PR News
Building the bridge between PR and the bottom line.
May 26, 2014 prnewsonline.com Issue 21 Vol. 70

PR's Goal: 'Talk Less, Say More' as Brevity Becomes Norm

Digital media starts to condense messaging

In the last few years, snackable content has become the norm among communicators competing for mindshare. In an increasingly mobile (and hyper-busy) society, the trend in content format has been to serve messages in smaller and smaller morsels that consumers could accesss without committing much time. The trend has only gotten more pronounced amid the mass proliferation of tweets (140-characters maximum), **Vine** videos, memes and **Facebook** posts.

Media companies, which PR pros rely on as their communication channels, continue to curtail the length of their stories, both in print and online.

Earlier this month, for example, managing editors at **Reuters** and **Associated Press** said that most stories should be no longer than 500 words.

The AP's Managing Editor for U.S. News, Brian Carovillano, said stories from the states should fall in the 500 to 700-word range while "top global stories" may exceed 700 words but must still be "tightly written and edited," according to the *Washington Post*.

For PR pros, all of this begs the question: Is snackable content giving way to more of a nibble? And, if so, what does that bode for PR professionals whose stock in trade is the written word?

They'll have to adapt, of course. At the same time, they shouldn't succumb to any hard-and-fast rules when deciding what the best length of a piece of content should be.

"Today's digitally driven world has only served to redefine brevity, one character at a time," said Albe Zakes, global VP of Communications at **TerraCycle Inc.** "Our overall goal is simple: talk less, say more." Zakes said that the company is constantly reducing the length of its media pitches, press releases and social content. "The opportunity for deeper engagement will always be present, be it a follow-up call or social interaction in the comments section of a website]," he added.

Page 6 ▶

▶ **Monetizing Digital PR**

By Bob Pearson

Developing an 'Earned' Media Plan

Engagement trumps reach and frequency

We are often asked our view on the newest social channel, whether it is **Vine** or **What's App** or **Vube**. Our response is always the same: Where are our customers? The advertising industry created the idea of "media planning." Their job is to identify the best media outlets to share a brand's story via paid media. It's a relatively easy concept, since it is generally based on reach and frequency. My how the world has changed.

In today's world, advertising is evolving towards 'storytizing,' which is driven by earned media, not paid. In earned media, our customers are deciding what is relevant, what they will share and whether they will, quite frankly, pay attention. Reach and frequency are being replaced by engagement and passion, which are far better indicators of shaping behavior and driving sales.

The result is that PR pros and communicators have an opportunity to create the first earned media plans, which tell us where we should invest our time and money. Here is how we can make this happen.

The most important point is that there are only ten types of online media. They include audio, video, forums, blogs, search, social media sites, micro-blogs, images, data/slides and Wikis. Here are the four keys to earned media plans.

1. **Rank the ten channels.** How many articles, videos, conversations or searches occur by channel? Once you get an aggregate number for each channel by topic, you can then stack-rank the channels. What's interesting is that when you

Page 7 ▶

PR Advice from the Pros

"Flawless execution of a bad strategy is still a bad strategy."

Read more great advice in PR News' Best PR Advice Compendium prnewsonline.com/prpress

PRN
ISSN 1546-0193
Group Editor, Matthew Schwartz, 212.621.4940, mschwartz@accessintel.com
Editorial Director/Events, Steve Goldstein, 212.621.4890, sgoldstein@accessintel.com
Graphic Designer, Yelena Shamis, 301.354.1838, yshamis@accessintel.com
Content Manager, PR Events, Richard Brownell, 212.621.4693, Rbrownell@accessintel.com
Writer/Editor, Brian Greene 212.621.4917, bgreene@accessintel.com
Director of Marketing & Event Logistics, Kate Schaeffer, 301.354.2303, kschaeffer@accessintel.com
Senior Marketing Manager, Laura Snitkovskiy, 301.354.1610, lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com
VP of Marketing, PR News Group, Amy Jefferies, 301.354.1699, ajefferies@accessintel.com
Marketing Coordinator, Kristina McHale, 301.354.1609, kmchale@accessintel.com
VP of Content, Tony Silber, 203.899.8424
SVP/Group Publisher, Diane Schwartz 212.621.4964, dschwartz@accessintel.com
Division President, Heather Farley
President & CEO, Don Pazour

Group Subscriptions - Laura Snitkovskiy, 301-354-1610, laura@accessintel.com

Additional Copies & Article Reprints - Contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295; info@wrightsmedia.com

Access Intelligence
Published weekly by Access Intelligence, LLC
4 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20850

Client Services:
Phone: 888.707.5814 • Fax: 301.309.3847
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:
88 Pine Street, Suite 510, New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212.621.4890 • Fax: 212.621.4879

▶ How To...

