

# PR News

Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.

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Contents

Brand Marketing

Advertising

## National Health Concerns Serve Up PR Risks and Opportunities

**Obesity.** It's a word that has gained prominence in the U.S. in the last several years, as concerns mount about the rising number of dangerously overweight Americans. According to the American Heart Association, of Americans age 20 and older, 149.3 million are overweight or obese, and

among children 2–19, about one in three are overweight or obese.

Those are startling numbers, and on Thursday, May 31, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced an attempt to do something about the problem—proposing to ban sugar-filled, calorie-laden drinks of more than 16 ounces from thousands of restaurants, delis, movie theaters, food carts, sports venues and other

businesses that serve food and drink. Understandably, Bloomberg has received much flak for the proposal, just as Americans were preparing for National Donut Day on June 1.

As the obesity problem intensifies, the race to put “healthy” products on shelves heats up. But companies—and consumers—beware: With more “healthy” products come questionable health claims. Take the case of POM

**Wonderful**, the maker of a brand of pomegranate juice. On May 21, 2012, a judge issued a cease-and-desist order against POM Wonderful in making unsupported claims that its juice reduces the risks of heart disease, impotence and prostate cancer. The case had been going on for two years, ever since the Federal Trade Commission filed a complaint against POM Wonderful

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### (DID YOU KNOW?)

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

1. On May 21, 2012, a judge issued a cease-and-desist order against POM Wonderful for false advertising claims. (p. 1)
2. In Q2 2012, average weekly “circler” engagement on Google+ was up 112% from Q1. (p. 2)
3. CEOs are twice as likely as CIOs to view social collaboration tools as important to their businesses. (p. 3)
4. Pinterest users are more likely to purchase a pinned item than are Facebook users who see a product on a wall or post. (p. 3)
5. As spokesman for tech company ON24, pitcher Brian Wilson of the S.F. Giants told the public to “Fear the beard—not technology.” (p. 5)
6. Leanwashingindex.com lets consumers rate health-related product advertising. (p. 6)
7. The market for tablets will be worth \$35 billion by the end of 2012. (p. 8)

Community Relations

## Go Grassroots: Build Goodwill With a Community Relations Committee & Plan

Reputation management is one of the most critical areas of concern for management teams and their boards of directors. Daily media reports are filled with stories detailing how companies have either done the wrong thing or broken laws. PR practitioners must adjust their crisis plans to incorporate the latest learnings, with the hope that they are prepared to rise to the call to help their organizations avoid a similar fate, should the unthinkable occur.

But what if we can take steps in advance to build relationships that will help us to either prevent or deal with an event before it actually becomes a crisis? That may require seeking a social license to operate within a certain geo-

graphic region or community. So what actions can we take?

Increasingly, we are seeing organizations developing strategies to build relationships not just with shareholders, but stakeholders—or communities. One such tactic being used more and more relates to building online communities through social media. While this is an important component of building communities, for this specific purpose we are focusing on a different kind of community building: a grassroots community relations committee and plan.

### THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

While new businesses have the advantage of building their

community relations plan during their growth stages, we often see that they don't. That being said, it is almost never too late to start and activate your plan.

For example, if your organization is operating under the following circumstances, having a community relations committee could be key:

- You operate industrial plants or stations within residential communities.
- Your organization is building a new industrial facility.
- A project has significant environmental impact and requires a public consultation process, such as building a pipeline or transmission line

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## ▶ Charting the Industry

Social Media

# Ghost Town? Brands Advance on Google+

While not receiving nearly as much press lately as its stock-price-challenged rival, don't feel sorry for Google+. As a product of one of the largest tech companies on the planet, Google+ demands attention.

In fact, a report released in May 2012 by social media company **Simply Measured** shows Google+ brand page adoption and engagement are on the rise. Overall Google+ activity is up since a Q1 study was released in February 2012—three months after the platform's launch. In Q2 2012, average weekly "circler" engagement is up 112% and content engagement is up 65%, according to the report.

