

PR 3.0: The New Public Relations Toolkit



Goodbye, Traditional Media.

In 2008, we saw the beginning of the end for traditional news media, and that trend has accelerated this year. Along with the current recession, the downward trend in traditional media is forcing a rapid evolution within the PR industry towards next-generation PR tools. Change can be difficult. The good news, though, is that the successful implementation of “PR 3.0” will help many PR companies survive, and some will thrive.

The faltering economy, declining ad sales and increased competition from Web-based media have all contributed to a major reduction of the number and size of traditional news outlets. Newspaper circulation¹ (see Figure 1) and advertising revenues are shrinking, forcing papers across the country to slash editorial staff. Since December, four chains with more than 30 U.S. daily newspapers have filed to reorganize under Chapter 11 of federal bankruptcy law,

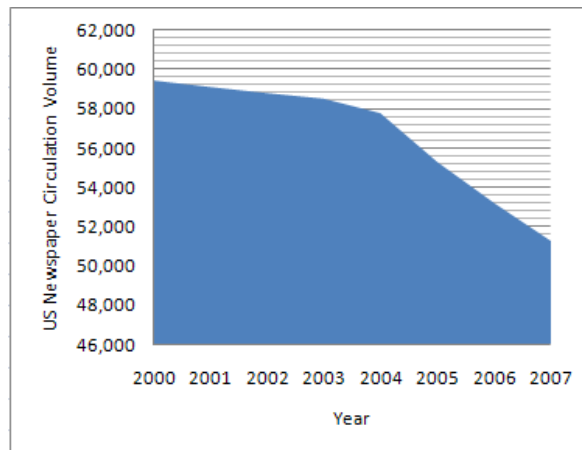
including the owners of the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Denver’s Rocky Mountain News closed and even the mighty New York Times, according to a recent Atlantic magazine article, faces the very real possibility of an eventual shutdown due to its enormous debt service obligations.² Even TV isn’t

spared - local TV stations are cutting news staff as well as entrenched but expensive long-time anchors, replacing them with cheaper talent. Magazines and trade publication businesses, suffering from a massive reduction in ad revenue, are also floundering and shutting down.

Like the aftermath of a forest fire, some large news outlets will remain, slashed and burned. But the trend is clearly moving toward media fractionalization: many tiny media

Figure 1: Annual US Newspaper Circulation Volume



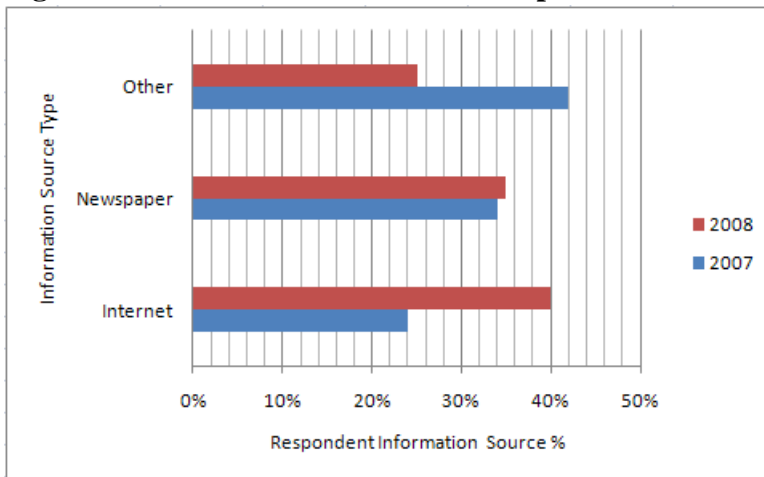
¹ *Annual US Newspaper Circulation Volume* <http://www.naa.org/TrendsandNumbers> (March 2009)

² Michael Hirschorn “End Times” Atlantic Magazine (January 2009)

outlets will sprout up in the form of blogs, Webzines, message boards, social media Web pages and other Web or cell-phone-delivered media.

