

Eight ways to rejuvenate your 2013 in PR



By [Janine Lloyd](#)

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2012 has come and gone as quickly as the New Year has begun. Now it's time to rejuvenate your agency and public relations campaigns with new thinking, re-invention and innovation. Reflecting on 2012 there are many case studies and examples of great PR campaigns, but there are also many mistakes which took place, particularly in the social media space.

What is so inspiring about our industry is that mistakes and lessons are just challenges for us to overcome and learn from, the real rejuvenation comes from taking a completely new and different look at how we do things. Keeping the ideas and tactics that did work and throwing away the ones that didn't is part of our iterative process, especially in the digital world. The real innovation comes when we take off our tinted glasses and view our practice through new eyes.

Here are 8 tips to try in 2013:

1. *Rejuvenate your teams* - while you may have done your annual strategy and team building session late last year, remember all teams need consistent rejuvenating as we are in a highly stressful industry. Put in place a consistent internal motivation and rejuvenation campaign which you can place in the hands of an intern to lead. Each month ensure that your teams have one fun afternoon. Some ideas are: a neck and shoulder massage from Hands On; free muffins; a foosball competition; bowling or an afternoon of socialising to get to know each other over a picnic. Do things your teams love. Remember that people spend most of their time at work and they deserve some fun time too. These times serve to bind and connect people as well as offer a little stress relief.

2. *Take a new look at each of your campaigns* - you may have been working on the same campaign for a while or you may be in the same industry, don't let this lull you into a false sense of security. Every client could do with a fresh look at their strategy or you could find the campaign stagnating. Start by taking a step back and reviewing the ultimate goals, audiences and tactics. Review how far you have come then relook your strategy and tactics. When doing so, take off your "black hat" (the negative one that shoots down any ideas that don't seem practical at the time), take time out in a boardroom on your own or in your team, and let the most creative ideas flow. Don't stop until you have written 5 pages of new ideas. Put yourself in your client's customers' shoes. View your campaign through their eyes.

3. *There is no such thing as traditional PR* - PR carries with it a set of trusted principles that we have learnt over time. Some say they are "traditional" and are inclined to view them as outdated. However, "traditional" doesn't mean they won't work. Some of the oldest most workable principles still hold true today even in the digital world. However, as PR professionals we need to ensure we are abreast of our customers and their customers and this requires a view outside the normal way of doing things. It's not about radically re-inventing what you do, but about doing some things differently to

reach and engage with all "publics" how and when they want you to. View your campaigns through the lens of your knowledge, experience and practice, but open your mind to new ideas and possibilities.

4. *Get digitally certified* - if you are still not digitally savvy, book a course and get trained now. Search, SEO and social media are vital and must be integrated with everything you do. Whether you work with a digital agency or have in-house resources, as a PR professional you still need to understand the digital world and how it works. The Vega School of Brand Leadership provides a part-time diploma in digital marketing, which is developed by the Digital Marketing Institute (the global body for digital marketing) and covers best practice knowledge and understanding of all things digital. This is something you must do during 2013.

5. *Think collaboration* - so many of us still practice in our PR silos and create a division between our practice and that of other marketing tactics. The time is long gone for this approach, integration is everything but more than that an understanding of other disciplines is essential. If you understand how the ad agency, digital or promotion team work, you will have a better knowledge of how to work closer with them for the benefit of your client. Having said that, collaboration is so much more than integration, it is an approach. It means sharing thoughts and ideas with others- your industry, peers and mentors. There is so much knowledge out there and it resides in other professionals just like you who aren't afraid to put their heads together to come up with better solutions, for clients and the industry. Collaboration also means being open and honest with your clients and working together to do even better work than the year before.

6. *Life is too short for ungrateful clients* - you may have that one toxic client but you justify keeping them due to financial reasons. Dig deeper and you may find they are a slow cancer to the agency. They could result in the unhappiness and loss of highly valuable resources and low team morale. If that is so, it's time to have a direct and honest chat to that client. If they are not willing to change or see the true value in what you do for them, it may be time to say goodbye.

7. *Career planning* - remember that at this time of the year most people are looking at their lives and asking themselves if they are on the right path. It's natural, it's a New Year and a time to set new priorities. As an agency or team leader you need to be tuned into your staff's needs and goals for the year. Sit down with team members and ask them to share their goals and views for 2013 with you, work on a career plan for them that fits in with their aims and that of your organisation. Then make it your resolution to deliver on these promises.

8. *Take responsibility and commit* - A new year provides an amazing opportunity to get serious about your career, your vision and that of your agency. We are in an industry that is integral to the success of brands, companies and people. We have an enormous opportunity to be part of this success which brings with it job creation, economic growth and financial reward. Put aside any fears you have. Be proud of your achievements and that of your agency and our industry. Commit to being the best PR professional you can be.

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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