### LUXURIOUS FINDINGS

The top 10 brands on the Simply Measured list have circlers that number from hundreds of thousands to millions, and are dominated by companies in the luxury goods and auto industries (see chart). These brands are making Google+ work for them, paying no mind to the talk that the platform is DOA after just a few months of business.

But Google+ *has* had a slow buildup, says Scott Monty, global head of social media for **Ford Motor Company** (No. 6 on the list), which was chosen as a test brand by Google at launch.

"We were pretty aggressive with Google+ early," says Monty. "But as time has gone on, we've wanted to see where Google is going with this."

Thus, Monty and his team are a bit more passive with Google+ now. On Facebook, Monty estimates they're posting at least twice a day—versus twice per week on Google+.

### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Yet Monty expects to step up that frequency. "We believe the platform will grow in impor-

tance. After all, it *is* Google," he says. One thing that's holding Ford back is a lack of robust analytics, which Monty fully expects Google will address. What Monty does see is more linkage of Google+ to other Google offerings, such as Gmail, its Blogger platform and YouTube.

It's that integration that has Jonathan Kopp, partner and global director at **Ketchum Digital**, bullish on Google+. "Google+ is building a robust, integrated social latticework that will connect data in a way that will benefit both consumers and brands, says Kopp.

### INVITING PLATFORM

So what works on Google+? For Ford, solid visual content is key. Fun videos and historic photos from Ford's archives catch the most buzz. "We'll go down in the lobby of our headquarters and do an Instagram

of a car on display, post it on Google+ and ask people to guess what year the car was made in," says Monty. "It's all about inviting participation."

And speaking of participation, **RJMetrics** released a study in May 2012 that isn't quite as rosy as Simply Measured's, finding that 30% of first-time Google+ public posters don't post again. Plus, the average time lapse between posts is 12 days. This prompted *Bloomberg Businessweek* to famously ask if Google+ is now a ghost town.

Monty, however, sees Google+ getting more integrated with Ford's sites and fully baked into the company's social media process, just like Facebook. **PRN**

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## Auto, Luxury Goods Makers Amass Thousands of Google+ Circlers

Brand Name	# of Circlers	Quarter / Quarter
Ferrari	730,831	8752%
H&M	684,670	43%
GUCCI	595,129	55925%
Burberry	546,759	59%
Starbucks Coffee	542,780	56%
Ford Motor Company	537,912	164%
Coca-Cola	517,379	49%
Samsung USA	514,180	35%
Pepsi	514,008	43%
Google	437,709	255%

Of the big brands, Ferrari's relatively new Google+ presence roared to the top of the heap with the most circlers in Q2 2012, compared to Q1. Fashion and luxury goods companies were hot on its tailpipe.

Source: Simply Measured

# CEOs Value Social Media More Than Others in C-Suite; People Prefer Pinterest for Purchasing—Facebook Pales

► **CEOs View Social Differently Than C-Suite Colleagues:** Chief executive officers are nearly twice as likely as chief information officers to view social collaboration tools as important to their business today (28% versus 15%), while only 14% of chief financial officers surveyed identify social tools as important, according to a study by *MIT Sloan Management Review* and *Deloitte* released in May 2012.

Interview data from the study of more than 3,400 corporate leaders across industries suggests that many CIOs struggle with an unarticulated vision for how they want to use social business corporate-wide. Study highlights include:

- While a clear vision and leadership are cited most frequently as critical to adoption of social software, the most common answer to the question, “How do you measure social software use?” is: “not measured.”
- The largest organizations, those with over 100,000 employees, and the smallest organizations, those with fewer than 1,000 employees, tend to appreciate the value of social business today more than midsize organizations.
- Respondents saw the most business value in social soft-

ware in the areas of “managing customer relationships” and “innovating for competitive differentiation.”

- Identifying industry sectors where social business is thriving, the report divides them into two categories: entertainment, media and publishing (media) and information technology (tech). Eighty-eight percent of media industry managers believe their companies are open to new ideas, and 68% consider themselves innovative. For tech, it was 77% and 69%, respectively.
- A majority of respondents (52%) believe that social business is important important to their business today. A total of 86% of respondents believe social business will be important or somewhat important in three years.

