

# THE DOWNFALL OF MASS MEDIA

Public Relations and the Rise of Social Media



By  
Muhammet ERBAY, Ph.D.

Communication



LIVRE DE LYON

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

One of the fascinating things about a book like this is more or less unique in its field. It will probably be read by media professionals and public relations people who are already highly proficient in their craft. They are reading a book to demonstrate a passion for their professions and an interest in learning more.

If you're one of those readers, then you might be wondering why you'd bother to read a book that specializes in something so narrow as the relationship between media and PR. You are probably very familiar with the long-held conventions and rules of media relations, which have been in place for decades.

This book serves multiple purposes:

1. It is intended to introduce what has been called “new media.” This term includes everything from blogs to social networking sites to a Web-based encyclopedia. It is for people interested in learning more about how these new forms of communication fit into the big picture of public relations.
2. It is intended to guide people who want to learn how to effectively use these new forms of communication in their day-to-day jobs.
3. The book is designed to explore the relationships between old and new media.

### **In the Beginning, Public Relations (PR) Was a One-Directional Communication Model.**

Public relations professionals were the only ones who could get their messages published. They could choose the medium to tell the story they wanted to tell, be it newspaper column, television, or radio. It is no longer valid.

Today, consumers are taking control of the conversation. They demand two-way communication with brands and businesses and use social media to amplify their voices.

Social media has changed the game when it comes to public relations. While traditional advertising is still essential, customers are now interacting

with brands as much as — or more than — they're interacting with their friends and family on social media. It gives companies a new and unique opportunity to establish a voice and build relationships with people that didn't exist before.

Companies are operating in an increasingly transparent world where consumers can easily share their experiences with others. They can also reach a massive audience immediately when they want to praise or criticize a company or product through social media.

Public relations aims to influence how an audience views a company, industry, or person by providing information to media outlets or social media channels. It's about building relationships, influencing opinion and behavior, managing crises, and communicating messages. A good PR strategy helps achieve business objectives by sending positive messages about your brand and encouraging customers to engage with you.

This book will cover the history of public relations, how social media is changing it, and its future.

### **Public Relations Has Always Been A Powerful Force In Society.**

Do you know public relations? Think again. About a decade ago, the world of PR went through a drastic shift thanks to social media. Ten years later, we are witnessing the aftermath that has forever changed the way people communicate and share information.

Let's face it, the business of PR is changing. Public relations has traditionally been tied to the status quo, from newswire distribution to media outreach and messaging. It's changed dramatically over the years, with social media, 24-hour news cycles, and mass media decline (TV & print).

Everyone who works in PR has only one boss: The consumer. And when consumers change their behavior, this changes everything. With the rise in the influence of social media and the decline of traditional media sources, public relations practices have been forced to adapt. Many PR folks are terrified by this rise of social media.

Public relation is a discipline that has always been very important in society. However, public relations has become increasingly digital in the last few decades. This shift was precipitated by the advent of social media websites, which began to provide outlets for brands to have their voices heard beyond traditional print and broadcast media. With the rise of social media, stories that once would have been limited to just a few publications found new homes on blogs, Twitter and Facebook.

This book will compare and contrast public relations with social media. The main thrust of my argument will be that PR has always been a significant influence in society. The difference now is that social media is increasingly being supplanted as the dominant force for brands to reach their target audiences through different channels.

This power shift has already been seen with the rise of public relations agencies getting slammed by Twitter and blog comments. Now, as more people use social media to make their voices heard, it's only going to take one tweet or Facebook post to get their message out and make a difference.

Attention paid to any organization has never been more significant than today. Social media has made it easier for the masses to spark a reaction and change the course of history. And that means your business is at risk if you're not ready for it.

***Mass Media Has Always Had The Power To Influence People's Views On Things.*** Mass media has always had the power to influence people's views on things. Since the printing press, mass media has affected how people see the world and themselves. Through mass media, people converse with one another and keep up with what is happening in the news.

The ability to be so readily available has undoubtedly changed how public relations professionals do their work. Much has been written about the changes brought on by social media. However, they are still being felt across every industry.

There's no denying it. Mass media is becoming extinct. Journalists are disappearing from newsrooms, and news is starting to sound less and less like an informational source and more like an opinionated blog. The internet has shifted the way audiences receive information. This digital revolution has given rise to online tools such as blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, which have led to what we now call social media.

These tools allow individuals to communicate by sharing text updates, photos, videos, and more. It's a far cry from conventional public relations (PR), where they taught PR pros that they must rely on "mass media tactics" to spread their messages.

The mass media have established several ground rules for transmitting information to the masses. But, these rules are changing. Why? Because of social media. Social media has completely upended how we get information, and it's caused a dramatic shift in the world of public relations.



## CHAPTER 2

# THE COMING OF MASS MEDIA

In the early twentieth century, the United States saw the emergence of a new mass media. Newspapers and magazines, previously small-circulation organizations focused on professional audiences, started to reach increasingly vast audiences. A variety of causes contributed to the increase in readership:

Advances in printing technology and distribution techniques reduced the cost of producing newspapers and magazines, allowing publishers to pass on their savings to consumers in the form of lower pricing.

Reading became a popular source of amusement and knowledge once the printing press was established and books were more widely available. As public schooling became more widely available, most people found it simpler to read. Except for Mississippi, every state had legislation mandating children to attend school for at least some time by 1900.

Radio and movies gave easy-to-access entertainment alternatives; consumers did not require reading abilities to enjoy them. However, radio and films promoted reading by presenting books and writers as sources of information. Before and after seeing the movie, people read books to figure out what was happening in popular culture. The novel came first, and the film came second.

The discovery of the radio gave birth to radio broadcasting, which enabled information to be instantly conveyed across long distances. It was followed by the introduction of television, which has since become one of the most prevalent forms of media, with over 3 billion television sets in use globally today.

Throughout much of human history, word of mouth was the primary means of disseminating knowledge. At parties, people would chat with their neighbors or share anecdotes. As a result, the news could only spread as rapidly as individuals could physically walk from one location to another. If you lived in a village, you might learn about a significant occurrence the following day, or perhaps much later if it happened far away.

All of this changed in 1440 when the printing press was invented. In Germany, Johannes Gutenberg created this machine, which he used to print

180 copies of the Bible. Instead of waiting for monks to hand-write each copy, individuals could now get their hands on a book much quicker and at a lower cost.

Newspapers followed. The first one debuted in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1605. Newspapers initially emerged in England in the 1620s and were quite popular by the 1700s. You primarily sent them to persons interested in politics and economics since they featured a wealth of information about government officials and business news. Because they were so tightly linked to politics, these journals also reported on wars and conflicts all around the globe.

Advertising grew increasingly frequent in newspapers in the late 1800s and early 1900s as firms sought to market their goods to broader audiences than ever before.

### **Defining Mass Media**

Mass media has been defined in different ways over the years. The Council of Public Relations defines mass media as “the means of communication that reach and influence large numbers of people.” In other words, mass media is any form of communication that reaches any people and can deliver a message.

Mass media refers to the internet and television, radio, and newspaper in today’s world. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest are also considered public relations tools.

Private interests or government policies control mass media outlets. It means that you can disseminate only certain information to the public. People who want to know more need to consult alternative sources of information, which makes it difficult for citizens to know everything about their community and country. It allows governments and corporations some freedoms that they would not have if there were no such controls on the flow of information.

Broadcast media, such as cinema, radio, recorded music, and television, disseminate information digitally. Print media, such as books, comics, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets, use tangible items to share information. It’s fair to say that public speaking is a sort of mass media in its own right.

The term was coined in the 1920s with nationwide radio networks and mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. However, some forms of mass media, such as books and manuscripts, had already been in use for centuries.

You can trace the history of mass media back to when dramas were performed in various ancient cultures. Roman dramatists like Plautus and Terence modified the form and content of Greek dramas to suit Roman audiences. Public

announcements were chiseled into metal or stone and posted in public places in those days. The first book printed in movable type was published in China during the Song Dynasty.

**The proliferation of Mass Media.** It's necessary to understand how we got here to comprehend how we got here. At the beginning of the twentieth century, mass media mainly consisted of newspapers, but it had grown to include television, radio, and cinema by the end of the century. The exponential growth and influence of mass media during this time is due in large part to three factors:

1. Advancements in technology
2. Consumer demand for entertainment
3. The rise of public relations

Over the past several decades, the proliferation of mass media has made it more difficult for organizations to capture the public's attention. It has given rise to a new form of public relations that focuses on creating engaging content to attract readers and viewers.

As an example, think about the way social media is changing marketing. Businesses that want to reach consumers on Facebook or Twitter must develop material that their customers want to see. It might include photos and videos and links to blog articles and other websites. Forget "Buy our product!" messages — people tune those out immediately.

Social media is also changing how companies respond to customer complaints and feedback. If a customer tweets a complaint about a bad flight, for example, they're likely hoping that someone from the airline will respond directly with an apology and a solution. The same is true if they post a negative review on Yelp or Amazon. And if they share photos of your business online, you need a strategy for responding in case those photos go viral.

Social media allows businesses to interact with customers differently, but it also comes with risks. Because posts can spread so quickly on social media, one wrong move can do severe damage to your brand.

**Mass Media vs. Social Media.** Mass media, such as television and newspapers, are on their way out. They're still helpful for certain types of information distribution, but they're not the ideal approach to generate interest in your product or business.

People's expectations of mainstream media sources have altered dramatically due to social media's severe emergency. While conventional media channels publish news with specific aims in mind, social media is a better

platform for gathering input and connecting with individuals who can help you achieve those goals.

While traditional media remains the most successful means of interacting with the public, social media is increasingly becoming a must-have tool for small and big enterprises. In the internet era, just having a presence on social networking platforms is no longer enough to be called a brand. Instead, it is critical to utilize these channels to successfully connect and engage with your consumers.

Social media is different in that it involves getting your brand recognized by a small group of followers interested in what you have to say. You'll never reach 100% of your happening severe potential audience on social media. Still, if you create an engaged community around your business and communicate with them regularly, you'll discover admirers who will spread the word for you.

Social media seems to have taken over the planet. And although it is helpful for many things, it may be a significant issue when it comes to selling your items. You may be tempted to worry and start posting link after link on social media showcasing all the fantastic things you're doing.

You're going to fall flat on your face if you keep doing this. You must develop a plan adapted to your company, not the other way around.

The truth is that mainstream media no longer works. It's no longer successful at capturing people's attention—and most people have already discovered that they can speak about you on their channels instead of on yours.

Indeed, several studies suggest that social media performs better than conventional media for brand creation and sales growth. Of course, not every buyer will see what you publish, but if their friends visit, there's a good possibility they'll buy something as well.

The primary reason social media has surpassed traditional media as a communication channel is straightforward: Social media provides a more direct, dynamic, and intimate experience. You can't go to the local newspaper or watch the news on TV and talk to the reporter. However, you may do so on your smartphone or tablet from anywhere in the globe, at any time.

*The Rise and Fall of Advertising.* The rise of social media has been one of the most significant changes to our lives in the past few decades. It has transformed the way we communicate and interact with each other. It has also transformed every aspect of our lives.

The internet is the most incredible marketing tool ever invented, but it's also one of the most damaging to your brand. Mass media produces a massive

amount of content, and it's overwhelming today's consumer — we've all got hundreds of channels to choose from, and new ones are popping up every day.

Content created by companies used to be what made us aware of brands and products. There were commercials, infomercials, and print ads. But now, there are blog posts, tweets, and Facebook posts — they're all a part of the media landscape.

Social media has had such a profound impact on the world around us it's easy to forget that it all started with a business plan. Before social media was even a concept, businesses used the internet to reach people.

In 1983, a PR firm hired by General Electric created the first “personal home page” for a corporation called GE@Home (now known as GE Reports). The PR firm was tasked with getting their client's message out to consumers, and they believed GE@Home would accomplish that. It didn't take long for people to start noticing something strange about this new form of media.

Companies began using more sophisticated tactics with more creative ideas as time went on. Soon, public relations firms were hiring “social media strategists” and developing strategies you designed to go viral on social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Today's marketing landscape is full of options for reaching consumers, but it's also full of challenges. It can be challenging to determine which one is best for your business with many possibilities.

The business landscape has changed so much that it's no longer enough to advertise on TV, radio stations, and newspapers, or even use social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to build your brand.

Mass media outlets are still influential, but you'll find that social media networks are now more effective at driving traffic to your site and generating leads. These days, it's not enough to just have a website; you must also leverage social media sites to create content that will drive traffic back to your site and generate leads.

Social media, in particular, has changed the way marketers approach their marketing efforts because of the time people spend sharing their thoughts online on these sites. On Facebook alone, people spend an average of 15 minutes per day communicating with friends through social media networks.



## CHAPTER 3

# THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The late 1990s saw the emergence of the Internet, which led to new forms of communication and social interaction that enabled people to share information globally. In 2006, YouTube was launched, and in 2010 Facebook reached 500 million users.

The rise of social media has revolutionized public relations. Traditional mass media methods — such as television, newspaper, and radio ads — are no longer enough to reach consumers. Social media marketing is a must for companies looking to expand their customer base.

Social media platforms have become an integral part of every PR strategy. The goal is to stay relevant and connected with your target audience. Major corporations such as Amazon have found success by using social media to engage with customers personally.

The rise of social media has had a profound effect on public relations, and its future appears to be intertwined with technology. Social media has revolutionized the way individuals communicate, so it was inevitable to influence how organizations communicate.

Social media has given the average person a platform to express their mind and, more importantly, a place where they listen to others. It is why social media has made such an impact on public relations.

### **Why So Many People Are On Social Media**

A few years ago, social media was just an infant. People were still getting the hang of it and were unsure if they wanted to embrace it. Today, social media has grown exponentially and is expected to be the next big thing in technology.

Social media has become a part of the world we live in today. From Facebook to Snapchat, Instagram, and beyond, social media platforms change how we communicate with others, express ourselves, and even view the world around us.

With so many people now using social media platforms in their daily lives, it's essential to understand why it's so popular. If you're not using social media

yet or are looking for strategies to use it more effectively, here are some of the most common reasons so many people are on social media:

- **Connection**

Social media allows people to connect with others who share similar interests or backgrounds. It provides a space where people can ask questions and receive answers from others who may have first-hand experience on the topic. These platforms also allow users to engage in conversation and build online communities.

- **Convenience**

It's quick and easy to use social media platforms. Most can be accessed via mobile apps and don't require special software or downloads. Social media also makes it easy for users to stay connected with others because they can get updates in real-time. Users don't have to wait for someone to reply to an email or text message; they can just log into their favorite platform.

- **Social validation**

A selfie posted on Instagram that generates dozens of likes can boost self-esteem as nothing else can. With posts such as this, it's easy to feel like you're getting support from your followers even if they're strangers online that you've never met in real life. The more likes you get, the better your mood will be affected by your interaction with society.

Social media has become the new norm for people to communicate with each other, but it's also been a game-changer for businesses. Social media is one of the most powerful tools in the marketer's toolbox for marketing strategies. And if you want to build your business, you need to know how to use social media platforms effectively.

Here are some of the ways that social media can help your business grow:

### **Talking About Brands**

Before social media, organizations could get away with having a one-way conversation in their press releases, news conferences, and other marketing materials. Organizations talked "at" people rather than "with" them; they did not have to listen because they could control what was said and when they said

it. It is not the case anymore. The public's view of public relations is changing because social media encourages an open dialogue between organizations and constituents.

Public relations professionals now have to monitor what people say about their organization on blogs, websites, and social networking sites. Then they have to respond appropriately by either refuting false statements or thanking people for positive comments. Public relations professionals cannot ignore negative comments or hope that they go away — that would only make things worse for the organization's reputation.

**Social Media Has Changed How People Consume News.** There was a time when television networks had absolute control over what people watched and when they watched it. Today, people can watch their favorite programs at any time on Netflix and Hulu. They can even binge-watch entire seasons on their mobile devices or tablets whenever they want. Social media has given rise to Netflix, Hulu, and other services that allow people to watch their favorite shows whenever they want. It has affected news consumption as well as entertainment consumption.

***Social Media Has Changed the Way People Communicate.*** Communication is used only through telephone calls or face-to-face conversations (or through the mail). Now communication takes place online as well. Social media allows people to communicate with friends and family anywhere in the world whenever they have

The digital age has undoubtedly and irreversibly altered the way we live. From the way we communicate with friends and family to how we shop, work, and treat illness, every aspect of our lives is touched by technology.

The internet is a vast network of information consumers have at their fingertips 24/7, which has led to a significant shift in consumer behavior. This shift has caused businesses to rethink their marketing strategies to keep pace with how people receive and interact with information.

It's been said that "content is king" in an online environment. With so much content available to consumers, businesses need to develop a content strategy that differentiates them from the competition. In addition to creating unique content, companies must also make sure that process includes an outreach plan for sharing it with the appropriate audience.

The rise of social media means that connecting with customers personally is more critical than ever before. Consumers want to feel as though brands understand their needs and interests before they buy anything or interact with the brand in any way.

*New Social Networks Appear Every Day.* Social media has exploded over the past few years, and it's not showing any signs of slowing down. New social networks are popping up every day, and older ones are refining their target audiences.

This is a massive shift in how companies promote their products, but it also emphasizes one of the most important public relations lessons: What you say is only as important as who hears you. The old model for journalism was a one-way street. Publishers create content and distribute it to readers. And then, the conversation ends.

But social media has changed that by allowing readers to join in on the conversation. Readers can now comment on news articles and share them with their friends. They can connect with journalists on Twitter or Facebook, and they can even start their blogs to engage with other readers about what's going on in the news.

Thanks to social media, today's consumers are more connected than ever before. There are more than 2 billion active social network users worldwide, according to Statista. Not only does this give marketers plenty of places to reach consumers, but it also gives consumers plenty of ways to share their opinions about brands and products.

*The Best Way To Communicate In The Future May Be Online.* Remember those hours you spent glued to the TV watching your favorite show? That time is coming to an end. TV has already become obsolete.

If you are a public relations professional, you have a lot of work. For years, we have been talking about the downfall of mass media and the rise of social media. It's no longer just talk — it's time to put our money where our mouth is. The media industry is being led on a path of destruction by the new social media platforms, slowly replacing the once-powerful mass media outlets.

Public Relations practitioners are currently facing an uphill battle as they try to help their clients stay connected with their consumers and maintain a positive image in the eyes of society. The mass media has lost some influence over its audience as social media platforms grow into formidable competitors.

As technology advances and becomes more accessible to the public, people have more power than ever over what information they receive and how they receive it. Before the rise of social media, the only way for people to consume news and current events was through traditional media outlets like newspapers, magazines, and television.

However, more people are spending their time on popular websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in today's world rather than reading local newspapers or watching broadcast news programs.

*Great New Tools Allow People To Get Online With No Devices At All.* In the old days, if you wanted to share something on the internet, the only way was to create a website. And that required a computer and some technical know-how.

But now anyone with a mobile phone can take a photo and share it with friends all over the world in seconds. People can also use their phones as computers – sending emails, downloading music, and playing games.

And social media sites like Facebook and Twitter allow people to find out what's happening right now in every part of the world – from natural disasters to political upheavals or simply what your friends are up to at this very moment.

These days, it seems everybody's either on Twitter, Facebook, or both. But what about the people who can't afford a computer or don't have access to high-speed Internet?

Increased online training resources have accompanied the rise of social media for nonprofits, small businesses, and individuals to help them make the most of these services. Some organizations are taking this idea one step further, helping provide physical access to the Web.