By Karen Bromley

Make Sure Your Stories Get Found

As PR pros we take a big chunk of our time creating exciting campaigns with a solid strategy that meets our clients' goals. We pitch our most trusted contacts and strive for A-list media coverage. But even when we do get coverage in the top media outlets in our field the expected traffic does not follow. Coverage in the **Huffington Post**, **People.com** and other sites with millions of unique monthly users is all well and good, but clients are often disappointed if that media exposure is not accompanied by a boost to the brand's website, if not some downright sales lift.

Why a lack of traffic? First, it is important to understand that even sites with millions unique monthly visitors have pages that are not noticed. The Unique Visitors Monthly (UVM) website traffic statistics are usually counted for an entire website, and not individual pages.

So the home page of People.com has six million UVMs, but your post may be buried way down and hard to find. Other sites are made up networks, so you might be featured in one area but the site's traffic is stronger for another part of the site.

How can PR mangers ensure that an online post drives traffic and gets noticed? Here are five tips for maximizing posts from online magazines, news outlet, blogs and digital media.

1. **Re-everything**. Make sure your client reposts on all social media channels as soon as the link is live. It's fine to ask the blogger to send you a link once it's live, especially since your efforts will help her in return. Your agency should also repost on its **Facebook** and **Twitter** accounts while appropriate images should be posted on its **Instagram** and **Pinterest** pages. (Our agency produces a monthly newsletter in which we feature the top posts of the month, bringing additional visibility to our posts among new audiences.)

2. **Be easy to find**. Make sure that every communication has all social media information for the brand and that the information can be easily spotted by reporters, bloggers, and others. Identify bloggers who can be "brand champions" and work out a deal for them to repost a certain number of links a month, for example.

How many times have you noticed a story because someone you follow posted it, not because you saw it from the original source?

Prior to pitching media, know your SEO keywords and work them into your pitch. Media are likely to pull from your content and will include your key words in coverage, making the placement easier to find with organic search.

3. **As seen on**. If a campaign received a particularly impressive placement, consider an email blast with a promotion for that product to customers, and include a link to the post.

Customers love "as seen on," and the media, particularly bloggers, will appreciate the extra effort to promote their sites.

This also gives your product additional credibility, especially from a respected voice in the market or industry. Make sure the blogger knows you are planning to do this so she can tweet a thank you.

4. **Be (more) searchable**. Include searchable keywords in photo captions and try and incorporate them into your client quotes. Ask the blogger if she can include alt tags in the image, which allows search engines to find the image. If you are promoting an infographic, submit yours to aggregators, which serve as resources for businesses and bloggers.

Provide links to bloggers from **Google Analytics** so you and your client know where the traffic is coming from and can work more closely with that blog, or try someplace new for the next time.

31%

Percentage of Web traffic to North American websites that came from smartphones and tablets, fourth quarter 2013.

Walker Sands Communications.

5. **Be consistent**. Success comes with being consistent and building on previous efforts. You know your target audience best, and how to reach them.

Time has been taken to develop the pitch and get it placed, now is the time to make sure you can reach the right audience with the right message. If you were able to secure that A-list placement, then chances are you have the tools and savvy to take it to the next level of visibility.

These are just a few ways to ensure that your virtual pass-along rate is the best it can be. Keep an open mind on new areas where you can promote your content. PRN

CONTACT:

