

How to engage with media in the digital world



By Janine Lloyd

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I presented a talk at the STC Media and PR Conference today about successfully engaging with modern media. Here are the highlights:

The media landscape as we know it has changed significantly due to technology shifts - social media, Google search, the proliferation of multiple devices (smartphones, iPads) and a variety of digital channels of communication. Underpinning this is the move to exhibitionism (user-generated content), voyeurism (I want to know what you are doing), real-time technology (always on) and the shift to an era of engagement.

So the world has changed from one where media were trusted and the main source of news to the new world of engagement where citizen journalists (anyone) breaks news, influencers emerge who aren't 'media' and the creation of multimedia formats of storytelling (written, visual, video, audio).

What does this mean?

- Anyone can break news
- News Breaks On Twitter but still needs journalists to verify its credibility
- News cycles have changed to one of always-on where stories break in seconds at any time, anywhere in the world
- Traditional media have to *feature news in digital realm* over waiting for their next publication or broadcast date
- Bad News travels fast
- Social Media drives the conversation
- There is nowhere to hide
- Instant response is required
- Need for Crises Communications

Package your information better

As PR professionals we need to package our information better for digital "media". We can no longer pitch just a press release (although we can certainly provide it attached to our pitch). We need to understand that media and influencers in the digital realm need you to provide your information succinctly, factually and digital. This is what is called the social media release. This means providing a summary of the story you want to tell upfront with the key facts highlighted - do not expect them to wade through a long corporate press release. Provide them with multimedia Links - videos on YouTube, images, RSS feeds and more. Ensure you provide relevant links & Tags - social bookmarking sites, Twitter hashtags or Facebook fan pages.

Invest in the Digital Press Kit

The printed traditional media kit is dead. Provide everything available digitally in a quick easy format for media and digital influencers to engage with you, download your content, videos, images.

Pitching to Social Media influencers

Remember to treat them as individuals and not just another marketing channel. Engaging with social media influencers is about building ongoing relationships for the long term, this means having relevant ongoing conversations, adding value to their audiences and channels, engaging sincerely and honestly and asking them what they need from you.

To pay or not to pay influencers

It is well known that digital celebrities charge a fortune for tweets or posts for brands, Kim Kardashian gets US\$13,000 per tweet. However, the issue is being raised globally that there must be transparency and that people who are paid to tweet or post must disclose that they are being paid! In fact, bodies are calling for legislation around this. I am of the view that if the brand plug is not genuine or sincere it lacks credibility. I believe that if you pay a blogger for a sponsored post, product review, or giveaway, the blogger must sincerely like the brand.

Brand publishing is on the rise

Brand Publishing is about content marketing at its best! A great example of this is Coca-Cola, which aims to kill the press release in the next year. [Coca-Cola](#) has created a digital content platform called the Journey (a digital evolution of its traditional print publication) where they directly communicate with consumers.

The company has also leveraged social networking by creating its own blogger contributor network focusing on new talent instead of big names called '[The Opener](#)'.

Brands like Guess have a magazine format where they encourage and feature user generated content to drive conversations and interact with consumers.

You need resources

If you are going to great digital content marketing and publishing you will need to invest in the right people to do this effectively, you will need a mix of journalists & editors and digital savvy people who understand syndication, analytics and SEO.

How journalists are embracing digital

A study done by Oriella PR Network Global Digital Journalism in 2013 reveals these interesting take-outs...

- Many are using paid-for smartphone apps for rich media content - 40% of global media outlets have a mobile app.
- Media houses have owned Twitter and Facebook pages and their staff (journalists, presenters) are personally using social media.
- Media are making use of blogs, Twitter and Facebook to source and verify news stories - but only when the sources behind those feeds are known to the journalists.
- Social media means more than blogs and Twitter - in particular, the use of Google Plus by journalists is rising. 40% of global media outlets have a mobile app
- Journalists are generating content in multiple formats and having to repurpose content for different channels

Traditional media still going strong

In the same study traditional media hold steady with 50% of media maintaining their offline print or broadcast outlet had the largest audience.

Watch the hyper local trend

While the hyper local trend is still **very new** there are local companies and suppliers pioneering this in SA. There are three main areas where you can take advantage of the hyper local geo tagging trend:

- *Marketing & Advertising*: send messages that are geographically targeted (via mobile) and demographically filtered
- *Create* content that is geo-targeted for *search success*
- *Real-time* targeting through outdoor, events, displays, point of sale, mobile apps, live promotions

ABOUT JANINE LLOYD

Janine Lloyd has been in the PR and marketing communications industry for 25 years, and now heads up Greater Than Johannesburg as managing director. In her career she has advised over 50 local and global businesses on PR and communications, as well as profiling for CEOs, executives and leaders. Janine is also a regular conference speaker on crises communications, reputation management and digital strategy, and is a qualified life, business and executive coach.

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