Charity: water has partnered with FrontlineSMS and Medic Mobile to pilot SMS technology in Ethiopia that allows health workers to send information about water projects in their communities via text messages. The project is part of its efforts to bring clean water and sanitation to 100 villages in Ethiopia by 2015.

This program will allow community health workers to collect data on community members' access to water and sanitation needs through text message surveys. It also will provide front-line health workers with information on preventing the spread of waterborne diseases and better responding during emergencies.

*More And More People Will Own Fewer And Fewer Devices.* Over the next few years, as most of the world's population gets online, expect to see more and more people own fewer and fewer devices.

We're still in the early stages of this trend. Take a look at your own devices; do you have separate phones for work and personal use? A laptop and tablet? An Android phone and an iPad? How long will it be before these devices start to blend into a single shared experience across your phone, tablet, television, laptop, and everything else?

Many people already have all their contacts, music, photos, documents, web browsing history, and other data stored “in the cloud” (on remote servers). It lets them access it from anywhere in the world. Soon we’ll also be able to access all our software from anywhere in the world. If you think about it for a moment, that means the device itself becomes less important than what it connects to.

Extensive social networks like Facebook are already scurrying in this direction. They want you to use their service from wherever you are — whether that’s on your desktop PC at work or on your smartphone while out with friends. They will grow faster than ever before as they succeed at creating products that work seamlessly across many different devices.

## CHAPTER 4

# THE MAGIC BULLET THEORY

**H**ave you heard the one about the little red hen that wanted some bread? She decided to grow her wheat, grind it to make flour, and then bake it into bread. It tastes a little better than mass-produced sliced white bread but comes out of the oven like any other homemade loaf. It's not quite a magic bullet. What is?

According to the Magic Bullet theory, the mass media is essential for public relations practitioners and organizations to succeed. While this theory is still popular, that doesn't mean it's viable.

Today, it would be difficult to imagine the world without social media. There's so much content today, and it is not just limited to this generation; young people worldwide are hooked to their smartphones, scrolling through the different apps on their phones. Teenagers and young adults spend most of their time chatting with friends through either Facebook Messenger or Snapchat.

### **What Is the Magic Bullet Theory?**

The magic bullet theory is also known as the hypodermic needle theory. The concept implies that media outlets can and will influence society's thoughts, as if by shooting a single message into the audience's brain. Even today, some people don't believe that mass media affects public opinion or behavior.

The magic bullet theory contrasts what some later called the two-step flow of communication model. This model suggests that people are influenced by what others say about their views instead of receiving a message directly from the media or even just common perceptions about those views. In other words, instead of absorbing information from one source and acting on it immediately, we may hear something repeated by so many sources that we simply assume that it must be true.

For example, suppose you're at work, and someone starts talking about this new TV show. You might decide to watch it yourself when you get home because your coworker convinced you it was good. But then again, maybe your coworker was wrong; maybe everyone else thought it was stupid, and that's why

no one else has seen it. Maybe you tell your coworkers about it, and they all go home and watch them.

This theory was widely accepted by scholars studying mass communication in the past. Scholars believed that mass media played an influential role in shaping public opinion that directly affects audience behavior.

The Magic Bullet Theory is an appeal to emotion fallacy that assumes that because two events happened simultaneously, the event caused the other. It's also known as The Fallacy of the Single Cause or Causal Oversimplification. The magic bullet fallacy is based on a false assumption, and it's possible to prove this fallacy wrong.

When you see a magic bullet fallacy in action, think about the following questions:

- What are the other potential causes? Couldn't they be responsible for the effect instead?
- Could it be a coincidence?

The rise of social media has challenged this once widely accepted belief. These days, scholars are more interested in how audiences interpret and use media messages. As public relations professionals, we build mutually beneficial relationships with the media, disseminating our messages to the masses.

Nowadays, the masses interact via social media – so our relationships need to be more multifaceted than ever before. There are many ways to distribute your messages in this new era of PR. Here's a look at how mass media and social media differ, what we can learn from each other and how a new approach to PR can help you achieve your overall marketing goals.

***Problems With Mass Media.*** Magic bullet theory is the idea that media messages, whether a film or television show, have an immediate and direct effect on their audiences. The name comes from a metaphor: Rather than the recipient having to process information (as with a surgical procedure) actively, the media message “hits” them directly, like a bullet.

The magic bullet theory was first introduced in the 1920s by Edward Bernays, who had helped create public relations as a form of mass manipulation. Bernays argued that advertisers could sell products to people by appealing to their desires and emotions. The magic bullet theory did not gain prominence until the 1940s, when researchers began studying its effects on children.

The magic bullet theory suggests that mass media influence people and events by “shooting” some kind of message, or bullet, into the minds of viewers. This concept is also known as the hypodermic needle theory of mass media.

The theory assumes that the audience is passive and heavily influenced by everything they see on television, in movies, in newspapers, and online. It also assumes that the message being transmitted by the mass media is always understood by the audience in the same way as intended by the sender.

The magic bullet theory was first proposed and developed during World War I. Propaganda was used to gain support for a war effort against Germany.

For decades, the magic bullet theory has been challenged by those who believe it does not accurately reflect the complex relationship between audiences and media messages. While some people may be susceptible to direct manipulation by mass media, others can form more critical opinions about what they see and read.

For example, many people find television commercials annoying and resent being manipulated into buying things they don’t need. Studies show that most people can differentiate between fact and fiction in what they watch on TV; even children can tell which cartoons are real and which ones are fake.

*How We Consume Too Much Media.* According to a recent Nielsen research, Americans consumed 12 hours and 5 minutes of media each day on average in 2017. That’s a lot of content!

Now, if you think about your day, you could believe that figure is rather high. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day, and most Americans work at least 8-10 hours every day. That’s where the Nielsen study shines; it reveals just how much media we consume each day. Forty-four percent of our daily media intake occurs while watching other media!

For example, if you watch 60 minutes of television, you’re probably doing it with your smartphone or tablet nearby. If you spend 20 minutes driving to work listening to music on the radio, you may also be browsing Twitter or Instagram on your phone.

When it comes to media consumption, multitasking is the game’s name. We’re constantly opening tabs and applications on our computers and phones, clicking open articles and videos, and scrolling through Facebook updates and Instagram photographs.

We have continuous internet access and use it daily. The media constantly assaults us. The way we get our news has changed. We now have more access to media than ever before. And, more than ever, we consume media in short spurts

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1 *How We Consume Too Much Media.* Nielsen research, 2017. Pg 26

– checking Twitter on your phone while waiting for a bus or watching YouTube videos at work, for example (or in class).

Most of us are already aware that our media consumption is excessive. And most of us recognize that it is our responsibility to modify this habit. But how exactly? We are inundated with media from the Internet to TV, movies, and books. It's all too simple to look at a few studies, see some similarities, and draw judgments about what the media does to us.

The magic bullet hypothesis of media impacts is a critical theory that contends media has strong, direct, and immediate effects on viewers. Because it's similar to injecting a narcotic into an audience member, it's also known as the hypodermic needle model or hypodermic-syringe hypothesis.

For various reasons, the magic bullet idea of media impacts is questionable. For starters, it believes that all audiences are the same and would respond in the same manner – a teenage male who enjoys action movies will react precisely like his mother when they see the same film together. Second, it fails to recognize that other things might influence an audience member's response. Third, it presumes that viewers have no agency or control over how they react to media.

*High Hopes for Digital Technology.* The Internet has altered how communication and information are conveyed.

Communication through digital technology is more accessible to everybody than before. Mass media (TV, radio, and newspapers) was only available to a restricted group of people. It's no surprise that media firms are fighting to remain viable in this new communication era.

Digital technology is much more user-friendly than television, radio, or newspapers. This implies that public relations experts are no longer required to create campaigns for customers; instead, anyone may utilize technologies like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube for free.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube may disseminate information more quickly than TV or radio stations, which normally employ a delayed format. As a result, businesses have learned that they no longer need to seek clearance from editors or producers before sharing information about their products/services.

Electronic communications delivered through email or put on websites such as Twitter and Facebook are less expensive than conventional modes of communication since there are no manufacturing expenses involved.

Everyday technology is becoming an increasingly important element of our lives. According to the survey, most individuals spend more than 10 hours

on their gadgets, which doesn't include the time they spend sleeping next to them.

According to the poll, most individuals have high aspirations for digital technology, with 89 percent believing it would improve their lives. And, as technology becomes more ingrained into our lives, 83% of those polled said they are looking forward to it.

Over half of those polled support the use of virtual reality (VR) technology at work, and more than 60% feel VR will improve their lives. This statistic is especially noteworthy considering that just roughly 40% of respondents stated they'd heard anything about VR.

Approximately three-quarters of those polled believe self-driving vehicles would help enhance road safety and decrease the frequency of automobile accidents. The majority also believe they will make traveling less stressful, mainly if passengers can utilize the additional time to do other things like sleep while being transported to their destination.

While many people are excited about the prospect of self-driving vehicles, others are worried about how they would react to them. Over half are frightened about losing control of their driving, and 45 percent are terrified about riding in a car.

*What Are the Advantages of Technology?* If you ask a teenager, they could argue it's a convenient method to communicate with their peers. If you ask a company owner, they could argue it's a technique to boost productivity. If you ask for an education, they could tell you that it is a means to customize learning. If you ask a government agency, they could argue it's a means to enhance citizen services.

With all of the potential that technology holds, why are many apprehensive of its usage in schools? Part of the cause, I suppose, is the mismatch between our expectations and reality. We have great expectations for what technology can achieve in the classroom, but we have not always seen the desired outcomes. Some have even questioned whether technology affects student success at all.

However, recent data from Project RED supports the premise that, when utilized responsibly, technology may help children learn and instructors educate.



## CHAPTER 5

# THE LOOPHOLES OF MAGIC BULLET THEORY COVERED BY SOCIAL MEDIA

Every organization in business fantasizes about a game-changing breakthrough or service that will change the world. Every organization desires the “killer app,” the ideal product that will provide an unrivaled return on investment (ROI).

You’ve undoubtedly heard something similar - such ideas are often expressed in the manner of “if only we could discover a better, more efficient way to do things.” Then, after you’ve come up with some type of unique solution, you’re ready to go big.

Social Media for Content Marketing: Is it the Holy Grail? It saves the day, and the social media Gods endorse your fresh new blog article. You’re going to gain a lot of free exposure! Maybe even more than you were earning from your blog. It’s great for content marketing.

### **The Loopholes of Magic Bullet Theory**

Remember: Magic Bullet Theory assumes that mass media has a direct, powerful, and immediate effect on audiences. It also assumes that audiences are passive and easily influenced.

- **Mere exposure effect**

The mere exposure effect, also known as the familiarity principle, is a psychological phenomenon. People tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them. In social psychology, this effect is sometimes called the familiarity principle. The effect has been demonstrated with many things, including words, Chinese characters, paintings, pictures of faces, geometric figures, and sounds.

Robert Zajonc first discovered the effect in 1968. Zajonc found that the more often participants were exposed to a particular Chinese character, the more positively they rated it in an evaluation test. The mere-exposure effect has since been demonstrated with many other stimuli (words, paintings, faces).

<sup>2</sup>In his article “Mere Exposure: A Gateway to the Subliminal,” Zajonc proposes that exposure effects may occur without conscious awareness and play an important role in forming attitudes and preferences.

In one experiment by Murphy and Zajonc (1993), participants viewed slides of different shapes while their eye movements were monitored and recorded. Some participants viewed slides without being aware of them (i.e., subliminally). Other participants viewed the same slides with complete awareness and attention. Regardless of whether or not the stimuli were consciously perceived,

Not surprisingly, advertisers are well aware of this phenomenon, which is why they spend billions every year on television commercials. Even though people generally dislike ads, they still impact consumers’ preferences. So while one ad may not make you like a product more than its competitors, a series of ads will.

A recent study by researchers at Cornell University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University tested the mere exposure effect on images seen via social networking sites. They found that when people were shown a picture on Instagram and then asked to identify it later in a line-up, they were more likely to identify it correctly if they’d seen it several times rather than just once.

The same was true for pictures shown on Facebook; repeated exposure increased recognition. The study did not look at whether more exposure would make someone like an image more than other images.

- **Selective perception**

Selective perception is the process that shows you perceive what they want to in media messages while ignoring contradictory information. Limited capacity explains how people select the first bits of information that catch their attention and ignore the rest.

Selective exposure explains how people seek out information that supports their attitudes and beliefs and avoid or ignore information that does not. This retention theory explains how people remember what they want to remember (confirmation bias) and forget the rest.

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2 *Mere Exposure: A Gateway to the Subliminal*,» Robert Zajonc 1968. 31

One of the biggest reasons social media marketing is so effective is because it overcomes selective perception, allowing you to see what your target audience wants, even if they don't realize it themselves.

You can break down selective perception into three categories:

**Preoccupation** - People tend to preoccupy themselves with the things that interest them. For example, if you're passionate about cars, you might notice the color of a new BMW, the number of doors it has, or its engine size. However, you probably won't give much thought to what kind of carpet it has or how comfortable the seats are.

**Expectation** - People tend to expect to see certain things and ignore other details. For example, someone who expects to see a red sports car might not even register that there are four doors and no trunk unless they're specifically looking for those details.

**Motive** - People tend to perceive things based on their motives. For example, someone who wants to buy a red sports car might pay more attention.

- **Selective exposure**

The magic bullet theory is a communication model popularized in the 1940s and 1950s. It states that mass media messages are single shots that penetrate the minds of large audiences. In other words, we are highly receptive to any information provided to us by the mass media. Once it penetrates our minds, it remains there and influences our attitudes and behavior.

We don't need to consider whether or not a message is true or false – our minds are extremely receptive to whatever is being communicated through mass media.

This theory has a major loophole: Selective exposure. According to selective exposure, we tend to expose ourselves only to information that matches our beliefs and attitudes. In other words, we surround ourselves with people who share similar opinions as us. We prefer reading articles that agree with our point of view and do not bother reading articles that do not align with what we believe in.

Imagine a situation where you are watching a game show on TV, and there is a question about your favorite movie star. You know the answer, but somehow, you cannot recall it at the moment.

Social media platforms allow us to connect with like-minded people and avoid those whose opinions differ from our own. For example, if you're an avid

fan of a particular political party, there's a good chance that you're following politicians and other members of your party on Twitter.

You may also be following news organizations that lean one way or another. If you're following enough news organizations, you might just happen to get your news from those sources that share your opinion on certain issues.

The same goes for other topics, such as sports teams, movies, music, etc. We seek out those who share our interests, adopt their opinions as our own (or at least agree with them), and avoid those who don't share our beliefs/opinions.

- **Receiver's characteristics**

The characteristic of the receiver is important because they are the ones who interpret the messages that are sent. Regarding social media, this means that if a message is sent, then an individual may interpret the message in one way; however, another person may interpret it differently. The differences in how people interpret messages online can be due to their age, gender, race and ethnicity, and even how much time they spend on social media (Cheung, Lee, & Raboy, 2012).

The receiver's temperament, mood, needs, perceptions, and beliefs are their characteristics. This is a lot to consider when you are designing your messages.

There is no perfect message for everyone, so it's essential to understand your audience and identify the barriers that could prevent them from receiving your message. The receiver's characteristics can be affected by:

- Their physical state- sleep deprivation, diet, and alcohol consumption
- Their emotional state- stress, anxiety, and anger
- Their mental state- perception, and beliefs
- Their physical environment- including noise and other people

Even if the sender and message are perfect, the receiver may still not understand the message. The receiver's relevant qualities include their ability to understand the message, their knowledge of the topic, their interest in the topic, and whether they are paying attention to the message.

If we look at social media, this is one of the most important things to consider. Social media users have a short attention span. If you want them to pay attention to your messages, they must be concise. The better you can get your point across in 140 characters.

In addition to this, you also have to make sure that you use easy language so that everyone can understand it. This applies to both written text as well as images or videos.

- **Message characteristics**

Beyond the idea of a channel, another way to influence media selection is to consider the characteristics of the message itself. The media choice decision may be influenced by factors that include:

Size. Big messages need big media. That's why the U.S. government uses airplane banners to communicate with Americans at public events like beach outings and sporting events. A similar tactic has been used in other countries.

In 1994, a French court sentenced an anti-Semitic political group called Ras front to pay a fine of \$22,000 or have its name and logo displayed on giant billboards across France for three months. The group refused to pay, so the billboards went up. They displayed the Ras front logo across Paris on giant electronic posters at the Gare du Nord train station and along major highways leading into the city.

A larger message might also need multiple media vehicles for effective delivery. For example, you might deliver a list of 100 ways to use your product by email. Still, you'll have more impact if you also make it available online as a downloadable PDF file or print it as a booklet that people can keep on hand at their desks as a reference tool.

- **Social context**

While the Magic Bullet Theory has many flaws, it is not completely without merit. The theory explains how mass media messages can influence people to change their opinions and behaviors in some situations. But the theory fails to account for the many different factors that affect whether an audience member will be persuaded by a message.

The Magic Bullet Theory left out the key factor is social context — or how and where media messages are consumed.

For example, if you see a political ad on TV or online, you probably think about it critically. You might disagree with the candidate's message or find it distasteful. You might even like some of what the candidate has to say but feel there are better candidates out there. But suppose your friends and family members tell you that they like a particular candidate. In that case, this social influence will probably outweigh any influence you get from a single commercial or post on social media.

When you see an ad for a product or service in isolation, you're likely to take it at face value and consider purchasing it if you like what's being offered. But when your friends share positive recommendations for products on social media, this recommendation is more likely to affect your decision to purchase any.

The Social Context is the key to success in any marketing that you do, so it is essential to understand how social context works and how you can use its secrets to make your business grow.

It is a critical aspect of marketing, but it's also something that people often struggle with. In this chapter, I'll explain the social context and how it affects your marketing, as well as why understanding it is so important.

***Digital Revolution and Participatory Culture.*** The digital revolution and the rise of participatory culture have blurred the line between producers and consumers, opening up a whole new world for marketers. Consumers are no longer limited to consuming pre-packaged messages. The Internet has opened the door to more interactive forms of media, allowing consumers to create content and share it with others.

The Internet has also allowed companies to be more transparent and communicate directly with consumers rather than through intermediaries like advertising agencies. This transparency has been driven by increased consumer skepticism of traditional marketing messages and a demand for greater authenticity in communications.

In this new participatory culture, consumers have access to a wide range of new media platforms that allow them to engage with others who share similar interests. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are popular because they allow interacting with others who share similar interests.

Online forums allow people to discuss their favorite subjects in more detail and connect with other like-minded individuals worldwide. Video-sharing platforms like YouTube allow users to create their content and share it with millions of other people worldwide.

These developments have not gone unnoticed by marketers. Many brands take advantage of these new platforms and engage with customers directly through social media. Social media is one of many ways marketers can leverage customer-generated content to build relationships with their target audience.

*The Loopholes of Magic Bullet Theory Covered by Social Media.* As we approach the end of this chapter, it's worth mentioning that some things can undermine the impact of your message, even if it does go viral. The first is that people sometimes have faulty memories.

For one thing, sometimes we don't remember things as well as we think we do. People might forget your message, or they might remember a "telephone game" version in which minor details have been changed when they tell someone else about it. This is helped because many messages around us compete for our attention and challenge our memory in real life.

This is even more true on social media, where messages are often shared and unshared so often that their original context gets lost. Even if it's a message you wrote yourself, you might not remember what you said or why you said it when people ask you about it later!

The second has to do with how people process information—or, more specifically, they don't always process information carefully. Think back to some examples of mass media campaigns we dissed earlier in this lesson. How did people respond to them?