Source: MIT Sloan Management Review/Deloitte

► **Pinterest Fans Are Purchasers:** Pinterest users are far more likely to purchase items they see posted on the site compared to the purchasing behavior of Facebook users viewing items they’ve seen on their news feed or a friend’s wall, according to a survey released in late May 2012 from behavioral commerce company **SteelHouse**. The survey finds

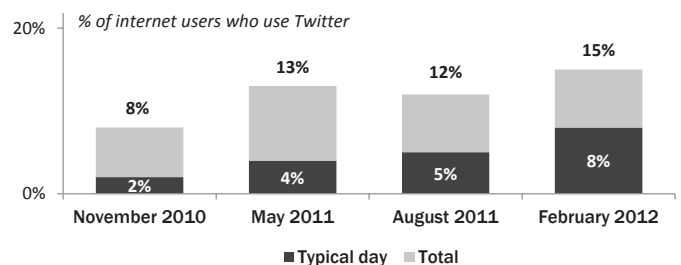
that Pinterest users are 79% more likely to purchase items they saw pinned on Pinterest versus Facebook users. Other findings include:

- 33% of Facebook users say they have purchased a product or service they’ve seen in a Facebook ad, on the news feed or on a friend’s wall, in comparison to the 59% of Pinterest users who have made a purchase based on an item they saw on Pinterest.
- 55% of shoppers prefer to share their purchases on Facebook, followed by Twitter (22%), Pinterest (14%) and Instagram (5%).

- 98% of shoppers say that online customer reviews have a major influence on their decision to purchase a product or service; 72% of consumers shared that they always read reviews before making a purchase, while 26% of consumers only sometimes read reviews before purchasing.
- 68% of shoppers say they rate and review products on a regular basis. The top product categories they write reviews on are electronics (23%), DVDs/CDs/MP3s (14%), and books and clothing (both 13%). **PRN**

Source: SteelHouse

## Percentage of ‘Typical’ Day Twitter Users Doubles in Nine Months



Some 15% of online adults use Twitter as of February 2012, and 8% do so on a typical day, which is double the percentage from May 2011, says a Pew Research study released in May 2012.

Source: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project

## Social Media Summit

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# Bay Area Cyber-Conference Company Winds Up, Pitches Audience via Quirky Pro Athlete and Virtual Technology

**Company:** ON24  
**Timeframe:** Sept. - Dec. 2011

San Francisco Giants pitcher Brian Wilson (not to be confused with the Beach Boy of the same name) is known for his rather peculiar personality. In the 2010 MLB All-Star Game, he wore a pair of bright orange spikes and continued to wear them throughout the season, coloring half of them black with an indelible marker after being fined \$1,000 by the National League for non-conforming shoes. Wilson claimed he was punished for “having too much awesome on [his] feet.”

In a 2010 interview with sports commentator Jim Rome, he claimed to be a “certified ninja,” which he claimed to have learned in a dream. Wilson is defined not only

by a wicked fastball, but by numerous tattoos, a mohawk hairstyle and a thick beard—dyed black, perfect for his nickname: The Beard. It’s no wonder that during the Giants’ playoff run in 2010—the season when they would win the World Series—adoring Bay Area Giants fans adopted the battle cry, “Fear the Beard.”

Staffers at ON24, a San Francisco-based company that provides cloud-based webcasting and virtual communications solutions, generally don’t sport tricked-out beards, nor are they certified ninjas. However, the company—which provides its services to more than 750 organizations, including IBM, Cisco, Credit Suisse and GE—has an entrepreneurial, nonconformist spirit. It was looking to boost awareness of its Virtual User conference, set for Nov. 17, 2011, and maybe “peculiar”



Image courtesy of ON24

As the host of ON24’s Virtual User Experience conference, San Francisco Giants pitcher Brian Wilson told attendees to “Fear the beard, not the technology” in touting ON24’s cloud-based webcasting solutions.

could work—especially when it involved pairing technology with a popular athlete.