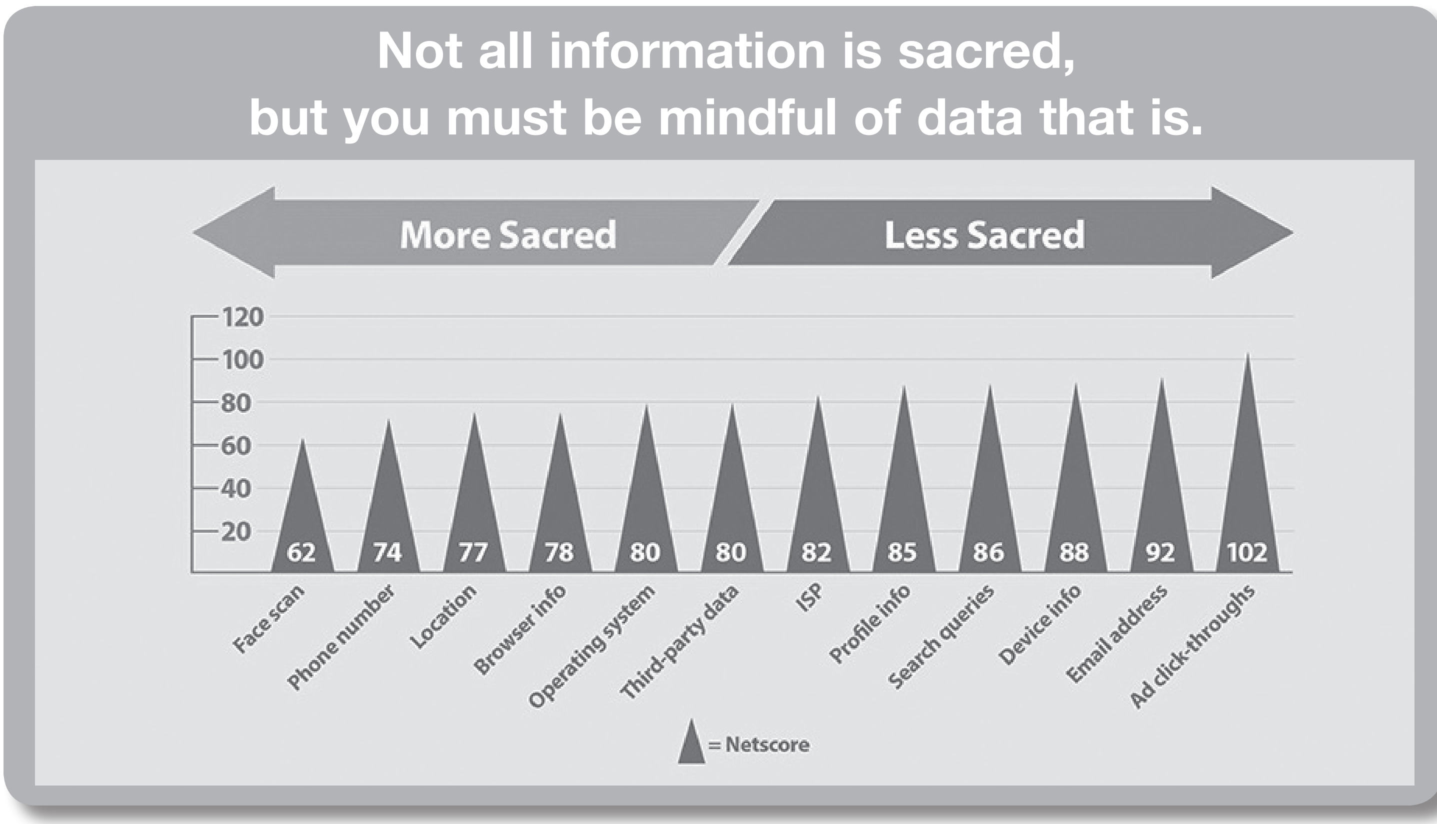
Karen Bromley is principal of The Bromley Group. She can be reached at kbromley@tbg-world.com.

Decoding the Millennials

New study shows that a majority of millennials will provide more personal data to a company they trust. Just make sure you're not accessing data that millennials consider more sacred.