## CHAPTER 6

# THE TWO-STEP THEORY

**W**e live in a world where anyone can create their media, and the old guard has very little control over the content created. In the past, the only way to distribute your message was through traditional media outlets like print, television, and radio. The problem with these legacy media channels is that they are expensive and difficult to access. This gave power to a select few who could afford to use these channels.

This was great for large corporations and organizations because they could reach millions of people with their message using a relatively small budget. However, it wasn't so great for everyone else since it was nearly impossible for them to get their message out there at all.

The two-step theory tells us that people can directly influence many other people. They are opinion leaders who communicate with the masses for us.

### **The Two-Step Theory of Mass Communications**

<sup>3</sup>In his book "Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics," Dennis L. Wilcox writes that for any given topic, the number of mass audience members (the ones we want to reach) is very high compared to the number of opinion leaders with access to these masses. In other words, there are not enough opinion leaders to go around.

Opinion leaders play a crucial role in shaping opinions and behaviors within their circle of influence. When they endorse a product or service, they pass their endorsement to their followers. The followers then adopt this new behavior or attitude because they trust their opinion leader.

***Spontaneous and Planned Behavior.*** The two-step theory of persuasion describes how people are influenced by their environment. As a result, they engage in spontaneous and planned behavior.

The first step of the two-step theory is when an individual receives information from the media and is persuaded to share it with someone in their

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<sup>3</sup> "Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics," Dennis L. Wilcox. Pg 39

circle of influence. People who are capable of sharing information with others are called opinion leaders. The second step is when the information from the opinion leader is used to form an opinion on a product or service that is then shared with others in the person's circle of influence. This process is known as the two-step flow of communication.

*Spontaneous Behavior:* Spontaneous behavior occurs when individuals behave in a way that is not planned and makes no sense to those around them. Spontaneous behavior can be triggered by many different activities, like listening to music, watching television, or reading a book. Spontaneous behavior can also be triggered by simply being exposed to a new idea without thinking about it for very long before acting upon it.

*Planned Behavior:* Planned behavior occurs when individuals have time to think about what they want to do or say before they act or spectating or speaking person's planned behaviors may be influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

An attitude is a person's evaluation of an object or issue based on personal beliefs and feelings. Attitudes are formed through experiences and are influenced by other individuals, beliefs, values, and morals.

Subjective norms are the perceptions of how others will react if a person engages in a particular behavior. For example, a person may believe that others will approve of them engaging in a behavior or disapprove of them engaging in a behavior.

The two-step theory is based on the idea that two types of thinking are involved in our actions—spontaneous and planned behavior. It explains that our spontaneous actions are often driven by our attitude and beliefs, while our intentions and social norms drive our planned actions.

*Methodological Issues in the Study of the Theory.* The theory study is a branch of psychology that seeks to understand how people think about, influence, and relate to other people. It has roots in both psychology and sociology. Social psychologists typically explain human behavior due to mental states and immediate social situations.

In addition, social psychologists study such phenomena as attitude formation and change, interpersonal attraction, small group processes, helping behavior, aggression and prejudice.

Social psychology is the scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behavior in social situations. Social psychologists study such topics as the influence of others on an individual's behavior (e.g., conformity, persuasion) and the formation of beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes about other people.

The two-step theory of mass communication has had an enormous influence on our understanding of the media, which is why it's essential to get it right.

In a nutshell, the theory says that mass media influences people through gatekeepers or opinion leaders — not directly through the mass media itself.

<sup>4</sup>Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld put forth the theory in their groundbreaking book *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*, published in 1955.

However, a few years later, Lazarsfeld gave an interview where he said that the theory wasn't really about what he and Katz thought at all — it was a summary of what they had found in their research.

***Predicting Planned Behavior.*** The most familiar theory of planned behavior is called the theory of planned behavior. Icek Ajzen developed the theory of planned behavior in 1985-1988. It is a theory that predicts behavior based on the intentions of an individual. Specifically, it predicts deliberate actions that are deliberate. The theory has been used to explain many different behaviors such as exercise, eating habits, and even shopping for cars.

Ajzen's theory is based on two premises. First, people have intentions to act. Second, their intentions are a good predictor of their actual behavior. The theory is broken down into two parts: an intention to act and a belief about the consequences of an action. These two factors are called beliefs because they are not necessarily true but rather what people think about the likelihood of something happening.

The first step in predicting planned behavior is to determine the intent of the individual to act. This is done by looking at their beliefs about performing the action and its consequences. Intentions are typically categorized into four groups:

- Strong Intentions
- Weak Intentions
- Moderate Intentions
- Non-Intentions

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<sup>4</sup>*Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*, Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld 1955. Pg 42

The theory of planned behavior is based on the idea that three kinds of considerations guide our behaviors:

- Attitudes (How much do I like or dislike this behavior?)
- Subjective norms (What do people important to me think about this behavior?)
- Perceived behavioral control (How able and willing am I to perform this behavior?)

Your perceived behavioral control is the most critical consideration for your ability to predict what you will do in a given situation. Perceived behavioral control refers to how easy or difficult it will be to perform the behavior and how much control you believe you have over it.

It's generally easier to predict behavior with little perceived behavioral control, but it's a lot harder when there is high perceived behavioral control.

For example, if you want to start running every morning, it's relatively easy for you to predict that you'll probably wake up late and hit snooze instead of going for a run on Monday morning. But let's say that in the evening on Sunday night, you plan out your entire week so that you'll get up at 5:30 am every day and go running before work. In this case, it would be harder for you to predict if you would follow through with your plan.

In 1957, psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed a new theory of human behavior and decision-making. These focused the Two-Step Theory-Predicting Planned Behavior on behavioral psychology and motivation — and the idea that people could be motivated by either positive or negative influences.

What does this have to do with marketing? Well, I think it strikes at the heart of what we're trying to accomplish in this day and age.

We're now firmly in the age of the social consumer, where people get their news and information from social media. And that means that brands need to learn how to communicate with them through socially-driven channels. But how do we best accomplish that?

The two-step theory has been around for decades, and it can be a valuable tool in our communication toolkit. It was first developed to help predict voting behavior but has since been adapted to explain human behaviors in other areas.

The key is to recognize that even if others influence someone about an issue, they may not act on that influence unless they have a reason to believe it's necessary or relevant to them.

In short, there are two steps involved:

- Step one: exposure – The person is exposed to the message or influence of others (opinions on social media or word of mouth from friends).
- Step two: behavioral intent – The person agrees with the message and wants to act on it (e.g., purchasing a product or sharing an article).

### **Constructing a Questionnaire to Measure Behavioral Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, and Control Beliefs**

In 1998, Ajzen proposed the theory of planned behavior (TPB). This theory focuses on the relationships between behavioral beliefs about performing the behavior, normative beliefs about what important others think about the behavior, control beliefs about factors that may facilitate or inhibit the performance of the behavior, and intention to perform the behavior.

TPB is one of the most widely used theories of human behavior. Since its proposal, TPB has stimulated theoretical development and empirical research worldwide. More than 800 empirical studies have examined TPB in various contexts and settings.

However, there are some problems with TPB. For instance, it is difficult to measure behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs separately because they are highly correlated in many situations. In this article, we propose a small change in TPB by adding another variable to solve this problem: subjective norm. Subjective norm is calculated as a combination of normative beliefs and perceived social pressure (control beliefs).

### **Constructing a Questionnaire to Measure Behavioral Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, and Control Beliefs**

We can measure behavioral beliefs using “This question will ask you what you think about (the behavior). What are the consequences of (the behavior)?”

We can measure behavioral beliefs using “This question will ask you what you think people’s attitudes are towards a particular behavior. We would like you to think about the people in your life who are important to you and imagine how they would react in each of the following situations:

- People who are important to me would approve if I bought a new pair of shoes for myself this month.

- People who are important to me would disapprove if I bought a new pair of shoes for myself this month.
- People who are important to me would not care if I bought a new pair of shoes for myself this month.”

Normative beliefs can be measured using “What do other people think (the target) ought to do? What do you think that other people like yourself think is the right thing to do?”

Normative beliefs can be measured using the following questions:

- My family members/friends/colleagues (name) will think that I should buy a new pair of shoes for myself this month.
- My family members/friends/colleagues (name) will think that I should not buy a new pair of shoes for myself this month.

Control beliefs can be measured using “How easy or difficult is it for you to act? Do you have any problems in doing (the behavior)? Would it be easy or difficult for you to do this in the next two weeks?”

### **Attitude–Behavior Consistency Over Time and Across Situations**

The two-step flow of communication states that much of the information in mass media messages pass through opinion leaders and the general public. Opinion leaders, or “influentials,” are people with the power to influence others’ attitudes and behaviors because others hold them in high regard.

The findings concerning the characteristic of attitude-behavior consistency over time also require some elaboration. The results clearly show that the two-step model offers a better explanation of attitude-behavior consistency than the theory of reasoned action.

In the study, the interest is in the extent to which attitudes are consistent across situations. Attitudes are not consistent when a single measure of behavior is used but when global behavior measures are used. Specifically, the estimates between attitudes and behavior showed quite low correlations when using a single measure of behavior but relatively high correlations when using a global measure of behavior.

These findings indicate a relationship between attitudes and global behavior measures over time and across situations. Still, there is no relationship between attitudes and single behavior measures over time or across situations. In other

words, attitudes do not consistently influence behaviors in particular situations, but they consistently influence global behaviors over time and across situations.

### **Outcomes of Planned Behavior Applying the TPB in Interventions**

The two-step flow theory of mass communication says that most people form their opinions under the influence of opinion leaders, influenced by the mass media. According to this theory, the direct effects of media messages on most individuals are modest.

Opinion leaders are seen as active information seekers heavier than average media users and more sophisticated media. These leaders are relatively independent thinkers who tend to be more educated, politically concerned and involved, and have greater self-esteem than others. Opinion leaders tend to have more social interaction and have greater persuasive powers with members of their reference groups.

Mass media can indirectly change public opinion because it influences the opinion leaders, who influence the less active masses. Opinion leaders get their information from various sources, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television news programs, Internet discussion groups, and other conversations with members of their reference groups.

These sources help them form opinions on issues that range from politics to fashion to sports to technology. Many people acquire information informally through these opinion leaders rather than directly from mass media or traditional sources such as school or work. The two-step flow model highlights the importance of interpersonal communication in affecting public opinion.

As social media has become more prevalent, public relations professionals must employ various strategies to connect with their audiences. This chapter gave several examples of how mass media and social media are used in tandem to sell products and services and persuade people to act.

The two-step flow model is one theory that explains how messages get transmitted through society. It suggests that mass media creates opinions in the masses, disseminated through interpersonal communications. The introduction of social media has disrupted this process because now everyone can be a mass medium. In other words, they can reach thousands of people by simply posting online.

To reach their audiences, public relations professionals must now adapt to the new ways people communicate online. This includes participating in social conversations and giving away content for free to persuade people to buy their products or services.



## CHAPTER 7

# THE TWO-STEP THEORY AS SEEN IN SOCIAL MEDIA

When it comes to social media and building relationships, there's a secret that many people don't know about — but are probably ready to hear. It isn't particularly new information or revolutionary; this is the core concept behind all relationship-building. The secret? It's called the two-step theory.

Social media sites are ideal two-step theory environments. These sites make it easy for people to interact through computers. Most social media sites have some type of chat function that allows people to send messages back and forth. Some sites, like Facebook, let people share photos and videos on their profiles.

Many social media websites also allow you to create lists of friends or followers. Using the two-step theory, an individual will create a profile with content that is carefully calculated to be attractive to others.

If you're trying to make new friends on a social media site, you might post pictures of your dog or cat or a video showing off your musical talents. You might even post a clever joke or quote a favorite song lyric on your profile page. All of these things are designed to get other people interested in you by giving them a little peek into what makes you special.

Once you've attracted someone's attention, they may decide they'd like to know more about you. That person would then send you an e-mail message or use the social media site's chat function to talk with you. This is the second step of the two-step theory — attracting someone's

Social media is a great place to showcase your brand.

It's an efficient means of getting your word out to influencers and then enabling them to pass it on to others in the Two-Step Flow of Communication Model.

Use social media to disseminate information about your product or service indirectly. You may adapt the Two-Step Flow of Communication Model to social

media in many aspects. Companies may approach customers directly via their accounts, but this isn't always successful since consumers are mostly there to interact with their friends and family. The only exception would be if you were a person or corporation with a massive following of your own, in which case you could reach out to followers directly via your profile updates and tweets.

It's more probable that you'll want to utilize social media to disseminate information about your product or service in an indirect manner. You do this by forming connections with influencers who have large followings of their own and sharing material that they deem interesting or relevant with their audiences. Social networking is the primary source of traffic, leads, and sales for several companies.

Using the two-step flow theory in social media marketing helps you connect with influencers who will help promote your goods (and help accelerate those sales).

What's the greatest part? Influencer marketing is more accessible than ever before. You can find influencers in your sector and examine their following size, engagement rate, and frequency of posting using tools like BuzzSumo, Klear, and Twtrland.

You may also use tools like Followerwonk to examine a user's Twitter audience based on geography, profile, and social authority. And, using a service like GroupHigh, you can arrange influencers based on reach and engagement data to locate the most influential people in your business.

Once you've found influencers that fit your brand's identity, contact them through email or social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook. Ask for an introduction if you have a good connection with an influencer who knows others who may be a good match for your campaign.

*Social Media Allows You to Connect With People in a More Personal Way.* Have you ever wondered why so many people are captivated by social media? It's not only that individuals want to contact their friends and relatives. It's because social media enables you to engage with people more personally.

It's the same reason why so many people like watching TV programs. The characters in television programs make us feel as though we know them. We often feel they are our pals – or even family members.

This is known as the two-step theory in marketing. According to the principle, the greatest method to persuade someone to purchase your goods is to make them feel like they know and trust you.

When it comes to selling online, the two-step principle is extremely significant. People are less likely to trust you if they can't see your face or hear

your voice. This implies you must give them a cause to trust in you and what you have to offer.

Social media allows you to engage with people on a more intimate level. It provides a platform for you to express yourself and share information that is important to you. Previously, media was more of a “broadcast” manner. Newspapers, radio, and television were all one-way communication mediums.

The two-step idea holds that the media transmits a message, and it is then up to the audience to receive that message. In other words, unless someone reacts to the broadcasted message, there is no contact between the two. The content makers may disseminate as much material as they wish and never know whether or not anybody heard it.

Social media transforms this information-broadcasting idea into a discussion rather than a one-sided exchange. Users on social media may communicate with one another via discussion threads, comments, likes, retweets, etc. This concept of social media as a discussion has been around for a long time and is still relevant today.

*Social Media Isn't Just a Place; It's a Way of Interacting With Customers.* Understanding the purpose of social media for companies is the first step. It's an excellent platform for cultivating connections with both consumers and prospects. You may use social media to initiate or strengthen a connection. It's a terrific method to meet new people, but you can also use it to stay in contact with old coworkers, acquaintances, and business partners.

In the context of sales, social networking offers a one-of-a-kind chance for salespeople to create connections with consumers before they even know who they are. In today's busy environment, a personal connection through social media may be a powerful method to break down boundaries, create rapport, and earn trust - all of which are critical elements for capturing a prospect's attention.

The two-step hypothesis of social media is founded on the premise that, unlike conventional media, online communication is not a one-way highway. Instead, it's a two-way street. Consumers like this form of engagement and will seek out firms who provide it:

Social media is a fantastic method to initiate interactions with consumers, but it's also a terrific way to enhance their experience after they've purchased something. You may use social media to engage with consumers when they have a problem or a query, but you can also use it to provide information and updates in advance. This may include things like:

Providing information on a product, such as its present state (i.e., whether it is in stock or not), invoices and shipping alerts are sent, or updates on a product

or service. The most effective approach to do so is via social media. Here's how the two-step theory works in this case:

- Consumers use social media to learn about goods and services. They want to speak with you before making a purchase.
- The interaction itself influences their purchase choices. It opens the door to sales and recommendations.

The Two-Step Theory refers to how information and messages are spread through certain media. The theory was first introduced by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) as part of their studies on the 1940 presidential campaign.

The theory is based on interpersonal communications within a group or community. It proposes that people receive information from media sources and other external sources. They often rely on interpersonal communication with friends and family members to validate the information they have received. This means that there are two steps involved in this process:

- First Step: Friends, family members, or other personal contacts provide you with information and ideas.
- Second Step: You then turn to media sources for more information about these ideas.

In other words, you employ interpersonal interactions to validate mass media messaging. It indicates that if your social media postings are uninteresting, users will not share them with their peers.

However, if your writings are fantastic and people like them, they will want to share them. One of the most common errors companies make is believing that merely being on social media would increase the number of people who like their posts.

That isn't how it works. According to the Two-Step Theory, mass media can indirectly affect public opinion by changing the views of an "intervening" or "opinion leader" group of individuals.

While there is no obvious difference between these 'opinion leaders' and how they affect their peers, research has revealed that certain individuals are more influential than others. These folks are more likely to be:

- Social butterflies have extensive social networks and are pretty active online (e.g., Facebook users)

- Influential Twitter users have many followers, tweets and retweets, and a high Klout score.
- Bloggers have a great number of subscribers and commentators on their sites.

The Two-step Theory tells us that people want to connect with a person before knowing them or following them. As an entrepreneur, you need to understand how we are wired and play by our rules.

- You need to establish yourself as a trusted authority in your market, so you can build a following of raving fans that will buy anything you have to offer.
- You need to stop selling. Instead, focus on giving value. Then ask for the sale when you know they are ready to buy.

People like to see real interactions between real people and brands. If you look at any of the most popular social media accounts, you will see pictures and videos of people talking to each other in real life, not just on the internet. This is because people want to feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

Your marketing strategy must consider this when promoting your business on social media. You can use this theory by posting pictures or videos of yourself interacting with customers in real-life situations. This could include images from your store, events where people interact with you, or even a picture from lunch with an employee.

You can also use this theory by posting videos that show customers using your products. People don't just want to know how awesome your product is; they also want to see it in action. You can show off your personality, be funny, ask questions, and set up opportunities for feedback and interaction.

**Be Funny.** People like funny content because it makes them feel good. They're more likely to share content that makes them laugh with their friends, family, or co-workers – which means you get a bigger reach for your brand. In addition, people remember funny content better than boring content.

**Ask Questions & Seek Feedback from Your Audience.** You can generate engagement on social media by asking questions, seeking feedback, or setting up polls or contests that encourage people to interact with your brand on social media.

For example, you can ask questions like “How often do you use our software?” or “What type of posts would you like to see more of?” **Show Off Your Personality & Have Fun with Social Media!**

Social media is one of the most prominent marketing tools you can use to grow your business. However, it's also one of the hardest tools to master. Much like actual social "media" (e.g., parties, groups, and other gatherings), there are rules that apply to how you should behave in public spaces to make a good impression on others.

The hard part about using social media for business is that you need to balance the needs of your business with the needs of your audience. For example, you may want to tell your audience about an upcoming sale or promotion you're running, but if this is all you ever talk about, it's going to get boring very quickly.

Instead, a good strategy would be to create content that balances promotional content and more general messaging that appeals to your target audience.

It would help if you remembered that people respond better to social media when relevant and relatable content. For example, if you own a bakery and post a picture of a piece of cake on Instagram with just a caption saying "yum!" you're probably not going to get much engagement on that post.

## CHAPTER 8

# THE USES & GRATIFICATION THEORY

The Uses & Gratification Theory is why people use a particular social media platform based on their motivations. The theory of uses and gratifications, which has been around since the 1940s, is based on the idea that media audiences are not passive. Instead, they make conscious choices about when and how to engage with news outlets and media platforms to “get something out of it.”