## VUE2011 OBJECTIVES

Driving registration to ON24’s flagship event, the Virtual User Experience (VUE) 2011, was the core of the campaign. The event shows registrants the new creative capabilities made possible with virtual event technology, and highlights virtual events’ continued mainstream acceptance within business. It would feature keynote speakers David Meerman Scott, best known for his book *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, and Sandy Carter, a social media thought leader, author, evangelist and visionary from IBM.

Three content tracks would focus on the following: “Virtual Events & Webcasting 101,” basic information to meet the needs of beginners and to help everyone improve virtual event ROI; “Marketing Applications,” about using webcasting and virtual events as tools to drive demand generation and reach customers and prospects; and “Training & Communication Applications,” focusing on leveraging virtual events and webcasts for employee training

and corporate communications.

## VIRTUAL/VISUAL ACUITY

Central to the VUE2011 experience would be online visuals, a “virtual San Francisco” 3-D environment complete with animated cable cars and virtual versions of landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge. “This campaign started with the designing of the event itself,” says Tricia Heinrich, senior director, strategic communications at ON24. And who better to lead event participants through a virtual San Francisco than the Giants’ Wilson? “Brian is well known, he has a certain amount of notoriety and, finally, he has a great personal tagline: Fear the Beard,” says Heinrich.

Thus, the ON24 team contacted an agent who specializes in sports figures, who then sent a proposal to Wilson and his team. At the time, Wilson was on the 15-day disabled list and was available for a spokesperson opportunity, says Heinrich.

With the talent in place, the following PR objectives were set:

- Announce that Wilson was hosting the ON24 virtual

## FOR ENGAGING VIRTUAL WORLDS, OVERCOME THE FEAR FACTOR

To showcase its virtual conference expertise, ON24 built a virtual version of San Francisco for its VUE2011 online conference. There may come a time when a virtual environment is the most effective way to get your message out. Michael LaRocco, former director of marketing and online media at ON24 (now principal at Creative Dilemma), offers five tips for creating virtual environments.

- 1. Don’t discount the impact of creative virtual communications.** Immersive user environments help drive event success.
- 2. The creative process actually starts with the message.** Determine your message first, and then reinforce that message virtually.
- 3. Get past the fear that comes with change.** Fear is the biggest obstacle to designing truly innovative virtual environments—fear of the unknown, the fear of failure, the fear that virtual events are too good to be true.
- 4. Assemble a creative staff.** Put together virtual event production teams staffed with smart, imaginative and fearless people. Challenge them to be bold and daring.
- 5. Strive toward a high wow factor.** Virtual event attendees not only want to be dazzled, they expect it. If you’re willing to take a little risk, the virtual world will reward you for it.

user conference (VUE2011) and leverage that announcement to secure widespread media coverage. The ultimate goal was to drive conference registrations.

- Conduct a conference registrant survey and use the results to leverage media interest in travel woes as the holiday season travel approaches.

The ON24 team of 10—including marketing, communications and production staff—developed and executed the following strategies for the campaign. They included:

► **Create a unique virtual environment to showcase virtual event creative possibilities.** Michael LaRocco, then creative director of marketing and online media at ON24, led the company's efforts to build that environment (LaRocco is now principal at Creative Dilemma). How do you best represent your virtual conference offerings? Build a world that is visually compelling—not only for VUE2011 conference attendees, but for journalists covering the event (see sidebar for LaRocco's tips on building virtual environments).

► **Develop a program theme that reinforces ON24 positioning.** Travelling virtually is easier and cheaper than getting a plane, staying in a hotel and paying for meals—that was a key ON24 message. And is there a better U.S. city than San Francisco to showcase virtually? Plus, ON24 is headquartered in the City by the Bay, giving the virtual angle even more cachet.