▸ **Millennials Embrace Big Data (with a Caveat):** Big Data has quickly moved to the top of the marketing food chain, as communicators try to gauge how their online data can best inform (and drive) their PR campaigns. But when it comes to the most effective ways to reach the millennials, you may have to double down on Big Data. Millennials (people ages 18-36) in the U.S. have come to expect brands to use their unique data to provide a better brand experience, according to a new study by **SDL**. The study, which took the pulse of more than 1,800 millennials throughout the globe, found that 40% of millennials in the U.S. could identify the digital data brands are using to track their behaviors; 60% said they will provide more personal data to a company they trust and 46% said they are willing to provide more data to businesses if it meant that they weren't forced to consider offers that aren't relevant. That's why it's so important for PR pros to access the kind of data that millennials don't have a problem with, such as their search queries, and tread carefully with data they consider to be much more sacred, including operating system, location and browser information (see below). PRN

Source: SDL



Rebranding Effort Yields ‘Money School’ Initiatives

Catholic Charities combat poverty

In 2011, Catholic Charities Fort Worth declared it would do everything in its power to end poverty in the community. Part of that effort included a free “Financial Education and Coaching” initiative aimed at citizens earning less than $50,000 annually. Unfortunately, in its first year, the program failed to get the attention of potential students, leaving classroom seats empty, program goals unmet and future funding at risk.

Thinking a solution might be found in buying bus ads and billboards, program leaders reached out for outside creative marketing help. What they gained instead was a powerful rebranding effort and long-term strategic communications plan that helped the organization strengthen existing community partnerships and engage other organizations in the poverty-ending mission.

THE CHALLENGES

Several challenges became key drivers in developing a strategic communications program. It became immediately clear that the initiative was not being sold from the “inside out.”

At the time, Catholic Charities housed 38 different programs and services (now up to 44) and employees interacted on a daily basis with clients who met the criteria and would be the ideal candidates for the financial education initiative (rebranded as Money School), yet no referrals were being made.

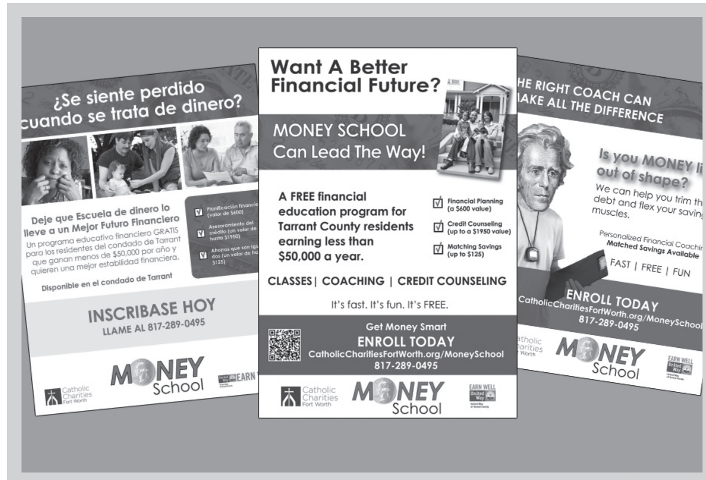


Photo courtesy: Strategic Image Inc.

Co-branding allowed marketing materials to be used by partner organizations in order to help enroll students.

These key stakeholders were not being leveraged as “brand ambassadors” for the program, due to limited knowledge and a weak internal referral process.

Similarly, program leaders had not taken into account Catholic Charities’ stellar reputation in the community, which provided enormous potential for engaging partners outside the organization.

A final challenge centered on an inability to rely or draw upon information from existing client demographics.

Of the 1,015 first-year participants, 73% were unidentifiable by age, gender, ethnic background or annual family income. Initial program statistics, therefore, were undependable for planning or benchmarking.

THE GOALS

The primary program goal for Money School had been clearly defined within the structure of this grant-funded initiative: increase program participation and get more “butts in seats.”

Establishing measurable objectives at timely intervals offered the ability to track attendance regularly to ensure the program would meet grant requirements.

The outside communication team also identified larger, more overarching goals. If leveraged fully, Money School could play a significant role in strengthening the Catholic Charities brand and supporting the organization’s overarching mission to end poverty. To do that, however, Money School had to become more than a program.

To truly achieve the long-term success that the client intended, it had to become a communitywide initiative with high-value participation and shared successes.

The communication strategy, then, focused on two distinct primary audiences: potential clients/students and internal/external partners with clients who qualified for the program. Strategies tied to those audiences included:

► Making client referrals a required part of the Catholic Charities system and building in employee accountability.

► Committing outside partner organizations to refer clients by creating a system for them to feed clients and share in the program’s success.

Digging Into PR Research

Gigi Westerman

Research can answer questions, identify and clarify audiences and set a baseline standard for future measurement. Regardless of the budget, there is always a way to conduct research. So dig deep, push back if you must, but get answers to those nagging questions.