In other words, individuals use the media for a particular “gratification” — be that social interaction, entertainment, or information gathering. Although often overlooked in favor of newer theories such as the spiral of silence, this theory has found some success in illuminating how people engage with new media — particularly in the context of social networks.

The theory has been used to predict everything from attitudes towards Facebook to political participation. It is also useful because you can apply it to any media platform, including new, constantly emerging ones.

### **What is the Uses & Gratification Theory?**

The Uses & Gratification Theory actively seeks out media to satisfy specific needs. In other words, they use the media to gratify needs. This is different from the hypodermic needle model, which stated that the audiences were passive receivers of media messages and could be easily influenced by them.

The theory also holds that if a media satisfies certain needs of an individual, they will keep using it and vice versa. The theory was developed in the 1940s but got its impetus after the Second World War when researchers started looking for alternatives to the hypodermic needle model, which had become very popular then.

You can apply the Uses & Gratification Theory to any medium, including social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as electronic media like television and radio.

***How Does This Relate to Social Media?*** The Uses and Gratification Theory was an alternative approach to understanding why we (people) use media. This theory suggests that the audience is an active creator of the meaning of a media message rather than a passive recipient (the traditional understanding of a mass communication audience).

As you might have guessed, this theory has been widely adopted by researchers studying social media and social networking. If you think about it, most of us are active users of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, so it makes sense that we'd also be active creators of our own online identities and interpretations of what we see.

Facebook is an excellent example of how the U&G theory applies to media. The website itself is a tool utilized by people with different needs. Some may use Facebook to contact family, while others may use it to catch up on the latest news.

Other users find comfort in using Facebook as an outlet for their expressions and thoughts. But, what is to say that these uses are not co-mingling? You can use them simultaneously without much thought on the user's part. This goes back to rationales counteracting one another and the need for gratification being achieved all at once.

### ● **The Uses & Gratification Perspective**

The uses and gratification (U&G) viewpoint investigate how individuals utilize media to meet their wants or desires. This method varies from the hypodermic needle model in that it does not presume a direct causal relationship between media and its influence on an audience.

The U&G viewpoint argues that individuals are active media consumers who choose when and where to watch television, listen to the radio, or browse the Internet. This idea posits that people are self-aware and skilled at deciding which media to utilize and when. In other words, they need what they want to meet, know what medium will help them meet that need, and utilize that medium in a precise manner to meet that need.

For example, if you want to watch a movie, you have various alternatives, including TV, internet streaming services (such as Netflix), movie theaters, etc. You choose what you utilize depending on your current needs (in most cases). If you want to watch a drama, you're more likely to go to Netflix than YouTube. However, if you're looking for fresh music videos, you'll most certainly wind yourself on YouTube.

While this may seem evident in today's world of many platforms and gadgets, it wasn't always the case. There were just two channels on TV 50 years ago – maybe three if you had a large family.

- **Uses and Gratifications of Facebook**

Facebook is one of the many social networking sites (SNS) growing rapidly. Unlike previous computer-mediated communication tools, such as chat rooms and email, SNS allow for rapid and continuous interaction among users.

The Uses & Gratification Theory (U&G) suggests that people use media to fulfill their needs. According to this theory, there are four main reasons why people use social media:

- **Entertainment:**

According to researchers like Katz, people use social media for amusement and pleasure. Users are looking for a distraction from their work-life or something that will bring them joy.

- **Information:** People use social media as a news source or learn about certain topics.
- **Social Interaction:** People use social media to connect with others, whether family, friends, or strangers who share the same interests.
- **Social Identity:** People want to know what other people think of them or want to impact their opinions and thoughts on certain topics.
- **Uses and Gratifications of Online Dating:** When it comes to the Uses and Gratifications of Online Dating, individuals utilize it for several reasons. It is crucial to remember that these may not be why they utilize an online dating service.

According to the uses and satisfaction hypothesis, individuals deliberately seek media to meet certain needs. In the case of online dating, users actively seek possible partners, and there are various methods they might use to do so.

**One method is to go browsing.** Users explore profiles in online dating to locate suitable mates with whom to make contact. They look for information about these possible partners in their profile descriptions and may or may not contact them based only on this information (i.e., without exploring the person's picture gallery).

Another method is to **look for certain characteristics in a mate that users find attractive**. This form of search is known as attribute matching, and it relates to the process through which users look for profiles based on predefined criteria (e.g., age range, height range, religion, location, etc.). Once they've found possible mates via attribute matching, they may go through their profiles in further depth.

Why do individuals utilize online dating services? One among them was the desire to be physically appealing. People are attracted to physically appealing people.

Another motive to use an online dating service is to validate oneself. People often utilize online dating services to legitimize their connection with another person. This is particularly true if they have been in a relationship for a while and have struggled to keep it going.

Social status, political ideals, and religious beliefs are other motives. Some individuals may join a particular organization based on political or religious convictions, influencing their profile images and descriptions.

The Theory of Uses and Gratifications may also help you understand why individuals use various websites and what drives them to do so. You will often discover that a particular website appeals to a specific demographic or age range, which may help you understand what inspires that population to utilize that website.

### ● **Using the Internet for Dating, Friends, and Fun**

The Internet has evolved into a valuable resource for locating a partner. The Internet is handy because it enables users to connect with others who share their interests.

Friendships may be maintained on the Internet by utilizing social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. The more varied a person's buddy circle is in terms of color, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, the more likely they are to utilize the Internet to keep those ties alive.

The Active Audience Theory is consistent with the notion that individuals seek out what they want from the media.

The Uses and Gratification Theory states that people use media for four reasons:

- to escape reality
- to be informed about the reality

- to create our own opinions
- for social interaction

Some of the most popular activities on the Internet are dating, making friends, and having fun. Several social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter allow you to connect with friends you already know and make new friends.

These sites also serve as a way to stay in touch with your family members who live far away. Many dating sites like eHarmony and Match are also used to meet potential romantic partners.

*What Does This Mean for Us Today?* Thanks to the internet, the amount of information we have access to is huge. This makes it easy to find something that helps fulfill our needs. But it also means that there are many more distractions around us than before.

If you're trying to write a blog post, but you keep getting distracted by Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram - you might want to stop using them for a while. Or install an app that disables your internet connection after a certain time.

Maybe it's not your fault at all! Maybe your friends are constantly making plans with you, and you can't say no. If that's the case, make sure they know how important it is for you to be home and work on your blog. The uses and gratification theory is a potent tool if used correctly.

**The Downfall of Mass Media Is Due to the Rise of Social Media.** It is now easier than ever for people to connect and share information. The uses and gratification theory explains why this might be happening.

The theory states that people have needs and use the mass media to fulfill them. People know what they're looking for, and they're not spending their time on something that doesn't satisfy them. If a person wants to be entertained, a soap opera might fulfill that need. And if someone wants to research a topic, then an academic journal will do the trick.

Social media allows users to create their own media experience and find content that satisfies their needs at any given moment. In some ways, it's like having all the traditional media options available within one device. Users can watch videos, read articles, listen to music or participate in a discussion forum. This level of versatility allows social media users to design their own experience and get exactly what they want out of it.

While this trend has been rising for several years, some indications indicate that social media is reaching its peak. There are now more ways than ever for people to connect online — but that's also making it difficult for social networks to distinguish them.

The uses and gratification theory is an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. This theory looks at what people do with media rather than media effects.

The theory examines how audiences select and use media to satisfy their needs. This theory assumes that audiences are active in their media use, as they seek out specific types of content to satisfy specific needs.

## CHAPTER 9

# SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE USES & GRATIFICATION THEORY

**S**ocial Media has played a big role in the use and gratifications study. This has had a huge impact on how each industry can communicate with its consumers. The social media channels that are most popular have changed the way we communicate. These changes are seen in the use and gratification study as well.

Through dozens of studies, the Uses and Gratifications Theory has been applied to social media. The two most common reasons people use social media are to pass the time and connect with others. Other common reasons include:

- To find out what is happening in the world
- To be entertained
- To feel better about themselves
- To feel worse about themselves
- To relax or relieve boredom

Can you ever imagine how people live without social media? Before social media, if people wanted to keep in touch with their friends or family, they wrote letters or called them. If people want to find new friends, they can only search for them in the offline world, such as schools, workplaces, or other places to meet strangers.

It is a bit challenging for people to make new friends and find the information they need. However, it is much easier for us to use social media and get what we want because it can save time and energy.

According to Luey (2008), “the uses and gratification theory suggests that people actively choose and use mass media to get certain gratifications.” Therefore, different people may have different usages of social media, varying from person to person.

Some people may use social media because they want to be more popular on the Internet, while others may use it just because they want to find new friends. Therefore, we need to know why people use social media to decide what content should be posted to get more likes and followers on our social websites.

### **Social Media Is Becoming an Increasingly Important Part of Our Lives**

Social media is becoming an increasingly important part of our lives. As a result, it becomes necessary to examine how social media affects how we behave and use it.

The uses and gratifications theory (U&G) is one of several theories that attempt to explain our need for media. U&G is critical of the traditional media effects model because it assumes direct, observable relationships between exposure to media and particular effects on audiences. U&G contends that this traditional approach is too simplistic and does not adequately describe the complex behaviors and motivations behind various kinds of media.

The main idea behind U&G is that people have goals or needs, which can be satisfied by socializing with others or by receiving information from various types of media. People use different media types to satisfy their needs and goals. The theory has been used to study a wide range of different kinds of communication and media, but, until recently, it had not been applied to social media.

A recent study conducted by researchers at West Virginia University examined the relationship between certain personality traits and motives for using Facebook. The study found that extroverts tended to use Facebook to connect with friends, while those who were

### **Social Media Can Be Abused and Used in Harmful Ways**

Social Media is a part of everyday life and has been woven into the fabric of society. It's hard to imagine a day without your favorite sites and apps. We use them for everything from sharing photos with our family and friends to posting status updates about the most recent happenings in our life.

But social media can also be abused and used in harmful ways. When you sign up for an account with any social site, you have to agree to their terms of service (TOS), which are the ground rules that govern that site's community. If you violate those terms, your account could be suspended or even deleted.

Unfortunately, people don't always follow these rules, and others are sometimes mistakenly banned for innocent violations or errors.

## Theoretical Background

The theoretical background of the Uses & Gratifications theory is that people need to gratify, and they will use the media to do so. The theory was created by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch. A brand community is an online community around a brand or product.

For example, there are multiple online communities for the Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360, and Playstation 3. Users of these platforms utilize social media to find out about new games for their system and connect with other gamers with the same platform as them.

A communication theory holds that audiences use the media for personal enjoyment and satisfaction. The uses and gratification theory focuses on consumers' active roles in using mass media rather than focusing on the effects of mass media.

The origins of U&G theory can be traced back to Blumer's symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes that people act according to how they perceive reality. At the same time, media effects research suggests that the media shape people's U&G; U&G suggests that people choose their own goals and select media content based on those goals.

The users' needs are fulfilled by consuming content offered by different media types. In this way, consumption patterns reflect an individual's needs. There are four main assumptions underlying this theory:

- **Active Audience**-People pick and choose what they watch on television. People are not passive sponges who just soak up whatever the media feeds them. They actively select their media sources and use their media in different ways.
- **Limited Time and Resources**-The amount of time and resources that people have are limited, so they have to choose how they will spend their time, money, and energy.
- **Socialization**-People learn the uses of the media from other people, especially those who are close to them in age and status. Young people may learn about new websites from older siblings or parents, for example. Or a colleague at work may tell you about a cool website that you didn't know about that helps you do your job more efficiently.
- **Diverse Media Environment**-As the number of media outlets has grown, people have more options for fulfilling their needs or wants, which means that each medium must compete with other sources for audience members' attention

## Technical Background

Social media is a platform for people to communicate and share their thoughts with others. But this platform is not entirely new to the people. Social media has been around for many years in the form of 'Message Board' and 'Chat Room.' The only difference between social media and message boards is that social media provides more user choices. For example, Facebook provides options for users to share videos, photos, and articles with other users.

In addition, there are differences between social media and chat rooms. Chat rooms enable communication in real-time, while social media does not enable real-time communication because users can only view the information that has been posted through their devices by other users. Still, they will not know whether the post is made when using their devices unless they use their devices simultaneously as the person posting the information on social media (Kjava, Ellis & Coulson, 2012).

## Empirical Studies to Support the Uses and Gratifications Theory in Social Media

A growing body of research has examined the uses and gratifications theory in the context of social media. Based on the review of existing literature, it appears that this theory appears to help predict online behavior.

Empirical studies in this area have provided evidence supporting three of the theory's four core propositions. Users do select media based on their motives. To use media to gratify those motives, they can perceive differences between media alternatives.

However, there has been little evidence that users can discriminate between gratifications; for example, people may use Facebook for entertainment and information. In short, many social media users may have multiple motivations for using a particular medium; thus, it may be difficult to isolate a singular motive from other associated motives (Raney & Bryant 2006).

Social media has been a source of great interest and research in recent years, particularly with the emergence of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

It is essential to understand how social media fills a social need for users. Many scholars have studied this topic over the years, with one of the earliest theories being the <sup>5</sup>Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz et al., 1974). This theory suggests that individuals use mass media to fulfill specific needs.

The influence of social media on people has been studied from many different perspectives. Much of the existing literature focuses on how individuals react to the information they receive through social media outlets (e.g., Yan & Zhang, 2015). However, there is also a growing body of research on how individuals use social media (e.g., Towler & Hawkins, 2011).

<sup>6</sup>Lin, Lu, and Shih (2011) conducted an example of this type of research, who examined why people use social networking sites in Taiwan. Their results indicated that both entertainment- and relationship-related motives are essential factors in using these sites. Another study found that college students used social network sites for three main reasons: gathering information about others, keeping in touch with friends, and entertainment purposes (Bargh & McKenna).



## CHAPTER 10

# MULTI-STEP FLOW THEORY AS SEEN IN MASS MEDIA

**H**ave you ever heard of multi-step flow theory? If you've ever stopped to read the directions first before beginning a project, you can thank multi-step flow theory. Multi-step flow theory is a way to represent complex processes as a series of steps that can be broken down and analyzed.

Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet founded the multi-step flow theory. The theory states that mass media does not directly influence people but instead influences opinion leaders. These leaders then influence others through face-to-face contact or social interaction. This process is usually referred to as "word of mouth" and can be seen in many forms of mass media today.

The multi-step flow theory is heavily based on two-step flows of communication. In a two-step flow, the theory suggests that messages are received from mass media by opinion leaders who then pass on to others in their social circle. However, regarding where there are multiple "steps" of opinion leaders who receive information and pass it along to other social circle members in a multi-step flow.

This process is fundamental to understand when looking at politics and social activism because you can use the process for both positive and negative results. For example, this process was very apparent in the 2016 election for President, where the opinions of celebrities and well-known public figures had a significant effect on voters' views. The same can be said about many other controversies, such as school shootings.

### **Flow Theory**

Flow theory, also known as the theory of optimal experience, is the psychological concept that describes how people achieve a state of total mental absorption in an activity. Developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, flow theory suggests that people are happiest when fully engaged in a challenging workout that requires their full attention.

The flow state was defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as “being entirely absorbed in an activity for its own sake. The ego dissolves. Time flies by. Like performing jazz, every action, movement, and idea is inextricably linked to the one before it. Your entire existence is participating, and you’re making the most of your abilities.”

The psychology of flow has been studied in many contexts since it was first introduced. While commonly associated with work or hobbies that require intense focus and concentration, flow can occur whenever a person becomes absorbed in a task or activity.

Flow theory is a concept developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Csikszentmihalyi describes eight elements that are present when a person enters into a state of flow:

- Complete concentration on the task at hand  
Clarity of objectives and rewards, as well as rapid feedback  
Time transformation (speeding up/slowing down)  
The experience is satisfying for its own sake, not for any other reason.  
Effortlessness and comfort  
There is a good blend of challenge and expertise.
- Actions and consciousness are fused, and self-conscious ruminating is eliminated.
- Distractions are excluded from consciousness.

One of the key elements of flow theory is that difficulty and complexity should rise with a player’s growing mastery. This is fundamental to game design, and it’s also something that you can teach to writers.

Most stories are more accessible to follow than games: you don’t have to understand reading before reading simple sentences. However, there is a complex curve to most stories. Readers start reading simple words and phrases, then move on to more complex sentences, paragraphs, and chapters. It’s not always a linear increase: occasionally, they run into a challenge they can’t handle, like an archaic word or a complex concept, and they may need to stop and look up a definition or ask someone for help. But as long as the reader keeps getting better at reading, they keep going deeper into the story.

This is the same way it works with games: players get better over time at navigating challenges, and eventually, they learn enough skills to overcome those challenges.

The problem with most media is that they don't consider this. If we watch a superhero movie from the 1990s like *Batman Returns* (1992), we see some pretty primitive editing techniques — lots of closes.

### **Multi-step Flow Theory**

The next theory we are going to explore is the multi-step flow theory. This is one of the oldest models, and Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet founded it in 1948. It's important to note that they developed this theory before social media existed and, for this reason, applies more so to traditional media than digital media.

The theory focuses on how information flows through social networks and who is involved in this process.

This theory includes 3 main aspects:

- The gatekeepers are the people that have access to information, but they do not share this information with others.
- Opinion leaders significantly impact the theory of others because they share their opinions and trust them and value their ideas.
- Mass media focuses on providing different types of information for the public, but people can agree or disagree with it.

The multi-step flow theory states that people go through steps when receiving information from mass media. The first step is exposure, which means that you are exposed to the message in some way, shape, or form.

The second step is attention, where you pay attention to what you are seeing and reading. The third step is comprehension, which is where you understand the message.

The fourth step is yielding, where you take action on what you have read or seen in some way, form, or shape, and then finally, the fifth step is integration, which means that your actions become part of your daily lives in some way, shape or form.

### **Columbia University Study**

In a famous Columbia University study, Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues researched how people made choices regarding the 1940 presidential election. The researchers interviewed voters in Erie County, Ohio, on their way to vote.

They found that many people were unaware of their decision to vote for a particular candidate until they were actually in the voting booth. Their votes

were determined by factors such as whether they had spoken with friends or family members who favored a particular candidate or heard a campaign speech from a candidate. Lazarsfeld concluded that most voters did not have strong feelings about either candidate.

They also reflected the lack of strong feelings about candidates in the small percentage of voters discussing specific issues about either party's platform. Most voters' opinions about candidates and parties came from conversations with others. The research study also found that people tended to talk about politics with friends and family who shared their views.

Lazarsfeld described this process as multi-step flow theory, where most of the "steps" involved talking with other people. He believed that mass media messages filtered through influential opinion leaders, who communicated those messages to others in smaller groups. The factors that determined someone's political leanings were directly related to how much they heard from others rather than how much they watched television

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Multi-step Flow Theory**

Advocates of the multi-step flow theory argue that contrary to the hypodermic needle theory, the media does not directly influence its audience. Rather, they believe that two types of intermediaries, opinion leaders and change agents, mediate between the media and its audience.

Opinion leaders are influential people who have a high level of interest in public affairs and take it upon themselves to share the news with their local group members and friends. With more active media usage, opinion leaders tend to be more informed and initiate discussions about new ideas with others. Opinion leaders are thought to represent about 10 percent of any population change agent who attempts to improve the quality of life for others by exposing them to new ideas. Change agents use interpersonal communication and mass media sources to motivate those around them. For example, suppose a change agent believes that a specific book or movie will benefit their social group (e.g., family). In that case, they might try to influence their family members by encouraging them to read or see it.