► **Make the Wilson story entertaining, relevant and newsworthy.** Three videos featuring Wilson were scripted by Heinrich and directed by LaRocco. "One was promotional, one was behind the scenes and one was for the fan base," says Denise Persson, chief marketing officer at

ON24. They would be distributed to the media and posted on YouTube. To play up its relationship with Wilson, ON24 tweaked his tagline, naming the campaign "Fear the beard, not the technology."

Not surprisingly, the behind-the-scenes video, with Wilson storming off the set, was the most popular, says Heinrich.



► **Highlight research to drive media coverage.** Two studies—one about the use of professional athletes for corporate events and the other the state of business travel—were fielded, the former before the conference and the latter after. In the first study, executives polled described several qualities in sports that apply to business, either agreeing or strongly agreeing that teamwork was the number one quality (90%), followed by reacting quickly (82%), persistence (78%), celebrating victories (74%) and being the best (73%). In the travel study, 92% of executives polled think that business travel is failing to improve, and they named Houston as the absolute worst city for conventions or trade shows (among other findings). "These studies had good

participation, and they really fueled interest with the press," says Persson.

► **Create a cadenced series of news releases.** These were designed to cover the conference before, during and after. The topics of these releases included:

- The hiring of Brian Wilson.
- Research: Use of professional athletes in corporate events (pre-conference).
- VUE2011 registration and keynotes.
- Research: The state of business travel (post-conference).

"In partnering with an athlete—we could target publications that normally wouldn't be interested in our story," says Persson. "Sports publications and sites are very popular with C-level executives."

The digital/media relations blitz resulted in big numbers. But is there anything that Persson would have added to the campaign to make it even more effective? She notes that with the virtual San Francisco theme, there was more of a West Coast feel and less of an international feel. That, she says, will be remedied in 2012.

Other than that, the ultimate goal of driving attendees to VUE2011 exceeded expectations, says Persson. Conference highlights include: 1,545 live participants; 3,756 registrants; 2,900 webcast views; 1,686 documents downloaded; and 652

virtual sponsor booth visits.

Digital PR/media relations highlights include:

- 23,040 YouTube video views
- 12% Twitter follower increase
- 82 million total audience impressions, including placements in the *San Francisco Examiner*, *Huffington Post*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Sports Business Daily*, *Exhibitors Daily*, CNET and the *Los Angeles Times*.

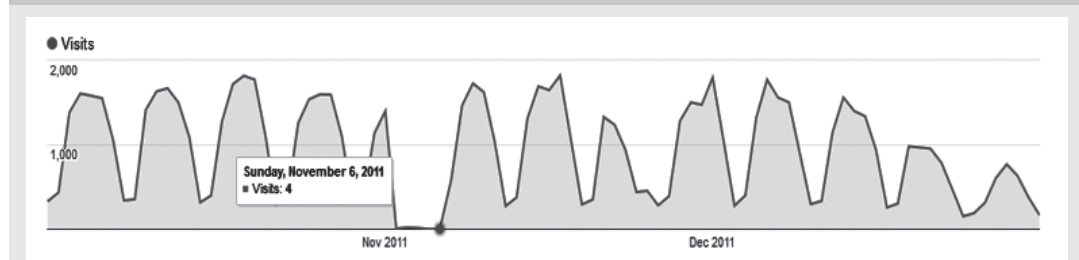
"An event should be fun and informative, and that's what Brian helped us create," says Persson. In 2012, ON24 is concentrating on a different outreach focus each quarter—virtual job fairs in Q1, virtual learning in Q2 and so on.

And Wilson? He's sidelined with a serious arm injury, having recently endured his second Tommy John surgery. Wilson is also sidelined *virtually* as well. ON24 will have a different approach for VUE2012. "We're going to create something amazing," says Persson. It will have to be, because after "The Beard," it couldn't be anything less. **PRN**

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## The Beard Draws Thousands to Event Registration Site



With S.F. Giants pitcher Brian "The Beard" Wilson as spokesman, ON24's VUE2011 registration site averaged close to 2,000 daily visitors from Oct.-Dec. 2011 (dips are nighttime lulls).

Source: ON24

# Making Health Claims

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alleging that the company had engaged in false and misleading advertising.

## UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS?

POM Wonderful's case illustrates a gray area in making health claims for products. The FTC rarely enforces its edict against health claims that are unsubstantiated, says Kevin Tuerff, principal and president of social marketing agency **EnviroMedia**. Thus, for the FTC to move against POM Wonderful, there had to be a compelling reason. In this case, it was because some POM ads claimed that its juice specifically reduce the risks of heart disease, impotence and prostate cancer. The FTC said those claims were unsubstantiated.

POM Wonderful says it was not fazed by the ruling, pointing out that just a small percentage of its advertising was affected. "POM's messaging

has always been about the brand's inherent benefits, both from a general health perspective and from a lifestyle perspective," Corey Martin, POM's VP of corporate communications, tells *PR News*.

It's cases like this that prompted Tuerff to create [Leanwashingindex.com](http://Leanwashingindex.com), a site that points out questionable health claims by manufacturers. Leanwashing, derived from the eco-equivalent term "greenwashing," lets the public rate advertising of health-related products and services. Just as companies sometimes exaggerate green claims, the same thing is happening with health claims. "It's an area that is not well regulated, and with the obesity crisis it's a problem that needs to be taken to the public," says Tuerff.

## HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES

While there are some minefields to tiptoe through, most

organizations (including those not in the food and beverage space) can benefit from addressing national health issues, says Louise Pollock, president of **Pollock Communications**, a New York City-based PR agency specializing in food and nutrition communications.

Pollock recommends researching the interests of your audience and shaping health-related outreach accordingly. "It could be about keeping in shape, time management or lifestyle tips," says Pollock, who adds that it's a good idea to pull an expert into the fold—i.e. a dietician or lifestyle coach. Then, your content can be distributed in the usual ways: press releases, advertising and via social platforms.

"The obesity epidemic presents an opportunity for all communicators to learn how to position their brands as a motivator of change," says Pollock. For example, a technology company could create a health-related app that benefits current and potential customers. Here are some tips from Pollock on how PR pros can play a role in helping Americans face their weight reality and get results:

- Keep abreast of lifestyle trends/issues (like obesity) that your brand can capitalize on to make a difference in consumers' lives.
- Be prepared to proactively respond to general changes in consumer behavior, wants and needs, to continue to build your brand and create a loyal consumer base.
- Take appropriate action to help make a difference.
- Identify influencers who resonate with your brand and who have the expertise to convey your key messages in a meaningful way to help motivate change.

## POM FIGHTS BACK

Meanwhile, POM Wonderful has been on the offensive, breaking new advertising the same week as the legal decision was handed down. The campaign consisted of three full-page advertisements in newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as home-page takeovers of CNN, the Huffington Post and other sites. The ads sport the tagline: "FTC v. POM—You be the judge," and includes passages from the ruling.

One quote in an ad from the ruling: "Competent and reliable scientific evidence supports the conclusion that the consumption of pomegranate juice and pomegranate extract supports prostate health, including by prolonging PSA doubling time in men with rising PSA after primary treatment for prostate cancer."

But, as the *New York Times* pointed out in a May 25 article, the sentence after that contains a caveat: "However, the greater weight of the persuasive expert testimony shows that the evidence relied upon by the respondents"—POM Wonderful and its affiliate, Roll Global—"is not adequate to substantiate claims that POM products treat, prevent or reduce the risk of prostate cancer or that they are clinically proven to do so."

Could POM have left well enough alone? "We have had a lot of positive consumer feedback," says spokesman Martin. So we'll let you—and consumers—be the judge. **PRN**

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## ON HEALTHY GROUND: HEALTH CLAIM WARNING SIGNS

Companies that make health claims must back up those claims with strong data, says Kevin Tuerff, principal and president of social marketing agency **EnviroMedia** and creator of [Leanwashingindex.com](http://Leanwashingindex.com). Leanwashing's ad scoring criteria—created by an advisory board of marketers, scientists and doctors—offers warning signs for communicators to keep in mind when making such claims:

