

Who you are shouts too loud!

 By [Ingrid von Stein](#) 26 Jan 2012

2012 started with an announcement that, for the first time, digital music sales topped physical C sales. Therein is the undeniable fact and confirmed trend for 2012 in communications: digital is officially the leading arm of the communications platform.



1. True communications platform

We will continue to see communications companies trying to incorporate digital into the PR mix as a value-added service but, alas, you will have missed the boat. It's not a value-added service but a true communications platform that is here to stay and within five years will have replaced traditional print media.

2. Demise of AVE

We will also see the final demise of the old AVE rates being applied to work out PR coverage. It's no longer about the thud factor or the conversion of ad rates multiplied by three or seven - depending on how arrogant you are. That may have been the basic system adopted for years but, in today's new media, it has absolutely no value any more.

3. True engagement and interaction

Where we should have already been years ago is true engagement and interaction between a brand and its market. Gone is the one-way, top-of-your-voice monologue, shouting out how great your brand is. Moving forward, as of yesterday, it's all about engagement and conversations created between a brand and its market where the market gets to tell you how great it really is - or isn't.

I CAN'T HEAR WHAT YOU ARE SAYING....because who you are shouts too loud!

New media communication is not a page on Facebook or some randomly placed tweets that go out every so many hours. Do brands ever read what is being put out about them and the interaction that it creates or, as in most cases, does not create?

4. Niche online radio stations

The days of promising clients an on-air interview with the major national stations are also a thing of the past. Today, the true communications specialists are using niche online radio stations to create and

continue conversations between brands and markets.

Today's consumers are not stupid. They choose whom they want to engage with. 2011 saw the rise of online radio sweeping through the South African market as the traditional radio stations floundered around, trying to create an online 'presence'. But the hybrid is not working.

Dedicated online stations are going from strength to strength, coming online in an explosion of creative energy. Here, at last, is a platform where the consumer becomes a participant and collaborator in determining what is aired, from the music played to the conversations initiated.

Because of its immediacy, there is continuous interaction via the online medium, using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Skype to engage directly with the community. (Yes, we now call them 'communities' and not 'listeners').

5. Evolution of newsletters

Traditional newsletters should have adapted in 2011 but, hopefully, 2012 will see this adaptation finally come about - short, interesting and engaging information. Gone is the MD posing with a baby as he or she hands over the cheque, replaced by material that is both pertinent and relevant to the reader.

Precise, hard-hitting and entertaining video and audio clips with direct links to your live blog, updated every few hours (not once a month!) is what it's about.

If you're not going there, why are you even bothering? What you're putting out is that 'We're boring. We don't have the time for you. We have nothing of interest to say to you but we'll say it anyway.'

6. Real stories

The new media is being trawled by savvy smart journalists who are looking for the real stories. Continuing to bombard them with vacuous news releases is guaranteed to get you unnoticed.

2012 will be the best year yet for new media communications and there will be a few players who lead the way, much like Google or Facebook did a few years ago.

Times have changed. Have you changed your communications? Sit back for a moment and let your community tell you what you need to hear because frankly, my friend, they can't hear you. If no one is listening, then surely it's time to think about what you're saying, how you're saying it and where you're saying it.

The conversation is online and the world is already there and listening; there's really no longer any need to shout loudly.

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