Multi-step flow theory was a new way of looking at mass media influence. There are three main elements of this theory:

1. Mass media primarily influence opinion leaders, who influence their social networks.

2. People in a social network may have different levels of media use and different levels of trust in an opinion leader.
3. The understanding and interpretation of media content are affected by the person's needs, values, and interests.

It's important to note that multi-step flow theory is not about how mass media influence prominent people. Instead, it focuses on how small groups receive information from the mass media and then decide what to do with it.

The theory suggests that media influences are not uniform across all members of an audience. It posits that people are influenced by their peers and friends, who mass media have influenced. The hypodermic needle or magic bullet theories suggest a two-step flow of communication rather than the one-step flow.

Strengths:

- Rejects the idea that media has a direct effect on behavior
- Relates to other theories of persuasion, such as social learning theory which suggests behavior is learned through observation and imitation

Weaknesses:

- Ignores the influence of family or immediate community in influencing behavior
- It does not take into account the cognitive process of individuals when evaluating messages

The mass media is a significant channel in the diffusion of the innovation process. The multi-step flow theory may have originated before the advent of television, but it is alive and well in the media today.

In the context of mass communication, there are two essential components to this theory:

- (1) the relationship between the content of a message and the person who receives it and
- (2) the role that opinion leaders play in this relationship.

The first component relates to what has become known as agenda-setting. When we talk about an issue repeatedly, it becomes more important to us. We don't

necessarily want to discuss something more than anything else; we focus on whatever is continually brought to our attention.

The second component of this theory deals with how people spread information through interpersonal communication. For example, you might hear about a new movie from a friend (who heard about it from their friend). This spreading information is called word-of-mouth marketing and can be very influential.

It is crucial to remember that although most of us may never experience the full complexity of this process as a participant, we are still exposed to it when we consume mass media content. This means that we, too, are involved in this flow process.

However, it is not the only channel through which the flow process can operate. By understanding how multi-step flow theory works in media, you will see how it influences your behavior when consuming other types of content such as blogs, books, or social media posts.

## CHAPTER 11

# CULTIVATION THEORY AS DEPICTED IN TODAY'S SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD

**M**illennials and Generation Z have grown up in a visual world where they are surrounded by the rapid advancement of technology and social media. How we use social media has changed over the years.

It was primarily platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Now there's Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc. This brings about my main topic: Cultivation Theory as Depicted in Today's Social Media World.

### **What is Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theory (CT) is a social theory that examines the long-term effects of television on viewers. CT looks at how frequently people view televised media (e.g., TV or movies), how much time they spend watching it, and what types of things they are watching. As a result, CT seeks to explain how viewing entertainment media affects or cultivates perceptions among its audience about real life, including their attitudes about themselves and others.

The theory was developed in 1972 by George Gerbner, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Dean Emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communication.

Cultivation Theory is defined as:

A communication theory that explains the relationship between exposure to mass media and perceptions of reality, proposing that heavy exposure to television results in an increased belief that the world portrayed on television is an accurate reflection of reality; also called cultivation hypothesis.

Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner and later expanded upon with Larry Gross. It proposes that the media influence how we view the world we consume. The media is a tool to convey messages and stories to a large audience every day.

According to cultivation theory, people who consume more media will have a skewed view of the world, known as cultivation. This idea is based on two premises:

The media offers a distorted picture of the world (the “mean world syndrome”). Viewers believe that this picture of reality is accurate because they see it so often in the media.

This theory is particularly relevant to social media, where users can create their reality through what they choose to share online. You may only see your friends’ best moments but assume that everyone else’s life is as good as theirs. This way of thinking can make you dissatisfied with your own life and lead to envy.

Cultivation theory has been used in news, video games, and advertising. However, it hasn’t been widely applied to social media use yet. Social media platforms have become a significant source of news and information for many users, making it possible.

George Gerbner developed cultivation theory. He believed that the more time a person spent on television, the more likely they believed linkages reflected society. He coined the <sup>7</sup>Mean World Syndrome. This meant that people would feel the world was a meaner and darker place because of what was portrayed (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980).

Many other researchers have discussed the importance of cultivation theory and how you can apply it to other media outlets. Social media allows users to connect with people worldwide, but at what cost? In today’s society, social media is inescapable, but does it affect people negatively?

As previously mentioned, cultivation theory is based on the idea that watching too much television can alter people’s perception of reality and make them feel as if the world is a worse place because of all of the negative imagery that they have been exposed to (Gerbner et al., 1980). In today’s society, we are consumed with social media. Social media is everywhere; our cells.

### **How Does the Cultivation Theory Apply to Today’s Social Media World**

The world is changing, and it’s becoming increasingly hard to know what is true and what is not. The media has a significant influence on how we look at life and how we think. The cultivation theory is a communication theory first introduced by George Gerbner in the 1970s that states that heavy television viewing has a cultivation effect on its viewers.

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<sup>7</sup> *Mean World Syndrome*. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980. Pg 82

Cultivation theory examines how long-term exposure to television content can affect the perceptions of reality for viewers. It argues that people who spend a lot of time watching television have their perceptions skewed because they see the world through the lens of what they learn from TV.

The cultivation theory states that the more time people spend “living” in the television world, the more likely they will believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on television. This effect is known as the mean world syndrome.

The main issue with this theory is that it does not consider individual differences between viewers. The theory predicts that all viewers who watch the same television implementing a larger population will interpret content differently, but this is not necessarily true.

The theory also assumes that all television content influences viewers in the same way, regardless of genre and content. However, research has shown that people who watch many news and crime shows may be more likely to view society as violent and dangerous. In contrast, those who watch comedies and soap operas may have a different perception of reality.

### **Impact of Cultivation Theory on the Way We Live Our Lives**

We're accustomed to thinking of the media as just a source of entertainment or information. But according to cultivation theory, the media may also play a subtle yet pervasive role in shaping our beliefs and behaviors.

The primary goal of television programming is to make money through advertising, not to serve the public interest. Television's commercial nature makes it vulnerable to content that yields high ratings but may not suit society.

Cultivation theorists argue that heavy viewing of television has a cumulative effect over time. As people watch more television, their perceptions of reality become increasingly similar to what they see on the screen. This “cultivation” process leads viewers to believe that what they see on TV is the way things are in real life.

Thus, people's attitudes and beliefs about social reality may be influenced by fictional TV shows, news stories, and advertisements (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Cultivation research suggests that heavy viewers tend to perceive more significant risks from crime than light viewers do. In addition, heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to think that violence effectively resolves conflicts (Gerbner et al., 1994).

## **The Realities of the World Today**

Social media is a part of our daily lives. We use social media to communicate with friends, family, co-workers, etc. We share information about ourselves on these sites, such as pictures, status updates, and feelings. We can meet new people through these sites to cultivate friendships and relationships with people from all over the world.

We can also listen to what other people around us are saying. For instance, if we see someone post a status about an event they attended or a picture from their new job or school, we can comment on their posts to start a conversation.

As our world continues to expand and evolve, it is not hard to see that we are no longer as social as we once were. Our society has become “glued” to their cell phones or devices, and for some of us, it can be hard to go an hour without checking our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, or other social media sites.

When scrolling through our social media sites, we don’t even realize that we are spending hours on end on these platforms. The more time people spend on these platforms, the more they start to believe in what they see and think people should act in their own lives. This is a huge problem because some social media sites have users post fake pictures of themselves or edit their photos to receive attention or likes.

When you are looking at a picture like this, you start to believe that this person is natural, and this is how the person looks when it could be far from the truth in reality. So why do people feel the need to edit their photos? They do so because they want to look better than everyone else around them, and they think that if their photos get a lot of positive feedback from others (likes or comments).

Mass media has changed a lot over the years. Social media is the top way people interact with and share information. The change from television to social media significantly impacts cultivation theory because people now have more information.

The definition of cultivation theory is that mass media creates images of the world and our place in it. This definition also applies to social media today. The prints we see and create through social media shape our reality and our perception of what is real.

Gerbner first came up with the idea of cultivation theory in 1979. He said there were two main types of cultivation effect: one was that television gave us an image of the world, which was distorted and not necessarily accurate, but because we saw this image so often we believed it was correct; the other was

that television gave us a picture of ourselves as part of society, but this image could be very damaging or inaccurate too.

Today, these two concepts apply very well to social media. Social media gives us a version of reality that may not be true, but we begin to believe it is because it's what we see all the time. For example, most people on social media only post their best moments in life, not all the bad.



## CHAPTER 12

# FACEBOOK DOMINATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the future way; Facebook is one of the largest online social media platforms. It can also be an effective marketing and advertising tool for companies, professionals, and individuals. Millions of users use Facebook daily. The goal is to have a strong Facebook presence noticed by potential customers and clients. Some companies focus on Facebook, while others focus on reaching the right audience. Regardless of your business goals, you need two things to develop a Facebook marketing strategy: great content and network growth.

### **Facebook Domination of Social Media**

Facebook is the biggest social media platform globally, with 2.27 billion monthly active users in the fourth quarter of 2018. It's the dominant social media platform, with a 53% market share among social media sites

These days, Facebook is the most popular social network globally by a considerable margin. Facebook dominates the social media landscape worldwide except for Russia, where VKontakte is more popular.

Facebook has always connected people with friends, family, and like-minded individuals online. The company's mission statement is to "give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together."

However, in recent years, Facebook began de-emphasizing personal connections in favor of public content from news outlets and brands. In 2018, Facebook rolled out significant changes to its News Feed algorithm that prioritize posts from friends and family over businesses.

Facebook is dominating the social media landscape. In 2018, Facebook generated almost \$55 billion in revenue, and it continues to grow.

Facebook's user base is massive at 1.49 billion daily active users, followed by YouTube with 1.9 billion monthly users and WhatsApp with 1.5 billion monthly users (as of Q1 2019).

With more than 2 million advertisers, Facebook has become a vast marketplace. If you're not already advertising on Facebook, you're missing out on an opportunity to reach your target audience.

The idea was to create a more positive user experience by delivering less promotional content and more personal content. Still, it sparked an outcry among many small business owners who rely on Facebook to reach their customers. Some page administrators reported seeing significant drops in traffic after they implemented the changes (some reported a decline as high as 50 percent).

Since then, Facebook has made several tweaks to its algorithm to balance users' desire for authentic connection with businesses' need for organic exposure on the platform. But these changes have made it even more critical than ever for marketers to understand how Facebook works and how they can

### **The Facebook Phenomenon**

What is it about Facebook that has made it such a phenomenon, and what is it about its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, that makes him worthy of being the subject of a Hollywood movie?

The easy answer: Facebook has been successful because of its size. Given the number of people who use Facebook, it's impossible to avoid it. Size matters, but without keeping those people on the site for so long, Facebook wouldn't be a cultural phenomenon. For Facebook to have sustained popularity over the past several years, there must be something more than numbers at work.

Two concepts help explain why Facebook has captured our attention: network effect and social proof.

Even though Facebook has been around since 2004, it's still growing. According to the latest figures from the Pew Research Center, more than two-thirds of U.S. adults — 68 percent — now use the social-networking site.

Another 33 percent said they used the site "not that often," while 16 percent said they were current Facebook users who accessed the area several times a day.

The survey was conducted in August and September 2015 among 1,520 adults; it has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.

### **Social Media and Marketing**

Social media has become a crucial part of marketing. If you don't already have a social media presence, it's time you got started.

The first step is to create accounts on some or all major social sites. Don't spend too much time on this step as most of these sites are pretty easy to set up, and you can always change the look and feel of your account later.

If you aren't sure which sites to use, start with Facebook. This site is the most popular social media site globally, with millions of users worldwide. Once you have your Facebook account set up, use it to share photos and updates about your business. Invite friends and family members to see what you are doing. The more people that see you do, the more exposure your company will receive.

After Facebook, Twitter is another excellent media site for businesses. This site allows people to share short tweets with their followers. You can use these tweets to use advertising tools by posting short ads or offering coupons or other incentives to potential customers who follow you on Twitter.

Social media is the new frontier with endless possibilities in the marketing world. When it comes to promoting a brand, product, or service, social media is the medium of choice for many businesses. However, there are a handful of dos and don'ts that can make or break your brand in the vast social media sphere — especially if you're just starting.

Before you dive into all things social, consider these helpful hints:

**Do:** Create content that resonates with your audience: Whether an article on your website or a post on Instagram, it's crucial to share content that resonates with your audience. For example, suppose you are a luxury jewelry retailer and share content about affordable fashion trends. In that case, this may confuse your audience and have them questioning whether they should follow your company's social channels.

**Don't:** Share content just for the sake of sharing it: This can be difficult for many companies trying to increase their social following on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. It is essential to keep in mind that posting irrelevant information may deter followers from engaging with your account. Remember to always ask yourself, "Is this relevant to my audience?" before posting something online.

**Do:** Engage with similar brands by commenting

### **Is There a Facebook Marketing Strategy?**

Marketing is all about reaching your audience, and Facebook is at the forefront of social media marketing.

With over 2.27 billion monthly active users, Facebook has been at the forefront of social media marketing for years now. It's a great way to build brand

awareness, develop lasting relationships with customers, engage with them in real-time, and promote your products or services.

Whether you're just getting started with your marketing efforts on Facebook or have been using this platform for a while now, there are always new things to learn.

Here are five tips that will help you develop an effective Facebook marketing strategy:

- Posting engaging content.
- Using Facebook Ads.
- Creating a Facebook business page.
- Using Facebook Messenger for customer service.
- Posting videos to Facebook Watch or YouTube.
- Creating a Facebook group for customers.

Facebook is a marketing tool used by more than 8 million businesses, and if you don't know how to use it, you're missing out on a huge opportunity.

Facebook can be an essential component of your overall business strategy because it's a highly visual way to share content that helps your target audience get to know your brand better. And the best part? It doesn't cost anything to create an account or start posting content.

The key to using Facebook effectively for business is understanding how to create value for users to build a dedicated fan base that will keep coming back for more.

### **Reaching the Right Target Market**

Regardless of what your company sells, there's a good chance that your target audience is on social media.

This is especially true of Facebook, which has more than 2 billion users worldwide, including an estimated 170 million in the U.S. alone.

That's where Facebook marketing comes in — a combination of business practices and strategies designed to reach this massive audience and tap into its potential for revenue generation.

Facebook can be a great way to connect with your ideal customers, especially if your target audience already spends lots of time on the platform. But there's more to Facebook marketing than just creating a page and posting updates. You have to have a Facebook marketing strategy to see actual results.

Follow these five tips to create a Facebook marketing strategy that works:

1. Get the right insights
2. Use the proper Facebook ad formats
3. Target your ad campaigns
4. Make sure your ads are mobile-friendly
5. Test different advertising strategies

### **Creating a Presence in Social Media**

If you're like many small businesses, you've probably already jumped on the social media bandwagon. You're connected to a couple of different sites, you have a few hundred friends and followers, and you're even getting the occasional comment or customer inquiry.

But if you feel like your business isn't growing through social media as much as it could be, there are some steps you can take to improve your presence in social media:

Improve your profile. Make sure that your profile is up-to-date and complete. Potential customers should be able to find out everything they need to know about what you have to offer just by visiting your profile page.

Share relevant content. If you're sharing content that's not relevant to your brand or products, chances are, nobody will want to follow you on social media.

Have conversations with customers. The point of social media is engagement — don't just talk to people, chat with them. Answer questions and ask questions of your own.

The Internet has become a way of life for most people, so it should come as no surprise that social media is one of the fastest-growing and most effective ways to market your business.

### **Domination of Social Media Marketing**

Social media has become a vital marketing strategy for large and small businesses.

By utilizing social media, businesses can keep their target market informed of new products, services, and promotions while also being able to eat to monitor consumer sentiment. Regarding their brand due to the overwhelming popularity of social media and its ability to reach a primarily online audience, it is no surprise that so many business owners have begun to harness its power to increase sales and boost profits.

As a marketer, you must have a social media marketing strategy to make your brand stand out from the rest of your competitors. The best part is that you can use social media to engage with your customers, clients, and potential leads.

Social media is an effective marketing channel that can help you get the word out regarding your brand and products or services. You can utilize this tool to connect with your target audience deeper through personalization, two-way communication, and so much more. For example, Twitter and Facebook are great platforms to share blog posts and video content daily.

You can also use social media to promote special sales and run contests or games to boost brand awareness. Showcasing user-generated content on your website or social channels can also help increase visitor engagement even further.

People interact socially on their laptops, tablets, and phones via social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and more.

The reason? Consumers want brands they can trust, companies that know them, personalized and relevant communications, and offers tailored to their needs and preferences.

You cannot ignore the domination of Facebook. It has become an essential marketing tool for businesses.

## CHAPTER 13

# OTHER PLATFORM TAKING OVER

As Facebook and Twitter take the world by storm, Pinterest is creeping up from behind.

Its rocketing popularity has seen it become the third most popular social networking website in the US and the fastest-growing site for all of 2012.

The number of unique users in the UK is set to more than double this year, according to eMarketer, while Pinterest's global following will grow by more than half.

So what is Pinterest?

Well, essentially, it's a website that allows people to 'pin' their favorite images. Users can organize their pins into collections called "boards," which others can follow.

The majority of pins are fashion-oriented - with many images being taken from other websites - but there are plenty of boards dedicated to food and drink, design, travel, and much more.

### **Podcasting is the new radio.**

Podcasting is the new radio, and it's taking over. Over 100 million Americans listen to podcasts—and that number is growing. Listeners are engaged: Most of them listen to all or most of each episode and subscribe, so they never miss an episode.

Podcasting is rising in popularity and becoming more accessible, with a larger audience than ever before. But there's still a learning curve in understanding the ins and outs of podcasting—especially from a listener's perspective.

What Is a Podcast?

A podcast is like a radio show (but better). It's an audio broadcast usually posted weekly or monthly that you can download for free on iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, or other platforms. Listeners can subscribe to your show, so they never miss an episode and download episodes to listen to any time—in their car, at the gym, or on their commute.

For creators, it's like having a radio show without the limits of time or commercials. Every episode can be as long or short as you want, and you control everything about it—from topic to guest speakers to your voice! And unlike other social media channels that are constantly changing their algorithms, podcasts are always free.

Podcasting is a powerful medium to spread your message, whether you're promoting a product or service or trying to gain exposure for your blog. It's also an effective way to find potential customers and business partners.

The most significant advantage of podcasting is that it allows you to connect with people interested in what you have to say. For example, when I meet folks at networking events, I often hear them listen to my podcast. You can easily leverage this by integrating your podcast into other content marketing strategies like social media and email marketing.

It's also a powerful way for entrepreneurs to get their brands out there and establish themselves as experts in their fields.

However, it's important to remember that podcasting is not a magic bullet — it takes time and effort to build an audience and gain exposure for your brand.

### **Blogging is the new content marketing.**

It's the one thing that's indispensable for every business.

We don't need to talk about why blogging is essential because you already know it.

The days of corporate blogging are numbered. An increasing number of businesses now see content marketing — the publishing of various forms of content, be it videos, infographics, or articles — as a more powerful tool for building an audience than a traditional blog.

If you aren't convinced yet, here are reasons why your business should start a blog today:

- It increases your website's SEO quality and helps you rank higher in search results (SEO).
- It positions you as a thought leader/innovator in your industry and market.
- It allows you to share more information, express your thoughts and ideas, and personalize with clients or customers.
- It helps you become an expert in your field - you develop authority by sharing valuable information regularly.

- It gives you a way to reach out to people who otherwise wouldn't find or contact you - people looking for answers that only you can provide.
- It establishes credibility - a business blog shows how much expertise and experience you have, which can help potential customers trust your brand.
- It increases your website traffic - every post is a new opportunity to get found by new readers or customers.
- It's great for networking - it allows you to connect and interact with other creatives, experts, and thought leaders in your industry.