- ► **Use your resources**. The biggest mistake most organizations make is forgetting to leverage the people who already knowand love them. Find your client’s brand ambassadors, theneducate and train them to carry the message.
- ► **Do extra credit**. Face it, the work you’re most proud of is the project where you went above and beyond what the client “thought” he or she needed. Think past project parameters and you’ll often find the most powerful and creative solutions.
- ► **Remember you are a teacher**. Clients know their busi-ness and you know yours. So, teach them the why, and not just what, of your business. While you’re at it, educate your clients about their role in the success of any commu-nications effort.
- ► **Earn your grade**. Don’t leave evaluation to chance. Set specific, attainable and measurable objectives at the outset. Ifyou don’t hit the marks you’ve set, it may be time to change strategies. Either way, you’ll be demonstrating value—and that makes you an “A” student.

This sidebar was written by GIGI WESTERMAN, APR, FELLOW PRSA, a partner at The S & G Group. You can reach Gigi at 817-672-5799 or visit www.thesandggroup.com.

► Developing client-friendly materials.

THE LAUNCH

With the Money School name in place, the team went about developing creative components such as the logo, fliers and Web presence with the end-users in mind.

Messages targeted potential students and internal and external referral sources. Program leaders approved a plan to train employees and make referrals a required part of the Catholic Charities system.

Employees received brand ambassador education and were encouraged to attend a Money School session.

To build external partnerships, the team worked with program leaders to identify area organizations with a shared mission, delineating the WIFM (What's In It For Me?) factor for any prospective partnership.

The plan outlined the need for initial, high-level "commitment" meetings among organization leaders. Who were the potential partners and what did they need to make referrals? Those who signed on as partners and "brand ambassadors" received education on the initiative including statistics and success stories.

They also received marketing materials that could be co-branded to help explain the program to potential students and to sign them up for classes.

As a result, Money School program leaders began to leverage internal and external brand ambassadors to find students and get them into the classroom.

Rather than shout the message through a bullhorn (or bus ad or billboard) and hope it might somehow hit the right target, the plan allowed program leaders to find others to do the shouting for them—partners who could identify students who were ready to change their financial future and commit to the education offered through Money School.

With clearly defined, measurable objectives in place, evaluating the Money School initiative was simple: did communication efforts accomplish the required number of "butts in seats" in the classroom?

44

Number of different programs that are housed by Catholic Charities.

Courtesy: Strategic Image Inc.

These statistics demonstrate the effectiveness of the rebranding campaign, exceeding program objectives during the first year.

Program leaders saw dramatic improvements in participation and program referrals by implementing the multi-tiered communication strategy that focused on rebranding the program to create a user-friendly sustainable effort, sharing success with community partners, and leveraging internal and external relationships to engage potential students.

► The first benchmark that 750 qualified families complete four hours of Money School by Dec. 15, 2011, was exceeded, with 900 clients served. By the end of June 2012, that number more than doubled, with a total of 1,965 families served.

► Performance exceeded requirements when 10 partner organizations (three more than called for) committed to referring clients to Money School by June 2012.

► Results also fulfilled the requirement that Catholic Charities establish a formal process for referring internal clients to Money School by January 2012 as the organization used newly developed tools to communicate internally.

The trend of success continued into the first quarter of the following fiscal year (July 2012 to September 2012). At that time the program had already met more than 50% of a goal of 1,500 qualified clients completing four hours of Money School by the end of June 2013, with 786 families, marking a growth over the previous evaluation period.

Once rebranding was complete and the strategic communications plan in motion, program leaders were encouraged to focus on improving data collection to assist in ongoing evaluation.

The program's long-term success also hinged on capturing student success stories—proof that Money School served a larger organizational goal of ending poverty.

By investing the community in this initiative, one organization at a time, sharing successes and creating an army of "brand ambassadors" both internal and external, the rebranding of Catholic Charities' Financial Education initiative went beyond the program goal of filling seats in classrooms.

The program created a platform for community cooperation while providing the opportunity to communicate the organization's commitment to end poverty and take a leadership role in effecting long-term, meaningful change. PRN

(This article is an excerpt from PR News' Top 100 Case Studies in PR Guidebook, Vol. 6. For a copy, please go to go to www. prnews-online.com/ pr-press.)

