

The Evolving Skillset of the Modern PR Professional:

Establishing Trust in a Chaotic World

The core skills of the modern PR professional are based on gaining the most important currency for companies today: **Trust**.

Consumers are more connected than ever, and they have a huge amount of choice in which brands they choose to buy from and work with. Brands need to take smart steps to reach these individuals on the platforms they use every day and serve them messages they'll value and trust.

The following are four of the most critical abilities for modern PR professionals to possess:

- **Verifying information** to spare customers from the deluge of fake news sowing confusion.
- **Reaching out to influencers** to give brands a human face.
- **Performing analytics** to make objectively smart moves instead of using guesswork.
- **Working with multimedia** because information consumption habits have evolved.

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Verifying Information

The chaotic media climate today, in which blatantly false and malicious stories can lead to very real consequences, presents a serious challenge for PR professionals. These individuals have to realize the magnitude of the problem and counter with clarifications.



Confusion is everywhere:

64 percent of Americans say fake news stories are causing “a great deal of confusion.” 24 percent say these falsehoods have led to “some confusion.”



Fake content is spreading:

16 percent of Americans said they’d shared a fake news story not knowing it was untrue – and 14 percent admitted to willingly sharing fabricated facts¹



PR pros’ best practices

- 1 Establish an internal fact-checking process and team
- 2 Prepare sources and methodology for statistical information before presenting to journalists
- 3 Restrict pitches to outlets with strong reputations²



Reaching Out to Influencers

With so much access to information, consumers are looking beyond brand's own communications to get information. PR pros today are learning to work with influential figures to reach large audiences with messages that come from people rather than companies.



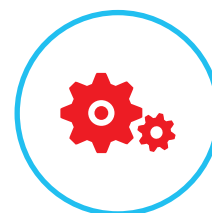
It's already working:

93 percent of professionals reaching out to customers through influencers found the method effective.³



Relationships will deepen:

Rather than quick-and-dirty paid product pitches, influencers and companies should develop deeper connections over time.⁴



Too much automation hurts results:

The value of influencers is in the human connections they create with followers. Too much automation negates this.⁵



PR pros' best practices

- 1 Choose influencers who complement your brand
- 2 Remember it's a relationship, not a contract
- 3 Don't let paid marketing dominate



Performing analytics

There is plenty of information flowing between audiences and brands today, and intelligent PR pros will become adept at harnessing it.



Unlock fast responses:

Using real-time streams of information, PR pros can gain quick insights on trends that are still fresh.⁷



Find small data in big data:

Global data is expected to total 44 zettabytes – equivalent to 1,936 trillion terabytes – by 2020.⁶ Rather than being overwhelmed by this flood, PR pros need to find the value within it.



Increase faith in PR:

Analytics use is proving PR's ROI.⁸



PR pros' best practices

- 1 Work with a trustworthy, comprehensive, media intelligence platform such as LexisNexis Newsdesk®
- 2 Use help from outside analysts when you need it
- 3 Approach the insights with an open mind, you could uncover something unexpected



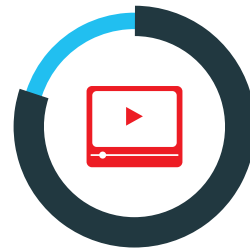
Working with Multimedia

Traditional press releases alone just don't have the reach they once did. There are plenty of ways to ensure PR messages break through to customers, and just about all of them involve breaking out of conventional media use patterns and getting creative:



Press releases are going unnoticed:

With **83 percent** of journalists using a mere 10 percent of all press releases they're sent, it's clear PR departments need other outreach channels.⁹



Video is rising:

When deciding what medium to use to communicate key info, consider video, which is becoming the new standard: It will account **80 percent** of consumer internet traffic by 2019.¹⁰



PR pros' best practices

- 1 Go beyond the standard press release to get journalists' attention
- 2 Give multimedia access wherever possible
- 3 Work with marketing, uniting your approaches¹¹



New Paths to the Same Goal

One of the uniting factors about the aforementioned shift in PR skills is that they only affect *how* PR departments achieve their goals, not what they are.

PR teams today are still interested in boosting the visibility and reputations of their brands, and doing that means going along with new technological changes that emerge.

In a world that is moving faster than ever - and becoming less receptive to PR touchstones such as the classic press release - it would be irresponsible to ignore the many changes going on and stay with legacy methods.

An effective PR department today is equipped with the latest technology, and staffed by individuals who know how to make those systems work toward their long-held goals.





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¹ <http://www.journalism.org/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/> ² <https://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/22035.aspx> ³ <https://www.launchmetrics.com/resources/blog/state-influencer-engagement>
⁴ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/paularmstrongtech/2017/01/27/the-future-of-influencer-relations-is-influencer-marketing/#ca7506a1d1e7> ⁵ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/02/02/the-fastest-way-to-destroy-influencer-marketing-automate-it/#69e73587d91b> ⁶ <http://www.northeastern.edu/levelblog/2016/05/13/how-much-data-produced-every-day/> ⁷ <http://tech.co/pr-trends-create-best-pr-campaign-2016-06> ⁸ <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/276778> ⁹ <http://www.marketingprofs.com/opinions/2016/30697/the-challenge-of-proving-the-value-of-pr-in-a-changing-media-landscape> ¹⁰ <http://influence.cipr.co.uk/2016/05/03/using-video-pr-activity-good-engagement>
¹¹ <https://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/20108.aspx>