And it's not just the content that's compelling. The medium has changed, with more and more people consuming blogs on mobile devices. Mobile is the new blogosphere, and we need to make sure our blogs are mobile-friendly if we want to reach our audience — wherever they may be.

But blogging isn't just about keeping up with the times; it's also about building trust. Businesses that blog receive essential influence. 7% more links to their website, a key ranking signal for search engines like Google. What's more, an infographic from Quicksprout shows that blogs increase your chances of getting found online by 434%.

The value of a blog extends well past search engine optimization, though. Blogging builds trust because it shows you're an expert in your field — an authority figure who you can trust to provide accurate information on a given topic.

Blogging leads to 67% more leads per month than companies that don't have blogs, according to HubSpot. This can be attributed to companies with blogs getting 55% more visits than companies without.

So what does all this mean? That blogging is good for business — plain and simple.

### **Online forums and chat rooms are our new living rooms**

Online forums and chat rooms are our new living rooms. Every day, we use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat to share what we're up to, transfer news, and ask for opinions.

Twitter has become the go-to place for people to discuss news in real-time. But it's not just significant events that turn into Twitter conversations — even the most minor things can become a part of the conversation.

These platforms have become so important because they allow us to interact with each other in real-time. This is different from traditional media,

which was always one-way communication, where we simply consumed news and information.

Now, we're able to respond and react to information as it happens — and all of that discussion can be captured by search engines.

It's easy to find someone who shares your interests. Every subject has an online community devoted to it. If you love sports, there's an online community dedicated to it. If you love art, there's a place online.

Sharing your thoughts with people who share the same interests can help you get new ideas and have more fun!

Online communities aren't just for computer geeks anymore. They are for everyone! Here are some of the most popular online communities:

#### Online forums

Online forums allow people to discuss topics in an organized way. That means each thread is dedicated to one subject, and there is usually a moderator to keep the conversation on track if necessary. This type of community is great if you want to engage in meaningful conversations with like-minded people.

#### Social networking sites (Twitter, Facebook)

Social networks let people post short messages or statuses that others can see. People who want to be friends can connect and send messages back and forth. A social network allows you to communicate with many people at once or just a few close friends quickly.

More and more people are making the Internet their town square, where they chat with friends, meet strangers, and make business deals. Over the last ten years, online forums and chat rooms have become our new living rooms — and rather than enjoying the comfort of home, we're cramming into virtual coffee shops and bars, shouting over each other as we try to get our points across.

The social Web isn't just for teens anymore; it's becoming a central part of American life. So much that younger receivers are being pushed off to services like Tumblr and Snapchat because sites like Facebook are being flooded with adults.

It seems almost everyone is on Facebook these days — even your parents. Not only that, but they're posting to public walls, sharing links and photos in news feeds, sending friend requests to co-workers, and commenting on your status updates. It can be awkward when your boss connects with you on Facebook.

### **Snapchat is the new personalized Facebook.**

In a world where Facebook and Twitter are constantly in the news, Snapchat is quietly growing.

People spend more time on the application than ever before, with almost 16 billion snaps sent every day. It's no wonder that the app is becoming a must-have for marketing and advertising.

To put it simply, Snapchat is the new personalized Facebook.

The platform has become an excellent way for companies to engage directly with their target audience and generate conversions.

Snapchat, a social messaging app and a tool for sharing photos has grown in popularity. Launched in 2011, the app now has over 100 million users, who spend an average of 25 to 30 minutes on it every day.

Snapchat is different from most other social media platforms because it focuses on private communication rather than public sharing. You can send a photo or video to a friend, and that content will disappear once your friend views it. The idea is to encourage people to share more candid moments rather than carefully curated photos and stories.

One of the reasons Snapchat is so popular is that it offers something unique: the opportunity for intimate communication through pictures and videos. This is especially appealing to younger users who are constantly connected through their phones and those who feel that traditional social networks like Facebook have become too public and less personal or intimate.

Social media platforms come and go, but Snapchat's rise suggests that a significant shift could be underway in which people gravitate towards personalized experiences instead of broadly shared ones. This shift could be good news for brands trying to reach consumers through social media because customized ads may be more relevant to consumers and, therefore, more effective than generic ads.

### **Social media has taken over all forms of mass media.**

Social media has taken over all forms of mass media. People can stay in touch with friends, get the latest news, and even watch their favorite television show on social media. According to a recent study, Facebook is the number one activity people do online. Instagram also ranks in the top 10 websites visited by Americans. The social media platform has been around for some time with no signs of slowing down.

Social Media is more than just a way of life for people. It's become an addiction and part of the daily routine for some users. For many people checking your Facebook or Twitter account has become a morning ritual essential, like having coffee and breakfast. Many companies are taking advantage of this

phenomenon and have created apps to help them connect with customers and increase sales.

Social media is the new primetime. People watch TV with their laptops open and their phones in hand, checking notifications on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is no longer just a place where people share cat videos and photos of food; it's also where they're getting their news, connecting with like-minded peers, and learning about new products.

You cannot deny the power of social media. It is becoming an integral part of people's lives, and it's only natural that companies will want to tap into this market to gain more customers and increase sales. Social Media Sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have millions of active users, which brings tremendous opportunity for marketing campaigns targeted at these specific groups of people who are already interested in what you have to offer!

## CHAPTER 14

# GEN Z NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MASS MEDIA

**Y**ou may have heard about the growing social media and technology use among Generation Z. But did you know that this has hurt the mass media? Well, it most certainly has. From traditional newspapers to TV advertisements and top-grossing films, we can see a negative impact on this generation's mass media consumption.

The interactive nature of the Internet has changed and continues to change how we receive our news and information. Today, there are countless ways to stay up-to-date on current events and news stories. The emergence of social media and smartphones has made it easier than ever to get the latest updates from news organizations like CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC.

Generation Z is the first generation born with access to the internet and social media. This new technology has radically altered their view of the world. As a whole, this generation is less trusting of others and more likely to be depressed than others before them.

Our news media is facing a lot of issues. From the rise of fake news to mass media consumers not trusting news sources, the media must face these problems head-on and find solutions to survive. The main issue is that people consume news differently than they have before.

The internet was supposed to be a good thing for news media, but currently, it's not so great. It's become increasingly difficult to fight against fake news, and the mass media has found their survival more difficult because of this. In addition, people have stopped paying for subscriptions to newspapers and instead are only reading headlines and getting news bites from social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

### **Gen Z is Changing Mass Media**

The media can be a driving force in our modern culture. In some ways, it's always been that way; the news has always been the best way to spread information

quickly, and the entertainment industry has always been an outlet for creative expression.

But the media industry is changing. As the business model of traditional media companies continues to crumble and digital media companies like BuzzFeed and Vice are finding it hard to turn a profit, new technology has made it easier than ever for anyone to create and distribute content.

For example, you can get your news from traditional print newspapers or online sources like Facebook and Twitter. You can watch TV shows on a TV set, or you can watch them on a computer or even a phone.

Young people have primarily driven these changes crucially; as new generations come of age and take over the workforce, they change the whole media landscape. The rise of technology and social media is just one example of this phenomenon in action.

This is why it's important to understand how each generation interacts with media — not only so you can stay on top of trends but also because it can help you predict where things are going next.

### **Gen Z Lives on Their Phone**

Gen Z is the generation that came of age in the age of social media. For example, they grew up with smartphones, and their first instinct when they hear about a news event is to turn to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter for more information.

This has had a disruptive effect on traditional media outlets like newspapers, magazines, and television news — which have all seen a tremendous drop in circulation, viewership, and ad venue over the last decade or so.

Gen Z will go to social media first for information about any breaking news event. If something strikes their interest, they will often do secondary research on their favorite search engines to get more details. If there is no new information available online, they may move on.

They aren't just playing games or texting friends either; they are constantly on social media as well. As soon as they wake up, before going to bed and at any free moment during the day, Gen Z is scrolling through Instagram or Snapchat.

Their constant usage of social media has made them very aware of presenting themselves. They know exactly how many likes a photo needs to get for it to seem popular. They understand what filter makes their skin look flawless and which angle shows their best features. They know how to edit a picture to look like it's from an editorial spread in Vogue magazine, but instead, you took it on the side of the road in a small town in the middle of nowhere.

Gen Z spends on social media time that they aren't spending watching TV or listening to the radio. Their habits have forced mass media companies to change their marketing strategies to reach this new audience. Some companies have begun using influencers —

### **Social Media's Influence**

The most significant impact Gen Z has on mass media is its influence through social media.

With social media's popularity being at an all-time high and the ability to connect with anybody in the world through a click of a button. It's no surprise that it had influenced Gen Z. Millennials were introduced to social media about ten years ago when Facebook first came out. Still, for Gen Z, social media has been around since they were born.

The average teen spends about nine hours a day on social media, according to a 2017 report by Common Sense Media. Because Gen Z has grown up with social media and the Internet, they are the most self-aware generation to date. They know how to use social media as a tool to get their voices heard, especially with the rise of Instagram influencers and YouTube stars.

The rise of online shopping is also because of millennials and Gen Z's attachment to their phones. Companies are changing their websites into mobile-friendly sites and even opening up apps for easier access for customers. This somewhat eliminates the need for physical stores and might hurt department stores in the long run.

The digital age is one of the best inventions for humankind. It allows us to communicate in ways you only imagined just a decade ago. However, with great power comes great responsibility, and society has proven that it can not handle this power responsibly.

We live in a world where social media is a primary form of communication and connection, but how much is too much? What are the effects of excessive social media use? Let's look at some of the consequences:

Social media creates an unreal sense of perfection

How many times have you seen a post on social media and thought to yourself, "Wow, their life is so perfect?" The answer is probably pretty often. This happens because people tend only to post the best parts of their lives or things perfect for sharing with others. If there is no picture being published, it probably did not happen.

Students focus less on long-term goals or patience due to constant instant gratification from online platforms.

They are less able to express themselves in person, potentially harming them when looking for jobs or trying to find romantic relationships.

The growth of social media has negatively impacted society through:

#### Cyberbullying

The rise in cyberbullying has been one of the most significant impacts of social media. According to DoSomething.org, more than 43% of kids have been bullied online, and about 1 in 4 has had it happen more than once. Cyberbullying is when someone uses the internet to bully others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of bullying behavior such as exclusions or rumors as stated by stop bullying, rapid development when people are cyberbullied.

### **The Shortening Attention Span**

According to The Telegraph, people aged 18 to 24 years old now spend an average of just three seconds looking at print ads, compared to 10 seconds in 2012.

In this world, attention spans have become incredibly short. Gen Z has an attention span of 8 seconds, roughly 1 second less than a goldfish (9 seconds). This is because mobile and social media have become so engaging that it is hard for anyone to sit in one place and do nothing.

Z'ers have often been characterized as short-fused and impatient. For example, they might not be able to sit through a thirty-minute television show without getting distracted by their devices or other things. This means that they are less likely to be influenced by mass media than older generations were before them.

And unlike their older counterparts, Gen Z is not multitasking just because it's convenient — more than half (54%) of Gen Z respondents stated that using multiple screens at once helps them get more done.

Today, young people are bombarded with images and messages by mass media.

The attention span of younger generations is constantly decreasing. With more and more mediums to capture consumers' attention, it's no wonder that many aren't staying focused on one thing for very long.

However, this has also created a new set of challenges when reaching out to younger consumers.

What is the average attention span?

According to a 2015 Microsoft study, the average attention span was eight seconds. This means that your audience is only paying attention for eight seconds before doing something else.

What does this mean for marketers?

With millennials (ages 21 – 35) and Generation Z (ages 12 – 20) dominating the marketplace, marketers have to think outside the box effectively to get their message across. It is becoming even more critical for brands to have an online presence, whether through social media or on their website or blog. Having multiple ways for your audience to consume information about your brand will help you reach a broader audience and make sure your brand message is being heard by those who may be consuming information in different ways.

The internet has made it easier than ever before to get information quickly at the touch of a button

Several factors are contributing to the shortening attention span:

- Fast-paced social media platforms where you're only getting a snapshot of content at one time compared with the longer form of television and film
- The ability to quickly jump from one piece of content to another on the internet with just a click or tap

As fellow members of Gen Z, we find ourselves easily frustrated by long videos with slow music and poorly edited clips. We also find it challenging to focus on tasks for long periods when immersed in our phones and social media apps.

Gen Z is a unique age demographic. They are tech-savvy, family-oriented, and have a lot to offer the world in many areas of life. Their continued shift towards digital platforms is not only inevitable – it's good for everybody involved. These days, there's always some new way to stay connected and keep up with the rapid changes that occur today – whether it's through social media or an app like Snapchat.

Although Gen Z is hurting mass media by turning away from physical newspapers and other content sources, they are also finding different ways to get news and connect with people. Overall, the generation has significantly contributed to communicating with each other today – one of our greatest strengths as humans.



## CHAPTER 15

# RICH COUNTRIES IMPACT ON SOCIAL MEDIA; INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT

The rise of social media has been phenomenal, and the pace of growth shows no signs of slowing down.

In fact, according to GlobalWebIndex, people from rich countries spend an average of two hours and 22 minutes on social networks every day.

This was a significant increase from 2013 influence when users spent one hour and 16 minutes per day on social networks. So, what explains this increase?

### **Rich Countries Impact on Social Media**

Social Media is the number one activity for internet users around the world. Facebook and YouTube dominate this landscape, as notable majorities of global internet users visit these two platforms every month.

New networks rise to prominence (e.g., Snapchat), new technology increases user participation and real-time content (e.g., Periscope), and existing networks enhance their platform and product (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram launching ‘buy’ buttons). Organic reach is also shrinking as the leading networks ramp up their paid channels to monetize platform investment.

Rich countries on social media.

Rich countries can impact the social media world. If a rich country does something wrong, it can affect them and others. If a developing country does something wrong, it is not a big deal, and no one cares about them.

The United States has been doing poorly, like picking on North Korea. This could cause North Korea to do something wrong, and they don’t want that to happen because they are afraid of what they might do. So therefore, they are scared of what will happen if they keep doing these things.

A developing country that is not doing anything good or bad with its power should be left alone as well because there is nothing that could harm people from other countries. It means there will be no problems at all for anyone else except

those in that area who may suffer from what's happening there. However, even still, no one else will know about it since there aren't any news stories coming out about it anywhere, so why bother dealing with them anyway?

### **Increase the Amount of Time Spent on Social Media**

Social media isn't just for sharing baby photos and holiday snaps. According to a new study, people in more prosperous countries spend more time on social media than those in poorer countries. The findings suggest that people's use of Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms is linked to significant societal factors — such as GDP per capita — rather than being down to individual personalities or preferences.

Time spent on social media sites and apps is on the rise. What's driving this growth? Most of it can be attributed to the increasing use of social media among older age groups. While time spent by younger users has remained relatively constant, adoption and usage by older generations have grown significantly in recent years.

### **The Price of a Smartphone**

Technology is an industry that has proven itself to be a significant influence globally. Many people cannot imagine what life was like before the age of technology, and they would undoubtedly find a way to use it if they had to live without it.

Technology has made life easier for people and has helped to get rid of some of the major problems that society has struggled with for decades. One of the biggest reasons technology is so popular is that it can connect people from all over the world and allow them to communicate with one another in real-time.

Technology has been able to change many people's lives in various ways. Some people have been able to find jobs and careers that they never thought were possible because of technology. In contrast, others have enjoyed their lives more by utilizing technology differently. Many companies have been able to develop unique products for consumers globally. These products are usually sold online through various websites that offer e-commerce and online shopping services.

Technology has also been able to help create a better economy in developed countries, which allows them to be more competitive with other countries around the world. People who live in developed countries tend to have higher incomes compared.

Smartphones are amazing. They connect us to the internet, help us play games and watch movies, and allow us to communicate with anyone in the world. But when you look at how much it costs for one of these devices, it's pretty easy to be shocked by the high price tag.

Well, there's a lot of technology packed inside those phones, and it's all working together to make the magic happen. Let's take a look at what makes up the price of a smartphone.

The effect of smartphones on social media engagement is highest in countries where they are most affordable. In other words, while the impact of smartphone ownership on social media consumption is similar across all countries, this relationship is most potent in countries where smartphones are more affordable.

In India, for example, the affordability of a smartphone ranks among the lowest of 19 countries surveyed. An Indian consumer needs to work 40 hours to afford a \$235 smartphone.

Comparatively speaking, a consumer in South Korea who boasts the most affordable smartphone (at three hours of work needed to purchase it) would need twice as many working hours to afford an equivalent device.

The price of a smartphone can have a massive impact on the amount of time people spend on social media platforms. In rich countries, the cost of smartphones is affordable, and people have more money to spend on them, allowing them to spend more time on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

However, in poorer nations where incomes are much lower, many people cannot purchase expensive devices. Therefore, they will spend less time online as they do not have access to these devices as much as those living in more affluent countries.

## **Mental Health**

More time online has long been associated with a greater risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. There are disagreements about why this happens, but it's plain that the correlation exists.

In many countries, social media penetration is still relatively low. That makes it harder to conclude how platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram affect well-being. But in places where social media use is more common, there is emerging evidence that it makes people feel worse — particularly when they compare the lives they're living to the curated lives of their peers.

When you think of the potential adverse effects of social media, your mind likely jumps to cyberbullying, online trolls, the dangers of sexting, and how it can impact your body image. But what about your brain? How does social media affect your mental health?

Social media is linked to depression

Social media is a dangerous trap that has become so routine in our lives we don't even realize how much it affects us. We are constantly attached to our phones, tablets, and computers, scrolling through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Social media can make us feel better about ourselves or make us feel worse about ourselves. How we use social media is the key to ensuring that it does not negatively impact our lives.

The use of social media by teens has been linked to increased rates of depression and anxiety, but the exact cause-and-effect relationship is unclear. Teens with mental health problems are more prone to being on social media, or does being on social media cause mental health problems? And if so, why?

The number of friends you have doesn't matter when it comes to loneliness

While many people might assume that having many Facebook friends will reduce loneliness, researchers found that this wasn't necessarily the case. In recent years, social media platforms have grown into global giants. The impact of this change on mental health has been the subject of various research in recent years.

### **Being Politically Correct on Social Media is Hard**

Social media isn't just a tool for sharing your holiday snaps and what you had for breakfast with friends; it is also a powerful business marketing tool.

Social media is an all-encompassing platform that allows anyone to use it to their advantage. One of the most important things about creating a social media presence is a voice that accurately represents your brand and attracts the right audience.

Let's face it, politeness matters. The social media world is rife with arguments, flaming, and trolls. When you are friendly, people will listen.

Social media is the number one platform in terms of social interaction. For example, Facebook has a population that is larger than any country in the world. With such a large population, it would seem almost impossible to maintain some level of normalcy without being rude.

Luckily for us, there are many ways to be polite on social media without having to worry about losing your mind. Here are some tips for maintaining politeness on social media:

Say please and thank you: As basic as this may sound, saying please and thank you can make a difference in how people perceive you online. It doesn't matter whether you're posting something on your wall or just posting a comment on someone else's post; these two words can show your appreciation for someone else's content.

Be respectful of other people's opinions: People want to know what others think of them and what they say about specific topics. It would be nice if everyone felt the same way about everything, but we all have our differences regarding opinions. Don't be afraid to disagree with someone but don't get into an argument.

### **Benefits of Social Media**

Some people believe that the world would be better without social media. The problem with this is that it's not as if we can simply shut them down. At least not without significant consequences.

