
marketing & PR
BY WILLY GISSEN



ONLINE EVOLUTION REVOLUTIONIZES PR

Are you armed and ready to roll?

Prior to the Internet revolution, companies pushed out their message, by a figurative bull-horn if you will. Press releases, bylined articles, brochures and speaking engagements all were designed to reach a broad target audience, many totally uninterested in the message.

The advent of online PR led to a new strategy, commonly referred to as inbound marketing, to make it easier for prospects to find you. If you rely on traditional methods for the web, you will be branded as a spammer and blocked by potential customers.

Convergence, the merging of two previously distinct areas, is accelerating across the Internet in many ways. Socialoomph, Hootsuite and that old standard, TweetDeck, let you monitor and post on several social media sites simultaneously, scheduling transmissions in advance, often for multiple clients. Wordpress has been used to code entire websites using software originally meant for blogs. And search engines are now acknowledging Twitter and other

social media in their search engine results pages, or SERPs.

Convergence is also blurring the boundaries between personal and business relationships. Facebook, one of the main culprits, requires a personal account linked to its business pages.

Trailblazing CEOs have simply incorporated their personal image into their organization. Even those who are adamant about keeping their business and social spheres distinct will eventually yield to reality. Try keeping personal messages out of your Twitterstream when you have built your account to 1,000 or more followers.

Convergence and the blurring phenomenon have transformed public relations as well. Traditional PR now encompasses online PR and vice versa. Press releases are blasted out using PRWeb and/or PR Newswire while simultaneously being pitched to trade magazines and business journals. Conference speakers will keep listeners attentive by creating a special hashtag for interactive and instantaneous feedback.

PR professionals are also expanding

into new arenas. The need for content in SEO campaigns is better addressed by writers than technicians. Media rooms created for website development must be updated with recent publicity, giving a boost to public relations practitioners who know rudimentary html.

These trends – inbound marketing, convergence, blurring of boundaries and the need for multi-discipline professionals – will dominate the future of online PR even though it's hard to predict specific developments. The prevalence of Facebook could never have been foreseen, and social media was succinctly described by my fellow columnists, Ellie Becker and Bernadette Nelson, as the "Wild West" of online PR.

However, the growth of online PR is accelerating and practitioners will need to get their six-shooters loaded and holstered if they wish to survive.

Willy Gissen is president of Cut-It-Out Communications Inc. www.cioediting.com, a public relations agency in Hartsdale. Reach him at wgissen@cutitoutcommunications.com.