



## TRENDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: AN ANALYSIS

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### **Introduction**

The emergence of internet based on Social Media has made it possible for one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them. Thus the impacts of customer to customer communications have been greatly magnified in market place. Social Media offers different forms of networking for different purpose. People can get together and seek potential jobs, get help completing tasks and get connected with new people through technology developments. This paper is an attempt to study the social media applications and the how the world is benefited with it.

The world has fundamentally changed. Globalisation, democratisation of information, the rise of social media and the global financial crisis have forced corporate leaders to reassess the strategic path for their brands and organisations. They do so at a time when the central objectives of communication, reputation and trust, have shifted shape, perhaps irrevocably. In today's hostile business environment, there is more need than ever for companies to explain why they are here, the rationale and the context. Our 2013 Power of Purpose study builds on those we carried out in 2008, 2010 and 2011 but with a new focus on how Corporate Purpose impacts on challenges which are increasingly relevant for companies in today's business environment: the need for transparency, managing successful organisational change and reputation recovery after a crisis.

The digital age has heralded a polar and some might argue generational shift in the way that the communications industries of PR, marketing, and advertising operate. It is increasingly evident that the future lies in full integration of all the communication disciplines. The advent of social media and the ever-increasing role of digital media in our lives means there are a number of opportunities for public relations. There are new ways to find audiences, new media through which to convey messages, tons of opportunities to connect with your brand's fans, and so on.

Social media is an internet-based form of communication. Social media platform allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content. Online Social networks facilitate connections between people based on shared interest values etc. They make it easier for people to find and communicate with individuals who are in their networks using the web as the interface. Online Social Media have gained astounding worldwide growth and popularity which has led to attracting attention from variety of researches globally. Although with time all generation have come to embrace the changes in social media network has brought about. It is inevitable to ignore the fact that now a day's social network plays an essential role in teenager's lives. Most of youth are spending at least an hour in these popular sites. There are many forms of social media including blogs, micro blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, virtual worlds etc. Social media allows us to discover, connect and engage with the people. Social media is an integrated technology that allows users to generate their own content and share that content through various connections.

Developing Informative and Interactive Programs for Television and other media: Informative TV shows covering season wise changes in the weather, best crops to be grown, advanced techniques, and interactions with experts have helped in the past but to spread the this knowledge into the extreme areas, unconventional media mentioned earlier in this chapter must be utilized.

### **Shift to Mobile and Beyond Mobile**

The biggest trend with the greatest immediate impact on communication is the shift to mobile. Global mobile traffic currently represents 17.4% of all internet traffic and is rapidly increasing. Mobile internet use is expected to surpass traditional desktop internet use in 2014. Mobile has become so deeply embedded in our lives by offering convenience through immediacy, simplicity and context. Through mobile and soon wearable technology each of us can receive individualised content which also points to another major trend, that of personalisation.

### **Personalisation**

This idea of creating your own "Youniverse" is a perfect example of tapping into our emotional desire to be seen as unique personalities. Public relations professionals must assist companies in learning how to move from more traditional tactics in favour of smarter approaches that extend their personalisation capabilities beyond the PC. The ability to deliver relevant communication across multiple channels will transform these marketing efforts from an unwanted intrusion into a valued service.



### **Social Media Impact on Communication**

Public relations professionals need to keep pace with this fast-evolving environment. The challenge is dealing every day with two huge data explosions: the expanding universe of ‘digital influencers’ and the massive volume of social media conversations and real-time mentions that concern your brand, industry and competition. Digital influencers have grown 30-fold in less than two years. A crucial difference with traditional media is the need for engagement. The sheer volume of mentions requires brands to prioritise: find out who matters, determine what they’re saying, how it sways others and how best to engage with them. Balancing the emotional (dialogue) with the rational (measurement of influence) is the key.