First, it's important to remember that social media is a tool - you can use it for good and evil, and the user often determines the effects. If the user has a positive outlook on life, they'll use social media to share their thoughts and feelings with like-minded people. Conversely, if they have a negative outlook on life, they'll use it to share their thoughts and feelings with those who have a similar worldview.

Some people indeed abuse social media by sharing fake news or offensive material. But this isn't always the case; there are plenty of times when people share genuine thoughts and feelings online to help others in need or simply because they feel compelled to do so.

On the other hand, Social media has played an essential role in connecting the world. Thanks to social media, we can connect with friends, family members, and even long-lost acquaintances.

Families separated by great distances can keep in touch through social media sites like Facebook or Twitter. Professionals can use LinkedIn or other social media sites to find jobs or business opportunities. Social media also allows people from different countries and cultures to interact.

Social media is a great way to help individuals build their brands and make their names known. In addition, it's also a great way to stay informed about the latest news and updates regarding your favorite celebrities!

However, social media is more than just something that helps us stay in touch with our friends and families; it also has many benefits for society as a whole. Here are just a few of these benefits:

- Social media contributes to the increase in self-confidence and self-esteem in people.
- Social media helps people get together, which can be a positive thing for society.
- People can access news and other important information from social media.
- Social media is used to raise awareness for an important cause.
- People can learn about different cultures by using social media.
- Businesses are using social media to advertise their products and services. They get feedback from clients, which helps them improve their products or service.

You have to be very careful about what you share with others on Facebook. If you are sharing a lot of personal information, you need to be aware of privacy issues and ensure that your messages do not contain any confidential information. If you do not want to share your data on Facebook, do not create an account there!

Make sure that your profile is up-to-date and complete. Many people forget to update their profiles on Facebook and have old photos or outdated contact information posted on the site. Make sure that your profile contains all the necessary information so that other users know who you are and where they can find you.

## CHAPTER 16

# THE PANDEMIC EFFECT ON MASS MEDIA

When the coronavirus pandemic emerged earlier this year, it changed how we live our lives. It also changed the way people engage with all forms of media, whether traditional or digital, and whether audio, video, print or online.

The change in media consumption has been remarkable. In many cases, the media have become more critical than ever before. In others, their use has been limited by some of the same factors restraining other aspects of our lives.

Because of budget cuts, many newspapers have cut their staff or closed down altogether during the pandemic. This is in response to declining ad revenue because businesses haven't been able to afford ads during the pandemic. By January 2021, over 800 newspapers had shut down since last March, and more than 100,000 newsroom jobs were lost (Wang).

The pandemic has disproportionately affected local news outlets as well. These are typically smaller newspapers that focus on local events and issues. We see a few significant reasons for this. Local news outlets often focus on advertising for small businesses instead of large corporations, which are more likely to survive during a pandemic. In addition, local news outlets have less access to capital from investors who can keep them afloat (Silverman).

The transition from print to digital media has also accelerated the struggles of mass media companies during the pandemic. Many companies are having difficulty making up for lost print revenue when so much.

### **The Expansion of Fake News during the Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed multiple aspects of life as we know it; the pandemic has had a significant impact on mass media, especially the news. One of the considerably more considerable population impacts of mass media is the expansion of fake news and online rumors.

One way in which this happened was through the proliferation of misinformation regarding the pandemic's origins. One such set of rumors alleged that the virus resulted from a bioterrorism attack by China, or it was an accident at a Chinese lab. Another suggested that it was released on purpose to damage America's economy.

The scope of misinformation has far-reaching implications for public health and government officials trying to spread authentic information to prevent the further spread of the virus. Misinformation can influence an individual's risk perception, health behaviors, and trust in public health officials and governments. This can lead people to take unnecessary precautions or inappropriate actions that can harm themselves or others. While misinformation is not new, some unique characteristics specific to COVID-19 make it particularly challenging to manage.

The rapid spread of misinformation is related to a few factors, including low barriers to entry on social media platforms, increasing distrust in mainstream media, and panic associated with the pandemic. Some common examples of misinformation related to COVID-19 include:

- Fake cures
- Misinformation about treatments for COVID-19
- Mythical origins
- Misinformation about where the disease came from (e.g., 5G cell towers)

### **Misinformation and Disinformation in Media During the Pandemic**

As the world comes to grips with the Coronavirus pandemic and faces the prospect of a very different way of life for the foreseeable future, we are witnessing an explosion in media output. Newscasts are extended, column inches are filled, and social media and video platforms are awash with COVID-19 content.

But how much of this content can be trusted? With so many people repeating what they read or hear and sharing it on social media without checking its validity, the risk of misinformation and disinformation is more significant than ever.

Most of the news we consume is generated by journalists who have been trained to source and verify the information. This means that you can trust most news reporting. But it is important to remember that not all content carries equal weight.

It's easy to conflate opinion pieces with fact-based reporting – they look similar, appear on the same news platforms, and may even use similar language.

But opinion pieces should be treated as such; they do not need to meet any standards for accuracy or impartiality since they are written by individuals or organizations expressing their opinions about a current event or story.

The same goes for sponsored content, where a brand pays a publisher to feature their product or service in the context of their journalism.

Misinformation vs. disinformation: What's the difference?

The terms “misinformation” and “disinformation” are often interchangeable. They're not always the same. Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that's spread unintentionally. Disinformation is information that's intentionally misleading or deceptive.

Both can be dangerous to public health. That's why people need to identify them and seek out accurate information from reliable sources.

How to spot misinformation and disinformation

It can be challenging to know what information you can trust as a result of this infodemic, but there are some signs you can look for that may indicate whether something is true or not:

Does an article cite its sources? Check for hyperlinks pointing to scientific studies or reliable news stories or references in articles written by credible publications.

### **The media's role in combating misinformation**

The pandemic has had an outsized impact on the mass media. News outlets have increasingly been forced to cover COVID-19, as it became clear that the pandemic would affect everyone, everywhere. The more expansive coverage of the virus has taken priority over other stories.

The pandemic has also made it harder for journalists to gather news and report on other stories effectively. They are now required to wear masks and maintain physical distance when interviewing sources and covering events.

In addition, many journalists were furloughed or laid off because of a drop in advertising revenue due to businesses being shut down, which meant that newspapers and other news outlets had fewer resources with which to cover the pandemic. A small number of local newspapers even folded as a result.

Some news outlets have come under fire for spreading misinformation about COVID-19 as they tried to keep readers engaged with content related to the virus. However, some news outlets have also received praise for taking their role as a trusted source of information seriously and working hard to combat misinformation about COVID-19.

The media play an essential role in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Media coverage of the pandemic has been extensive and accompanied by a rise in misinformation and disinformation. Therefore, the media's role in combatting the pandemic is doubly essential: they are needed to provide accurate information to the public while also confronting disinformation.

The media have long played a role in informing the public about the health risks caused by infectious diseases and how to prevent them. They used media to promote knowledge about HIV/AIDS, for example.

However, research shows that the media's roles over time have evolved from providing basic information about a disease to raising awareness of risk factors for infection and promoting action among citizens as part of collective efforts to curb disease spread.

This evolution occurred as mass media became increasingly personalized through digital technologies. In this regard, we can learn from previous research that identified two main types of mass media roles during epidemics:

- **Information provider:** Mass media disseminate information about a disease (e.g., its symptoms) and ways to prevent it (e.g., hand washing). This role is critical because it helps citizens understand the nature of a disease and their risk of exposure or infection;
- **Watchdog:** Mass media act as a watchdog for government response and policy implementation, monitoring the government's activities against its promises or its performance relative to other countries. This role is crucial because it places pressure on governments to respond effectively and efficiently by holding them accountable for their actions.

### **COVID-19 and Individual Media Use**

The COVID-19 pandemic affects mass media and individual media use in dramatic ways. By now, every organization has had to adjust its business model, whether a large media company or a local restaurant. This chapter explores how the pandemic is affecting organizations and individuals.

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on mass media. Many organizations are struggling to survive. Mass media organizations, particularly local newspapers and broadcast stations, face huge operational challenges because they have been financially unstable for years (Livingstone & Kümpel, 2020).

For one thing, there's a lot more time at home to watch TV or play video games or use social media. Let's look at what we're seeing.

Television viewing has been on the rise, and it's not just because of the pandemic. But the pandemic has given people more time to watch television and more need for entertainment and distraction from current events. The most significant increases were seen in news watching and streaming services.

More than half of Americans report listening to more radio during the pandemic than before. With so many people working from home, the radio is an excellent and enormous substantial way to stay connected with what's happening outside their homes — and perhaps even an escape from all that's going on at home!

Video gaming appears to be up during this period, possibly due to increased access to gaming consoles and a rise in new users, many of them older adults who are trapped at home without much to do.

The pandemic also appears to have increased book reading or revived it as an activity after decades of decline. People have time on their hands, and there's a lot of talk about reading being a great way of spending time constructively.

The Pandemic Effect is a phenomenon stemming from how technology can now spread ideas, catchphrases, and news stories at an unprecedented speed. Who needs mass media when we have social media? Continuous consciousness of what's happening around the world is essential.

It means that we can be more aware of other people's thoughts, feelings, and knowledge in other places. The result is that we can feel less isolated and isolated and more connected with the rest of humanity. Communication has never been faster or easier, with development remarkably rapid in recent years.



# CHAPTER 17

## PR AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Since its inception, one of the most notable changes in journalism is the diminished role of PR and Mass Communication in the information flow. Transnational companies have had to overhaul their communication strategies for their images and public opinion about them. Social media has changed the way we respect our disregard, different news sources, our friends, and our connections have a more significant influence on us than they ever did before.

One of the most significant impacts of the digital revolution has been on public relations. In the past, PR involved advertising in mass media. It involves online marketing, social media and networking, and other methods in today's world.

There are many discussions about the future of mass media and PR. Some people argue that mass media will stay relevant as long as necessary. Others argue that social media and online marketing have taken over this industry to a large extent.

I think that both types of media have their roles in today's world. We cannot deny the importance and power of traditional media like print and television. However, at the same time, we cannot ignore social media either.

The best way to use these two tools would be to combine them and create an effective marketing strategy by using both channels wisely.

### **The History of Mass Communications**

The beginning of the history of mass communications is usually defined as the advent of printing in the West. While it is difficult to think of a time without newspapers, magazines, and books, printing is a relatively recent development in human history. The earliest known woodblock print appeared in China around 220 AD; however, block printing was not widely used until the 10th century.

MovablBi Sheng invented the movable type 1040 AD, but movable type printing was not widely used in China until the 15th century. Although Gutenberg's invention of movable type in Europe has been credited with starting

the Printing Revolution, China had already developed metal movable type technology hundreds of years earlier.

It wasn't until a few hundred years later that more people were able to read and write. In fact, during the era when most European monarchies were absolute rulers (1450–1789), literacy was declining in many countries. By 1750 only 20 percent of Europeans could read or write. Not surprisingly, this lack of literacy meant that very few people read newspapers or books during this period. Social media have blurred the line between Mass Communications and Public Relations.

Before 1700 most information was disseminated through word-of-mouth and hand-written letters rather than mass media messages. After 1700, printed newspapers became increasingly common.

### **Public Relations vs. Mass Communications**

Public relations has always been about relationships. And the most valuable currency for building and maintaining those relationships is information.

During the 20th century, mass communications were the way to transfer information and to reach a large number of people in a short amount of time.

Social media has blurred the line between Mass Communications and Public Relations. This can be both positive and negative.

Public Relations vs. Mass Communications Public relations and mass communication are two different fields that use similar tools for various purposes. Each field has its responsibilities, skills, and types of training. However, both areas involve the distribution of information.

#### **Public Relations**

Public relations professionals create information to share with the media, social media sites, or public. The information may include events, news releases, or other details necessary to build relationships between organizations and customers or clients. A public relations professional creates ideas for the media and distributes information to specific audiences. Often, a public relations professional is responsible for gaining positive publicity for an organization through various communication channels, including social media sites and newspapers.

#### **Mass Communication**

Mass communication involves the distributing formation to a large group of people via various channels of communication, including television, newspapers, magazines, and radio. Mass communication also includes digital forms of communication like social media sites and websites. Mass

communication consists of news broadcasting, which is distributed to a broad audience simultaneously through electronic channels.

The image of public relations (PR) has not always been positive. This is because they confuse PR with mass communications. While these two professions are related, they are pretty different.

Mass communications are advertising, marketing, and information dissemination through media outlets such as newspapers, television, radio, and the internet. Public relations is more about creating and maintaining a good relationship between a company or organization and its general audience.

The primary difference between public relations and mass communications is that the former manages the spread of information between an individual or organization and the public. At the same time, the latter refers to the academic discipline that covers how individuals and entities relay information through mass media to large segments of the population at once.

#### Public Relations vs. Mass Communications

Here are some of the most significant differences between PR and mass communications:

A public relations practitioner helps create a positive image of a person or business in the eyes of the general public. Their job is to shape public opinion by managing communications and information. Public relations specialists usually work in-house for organizations or are employed by advertising agencies since they often work alongside marketing teams.

Mass communications professionals do not necessarily need to be employed by an organization. This career path focuses on understanding how people share information through mass media platforms. Professionals in this field can find employment opportunities in marketing, journalism, broadcasting, advertising, publishing, and corporate communications departments.

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PR is strategic, while mass comm is tactical. Mass communication refers to communication that involves sending out a message to a large group of people. Public relations involves using communications tactics to achieve organizational goals. PR is more strategic than mass communication.

PR focuses on relationship building, while mass comm focuses on reach. Again, public relations is about relationship building with target audiences with a vested interest in what you're doing or selling. Mass communication focuses on reaching as many people as possible through various means like print media and broadcast channels.

The goal of PR is to build credibility, while the purpose of mass comm is to increase awareness. The ultimate goal of public relations is to build credibility and reputation for your organization by earning media coverage in top-tier publications and news sites that your customers read and trust. Mass

communication aims to increase consumer awareness among a large audience using various platforms like broadcast channels or print media.

### **Where Do They Intersect?**

Public relations, or PR, is a strategy to help businesses or people get positive media attention through good storytelling. PR professionals create and maintain relationships with journalists, bloggers, and influencers to get their clients in the news.

PR and mass communication are related fields, but they perform different functions. Mass communication is the process of distributing information to large groups of people, while public relations involves building relationships with the public an organization serves.

Public relation is a critical aspect of mass communication. Brands can reach large audiences through mass communications strategies such as advertising, social media marketing, and Content marketing. PR professionals can use these same communications channels to tell compelling brand stories to build trust and credibility with target audiences to tell com

PR, or public relations, and mass communication are two different things, but they intersect and overlap in several aspects. Mass communication is the process of sending messages to a large group of people, while public relations is when the news is about a company.

PR involves maintaining relationships with various groups interested in an organization. This includes the media, customers, business partners, and employees. Mass communication involves spreading information through mass media, like television, radio, or newspapers.

### **The Fall of Mass Communications**

The end of mass media has been predicted for decades, but it is still with us. The reason is simple: Mass communications are inexpensive to produce and work. Before mass communications, there were only two ways to communicate: face-to-face or via a messenger. Printing presses made it possible a third way to communicate.

That was true of other forms of mass communication such as newspapers and books. The first newspapers were published by royal decree. Until the advent of radio and television, the only way to hear a recording was in person or through a phonograph record. That's why radio was revolutionary in the 1920s: You could talk back!

We are experiencing the opposite of the golden age in our current time. It is now called the post-mass communication era, where many more people can communicate with each other and with large groups of people. This new age is also known as Web 2.0 or the New Media.

In today's society, we are no longer limited to just a few people receiving news from mass media outlets like CNN or FOX News. People can now go on Twitter, Facebook, or Reddit to get their information from friends and even strangers worldwide.

People can also use these social media sites to distribute information themselves if they choose to do so. It is no longer limited anymore for it is free for anyone who wants to use it.

### **The Rise of Social Media as PR**

The rise of social media has opened up a new era in PR. Gone are the days when we mailed press releases to journalists and reporters. Now, individual consumers turn to social media for news, so companies adapt their PR strategies accordingly.

Facebook and Twitter have become the go-to places for press releases, with the added benefit of engaging directly with customers. Social media allows brands to show off their personalities and Connect with consumers personally. This helps build long-lasting relationships between companies and their customers.

One of the most significant ways social media has changed PR is that it gives a direct conduit to the public. In the past, if a company wanted to make an announcement, it mostly had two options—either go through the press or just make a direct announcement on its website or another forum.

Today, however, companies can communicate directly with customers via all sorts of social media channels. They can do things like announce new products on Twitter or Facebook before they are released, or they can give sneak peeks at upcoming products using Instagram stories or Snapchat photos. This allows companies to bypass journalists and speak directly with customers. This makes it easier for them to control their message, but at the same time, it also puts more pressure on them because they don't have anyone else acting as a buffer between them and their audience if something goes wrong.

Another way social media has changed PR is that it has put companies at risk of negative buzz going viral very quickly.

Social media is a great way to promote your brand, but it's not a replacement for mass media. Social media allows you to reach out directly to consumers and

involve them almost in the same way face-to-face communication does. Still, you have to be careful with how you interact with customers.

Be sure not to offend or embarrass them, and remember to keep your options open; social media is just one more way for companies to get their names out there. By using various methods, such as social media and mass communication, businesses can reach the widest audience available at any given time.



## CHAPTER 18

# THE EVOLUTION OF PR AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**F**unny how things change, isn't it? At one time, a newspaper was the best way to reach the masses. Nowadays, social media is the preferred method for communicating with customers and prospects.

Companies are spending millions of dollars on social media but are still under budget by several million in PR. It's time to stop competing with marketing and start working together.

For years, companies and agencies were trying to figure out how to use social media for PR. This was a difficult task as the two disciplines are very different. While PR is all about building relationships, social media is more about building networks. PR is strategic while social media is tactical.

Then what happened? Social media turned into paid advertising.

Marketing took over, and this has been a great thing for social media companies like Facebook, as they have seen revenues skyrocket because of it.

However, it has left many companies wondering if there is still a place for PR in their business or just allocating more funds to marketing and forgetting about the bottom line altogether.

Some say that the two types of companies in the world keep up with trends and those left behind. What started with a simple press release has evolved into an entirely new way of communicating to your customers, employees, prospective employees, and the media.

Companies would send out a news release to journalists and local news stations to announce their latest venture back then. Those who had more money could buy a spot on radio or television for a commercial.

Much has changed since then. With the advent of social media, businesses have been given a platform to reach millions of people instantly without paying for advertising.

Companies can now post about their work on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for free and potentially reach thousands — even millions — of people at once.

## **Traditional Media**

Traditional media are still in use; however, they have lost popularity over the past few years. This is because traditional media has become quite expensive, and many small business owners simply do not have the budget to afford it. In addition, traditional media requires a large amount of time and effort to be put into them. Most small business owners today could benefit from more free time, so traditional media can be a disadvantage for them.

Traditional media is still very much alive. Even as consumers have shifted their media habits from offline to online, traditional media has evolved alongside them to maintain its importance in the modern world.

By traditional media, we mean the following:

- Newspapers and magazines – long-form content that can be delivered through physical formats or digital formats (web and mobile). This includes both national and local publications.
- TV – national, local, and cable TV channels that can be broadcast on a set or digital device.
- Radio – broadcast radio stations that can be heard in-car, at home, or online.
- Outdoor – billboards, signs, posters, transit ads, and other signage viewed in public spaces.

Newspapers and magazines are still around today, but most people would instead read their news online or on an app than read a newspaper. This is because most people are on the go and cannot stop what they're doing to sit down and read a newspaper or magazine.