THE S&G GROUP
DEFINING STRATEGY

This article was written by Sandra Brodnicki, APR, and Gigi Westerman, APR, FELLOW PRSA, partners at The S & G Group. You can reach them at 817-672-5799 or visit www.thesandggroup.com.

Length of Content

► *Page 1*

Shrinking content may also be a function of **Google**. The search giant displays roughly 65 characters in its search results. Yet only 19.5% of all press releases had headlines with 65 characters or fewer and just 23.7% were at 70 characters or fewer, according to a study released earlier this year by **Schwartz MSL Research Group**.

Schwartz MSL examined more than 16,000 **Business Wire** press releases from 2011. The average headline length was 123 characters.

FAST PITCH

Call it the cinemazation of PR copy, in which the headline has to give the targeted audience a sense of the entire story, or fail to stoke any interest.

"We try to make the headline and the pitch itself short, engaging and provocative and have the release to back it up," said Nina Kaminer, president of **Nike Communications**, whose clients include **De Beers**, **Dewar's** and **Rosewood Hotel & Resorts**.

She added: "When we email journalists we have to get their attention very quickly, but we try not to get obsessed with every last detail."

Indeed, as content shrinks, relationships with reporters and other stakeholders become even more important in terms of the proverbial follow-up. "If we don't get their attention we're not going to be able to get to the rest of the nuances" of the story, Kaminer said.

ALTERING THE MESSAGE?

Optimizing headlines for search results is one thing and should be encouraged. However, PR pros should be careful about truncating the length of their communications, lest they risk trivializing the message.

"An easy way to protect yourself from content so brief it's flat, is to send the pitch or the message to a team member and ask her if she 'gets it,'" Terra Cycle's Zakes said. "If a coworker is missing the point, so are you. When it comes to a press release or media pitch, consider opening with an executive summary of sorts. You can always provide more information in the 'attached release' or in an addendum or link."

110 Characters

Ideal length for tweets to allow for retweeting.

Social Media Today.

He added: "Our strategy is to use imagery, links and concise language to position our messaging, but always offering more information to interested parties. Be it a reporter or a Facebook fan you want to reach, provide the minimum amount of information to support your messaging and offer to provide further data as required."

Before deciding on the length of the content, regardless of the medium, PR pros need to combine message, audience and format, said Lisa Astor, VP at **PAN Communications**, whose clients include **Novell** and **Coveo**. "If you can figure out those three elements you can figure out what the best length for the communications should be," she said.

For instance, millennials may like most content in smaller bites, but hospital CEOs prefer longer, in-depth content, Astor said. "Memes and tweets are not the best way to communicate with every audience." PRN

CONTACT:

Lisa Astor, lastor@panncomm.com; Nina Kaminer, ninak@nikecomm.com; Albe Zakes, albe.zakes@terracycle.com.

The Long and Short of PR Messaging

There has been a tremendous amount of buzz lately regarding creating "snackable" content. These are shorter, more digestible items that today's consumer—who is often "speaking" in 140 characters or less—can devour. In the midst of all this, AP and Reuters recently issued decrees that reporters should try to cap their stories at 500 words.

On the other hand, media brands like *Sports Illustrated* now boast splashy sites dedicated to longform journalism. And *The New York Times* has launched Times Premier, a premium service that, among other trophies, offers access to entire e-books on a single subject So which way should we go? As communicators, are we now supposed to be creating content that's shorter or longer? The answer, of course, is yes.

Don't get me wrong: size does matter. But here are three tip to consider when sizing up your content strategy:

1. **Fit for purpose**. Finding the right length is not the goal; it's a means to an end. Your overarching aim should be to create a compelling storyline that both fits the business strategy and resonates with your audiences. Only when you know your storyline, how it differentiates the company or campaign and how it will inspire audiences to engage, can you start thinking about the size and scope of the specific pieces of content.
2. **Ear we go**. Good carpenters measure twice and then cut. Good communicators listen twice and then create. It is crucial to use your eyes and ears to determine the ideal length(s) of content for your key audiences. Don't guess at this. Ask them, survey them and research the size and scope of the content that they already enjoy. But remember: when scripting content, don't use words unless you have to. Extra words dilute the point and distract the audience.
3. **One size does not you know what.** When telling your story in a strategic way, think of creating different "episodes" a la "Game of Thrones." These episodes fit together and build on one another to drive the story forward.