### **Brand Journalism**

Social media broke the traditional media model in one fundamental way: media organizations are no longer gatekeepers of information & audiences. The very definition of "news" is changing, and this evolution creates the opportunity for PR & content MARKETING pros to create timely content that earns credibility, earns media and generates ongoing (and relevant) visibility for the brand. The key to finding and telling great stories in a way that will make your audience not only want to engage with them but share and even repurpose them is to commit to trying new things. Brand journalism isn’t content marketing, nor is it sponsored content. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. It is meaningful, quality storytelling.

### **Crisis in the "Always On" Era**

Since the advent of "always on" social media, companies have to guard their reputations even more vigilantly. Viral videos can wreak havoc on brands. Legal responses like attempting to pull videos from youtube only inflame the situation. Speed is of the essence and ultimately the only answer at times like this is timely, honest and transparent communication. This leads us to another key trend: hyper-transparent communication.

### **Transparency is King**

In our hyper-connected world, the trend is increasingly towards hyper-transparent communication. Consumers and other stakeholders have many more channels at their disposal for exposing and discrediting companies for any lack of honesty. As difficult a concept as that is for many, transparency is the only answer and any failures in this area are punished with alarming speed and efficiency. Brands that embrace this hyper-honesty trend will reap the benefits in consumer trust.

### **Evidence-Based**

A major trend in public relations is that of measurement from the outset and throughout a campaign to measure impact and effectiveness. Burson-Marsteller has developed an evidence based approach to communication with the use of research among target audiences to test messages and measure results. Digital campaigns are particularly easy to track as many social media channels like Facebook, Twitter and youtube have their own analytics which make it possible to demonstrate the reach of these campaigns by the number of views, shares, retweets, likes, etc. But it’s pushing beyond simple measurement into actionable insight that will be the game- changer for communications.

### **Image is All**

Studies have shown that people remember only 20% of what they read (are you still with me?) And that 83% of learning occurs visually. The massive popularity of visual social networks like Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr, demonstrates the emotional power of images to tell stories in a way that is proven to be far more memorable than mere words. In the same way, viral videos tell more powerful stories and allow greater engagement with consumers. The rise of infographics also shows the capacity of visuals to break large chunks of data into digestible portions. The bottom line is, we all have ever shorter attention spans and compelling images and visualisations are the key to making your story stand out from the crowd.

### **Best of all, Digital Campaigns can be Measured**

However, there seems to be some disagreement about the skill set PR pros need to succeed in today’s environment, and there are three points of view emerging:

- The traditionalist, who values the ability to write, build relationships, isolate and convey key messages and build publicity strategy above all else.
- The digital enthusiast, who values social media acuity, digital content production and editing and coding skills highly.
- The quant, which focuses on data, analytics and how PR integrates with business processes.

Let’s look at the trends in the PR business to help determine which skills we really need:

#### **1. Storytelling (and “Story Selling”)**

There’s a difference between writing well and telling a story, and a good story is valuable currency today. Stories are sticky, relatable, and effective; these are the reasons stories are the cornerstone of the content Marketing strategies and social media programs that are becoming enmeshed within public relations. But there’s more to storytelling than good writing.



**Required Skills:** Curation. To develop a story that will gain traction with your audience, it's necessary to spend a little time learning about their interests; otherwise, you risk missing the mark with them. Curate content (which is a fancy way of saying "find interesting stuff and share it) and see what sort of information (and format) resonates with your audience. Observe what they're sharing (and re-sharing) too. The intelligence you glean will be invaluable to your writing process.

## 2. Quantification

The ability to measure digital outcomes requires communicators to dust off their analytical skills, because "big data" is here to stay, and it is strongly informing communications. Knowing how to organize and crunch data, correlate results, and correctly interpret and apply data are core skills that enable communicators to turn the masses of data available to us into valuable business intelligence and ROI metrics.

**Skills:** Data analysis and advanced spreadsheet. The good news, especially if you've been out of school for a while, is that today's spreadsheet programs like Excel include powerful data analysis functions that make things such as correlation and statistics work fast and easy. Developing advanced understanding of the spreadsheet programs and the data analysis toolkits they contain is an important first step.

