehensive event and media relations efforts by Hunter Public Relations.

Source: Hunter Public Relations

"Picking up trash along the shore isn't necessarily the most glamorous experience, so we focus on making the entire cleanup fun and memorable," says Russo.

One of the campaign's biggest challenges is that the Surfrider Foundation is a volunteer-based organization, with only a handful of paid staff members who are vital to the planning of every event to scout cleanup locations, obtain permits, help recruit attendees and even serve as spokespeople. Also, pitching the media in cities like Washington, D.C., Chicago and Seattle presented a unique set of challenges for securing coverage of beach events.

The results, however, were stellar:

- In 2011, the Beach Rescue Project campaign garnered 117 million media impressions, 113% more than the set goal of 55 million.
- Noteworthy national and local placements for the program included: *USA Today*, *Women's Health*, *Time Out* Chicago, Boston and Phoenix, *Miami Herald*, *Seattle Times*, *Surfline.com*, *Treehugger.com*, NBC & Fox Miami, NBC Seattle,

NewsChannel 8 Washington, D.C., and DailyCandy.

- The campaign outperformed the 2011 CPM benchmark at \$3.67.
- More than 1,400 volunteers were recruited throughout the summer (approximately 65 per event).
- To date, the Beach Rescue Project has activated more than 5,500 volunteers and collected more than 3,000 pounds of marine debris; more than 8 tons of trash have been removed from the coastline. Surfrider Foundation's local membership base and awareness have also increased, breathing new life into smaller chapters.

Every year, Barefoot's goal is to expand the Beach Rescue Project. For 2012, Barefoot has increased the number of beaches it's visiting and will be supporting Surfrider's newest chapters. The campaign has also gone global, with Barefoot cleanups planned in Europe and Australia—cheers to that.

PRN

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✓ Measurement Tip of the Week

Powered by: **CARMA**
Global Media Analysts

Make media measurement more than a scorecard. It should be used as a tool for learning and managing performance. Measure, learn, implement and improve.

The Newsjacker's Motto

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coming, like the Super Bowl, and 2) reach out “manually” to reporters to get their attention. Those days are gone, says Scott. “What is different now is that Google indexes in real time, creating a piece of content that reporters will find at that precise moment,” he says. “That’s why the technique for newsjacking is different now.”

NEED FOR SPEED

And the major component of this technique, says Scott, is speed. For many companies, speed is scary. If they want to partake in real-time communications, there is no time to check with the lawyers to see if a story angle is OK.

The problem is that PR pros spend a lot of time on long-term planning. “They forget about ‘right now,’” says Scott. Yet “now” is when the opportunity is. Scott tells the story of B2B software company **Eloqua**, and how it newsjacked the story about a competitor, **Market2Lead**, that was acquired by software giant **Oracle**.

Within two hours after Oracle issued a rote press release about its acquisition, the CEO of Eloqua had written a blog post relating how great Oracle’s acquisition was for the industry, filling in the blanks of the press release with great information and context.

Then Eloqua e-mailed a link to that post to every Market2Lead customer for which it had an address. The result was more than \$1 million worth of new business to Eloqua. Who says ROI is difficult to prove in PR?

GIVE IT THE SMELL TEST

All of this sounds bulletproof, but there has to be a smell test before you commit an act of newsjacking. “There are times when it’s distasteful to jump on

the bandwagon of a story,” says Dave Armon, president of marketing/PR monitoring service **Critical Mention**.

Armon gives the example of a former client that made fire detectors. When news of a fatal fire broke, the company would send out a press release that stated: “This is an example of a death that didn’t have to happen.” Granted, the company did it through the guise of a “safety institute,” but the message was much too obvious and harsh.

On the cusp of newsjacking bad taste was *Hustler* magazine’s Larry Flynt, who jumped on Anthony Weiner’s resignation after the New York politician was caught with his pants down on the Internet. The day Weiner resigned, Flynt decided he wanted to be in the “second paragraph” of the national story, says Scott. So he publicly offered Weiner a job at *Hustler* as VP of the Internet division.

There’s is only one Larry Flynt, however. So Armon says you need to ask yourself, “Is piggybacking off this news in good taste and on message?”

FLAGGING HOT TOPICS

Yet there are companies that don’t shy away from the speed of real-time communications. **CSC**, a B2B software company, scans the news daily for opportunities. “If a hot topic falls within our expertise, we immediately flag it to a subject matter expert,” says Chris Grandis, corporate director of global public relations at CSC.

