

What's up in media for 2012?

 By [Marion Scher](#)

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Ever since I read Faith Popcorn's *Clicking* in 1998 (and I can't believe you haven't read it - really?) I've been hooked on trends and how important it is not only to pay attention to what's affecting people right now but what could happen around the corner. Because you need to be around that corner, armed with what you need to reach your market.



1. Screen culture

Up to a year ago, mention the words citizen journalism and you'd get a giant sneer from anyone in the media industry but look around you and what do you see? People glued to screens, small, medium and large - all reading someone's words, but definitely not just fine journalism. They're part of the 'screen culture' which we're all engaged in on a daily basis.

No longer do we wait with baited breath to receive the evening news read by one of our articulate (*not*) news reporters. What's happening is being thrown on to our screens by people as it happens. Today's news breakers are rioters, strikers, students, housewives, accountants and anyone who can type!

2. Writing the mobile way

For many years I've tried to get corporates to use more conversational writing in order to make their messages more readable. Now a new challenge has been thrown up - getting a message across, not necessarily in 140 characters for Twitter (although that's a good thing), but certainly one that fits and makes an impact on a mobile screen!

3. The marriage of social and traditional media

Again the naysayers said 'never would these marry' - well, guess what, they have and the word is they're living happily ever after.

When you're planning a press campaign today, there's no way around it: you have to look at how you can use both social and traditional media, preferably merging them into one smooth campaign. Remember people are far more likely to see your release if it's on a Facebook page or a Twitter teaser.

4. How is media covering events?

Perhaps this should be called the death of the social columnist. Everyone and anyone who happens to be at a social bash can have their say online and do.

Harness this and find someone in your organisation who can write well enough to tell people what your company is doing and why your events are ones not to be missed!

5. Clearly defining readers' needs

With the screen culture comes variety like never before. Today you can have a whole publication tailored to your needs - well, at least if you're a Zite reader. If you want to reach your target market then know who they are. Their age group? Are they rich or middle-class? Do they want to read about luxury travel or value-for-money bundu bashing?

6. Social media - a journalist's dream for sources

In the 'old days' when we needed an interview subject, it was a case of spreading the word around your colleagues and friends and hoping that maybe they'd know someone who knew someone...

Today, all you need is Facebook, LinkedIn or whatever way you choose to reach your outer circle. Within hours, even minutes you have an abundance of sources - journalism bliss!

7. Monitoring what others are saying about you

Most companies today realise the value of their websites, and have included Facebook and Twitter as add-ons. Good thinking. BUT how many actually monitor the feedback received on these and do anything about it?

It's no good setting up a two-way street that only goes one way! Employ a youth while he or she still knows everything - it'll be good for you.

8. Go niche

To get that little bit of time that people have in between gaming, checking Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, their stocks, the weather and so on, target your readership. If you see a gap in the market for cross-dressing brides or ambidextrous golfers, then go for it.

9. Trending and the media

Again, something I'm always telling my clients is to hook on to whatever's happening, whether it's Malema, the euro's decline or the latest exercise craze - grab on to it. When someone presses Google, you want to come up on the other side.

10. To blog or not to blog

Well, before you check out how much I blog, I have to confess to not keeping up with my blogs - and I am definitely the worse for it. But at the same time I don't always have something witty or bright with which to enlighten you or perk up your day.

Having said that, blogging is becoming bigger and it's worth looking at how you or someone in your organisation could add value to your company with a regular blog.

11. Specialisation

All clients want to get on television or radio, so what's stopping them? Perhaps the fact that why would anyone want to listen to them unless they have something truly original and, with the age of specialisation, maybe they should concentrate on being the go-to person on their topic (whether it's air conditioning or fast food)?

Get media-trained and become in demand for talk shows and comments [*and be reliable: don't cancel at the last minute without good reason or you won't be invited back again, after having caused a hole in someone's programming before the show goes on air -managing ed*]

12. Check out your apps

There could just be one application on your phone that you could tap into to reach your market - but if you only use your phone to make calls and send smses, then you're so last year...

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