## 3. Visual Communications

The rise of the infographic and the emergence of platforms such as pinterest, tumblr and instagram all of which trade heavily if not exclusively in visuals has accelerated the trend of using visuals in pr. harnessing multimedia and video to engage and attract audiences is rapidly becoming stock in trade for PR.

**Skills:** Visual thinking. Basic videography, photography, and design are important, as is the ability to develop visual concepts to accompany and illustrate messages. A bonus skill is multimedia production and editing skills. Even if you have a design team at your disposal, learning how to think about messages visually is an important skill, because communications are becoming more and more about art. If you don't have a design team on hand, learning how to develop, edit, and publish visuals for campaigns is crucial.

## 4. Proactive and Predictive Monitoring

We're in an age of radical transparency, which is fueled in part by the lightning-fast flow of information. Instead of monitoring "downstream"—that is, looking for media pick up that has been published—PR teams are switching gears and monitoring conversations and trends to predict events and communicate proactively. In a nutshell, PR can influence outcomes, rather than simply measuring them.

**Skills:** Social listening. Acuity with social media monitoring and understanding of social audiences is the cornerstone of good monitoring. Learn how to use a social media dashboard to evaluate what people are discussing and identify the recurring issues in your marketplace. Get involved in social media and industry discussion groups to observe first-hand how conversations work and how ideas flow.

## 5. Adaptation

Content marketing, search engine optimization, video production. None of it sounds like PR or, more specifically, PR as we've traditionally thought of it. The truth is many public relations job descriptions are reading more like a catalogue of communications skills. The mushrooming demands on PR departments and subsequently, on professional communicators is in itself an important trend.

**Skill:** Learning. The ability to succeed in changing times is really part of the DNA for public relations. After all, this is the department that cuts its teeth on curve balls. The only thing predictable about PR is change. Make time in your day to read, practice, and learn.

## Applications of Social Media Networking

The world's most popular social networking sites certainly have changed over the years, and they'll undoubtedly continue to change as the time moves forward. We've moved on from the days of MySpace to a social media era now dominated by facebook and all sorts of other social media apps.

**1. Facebook :** It was created in February 4<sup>th</sup> 2004 by Mark Zuckersberg the CEO of the company. Headquarter located at Menlo Park, California, US. Most of us already know that Facebook is the top social network on the web. It's a thriving beast of a social media networking site on the web with 1.59 billion monthly active users as of December 2015 and over 1 billion



that log on daily. Five new profiles created every second. Facebook users are 76% female and 66% is male. 46% of market reports that facebook is critical or important to their business. 16 million local business pages have been created as of may 2013.

**2. Twitter:** Twitter was created in March 21<sup>st</sup> 2006, by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams and launched in July 2006. The CEO of the company is Jack Dorsay and Chairman of the company is Omid Kordestani. Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called “tweets”. Twitter is known as the real time, public micro blogging network where news breaks firsts. Most users loved it for its iconic 140-character limit and unfiltered feed that showed them absolutely everything. Twitter has changed dramatically over the year, and today its criticized a lot for going the way of looking and functioning almost exactly like facebook. As of May 2015, Twitter has more than 500 million users, out of which more than 332 million users are active. Over 100 million users login daily.

**3. LinkedIn:** LinkedIn was created in December 2002, by Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstan Guericke, Eric Ly, and Jean-Luc Villiant and launched in May 5, 2003. The CEO of the company is Jeff Weiner and Chairman of the company is Reid Hoffman. The total numbers of employees are 8735 as on 2015. LinkedIn is a social network for professionals. Anyone who needs to make connections to advance their careers should be on LinkedIn. Profiles are designed to look sort of like extremely detailed resumes, with sections for work experience, education, volunteer work, certifications, awards and all sorts of other relevant work related information. Users can promote themselves and their business by making connections with other professionals, interacting in group discussions, posting job ads, applying jobs, publishing articles to LinkedIn pulse etc.

