



## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

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### **Abstract**

*Social media make life easier and bring people together, develop community and provide scope to public talk and give immediate feedback to a particular cause, enhance product reach, burst breaking news in advance of traditional media, routine as a job enlisting portal, bond relationship, help bloom tourism, provide a wide scope e to consumer preferences, employee facilitator as internal communicator, share and care health complication and treatment.*

*We all know social media has had a massive impact on PR and News, but until now I hadn't seen this impact packaged in a way that truly captures the scale. Social media impact has been widely reported on, discussed and analyzed over the years. Often these studies focus on how social media impacts kids/students, government, the entertainment industry, business and everything in between. As PR pros each and every one of us should be keenly aware of social media impact on news as it has a direct impact on PR.*

**Key Words: Social Media, Development Community, Public Relations, Impact.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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Social media lets us reach people more directly, through Twitter and Facebook and an ever-growing array of new platforms. It used to be B2B and B2C but now it's B2P, with P being people. Social media cuts across channels and is all about engaging with individuals, holding conversations not relying on press releases and launches.

There are huge opportunities there, but the 24/7 scrutiny brings new threats, too. The key is to have a strategy: think carefully about the resources you have and how you can keep control of any conversations you begin. Anyone can set up a Twitter or LinkedIn account, but you need a strategy to make it a success. If you treat social media as a key part of your PR and wider business strategy you can achieve real business results.

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Twitter. Facebook. Digg. MySpace. LinkedIn. Google hangouts, skype..., Today's technology changes so rapidly and making everybody to accept its importance and relevance.

Social media facilitate interaction. Consumers have a voice that is heard by the company directly Social media is assisting people resolve their customer care. At the same time, young people are using social media to get jobs with their well-liked companies.

The Director of National Intelligence in its report identified the prevalence of exercise of the social media by Indians was first coming to relevance during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, It secures significance as effective tool utilized by a cross segment of society in India.

DNI said since January 2008 it has observed an increase in pro-separatist material and propaganda on social networking sites.



As per data of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 83 million people are using Internet in India and more than 56 per cent on broadband. Majority of them access social media through mobile mobiles According to a report; the number of mobile social network users in India is expected to reach around 72 million by 2014. (Business standard 7 Dec 2010)

The ViziSense, an online audience measurement service, reported that Face book usage is more with 22.1 million people access in July (2013), followed by Google's Orkut with 18.5 million.

### **ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT**

PR pros know the impact social media has had on their own daily lives, and it makes perfect sense that it has impacted our journalist friends as well. To do our jobs well we must look to not only how we are impacted, but also to how the industry has been impacted. While this info graphic offers only once small piece of the impact puzzle, it does point to one very important fact – social media has changed the world of journalism. We must use this information when determining how we should be working with journalists; if we ignore social media in our daily interactions with them we are missing an extremely important communication channel.

Approach to Anna Hazare's 13-day long protest fast, the media again made itself part of the story. Missing in the frenzy was any effort to arrive at an understanding of what "corruption" meant to the people joining the protest. Also lacking was a sense of tolerance for alternative views on a complex social phenomenon. Far from reflecting the complex and multilayered anxieties that underpin the growing popular restiveness with governance processes, the media chose to present a singular authoritarian point of view as the true and authentic voice of all Indians. The implications for the quality of the public discourse on the future of democracy are grim.

*Tom Malcolm, head of consumer, Diffusion according to him* Social media is not only forcing PR agencies to become much more integrated. A thread on a consumer forum can quickly become headline news and as such PR professionals need to have an understanding of how a brand's reputation online and offline are intrinsically linked.

The rise of social media has also had an effect on media organisations which are now in search of unique and engaging content which will drive traffic to their websites. This in turn has transformed the role of PR. To feed the media's growing appetite for engaging content, successful PR campaigns are now increasingly reliant on their ability to create engaging content that people want to share and talk about online. This has also forced PR agencies to work alongside and focus a lot more like creative and ad agencies.

*Andy Heaps, operations director, Epiphany* Social offers a host of opportunities to integrate different parts of the digital marketing mix. At Epiphany we have a creative development team who work hand in hand with our online PR and SEO teams to create content to fulfil strategic search objectives, drive online visibility and build brand engagement through social media channels.

