

Transforming your public relations with content marketing and social media



Traditional news media play an important role in enabling companies to tell their stories. Although broadcast viewing patterns have changed, according to consumer research from Gallup more than half of Americans still cite television as their [main source of information](#) about current events. Remarkably, this holds as true for an 18-year-old Millennial as it does for a 49-year-old Gen X-er.

However, as the [Pew Research Center notes](#), “Online and digital news consumption, meanwhile, continues to increase, with many more people now getting news on cell phones, tablets or other mobile platforms.” How should companies act on these insights to ensure the highest levels of engagement with customers and critical stakeholders?

In research conducted by Pew, they document the steady erosion in the frequency in which people watch the local news. In 2006, 18- to 29-year olds said they “regularly watch” local news. By 2012, only 28% of young people said they regularly watched, a decline of -14% over the period.

The growing importance of digital channels and social media

As you might expect, people of all ages are following the news on their mobile device. Pew notes that at least one-in-five Americans (17%) got news on their cell phones yesterday. Among smartphone users, it was nearly a third (31%).

Social media is inextricably linked to mobile, and there has been a corresponding leap in the share of social network users that saw news via a social platform. According to Pew, 55% of Americans access the internet via a mobile device, and 30% of those people saw news on a social networking site yesterday.

3 strategies to increase the value of earned media

As the relationship that people have with traditional media continues to evolve, there are three social media strategies that savvy communicators can leverage.

1 Drive engagement via content marketing

The hallmark of social media is that conversations drive engagement. Interesting and valuable content is the fuel that drives the conversation. For PR, media relations, and other communicators this calls for a systematic approach to content marketing. As we explained in a recent article:

Effective content marketing is basically the development of useful information to educate customers and prospects, without any hard sell. For most businesses, the goal is to provide value that informs and inspires people to learn more about the company’s products and services –with content often delivered through blog posts, case studies, whitepapers, and articles. [Read more](#)



2 Use social listening to understand customer preferences and discover unmet need

With digital communications, people expect an experience that is tailored to their needs. Is your brand like the guy at the backyard barbeque who spends the whole day talking shop? Make sure your media relations team knows how to listen; listening in social media is critical to success.

With a social media listening effort, communicators can learn what's most relevant to various audiences, and tailor their outreach to audiences most likely to respond positively. And don't forget to track what people are saying about your competitors: you may find opportunities to meet the needs of unsatisfied consumers to win their business. [Read more](#)

3 Transform negative sentiment into a winning customer experience

News travels fast via social and mobile channels, particularly bad news. With the social conversation, people will be quick to point out the inconsistencies between your media relations messaging and the way your company conducts business. Managing negative sentiment isn't just a task for customer service, it requires a close partnership with news relations, public affairs, marketing, and other communicators. Check out a few tips for responding to negative social posts:

When customers have a bad experience, they're often more connected to how they FEEL about it, than the issue itself. That's why you need to sharpen your focus on how people react to your business. Timely and effective communications can help you manage negative sentiment, rebuild trust, and promote loyalty.

[Read more](#)

Traditional broadcast and print media outlets remain highly effective means to reach customers and community influencers. However, as social media usage grows, and social networks expose people to news stories, professional communicators face new challenges. To generate positive engagement they need to spark conversations about their brand, develop and execute content marketing strategies that reinforce their media pitches, and work with internal business partners to listen for—and act on—negative feedback. More than ever, effective public relations calls for a multidisciplinary and strategic approach.

Let's Talk

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