

# SA PR needs to lose cottage industry perception

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The public relations sector in South Africa is going to be an exciting environment in 2011.

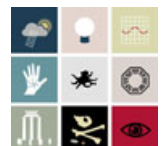
1. The "techies", geeks and online players will have almost completed their **takeover** and domination of the local PR sector when it comes to social media client management and, despite a few outliers, the trend will continue.



2. The **growth in online reputation management (ORM) specialists** will continue until traditional PR agencies get to grips with the various social media platforms and how to position their clients in that space.
3. There will be **consolidation** in the traditional PR space as those agencies - struggling to justify their huge monthly fees - get forced to meet their equally huge overhead structures by reducing staff and cutting other costs.
4. Clients will continue to apply pressure to provide a **full-service offering for reduced monthly fees**. Clients will also start pushing to interact with the pitch team that originally won the business. The 'juniorisation' of the interaction between client and agency will be reversed.
5. Long-term contracts that were signed at the height of the latest recession, in a defensive move by agencies to hold onto business, are coming to an end and there will be numerous **large account moves**.
6. Clients will continue to look for **real value-added services** from PR agencies.
7. **Measurement of actual value** provided in PR terms will move away from the traditional AVE approach, to a triple- and quadruple-bottom-line approach, much like what their clients are being forced to measure themselves against, in terms of the various King Codes.
8. **BEE will continue to be a non-starter** in the PR space as skilled black PR professionals will be poached by clients and brought in-house to bolster their senior management BEE profiles.
9. Automatic annual fee increases remain a thing of the past. Clients will be more inclined to introduce a **hybrid fee structure**, partially based on a base retainer and topped-up with an incentive programme, measurable by coverage or non-coverage received.
10. The **SME portion of the market will continue to grow** and will be bolstered by new entrants as the economy begins to show signs of growth again.
11. Students in PR will continue to **struggle to find internships** as SMEs still don't understand the dti guidelines and access to internship grants.

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Angelo Coppola runs his own PR shop (Channel Managed PR), when not looking for something worthwhile to champion. He specialises in tactical content, media liaison & strategic and tactical PR. He's an ex-financial journalist. Email him at [angelo@channelmpr.co.za](mailto:angelo@channelmpr.co.za), follow him on Twitter at @angelo2711 and read his musings at [www.posterous.com/angelo2711](http://www.posterous.com/angelo2711).

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