The advent of the social web means that it's now more important than ever to create, seed and promote great quality content. By using a hybrid approach, it's possible to generate a much larger and more meaningful digital footprint for the brands you're promoting.

*Pete Goold, managing director, Punch Communications says that* The advent of social media is forcing PRs to be ever more accountable and transparent, not only in terms of measurement but also in terms of cross-team working. Increasingly, in our experience, the open nature of the social media team tends to promote better integration with other marketing disciplines – leading to a more positive working arrangement and a better outcome.

Also of course, Social Media requires a PR person to think less about an intermediary – such as a journalist or blogger – and more about the end user, which results in catering for a broad spectrum of needs. Rather than targeting a single individual with an idea, PRs that manage social media now need to think about the response of a broad demographic – which arguably forces the thinking to be more robust than ever before.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND PR BECOME SYNONYMOUS TODAY**

*Tom Malcolm, head of consumer, Diffusion described* Social media and PR has become much more integrated but that does not necessarily make them synonymous. The agency landscape is very fragmented with ad agencies, search agencies, digital



and design agencies all vying for social media budget. Marketing Directors are looking for agencies that can take a mature approach to a brief and work closely alongside each other to achieve business objectives.

*According to Pete Goold, managing director, Punch Communications* There is an element of social media which lends itself perfectly to PR thinking – which is the creation and management of an engagement strategy and the narrative that runs through any given social profile. However, social media also comprises major elements that are better managed by digital creative and paid media teams respectively.

The ideal is to have the appropriate areas working harmoniously and irrespective of which one leads the activity; ensuring that there is openness across the team is likely to create the best outcome.

*Nigel Ferrier, director, Optimise PR and executive chairman, FPCG* They should be. Companies live and die by their reputation, and since the advent of social networking, they live and die a lot quicker. Consumers look online for information and reviews; last year the Social Media Statistics Compendium found 75% say purchasing decisions are influenced by what they read online, and social media is a key element of that. Companies can't afford to ignore it. So social media is integral to most PR campaigns in some shape or form.

### **Does the PR's traditional toolbox lend the profession to leading the way in social media?**

*Nigel Ferrier, director, Optimise PR and executive chairman, FPCG* his opinion on social media is PR's all about engagement, whatever the platform, and social media mirrors that. But we need new tools, too, to keep abreast of rapid technological change and engage effectively with new audiences. We find many SMEs are struggling to know where to start with social media. That's why we've developed a new monitoring and analysis tool, Social Sleuth, to help companies protect their good name and respond to threats.

It's more immediate than a focus group. Social Sleuth shows companies what people are saying about their brand and where they are saying it: whether on news websites, forums, blogs or social networking sites. As well as recording the volume of mentions, it crucially records in real time whether mentions are positive or negative, so companies can respond if their reputation is challenged.

*Tom Malcom, head of consumer, Diffusion in his opinion* There are significant strengths in PR's traditional toolbox that lend it to run successful social media campaigns. However this is not an exclusive position. Just as PR agencies will claim an innate ability to communicate with audiences so an ad or creative agency will claim a heritage in creating unique and engaging rich content.

The days of the traditional agency bun fight over budgets are numbered with brands expecting a much more mature and collaborative approach to briefs with agencies honestly outlining what strengths they can bring to the table.

*Adam Lewis, managing partner, immediate future according to him* PR people are well equipped for social because they know how to tell a story. They know how to create dialogue and they think beyond campaigns to relationships. All of which is essential for effective engagement on social media.

But the traditional toolbox might be limited when trying to keep pace with the innovation that's happening in social media. I can say this having worked in the PR industry for many years. The PR industry arguably lacks the tools for using the raft of technology and mindset for analysing the vast amount of data and metrics that social media can yield.

Column inches, circulation and the dodgy old advertising equivalent value have been the mainstay of PR measurement for far too long. In contrast social media provides hundreds of potential KPIs, covering not just reach, but engagement, sentiment and loyalty. Understanding the value of social media means having a more analytical mind that can decipher the relationship between things like re tweets, comments and authority. Most PRs are not naturally technically minded.- they are creative, people. But they need to know the difference between an API, BIT.LY, App, CSS and CMS for example.