1. **The ad, packaging or promotion misleads with words:** Focus on the words only—what are they really saying?
2. **The ad, packaging or promotion misleads with visuals, imagery or sponsorships:** Will nonverbal cues such as graphics, photographs, sponsorships or celebrity endorsements make customers think the product/company is healthier than it really is?
3. **The ad, packaging or promotion makes a health claim that is vague or can't be proven:** Clearly identify what the claims are, and provide a source for those claims.
4. **The ad, packaging or promotion exaggerates how healthy the product/company actually is:** Don't overstate how healthy the product/company actually is—it's not worth the risk.
5. **The ad, packaging or promotion leaves out or masks important information, making the health claim sound better than it is:** Claims should be consistent with nutritional content, and potentially unhealthy aspects of product should not be disguised.

# Community Relations Committee & Plan

► Page 1

through a specific jurisdiction that could impact residents, nature preserves, etc.

- Your organization believes that a strong community will attract and retain better employees.

There are many reasons to have community relations but there are no shortcuts to doing it right. With corporate social responsibility being measured on more and more scorecards, community relations is now in vogue. More than just a fashion statement, community relations provides real and tangible solutions for organizations when dealing with the public.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

In addition to the accompanying checklist of items, be sure to have Terms of Reference (TOR) for your committees and share these TOR with committee members as they sign on. When modifying the TOR, be sure to do so with your committee. Here are some best practices for making sure your community relations committee is successful:

- **Be consistent, with both the composition of your committee representatives as well as the timing of the meetings.** If you designate people to be a part of the committee, ensure that they are committed to being at every meeting and can contribute. Company representatives should be able to make decisions and share information at the meetings. They should have the appropriate authority.
- **Have a budget.** If your organization is committed to community relations, then back it up with a budget. Be prepared to pay for meeting space, meals, transportation, advertisements introducing your committee members and other administra-

tive costs.

- **Have an open mind.** Be prepared that initial discussions may not be positive or pleasant. However, listening without being defensive will bear fruit.

- **Have patience.** Be steady and take your time with your community. This alone will start the building of trust.

- **Be present.** Once you start this process, see it through. Don't commit to something and then not live up to it.

## GO ABOVE AND BEYOND

Even after you have formed your community relations committee, it may not be enough. For example, when going through an environmental impact assessment, you may be required to have public information sessions which require open houses and the preparation of reports for the regulator.

As a best practice, don't wait for a regulator to tell you how to operate. Be proactive and set your company's guidelines to include:

- Establishing parameters for public information sessions—when they should occur, how you will advertise and communicate to the greater public about the event;
- Determine how you will include your community relations committee in public information sessions both during the planning stages and the actual events;
- Be sure that you have sign-in sheets, information packages, subject matter experts, media spokespeople and exit questionnaires available; and
- Be sensitive to the fact that literacy continues to be an issue. If someone opts to not fill out an exit questionnaire, offer to fill it out for him or her if you ask the questions. Then give the person the option to sign the form. This

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS CHECKLIST: SET CLEAR ROLES

Before you set up a community relations program, here's a checklist of committee to-do's from Heather-Anne MacLean, senior community manager for **Radian6**.

- Ensure that management is on the same page as those participating in community relations.
- Have a clear roles and responsibilities document prepared for management sign-off. Having this mapped out in advance of a committee start-up can avoid embarrassing contradictions between management and those actually running the committees.
- Have a clear understanding of whether or not the committee has a project life, or if it is intended to continue on indefinitely.
- Invite senior management to participate in meetings at least once a year.
- Have management sign-off on Terms of Reference before they are shared with the community.
- Be prepared to have minutes of the meetings recorded and shared publicly.
- Have a plan in place should your community relations committee abandon your company.
- Be sure to review membership yearly with the committee and seek their input as to whether additional members or different members are needed.

not only preserves a person's dignity, but it also helps you gather needed feedback.

## REMEMBER YOUR COMMITTEE

The ultimate goal should always be to promote an open, transparent and honest forum for communications with your community. Be ready and prepared to share public communications in advance of releasing to the greater public. Seek their input and ask for their advice.