**4. Google+:** Google+ was launched in December 15; 2011. Google+ became the fastest growing social network the web has ever seen. After a couple of times already with Google Buzz and Google Wave by combining the best of Facebook and twitter in one site and backing it by the power of world’s largest search engine. 300 millions of monthly active users. 20 millions of monthly mobile users. Average monthly time spent on Google+ 7 minutes. Average duration of Google+ visit: 3:46.

**5. YouTube:** Where everyone does goes go to watch or share video content online. It is obviously YouTube. After Google. Youtube is the second largest search engine. Despite being owned by Google, youtube can still be recognized as a separate social network. All on its own as the premiere place online to go to watch videos on required topic and upload our own as well. From music videos and movies, to personal vlogs and independent films, youtube has it all. Youtube has over a billion users almost one third of all people on the internet. \$4 billion is the estimated 2014 revenue. Over 4 billion videos views are there. Estimated number of new videos uploaded to youtube every minute is 300 per minute.

**6. Instagram:** Instagram has grown to be one of the most popular social networks for photo sharing that the mobile web has ever seen. It’s the ultimate social network for sharing real time photos and short videos while on the go. Now it’s even a leading advertising platform for brands too. Instagram was bought for a hefty \$ 1 billion by facebook in 2012. There are 400 million monthly active users. More than 75 million daily instagram users 20% of internet users that use instagram.

**7. Pinterest:** Pinterst has become a major player both in social networking and in the search world, proving just how important visual content has become on the web. As the fastest standalone site ever to reach ten million monthly unique visits, pinterest’s beautiful and intuitive pin board, style platform is one of the most enticing and useful resource for collecting the best images that can be categorized into separate boards. One third of all pinterest’s sign ups come from men 71% of pinterest’s 72.5 million users are women. 75% of pinterest usage take place on mobile devices.

**8. Tumblr:** Tumblr is an extremely popular social bolgging platform that’s heavily used by teenagers and young adults. Like pinterest its best known for sharing visual content. Yahoo’s purchase of tumblr for \$ 1.1 billion. Date of launch February 2007. Headquarters’ is at New York City Richmond VA. 550 million monthly users. 280.4 millions of blogs. Average daily sign ups are 120.

**9. Vine:** Vine was created in June 2012 by Dom Hofmann, Rus Yusupov, and colin Kroll. American micro blogging website twitter acquired it in October 2012. Vine is a very short form video sharing device where users can share six second – long looping video clips. Users videos are published through vine’s social network and can be shares on other services such as facebook and twitter. Vine’s apps can also be used to browse though video posted by other users, along with the group of videos by theme, and trending or popular videos. As of December 2015 vine has 200 million active users.



**10. Snapchat:** Snapchat was launched on September 2012. The total number of snapchat users is 100 million daily users. Snapchat is a social networking app that thrives on instant messaging and totally mobile based. It is one of the fastest growing apps out there, building its popularity on the idea of “self destructing snaps”. Average number of photos shared on snapchat every second is 9000 snaps per second.

### **PR Industry in India**

The Indian PR industry, though fragmented, is gradually growing and transforming. In India, the industry size is merely Rs 150-200 crore .What the Indian PR industry needs now is to move the communications business into the next stage of evolution, and that can only happen with awareness of the depth and scope of PR.

In the last decade the market has evolved and also the coporate’s need for image building and leveraging strategy. technology has started to transform the way public relations works today. social media is redefining the pr tools, giving this huge opportunity to professionals to truly interact not just with press but public at large. in the Indian corporate sector, PR is well understood and accepted. more companies are investing in pr as social media is in sync with any communication in India and globally as well.