*Pete Goold, Managing director, Punch Communications in his voice* In terms of managing the narrative, yes absolutely. And, provided that a PR has a broad enough frame to be able to understand how best to take advantage of other disciplines through



integration, then PRs are also well suited to devising the overall strategy – although it's important that ideation can come from any part of an integrated team, from junior to senior, irrespective of discipline.

A PR's approach to measurement – with a high level of attention to detail that is designed to result in actionable outcomes – is very well suited to social media. Ultimately, many of the best social media campaigns are those which do the basics well and continue to improve week on week through detailed analysis and taking advantage of the resulting insight to rapidly evolve the strategy.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND FIVE BIG IMPACT FACTORS**

Social media's Big Five (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogging and YouTube) changed the life of public relations professionals in ways that could be both cataclysmic and awesome.

Cataclysmic in the sense that the pace at which communication takes place has developed from snail mail to tweeting in real-time. The result? News often reaches the journalist before the official press release lands in their e-mail inbox.

Take the recent Miss World pageant, which I followed on a direct (albeit slightly delayed) broadcast on television, the official web site as well as Twitter, as an example. Four decades ago, before South African television, the public had to buy the newspaper the following morning to see who has been crowned the most beautiful woman in the world. Today you simply log onto Twitter and use the hash tag #missworld to see the results before it has even been announced on the so-called direct television broadcast. It is clear why this could ultimately be disastrous for the public relations professional who does not keep up with digital technology.

At the same time it can be the most awesome thing that has yet happened in the industry if you are a public relations professional who is driven by the competitiveness of pitching the perfect news story in less than 90 characters.

The future of public relations is a fusion of old and new. The 'R' in 'PR' does, after all, stand for Relations. Face-to-face meetings and telephone calls are as important as that 30-second YouTube pitch-video that you've tweeted.

The popular public relations professional of the future can hot up headlines and sell ice to Eskimos, yet at the same time be tactful and show respect to the journalist who they so heavily rely on for getting the desired publicity.

All-in-all the industry has been thrown into the deep seas of the digital age and only those public relations professionals who can find innovative and creative ways to practice their profession will swim to victory. A recent info graphic, Impact of Social Media on News, published by ING, helps put social media impact into context every PR pro will appreciate. To complete this info graphic, ING initiated an international study to analyze social media impact on PR professionals and journalists. The study looks to identify how social media has influenced news and news distribution.

### **KEY SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT FINDINGS**

- **Reliability**  
Despite low level of reliability, 50% of journalists identify social media as “main source of information” (Twitter).
- **Fact Checking**  
52% of PR pros find that journalists are less likely to contact them to fact check since the emergence of social media (Twitter).
- **Rules of Journalism**  
60% of journalists report that they feel less bound by traditional rules of journalism when using social media (Twitter) 59% of journalists say they feel free to share their personal opinions on social media (Twitter).
- **Importance to a journalist's daily life**  
70% of journalists report that social media is important to their daily performance (Twitter)  
68% of journalists say they can't operate without social media (Twitter)

And, most staggering of all facts, **56% of journalist report that they feel traditional media has become less important than social media.** For more information, and to enjoy a fantastic info graphic.



### **INTERNAL COMMUNICATOR - ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Many Employers are using social media tools such as instant messaging and social networks to communicate with their employees. This facilitates to immediate pass on information and to obtain feedback on decisions made by the company. As per Business News Daily report, a research based on a survey conducted across 290 organizations in North America, Europe and Asia, reveals that more than half of the employers surveyed now use various social media tool as part of their internal communication initiatives as a way to establish community

The nature of social media intended to fabricate community and facilitate to engage employees on major matters like as performance, collaboration, culture and values.

### **CONCLUSION**

Public Relations industry has undergone a radical change in the last few years, since the emergence and widespread adoption of social media sites such as Face book and Twitter.

The Social media secured importance, relevance in the guild. On the charge of corruption, after a social media campaign, a Chinese provincial official Yang Dacai was sentenced to 14 years in jail for subversion. The social media enable people feel comfortable to talk and act naturally, which automatically empower freedom. The health care also benefitted from social media networks it is possible only through public relations.

It's not the first time the PR industry has had to adapt to a new way of doing business. Being creative as well as tactical is what drives PR success. For this reason, the PR industry has always been at the forefront in terms of responding to technological advances and experimenting with new tools and techniques to generate ever improved results. Today Public relations more depend up on social media and social media no doubt creating revolution in globalization.

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