When the White House announced its “Big Data” plan on March 29, Grandis pushed the news to a subject matter expert, who quickly wrote a bylined article on the subject that was pitched to the media.

CSC often gives context to breaking news stories through posts on its blog. Executive

How to Newsjack



News breaks
second-by-second
24 hours a day

1
**Find news
to jack**



Quickness
is essential

2
**Formulate
a strategy
in real-time**



Always use
good judgement

3
**Instantly
get your
take into
the market**

Real-Time To-Do List

- ☐ Be open to serendipity (happy accidents)
- ☐ Monitor keywords, phrases & trending word clouds
- ☐ Track journalists & media outlets
- ☐ Follow Twitter hashtags

Strategy Questions

- ☐ Does your organization have the mindset to act in real time?
- ☐ How are you related to the breaking news?
- ☐ Why should the media care?

Possible Actions

- ☒ Blog your take on the news
- ☒ Tweet it using an established hashtag
- ☒ Send a real-time media alert
- ☒ Talk about it in a speech
- ☒ Hold a live or virtual news conference
- ☒ Directly contact a journalist who might be interested

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Speed and flexibility will give you a leg up on your competition when it comes to real-time communications, says David Meerman Scott, who recently released a book on newsjacking techniques.

Views, which then gets pushed out to the media. On a more breaking basis, if there’s a security breach story, for example, CSC experts are quickly offered to a variety of outlets for comment.

Grandis says there are parameters that are followed when riffing on breaking news: They must have an expert who can address the topic; and the news source must be credible—a reputable business or trade publication.

Being ready to handle a media onslaught if your newsjacking strategy works is critical, says Armon. So that means making sure that you

are nimble enough and have the resources to jump into media relations in real time. Not being prepared for what’s to come could put the focus on your organization’s ineptitude instead of the story.

That’s why Armon is an advocate for communicators having the skills *and* the freedom to act quickly and decisively. Amen. **PRN**

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Social Media Report Card

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grading them on the following factors: corporate engagement; creativity and original content; user engagement; fan following; brand building; and emotional bonding. Ultimately, we're attempting to show if their social media strategy is fulfilling their objectives and identify the type of content they need to emphasize more in order to better achieve their goals.

Overall, both airlines use social media to effectively build their brands. Facebook and Twitter updates align with company values and successfully amplify messaging such as environmental responsibility, passion for employees and community engagement.



The emotional bond with customers can be accredited, in part, to both airlines' timely responsiveness to customer testimonials or complaints. Both airlines address every comment (positive or negative) and handle them appropriately with a reply or call to action. When a negative remark appears on Twitter, both airlines often respond by asking the customer to direct message them with their e-mail so a customer service representative may assist them. This enhances engagement by using social media as a platform to create personal dialogue with the customers.

Overall, both airlines deliver content in a thoughtful and deliberate manner to help create a personal relationship with their customers through social media. **PRN**

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— Social Media Report Card —

				
Comments	Grade	Category	Grade	Comments
Less customer engagement. Mostly use social media platforms to update flight status or other company updates. Twitter is primarily used for reactive customer engagement to answer questions/complaints. HOMEWORK: Be more appropriate with customer responses.	B	Engagement	A	Engagement with fans is active and friendly, with responses to almost every comment both positive and negative. They respond in a timely and appropriate manner. They have two different Twitter accounts, one for engagement and one for fare updates. The fares account also engages with customers, but does so less frequently.
Some creative content such as trivia and photos are available on the Facebook page, but there is limited creative content in the Twitter account. HOMEWORK: Make use of Facebook's Timeline to help show the history of the brand and tell the interesting stories of Alaskan tourist attractions. Use Twitter for contests and much more diverse updates.	B-	Creativity/ Original Content	A-	Content on Facebook is primarily written to announce contests/deals/updates in the company. It does post many interesting pictures, including historical images and advertisements. Twitter is much more original as they have creative contests such as a scavenger hunt using the hash tag #AlohaKNBR. They primarily post contest information on Twitter.
Fans are very engaged on the pages and like photos/posts. Fans share the information frequently.	A	User Engagement	A	Fans engage frequently on the page and like and share photos/posts.
Facebook: 167,642 likes Twitter: 54,585 followers	A	Fan Following (as of March 29, 2012)	A	Facebook: 140,077 likes @HawaiianAir: 33,074 followers @HawaiianFares: 12,955 followers
They have done a great job with posting/tweeting about ways to improve service and ways they are helping the environment. It's also great that they promote their prestigious awards as it builds brand credibility. They also sign each tweet with the name of the customer care representative, which personalizes the brand.	A	Brand Building	A	Hawaiian Airlines does an excellent job of building their brand. Their mission is to grow the airline leveraging their passion for excellence, their customers, their people and the spirit of Hawaii into the tone of their posts. They are very quick to respond to customers, promote their employment opportunities and deal specials, and often say positive things about Hawaii.
A Veterans Day post told a story about their employees who served overseas. It received 715 "likes" and was shared 75 times. This created an emotional bond with the brand.	A	Emotional Bonding	A+	People are constantly posting/tweeting about their love for the brand and the company reciprocates the love by sharing inspiring stories.
	B+	Overall Grade	A	