Matt Purdue

Each episode will employ different platforms. One episode might use tweets, blog posts and a custom app. The next episode a video and a bylined article. Again, it's not so much about picking the right size. It's about mixing and matching different media to surround your target audiences and build your story.

The bottom line is that there is no easy answer to the question: "What's the best length for this blog post?" Nor should there be. Good communicators act as strategic advisors who create bespoke solutions to connect business strategy with target audiences.

This sidebar was written by Matt Purdue, director of content strategy at Peppercomm. He can be reached at purdue@peppercomm.com.

▸ Page 1

focus on a topic, e.g. “Brand X” vs. the larger topic, e.g. “nutrition,” you’ll find that the larger category topic is at least 40x higher in volume than your brand, on average.

You now know where the customers are for your category and for your brand and you have a priority order of channels from 1-10.

Note: Remember that the priority order of channels will change by country, topic, issue and brand.

2. **Role of channel**. Each channel plays a very specific role. **Slideshare**, which has more than 100 million unique visitors per month, is the top place to access PowerPoints. Customers who want to learn go there often.

Forums are often where communities are teaching each other about topics. Videos are our favorite way to absorb new information, since our brains prefer to learn this way. Search is what we do when we have a question and aren’t sure where to go, often in the beginning of our journey. Wikis are our new **Encyclopedia Britannica**’s. You get the picture.

Each channel serves a different purpose. We may want to start a conversation on **Twitter** and link to a slide deck on Slideshare to see if we can get our customers to learn more on a key topic. The key is we start thinking of several steps taken by the customer that shape behavior, not just one.

Note: Ask yourself what the journey is like for a customer to go from zero knowledge to buying your product. What content is important at each step of the journey?

TEN AREAS OF ONLINE INFLUENCE

Channel	How to Target/Format	Why You Should Use It As a PR Channel
Audio	Favorite of Salesforce and customers on the go.	Podcasts of all types, plus adio tracks of video segments are an undefined area of online, yet have growing uses for communicators.
Blogs	More than 200MM bloggers covering everything under the sun.	We should know the top influencers by topic who drive relevant share of voice. The numbers of influencers are small, precision is key.
Data / Slides	SlideShare	A great location to share all public presentations.
Forums	The engine of online conversations.	Knowing who is driving conversation in forums is key. We should treat high volume moderators with the same respect as we do with journalists.
Images	Is all content tagged to impact natural search? Think Pinterest.	Companies often forget to tag all content in the 10 languages that reach 82% of the online population.
Microblogging	An effective way to alert influencers and help propel news cycles	A great opportunity to build a network of influencers who want to share your news in real time. Twitter is a prime example.
Search	Yes, Google is No. 1, but YouTube is No. 2. Keywords are crucial.	We need to know the influencers on the first screen for our brand and key topics. We also need to understand where people are taken when they search.
Social Networks	The communities that are often our “first place” to go online.	Our day often starts and ends with Facebook or other social sites.
Video	Consumption habits are starting to favor video vs. copy.	There are hundreds of video sites to analyze; such sites sometimes house ratings and reviews of products and services.
Wikis	Free online peer edited online encyclopedia.	Nearly every topic has a Wikipedia entry, which means it could be the first information a consumer finds about any topic they are seeking information about.

The ten channels of online apply in all countries worldwide. Take a brand you work on today and build a simple spreadsheet that shows the social or media sites for each channel. Then, count the video views, search results, image views and continue to quantify results for each channel. Then do this for the larger category your brand is part of. Now rank those channels based on volume and you have just figured out where your customers are most likely to be found. Any social channel or media outlet fits into one of the ten channels. *—B.P.*

3. **Customer need by channel**. Our customers want us to have the equivalent of a conversation with them. Even if we don’t really converse, they want to at least know that we understand their needs. For example, if we are on **YouTube**, most of us go there to either entertain ourselves or to answer a question.

So if you share videos, answer your customers’ questions and then move on. Don’t try to be an entertainer unless you are amazing at it. Avoid slick corporate videos. If you are on SlideShare, you want to see slides that teach you something you didn’t know.