Above all, be honest with yourself, your committee and your community. If you jeopardize the relationship, it may be too difficult to call on your

committee and your community after the fact to support you. Even when companies make mistakes, coming clean up front results in supporters standing by you in both good and bad times. **PRN**

*[This article was adapted from PR News' Corporate Social Responsibility & Green PR Guidebook, Vol. 5. To order go [prnewsonline.com/store/65.html](http://prnewsonline.com/store/65.html).]*

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# It's Time to Make the Right B2B Mobile Moves



The Mobile Marketing Association says there are now more mobile phone subscribers globally than landline subscribers. And **JPMorgan** predicts the market for tablets will be worth \$35 billion by the end of 2012.

While mobile marketing, in some basic forms, has been around for more than a decade, the breakneck speed at which the notable move to mobile is occurring has left many a B2B communicator wondering how to tap this channel to reach customers and prospects.

Overall, business-to-business companies have been hesitant to jump into mobile marketing. Many B2B companies have struggled with how much effort and budget to allocate to mobile campaigns and, moreover, how to devise and execute such campaigns in a way that generates results.

## SHOW US THE MONEY

Successful public relations and marketing professionals have long understood the need to reach customers and prospects where they live and on their terms. And B2B executives are starting to use mobile devices as their primary communications tool, according to a joint Google and *Forbes* survey. What's more telling for B2B communicators is that 65% of executives are comfortable making a business purchase

on a mobile device and more than 50% of executives prefer making business purchases on the mobile Web versus a landline phone.

The changing landscape is creating an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" atmosphere where B2B communications pros must overcome their procrastination and either create mobile outreach programs or look to expand existing ones.

## MAKE THE MOBILE MOVES

For newbies, there are a number of factors to consider when jumping into the mobile waters. Here are the most important factors:

▶ **Mobile is a long-term strategy.** In sum, the newness and buzz around mobile doesn't mean PR and marketing professionals should throw caution to the wind and launch mobile campaigns without clear objectives. While specific revenue goals are great, they may be harder to determine in the B2B arena—especially for businesses with long sales cycles.

So decide which attainable, measurable goals make sense for your business—such as expanding your prospect database by a certain percentage, scheduling appointments with a specific number of key prospects or upselling services to existing customers.

▶ **Less really is more... some-**

**times.** Most B2B communicators are trying to reach senior-level executives or certainly people within organizations who influence buying decisions. When executing mobile marketing campaigns, keep in mind that your audience is already receiving a lot of information via mobile devices.

While you want the campaign to drive results and be actionable, more communication is not necessarily going to make the campaign memorable. There's no golden rule regarding the amount and frequency for reaching out via mobile. The best guideline is to determine if your communication has value and set up a schedule that's not going to irritate your audience.

▶ **Keep it simple.** Yes, mobile phones and tablets are the best inventions since sliced bread, but they are not PCs and have limitations. With that, mobile campaigns need to be user-friendly, allowing targets to easily access and review the information without a lot of hassle. The call to action should be easy to execute via the mobile device, too.

▶ **See more, buy more.** At the same time that tablets and smartphones are gaining in popularity, there is a shift to a non-text Web. Online video is becoming increasingly widespread with more than 50% of executives (under 40) making

a business-related purchase after watching a video. Because video takes executives down the purchase path, B2B communicators need to develop compelling videos that work well on mobile and include strong, immediate calls to action.

▶ **It's just one part of the mix.** While the time is right to enhance mobile strategies, B2B communicators should ensure that mobile is one component of a broader, holistic outreach strategy. Don't compromise other PR and marketing approaches for mobile's sake. Rather, develop complementary campaigns that reach your customers and prospects through various channels.

Finally, leverage mobile campaigns as a way to get customer feedback, not solely as a tool to push information. Following best practices and opening the mobile channel as a way to listen to your customers, instead of just selling them, will undoubtedly generate the long-term results and revenue to demonstrate their value to the organization. **PRN**

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