It's critical that you start formulating a strategy to take advantage of this new media terrain, because much of the traditional media industry will become unrecognizable. Already, the Internet has overtaken printed newspapers as a primary source of news. In a December survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 40 percent of respondents said that the Internet was their primary source of national and international news, compared to 35 percent for newspapers (see Figure 2). One year earlier, 24 percent had chosen the Internet, compared with 34 percent for newspapers.³ That trend continues this year. More than ever, people now control the format, frequency, tone and type of content they consume. The PR industry must begin to understand this.

Figure 2: Pew Research Center for People & Press Source of News Survey



Public Relations Must Adapt, and Soon

For PR professionals, the death of traditional news media will mean that “big score” media placements—the one-time stories on the front page of a national newspaper or a network evening news story— will become rare, and less and less relevant. Eyes, and more importantly, audiences, will be reached in 2009 through the thousands of new media outlets and direct communication channels. Public relations clients will

³ *Internet Overtakes Newspapers as News Outlet* <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1066/internet-overtakes-newspapers-as-news-outlet> (December 2008)

increasingly view their audiences as many individual “publics,” instead of a few homogeneous groups.

This year will also prove historic for the public relations industry because of the economy’s effect on its client base. Businesses across all sectors have shuttered, and many more have undergone layoffs. But 2009 will also enable those companies who are well-positioned in the economic downturn to take advantage of a weakened competitive field.

How Does This Affect the PR Business?

More clients will be financially stressed and looking to reduce or eliminate their public relations budgets. But those PR opportunities that can be seized will provide enormous payoffs. Traditional media will be harder to navigate, due to:

- the high rate of news personnel turnover
- increasing reliance on the Associated Press for content
- fewer news outlets
- less content created per issue
- content created to sell newspapers rather than to inform the reading public

In short, there will be far fewer opportunities for story placements reaching wide audiences.

That means that PR firms will have to adopt integrated solutions for effective public relations campaigns, reaching bloggers, search engines and other Web-based outlets; utilizing social media; monitoring and adjusting communications using real-time tracking; and even incorporating best-practice marketing methodologies, heavy on measurement, analysis, and ROI calculation. The Internet is, at its core, a completely measureable, trackable medium and the focus is more on direct response and less on branding and awareness. The successful PR professionals will master the new communication channels and pursue many smaller, more tightly focused audiences. More than ever, public relations professionals will have to be more efficient, more tech savvy and more effective to improve their clients’ return on investment. Those who cannot deliver improved ROI will find it difficult to stay relevant and stay in business.

Making the Shift from PR 2.0 to PR 3.0

In 2008, the PR industry embraced 2.0 social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn – most of which weren't designed specifically for business-client public relations. Most of the online PR tools had major flaws, such as not tracking communications in real time, or having to rely on the outdated, highly inefficient practice of staffers calling reporters to verify and update contact information.

Within the chaos of the 2009 economy, the next generation of online PR applications will arise: PR 3.0.

This will be “PR-on-steroids” compared to its predecessors—far more effective and efficient, and melding the best features of public relations and marketing into a single hybrid. This PR 3.0 generation will also incorporate best-of-breed features of social media Web sites and media distribution sites that have recently gained popularity. Public relations professionals will move to adopt PR 3.0 in part because their appetites for effective tools were whetted, but not satiated, by the popular 2008 Web applications.

Key Ingredients of PR 3.0

Most importantly, the PR industry will look to PR 3.0 to help save itself. Faced with the economic realities and shifting media landscape of 2009, the choice for PR professionals will be simple: adapt or perish.

Assuming you're interested in adapting and staying in business, here are some features that we think effective PR 3.0 applications will include.

* **Real-time updates to media contact information, via social media.** Users must be able to generate and update accurate media contact information, in real time, so the latest contact data is available for people throughout their network. This will be critically important because of the changing media culture and economy, with the members of the media rapidly changing jobs. Old methods—attempting to generate or verify contacts through mass calling—won't work. Social media can help do this.