If you are on **Facebook**, know who you are trying to reach. If you are sharing images that appeal to men and you’re trying to reach women, you’ll turn away your audience. Those types of tiny details show whether you actually know your audience or not. Customers won’t complain, they’ll just avoid channels that don’t get who they are.

Note: Imagine the journey of your customer. Where do they learn first about your brand (search), where do they go to learn (video or SlideShare), where do they talk with their peers (forums) and where do they get subtly influenced by their peers every day (Facebook).

4. **Time commitment**. You’re not spending money, in most cases, for media. But earned media is an apt title. You do “earn it” by being present, engaging in conversations, sharing relevant information and answering questions the best you can.

It takes a dedicated person or team to do this well. And you need to talk continually about what is working, so you keep getting better at how to reach customers for each channel.

Note: Focus on understanding what excellence is like in each channel for your brand. What works and why? What never works and why?

The result is that you can identify which channels matter for your brand. You can focus on where your customers are and invest your limited time and money into the places with the highest ROI.

You can also tell those folks who randomly ask for a channel to be built that it’s a bad idea if your customers aren’t there in mass, and simply smile, show the data and go to your next meeting. PRN

CONTACT:
Bob Pearson is President of W20 Group. He can be reached at bpearson@w2ogroup.com.

By John Curran

PR's Stake in the Evolution of the Internet

Make sure your Web protocol is up to speed

For the past 30 years, the Internet's infrastructure has been supported by Internet Protocol version 4 (IPv4). IPv4 has more than 4 billion addresses to number connected computers, but with the continued growth of the Internet and mobile devices, it won't be long before the supply of IPv4 addresses is fully depleted. A few weeks ago the **American Registry for Internet Numbers** (ARIN), the organization that distributes IP addresses in the U.S., Canada and parts of the Caribbean, announced reaching the final stage of its IPv4 countdown plan, emphasizing the need to turn on the successor Internet protocol, IPv6.

IPv6 is the protocol created to account for the growing Internet. It contains approximately 340 undecillion addresses, providing ample space for all the new devices comprising the Internet of Things (IoT).

IMPACT ON PR

Yes, the Internet is running out of space, but IPv6 is far more than a technical issue. Without deploying IPv6 on their public websites, PR professionals could lose reliable Web metrics—the very tool that allows them to determine ROI and other critical business strategies.

"Without deploying IPv6 on their public Web sites, PR professionals could lose reliable Web metrics—the very tool that allows them to determine ROI and other critical business strategies."

PR success is often measured by click rates, social shares, page views and increased website traffic driven from media coverage and social content.

These Web metrics are based on the ability to associate the underlying network information where the end user is coming from. Websites that aren't also connected via the newer IPv6 networking protocol cannot receive useful network-based location information from newer users connecting via IPv6.

Instead, current Internet websites (which have not been IPv6-enabled) receive incomplete or even incorrect location information for newer Web users. These increasingly inaccurate statistics produced by IPv4-only websites will make it difficult for PR professionals to highlight the success of their campaigns, strategically target the right customers or gather information for future efforts.

This not only results in a loss of insight, but also a potential loss of customers or clients.

THE WHOLE WEB

In a few years, newer Internet-enabled devices will only have the capacity to connect via IPv6, since this is the Internet address of the future. If IPv6-only users attempt to reach an IPv4-only website, they must go through a network gateway that causes those users to appear to be coming from the location of the gateway instead of the actual user location.

For example, you may register that several users in California clicked through to your new product's microsite from a link you tweeted. You may then invest in a geo-targeting **Twitter** advertising campaign in California, as it appears that several current and potential customers are located there. However, in actuality, these users were located throughout the U.S. and your campaign investment produces little to no ROI.

Aside from the sunk cost of an ineffective PR campaign and potentially lost credibility, you've also missed out on an opportunity to accurately target potential new customers.

PR PIVOT

Enabling IPv6 on your website will allow PR pros to present accurate and dependable analytics-driven indicators of success, as long as companies properly provide their content via both IPv4 and IPv6.

It doesn't matter the size of your company or which industry you represent—the ever-growing Internet has made it imperative for businesses to make sure their websites are ready for the new Internet protocol.

PR executives need to communicate to C-level managers why they need to adopt IPv6 and how inaccurate Web analytics ultimately affect their organization's bottom line. PRN

CONTACT:
John Curran is president-CEO of ARIN. He can be reached at jcurran@arin.net.