Branding in Troubled Times: Find Your 'True North'



As PR professionals, we all know that the communications campaign should not be the first budget line item to cut during troubled times. It is our job to prove to clients the positive impact a PR campaign can have on their business and how crucial branding is to the preservation of the company. Perception is reality and a company must do everything to sharpen its brand messaging—and keep it in front of its constituents if they want to weather the storm. This has never been more apparent than in the tumultuous financial services industry.

BLOOD ON THE STREET

The financial markets have never been more volatile. Banks, liquidity venues and broker dealers are all starting to look alike—and sell the same products and services. In February 2009, the Dow Jones Industrial Average hit its lowest point since 1996. We all thought the worst had come and it would be smooth sailing from that point on.

Fast-forward three years and we have glimpsed the other three horsemen of the apocalypse in rapid succession. Mergers and bankruptcies happen every day and Eurozone backlash continues to have deleterious effects on the financial markets.

The bar for news has

become a pole vault. Each time the North American economy under-performs, it sends spasms through the international markets, making it nearly impossible to get a vendor in the headlines unless they get indicted.

As with any other industry, firms need to ask basic questions to define the brand position in a highly competitive landscape.

CANDY OR MINT?

The biggest brand killer in the marketing and PR game is the lack of a consistent message. If you poll a large base of customers and prospects only to find out that 20 think you're an IT outsourcer, 10 think you are a consultancy and 25 think you are a quant shop, your ship is going to sink.

The old adage "nobody ever got fired for buying IBM" rings truer than ever. Companies want assurances against financial failure, increased regulation, spending cuts, etc. A company with a clear, well-maintained message is always the safest bet in a down market.

When a company is struggling to identify its corporate vision or "true north," it needs to undertake an extensive audit of investors, analysts, editors and other constituents to gain anecdotal evidence that will help define its corporate identity, marketing messages, value

proposition and product positioning.

Some of the most basic (and illuminating) questions are as follows:

- How would you describe the company?
- Who is the competition?
- What is the company's competitive advantage?
- What are the company's biggest challenges?
- What are the best and worst aspects of the company?
- How long will the company's products/services be useful?
- What is the company's exit strategy?

Elemental questions it would seem, but more often than not, the respondents—even those intimately involved with the company—sound like they are talking about completely different entities. This exercise is the quickest way to surface a perception problem. If the people closest to the company all think it does different things, imagine what the general public could be thinking. This kind of perception problem is particularly dire in a struggling economy. If you seem confused, there are a dozen competitors ready to step in, dazzle your prospects and steal your sale.

FRAGMENTED BRANDING

One of the more visible

examples of fractured brand positioning within the financial markets industry is coming from the liquidity venues. Traditional stock exchanges are seeing order flow and liquidity being threatened, so they are actively seeking new ways to improve service, increase product "stickiness" and be competitive. In the face of this identity crisis, traditional exchanges need to pay attention to their own reputations and go after analogous markets in their acquisition benders to build brand equity instead of diluting it.

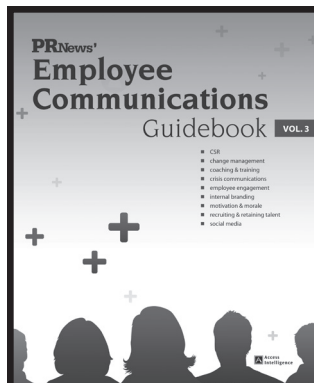
PACK FOR JOURNEY

It is important to remember that success will not be achieved overnight. Expect to chip away for a while before you see results. A sustained and circumspect approach to brand preservation will yield results over time as the markets continue to roil.

The key is to be thoughtful and proactive in your efforts, and to make sure you have realistic goals. **PRN**

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