With the emergence of blogs, user-generated content and other social media tools, there is a lot of debate about the digital space being the final frontier for brand communication. The face of PR is, of course, in digital. But, let us not forget that we are in a country which is still only beginning to explore the variedness and pluralism of traditional media. In fact India will be a great case study for blossoming PR since clients are amazingly enthusiastic about experimenting with new forms of communication, at the same time blending with traditional and alternative methods of communication.

### **The New Realities**

In addition to the modern organizational culture in India, it is evident that corporates understand the importance of managing both corporate reputation and brand image. Also increasingly stakeholders are more aware, educated and sophisticated about the choices they make. Social media specifically has enhanced the role of a PR agency. In a fast-evolving market-place, 2010 saw the continued expansion of digital and social media with companies and government agencies adopting new channels to communicate and engage with consumers, key influencers and all brand stakeholders.

PR is becoming broader and strategic. pr professionals will need to develop a new hybrid set of marketing and communication skills, which will include the factors of management consulting, business intelligence, advocacy, reputation management, direct marketing and internet strategy.

PR is moving beyond media relations to digital communications, continuous flow of information, advocacy and image management. Digital will probably be the single biggest change in the business as it is new, innovative and dynamic, and gives quick results. Digital communication will ultimately change everything about business.

PR industry is increasingly embracing new technologies, emerging trends, and the IT industry in a way that fosters honest communication and true relationship-building for both its clients and itself. Given, PR companies gear up to undertake this new route to do business effectively. It is no surprise that public relations firms in India will be thriving provided they meet the following industry challenges.

### **Challenges for the PR industry**

The high-growth PR industry is unfortunately caught in the classical trap of oversupply of clients and a shortage of good talent. One of the biggest challenges being faced is the lack of talent entering the industry both in quality and the quantity. The PR business will need to develop a more consultative, brand custodian and strategic approach to meet the increasingly sophisticated challenges faced by its clients.

PR professionals will need to unite around a measurement standard that emphasizes business results rather than media results. The state of PR pedagogy in India is yet to attain rigour and is theoretical. The industry needs to move cohesively towards a curriculum and talent that will be able to meet their needs. The PR industry will need to fend off competition from other disciplines that believe they have the skills to help companies communicate and engage with their stakeholders. The industry will need to recruit and retain top talent, persuading people that public relations is a worthwhile and rewarding career, a perception problem of the PR industry.





If the Indian PR industry can meet these challenges, the potential for growth over the next decade is nothing but spectacular. There is immense opportunity to make PR a more important part of the communications arsenal using digital tools.

### Conclusion

Social media networking websites are a revolutionary idea with a very bright future further scope for advancements. Many users are benefited with the social networks. The opportunities from this medium are immense and many organizations are making use of this medium. Social Networking offers many benefits. Social networking is the popular online trend to share information. Online communities and blogs are becoming very popular and moreover since the advancement of embedded systems. People can use them on the go with the help of various social media applications. The world is getting closer every day and everyone wants to be connected. World is moving more towards information streams.

PR is becoming more integral to the overall marketing communication of the company. It is getting integrated within the cultural profile of an organization, within the values embedded in the organization; and it is one of the strongest ways to ensure commitment and loyalty for the organization from various brand stakeholders. The rise of various forms of media has not only made the PR department more important in the overall marketing plans of a company but has also expanded the key responsibility areas for a PR agency.

Today's professional communicator needs to know how to shoot and edit photos and video, be proficient in social media, create graphics, possess at least a basic understanding of Web design and know how to work with outside vendors for printed materials," "Now, it might just be that employers will demand all those skills and never actually expect their new hires to do them all on the job, but if the employer asks for the moon and stars you'd better be able to at least enter outer space." And it's useful to consider the drivers of these trends – namely, the influence of the digital domain on communications and the very measurability digital offers us. For any organizational development the PR is very much important, the Globalisation and ICT impact brought drastic changes in Public Relations every PR profession must change according to the needs of the organization. Hence it may conclude that social media is a best platform for communication, business, information gathering. Whole world is benefited with the social media.

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