* **Online newsrooms**, where reporters, editors and others in the media are updated in real time with the latest news, and where they can view archived releases, photos and videos. Because members of the media face an overflow of information, with a barrage of irrelevant data that wastes their time, PR 3.0 tools need to incorporate a matching, filtering and sourcing service for reporters. Because files, videos and photos can be difficult to e-mail due to their size, online newsrooms are an imperative for sharing information with target influencers.

* **Affordability and accessibility.** PR 3.0 applications will need to be affordable, open platforms that everyone can access and customize for their individual needs and audiences. An organization should be able to set up customized media lists and targeted, relevant messages for each of its target audiences. PR 3.0 applications also need to be Web-based – accessible from anywhere – and centralized, providing all the necessary tools from a single platform. Advanced PR tools such as online newsrooms were once costly and available only for large companies. But the pressures of today’s economy provide a market opportunity for platforms that can provide accessibility and ease of use for all.

* **An integrated approach**, providing both wire distribution of press releases and targeted outreach, with a customized media list of key reporters who can receive an e-mailed release individually. Because of the changing ways that audiences receive information, the PR 3.0 approach should integrate with the latest marketing tools, like search-engine optimization, site tagging, trackable e-mail campaigns, interactive videos and photo-sharing.

* **Real-time tracking** of communications, allowing PR professionals to maintain message discipline and to make necessary, on-the-fly improvements to public relations campaigns. Real-time tracking allows users to see immediately where and when their press releases are viewed, and who is viewing. This tracking is critical for helping to measure responses to a public relations or marketing campaign, and for analyzing the effectiveness of that campaign and what changes should be made.

* **Real-time updates for journalists too**, allowing them to make changes, instantly and without delay, to their contact information on PR client media lists. For the journalists who survive the waves of layoffs, the Web must play a central role in their careers.

Journalists must embrace PR 3.0 and look to publicity seekers as collaborators, not adversaries. According to a survey of business journalists by the Arketi Group, 93 percent reported that they use the Internet for finding news sources and 89 percent for finding story ideas. Next, they must use PR 3.0 tools to remain connected and informed.

With the vast changes underway in the media and in the economic climate for clients, the PR industry simply cannot expect old-fashioned public relations methods to work. In today's environment, the way people receive information has changed, and old PR methods are ineffective, inefficient and provide a poor return on investment for the client. PR professionals who embrace PR 3.0 tools will be best-positioned to seize the many opportunities presented in this new landscape.

ABOUT MYPRGENIE

MyPRGenie is a PR delivery platform for the 21st Century. MyPRGenie helps journalists, companies and PR professionals communicate with each other more effectively, leading to less wasted time, fewer irrelevant calls and more rewarding relationships.

For [companies](#) looking for PR, MyPRGenie allows you to **CONNECT** to more than 540,000 journalists globally. We provide a centralized PR platform with online tools for companies to effectively and efficiently **DELIVER** your news, **GET HEARD** and **TRACK** results in real time.

For the [PR professional](#), MyPRGenie allows you to customize our PR delivery platform to fit your agency's needs so you can better serve your clients. With our solution, you can **CONNECT** to more than 540,000 global journalists, **DELIVER** news to different target audiences and **TRACK** results in real time. We provide you with one platform with all the PR tools you need to maximize return on investment for your clients.

For the [journalist](#), MyPRGenie allows you to **FOCUS** on the stories you are working on and **CONNECT** with the right sources. We give you the online tools to help you **FIND** story opportunities and create targeted story pitches.

MyPRGenie was developed by people with deep backgrounds in PR, marketing, business, and software technology --people who understand how much more robust the

practice of public relations can be. By connecting storytellers directly with storywriters, and enabling businesses to easily interact with journalists, MyPRGenie is creating a democratic, efficient, 360-degree communications platform for the 21st Century marketplace.

To sign up for a 30-day FREE trial of MyPRGenie, please visit our website at <http://www.myprgenie.com>.