While this may not seem like a big deal, it is one of the main reasons people no longer use newspapers or magazines as media channels. The same goes for the radio. It is much more convenient for people to listen to their music on Spotify or Pandora than it would be to listen to a radio station at all times of the day.

## **Modern Media**

The world of media, as we know it, is changing. The media landscape has been transformed by the emergence of digital technologies and the Internet, which have significantly impacted the way people consume news, information, and entertainment.

Traditional media outlets like print and TV are losing their appeal with consumers, who now spend more time online consuming content on social media platforms than reading newspapers or watching television. This has led to a dramatic shift in how news is being reported and consumed.

PR practitioners need to understand the changing media landscape to be effective in their jobs. Here are some of the key trends that are shaping modern media:

**Social Media Is Now Mainstream:** Social media is not just for teenagers anymore — it's now an essential tool for marketers and PR professionals. Social networks like Facebook and Twitter have become important news sources for many people; a 2012 survey found that 85% of Americans get their news through social networks. Social media is also an important channel for marketers to reach out to consumers and engage with them in real-time.

The mainstream media's role has changed dramatically. Traditionally, the press was responsible for informing citizens about what was going on in the world. Today, news organizations are fighting to survive.

As a result of declining circulation and advertising revenues, traditional media outlets have reduced their staff, resulting in fewer reporters and less coverage.

In addition to the decline of traditional media, there are also many competing sources of information — blogs, social networks, online video sharing sites, and other new communication platforms. The proliferation of these sources means an abundance of information is available to the public through alternative channels.

**Mobile Is Changing Everything:** The rise of smartphones has radically changed the way people consume content. People now spend more time on their mobile devices than on desktops or laptops, which means marketers.

## **PR and the Internet**

A few things have changed in how PR works from the days of yore. The main change is that anyone can be a reporter or a “citizen journalist.” This means that the old PR rules about going through the gatekeeper (the editor) to get your message heard are gone.

The Internet has been a game-changer for public relations. The old rules are gone, and new ones occur every day. The most important new rule is this: You need to be much more proactive in your public relations efforts to keep pace with the Internet's speed.

The Internet has lowered the barriers to getting your story heard. If you had a good story but no big media outlet, you were out of luck. You can tell

your story on YouTube or social networks and have a chance at being heard by millions. You have to work hard to make it happen.

If you're not familiar with basic PR techniques, here's a quick rundown of the main ones:

- News release: A short statement announcing something newsworthy about your company or product that's sent to journalists
- Media list: A list of contacts in the media who might be interested in your news release
- Press coverage: Media coverage of something newsworthy about your company or product
- Press kit: Collateral materials (such as photos, bios, and releases) sent to journalists along with a press release

### **The critical role of social media in PR**

Social media is the new word of mouth in today's digital age. It is a powerful tool for public relations professionals to speak directly to their target audience, allowing them to reach a wider audience and build relationships with consumers in real-time.

Social media allows PR professionals to engage in a two-way conversation with their audience, rather than traditional one-way communications through channels such as print and broadcast outlets.

Social media has grown exponentially over the past decade. Not only does it provide a platform for individuals and businesses to communicate, but it has also opened up a whole new world of opportunities for PR professionals and brands to connect with their customers and influencers.

So how can social media benefit your PR?

- Social media is a great way to monitor what's being said about your business. You can receive instant feedback from your customers and prospects, allowing you to modify your strategy or even just have one-on-one conversations with people who have questions about your product or service. If a customer has a problem, there's nothing better than being able to jump in and help out before it escalates into something worse.
- It's a good way to build relationships with journalists and bloggers whether you're working on a specific campaign or not. Most journalists and bloggers

are now active on at least one social network so it's easy to get in touch with them quickly and easily if you need to.

- Social media channels offer a way to engage with audiences directly, as well as target journalists and influencers who are relevant to your business. This makes it possible to deliver more effective campaigns and ultimately drive sales. Social media makes it easier than ever for businesses to engage directly with their audiences.

### **Social Media and the Internet**

Social media and the internet can be precarious places to hang out. There are many potential problems that users can run into, from getting hacked to accidentally clicking on false advertisements.

The internet is a place where you can have fun, but you should be careful about the risks involved. When using social media sites, it's important to remember not to share your personal information with strangers.

You can prevent this by adjusting your privacy settings and only accepting friend requests from people that you know in real life.

It is also important to be aware of what your children are doing online so they don't get into trouble either.

They are all interconnected.

All social media, search engines, and shopping sites are online. That's why we call it the Internet. Some have their apps. So you can use them while offline too.

It is called a network because everyone is connected to everyone else through some sort of technology. We are connected via the Internet or social media sites or phone lines or fiber optics or satellites or wifi or Bluetooth etc...

So when you send a message on Facebook, for example, it travels through the wifi you are using and goes through a Bluetooth connection from your phone to the server that hosts Facebook. Then it is transferred to Google servers (because Facebook uses Google as its search engine). Then it is delivered to your friend's computer/phone.

So in this simple example, there are 3 (two main ones) different companies that have a hand in the delivery of your message: Facebook, Google, and Apple (if you used an iPhone). If the person who received the message has an Android phone, then Samsung may also be involved in some way. If they use WiFi instead of a data plan, then their ISP will also be involved somewhere along the line.

If you send an email to someone, then your email provider will also be involved in some way.

Be aware that not all users are who they say they are. Remember to respect other people's privacy and be considerate when communicating online.

Social Media Dos and Don'ts:

DO:

Use privacy settings. Make sure you know how to keep your posts private from those you don't want seeing them. You may even want to consider using different social media accounts for your personal life and another one for business or professional use only.

Protect yourself from scams and fraud. Scammers use social media as a way to target their victims. Make sure you do your research before sharing any personal or sensitive information online.

Do not click on any links, even if they seem like they're from someone you know, without verifying first that the link is legitimate. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Limit your social media use at work. Many companies will monitor your social media accounts while on the clock or have policies against using social media during business hours (or both).

Don't limit your posting to just sales pitches or self-promotion. Posting too much self-promotion can turn people off from your company and its products or services. Focus on providing quality content that people can relate to, even if it isn't about your business.

Do build relationships. Social media is about interacting with others and building trust through your business's expertise. It is important to respond to people's questions and comments about your products or services promptly.

Do provide value. When you publish information or share content from other sources, make sure it's interesting to your customers and provides them with something of value.

DON'TS:

Social media is a great way to keep in touch with friends and family, but it can also be a source of harassment and embarrassment. Here are some tips to help you avoid trouble:

Don't post sensitive or confidential information: your full name, credit card number, Social Security number, and other sensitive information. Don't share anyone else's information either.

Don't post inappropriate content: pictures of yourself that you wouldn't want your employer or grandmother to see, offensive language, and other inappropriate content.

Don't share personal details: where you live, where you work, and where you go to school. People from the past may use this information against you. They might not have changed at all since high school or college, so don't give them the opportunity.

Don't add people who aren't your friends: Strangers can easily use the information you provide on social networking sites to obtain more information about you from public records. Even if they're not a predator now, they might become one in the future.

The evolution of PR and The Evolution of Social Media are interwoven, and you need one to understand the other. The biggest change that the evolution of PR and Social Media has brought into the public relations community is a new ability to build trust with both clients and consumers.



## CHAPTER 19

# THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**P**ublic relations (PR) is the practice of managing the flow of information between an organization and its public. In most cases, the public is consumers, potential consumers, investors, employees, and so forth. PR builds relationships with these groups to create a positive image for an organization — one that will ultimately lead to sales and profits.

A successful PR strategy can make or break a social media campaign. It's for companies to hire outside PR firms just to write blog posts for them or respond to comments on Facebook pages. If you're going to be working with a paid PR firm, make sure it shares your vision for your company's presence on social media. The last thing you want is a bunch of stodgy blog posts that do nothing but bore your readers!

That said, investing in professional PR from the get-go isn't necessary; if you know what you're doing and have time to spare, you can do it yourself.

The function of public relations (PR) is to maintain a positive reputation for a company or organization.

The role of social media in PR is to share information and content that is pertinent to the reputation of the company.

Social media encompasses blogs, microblogs, social networks, social bookmarking, social curation, wikis, and any other type of collaborative Internet-based platform.

PR professionals use social media to communicate with three main groups: the media, employees, and customers.

PR professionals also use social media to track what people are saying about their company or organization by monitoring blogs and other discussion platforms.

## Public Relations in the Digital Age

The Internet has dramatically altered the way public relations professionals do their jobs. From blogging to social media, the digital age has changed publicity and public relations.

In the digital age, PR professionals must now understand how to use these new media platforms to reach their target audience. Publicity and public relations have changed from being a one-way dialogue to being a two-way exchange between company and consumer.

The best way for you to understand this change is to think about the way you get information today. Do you read a newspaper or watch TV news? Many people would say no. Instead, they go online and look up news articles or read blogs that interest them. And if they want more information on a topic they find online, they may go on Facebook and post a question asking their friends what they think about it. In other words, people are getting information from a variety of sources — many of which are not traditional media platforms.

The way consumers get their information influences the way PR professionals communicate with them. Consumers don't want to be bombarded with advertising messages all day long — which is why companies use PR experts in the first place. In addition, these new digital platforms give consumers more power than ever before: If your company does something wrong, customers can easily broadcast

In a digital age, businesses have more opportunities to build their public relations.

There are plenty of chances, but they're easy to miss if your business doesn't understand how it needs to adapt to the digital landscape.

- Build relationships with influencers. Businesses that don't understand the importance of influencer marketing will find it difficult to build their public relations. When you've built connections with influencers, you can gain more exposure than brands with a much larger budget.
- Get active on social media. A great way to increase your public relations is by getting active on social media and engaging with your customers there. By being an active presence, you can create a stronger relationship and improve your reputation with them -- and potentially attract new customers, too.
- Make use of SEO. Search engine optimization is a powerful tool that could help your PR efforts as well as your marketing efforts. If you haven't mastered

SEO yet, consider hiring a professional who can help you create content that is optimized for search engines and improve your search rankings over time.

- Take advantage of the news cycle. The news cycle has changed dramatically thanks to the growth of online media, but there are still plenty of opportunities to get your story heard.
- Increase your credibility. Studies suggest that most people trust recommendations from friends and family more than they trust advertising. This is a huge opportunity for businesses because it means that credible third-party validation can go a long way toward improving your company's reputation.

One of the most important changes is that digital technology has enabled greater transparency. The public is ever more aware of what goes on behind the scenes, both with companies and with the government.

For example, a great deal of the news that we read online comes from social media, in particular Twitter. People can now use social media to share stories about their experiences with a company (both good and bad) or to reveal things about companies that they feel the public should know about. This can be a really useful development for PR professionals because it provides them with a platform to talk directly to their target audiences. However, it does mean that they have less control over the message than they used to have.

## **How Social Media Has Changed PR**

Social media is one of the most important communication tools for public relations professionals. It has changed how organizations communicate with the public and interact with other organizations.

Like any other communication channel, social media also has its pros and cons. However, it is a powerful tool that enables PR professionals to reach large numbers of people quickly and at little cost.

PR has changed a lot over the years. It's become more like advertising and marketing, with content strategy and SEO taking center stage. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or unpaid ("organic") search results. SEO can significantly impact your business if done correctly.

Public relations used to be about communicating with journalists and forming relationships with them. These days it's much more than that, but it's important to remember how much journalists matter to the success of your brand or business.

Social media has made PR easier on businesses and brands because they no longer need to rely on the media to communicate their messages to the public.

Most small businesses do not have a PR department, however social media has made it so that everyone can be their PR team. By publishing articles through your company blog and distributing them via social media, you can spread awareness about your business in a very efficient way.

Here are some ways social media has changed PR:

I've been in the field of public relations for several years, and I've seen how the industry has changed in response to social media. Social media has changed public relations in many ways that can affect the way consumers view companies. Here are some ways social media has changed PR:

**Social Media Has Changed the Way Companies Deliver Their Message.** Social media has made it possible for companies to deliver their ages without relying on traditional forms of media to carry their messages. Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter allow companies to tell their stories directly to customers. This allows companies to control their message and avoid misinterpretations by third parties.

**Social Media Is Changing the Way PR Professionals Work.** The internet is changing the way PR professionals work. The internet provides information that is available 24-7, 365 days a year. PR professionals are now working longer hours than ever before because they need to monitor the internet so they can respond promptly if there is a crisis or customer service issue that needs to be dealt with immediately.

**Social Media Has Changed Customer Service.** In today's world, customer service complaints are often aired on social networks like Twitter and Facebook. Companies need to have these networks so they can address customer

PR, marketing, and advertising have become one. Social media allows all three departments to work together for greater brand awareness, customer engagement, and revenue.

PR is no longer just about press releases. It's about creating content for various platforms and channels, including social media, mobile devices, and blogs.

It's no longer just about what you say; it's also about what others say about you. Since anyone can post something on social media, it's important to know how people are talking about your brand online. Your reputation is partially determined by what they're saying — whether positive or negative — which again reflects the importance of building relationships with your customers.

## The Changing Face of PR

In the age of instant technology, it seems that everyone is a journalist, publisher, and broadcaster. It's the dawn of a new age for PR practitioners.

Many people believe that technology and social media are killing public relations, but it's quite the opposite: technology is creating a new era for this ever-evolving industry.

The rapid pace of digital change is forcing us to rethink how we communicate. The lines between what constitutes 'media' and 'public' are converging \and as such, PR professionals must re-evaluate their roles within organizations and adapt to become more multimedia relevant.

So, what is PR today?

In its simplest form, it's still about getting your name out there — but in an environment that is changing rapidly. The good news is that it's also evolving into one which is more accessible and democratic than ever before.

In this new age of PR, being able to create engaging content is vital. More than ever before, we must be able to write compelling copy for online platforms including blogs, websites, and social media pages. PRs need to understand how to use these platforms effectively for their target audience and build a positive reputation for their clients.

The difference today is that it's a lot more difficult for a business to "control" its PR efforts. Social media and online communities give everyone (including your competitors) the chance to express their opinions about you, your products, and the way you do business. And in most cases, this feedback will be visible to everyone — from potential customers and investors to employees, partners and investors.

In today's world of social media, paid advertising, and content marketing, it's easy to forget about the power of a good old-fashioned PR stunt.

PR is a powerful tool for establishing credibility and expertise, gaining coverage in the media, and building brand awareness.

But what is PR? Put simply, it's an aspect of marketing that uses third-party sources (rather than self-promotion) to promote an idea or a business.

In short: PR is all about creating valuable content for your audience, then finding ways to amplify it.

Today we're going to take a look at some of the most important changes in the field of PR – as well as some things that haven't changed in this rapidly evolving field.

## How PR Pros Use Social Media

Social media offers a ton of benefits to PR pros, from providing real-time awareness and audience insights to helping build relationships with journalists and the public. But how are public relations professionals using social platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat?

To find out, Sprout Social surveyed more than 500 PR pros about their social media habits and preferences. The survey revealed that PR pros use social media in a variety of ways to achieve their goals. They also have very strong opinions about which platforms are most effective at helping them do their jobs.

### What Are PR Pros Using Social For?

PR professionals use social media in four ways:

- For media monitoring-what, people are saying about the brand or organization
- For outreach and engagement
- To share content and knowledge
- For crisis communications

Social media is the new frontier for public relations, but it's still a largely untamed land that is being explored and developed as we speak.

The way businesses engage with customers has changed radically since the dawn of social media. For one thing, brands are now able to interact directly with their customers and prospects without a middleman. This allows businesses to establish meaningful relationships that they wouldn't have been able to create otherwise. It also allows them to reach out at any time without having to wait on someone else's schedule or approval.

In many ways, the advent of social media has been both a blessing and a curse for public relations professionals — and their clients. While it's easier than ever to reach large numbers of people, it's also significantly harder to manage brand reputation.

The core tenet of public relations is the same today as ever: it's about building and maintaining relationships with your audience and stakeholders. But never before have there been so many new ways to accomplish this.

For starters, any organization can now do PR. Before, only big companies could afford to hire an agency to handle their PR and marketing efforts. Now, even small businesses can leverage social media to reach out to press people — and they don't even have to spend money on it! They just need to be creative and strategic with the content they produce and share on the Internet.

Another thing that changed with social media is how we create stories for the media. The good old press release is still very much a part of PR, but these days, we also use infographics and video content for traditional media outreach.

As a quick refresher: PR is about managing the spread of information between an individual or entity (the sender) and an audience (the receiver). It encompasses everything from social media campaigns and earned media placements to internal communications efforts, like employee newsletters.

But if you want to be successful in today's landscape, you need to do more than simply react to what others are saying about your company. You need to actively engage with your audience on social channels.



## CHAPTER 20

# SHOULD PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA BE ALIGNED?

**T**wo of the more popular marketing disciplines are public relations and social media. Both are effective at reaching customers, but should they be aligned?

One of the main differences is that PR is focused on communicating with the press and influencers, while social media is about directly engaging with customers.

PR outreach can be a great way to get the word out about your business or new product, but it's a long-term play. You need to build relationships with people in the industry to get them to write about your company. And even then you need to make sure that you don't get pushed down their editorial calendar because something more important comes along.

Social media, on the other hand, lets you communicate with customers directly. Whatever you want to say can go straight out there without having to wait for someone else's schedule or editorial priorities.

So which is better? It depends on what you want to accomplish and how much control you want over your messaging.

Both public relations and social media are about communicating with customers, but each of them has different goals, uses different tools, different metrics for measurements, and different skill sets.

### Public Relations

The goal of public relations is to manage the communications between a company and its audience. Public relations people try to shape how their brand is perceived by their customers by creating positive press and marketing campaigns. Not every PR campaign will directly sell products. Instead, they will try to increase brand awareness to sell products in the long run.

### Social Media

The goal of social media is to engage with customers on a personal level and create positive relationships with them through likes, shares, and other

interactions. Social media professionals use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest to reach out to their audience directly. They aim at satisfying the customer's online needs through various tools, like Facebook Messenger or live chats on the company's website.

### **Why should I align social media with PR?**

The answer is simple: because you want your business to succeed. Social media and public relations are powerful tools that can help you achieve business success when they're used together. They provide a cost-effective way for you to build a brand, create positive awareness, and achieve your business goals.

Here are five reasons why you should align social media with PR:

#### 1. Social media is the new public relations

It used to be that PR was all about getting ink in major publications, which meant you had to do a lot of handholding with reporters and editors at various media outlets. These days, social media has completely changed that equation.

Nowadays, your audience members are Twitter users and LinkedIn group members, not just readers of specific magazines or newspapers. And they're also talking back to you on those platforms. So it's only natural that PR has evolved into a two-way conversation — and social media has made it possible for companies to communicate with their audiences directly.

#### 2. Public relations helps tell your story across social and other owned platforms

Owned content can be a great way to share a longer-form story. Whether that be a blog post or video, it is important to have a strong public relations strategy to promote the content through social and other earned channels.

With the right PR strategy in place, you'll consistently get coverage that highlights who you are and what you do — and it's important to share this with your audience on social. Not only is this great content (and authentic!), but it also adds credibility to your brand.

#### 3. PR helps to humanize your brand on social media

Today's customers are looking for brands that they can relate to and trust — and this is where social media comes in handy! Social channels allow you to interact with people on a more personal level, making it possible for them to connect with you as a person rather than just another business trying to sell

its products or services. And when customers feel like they know you better than anyone else does (because hey – they do!), they’re much more likely to buy from you!

4. PR helps keep your content real, relevant, and timely

Your company can’t control what’s happening in the world around you, but PR helps you understand the important issues and set a strategy to engage with them. As Jeff Bezos said in his annual letter to shareholders, “The outside world can push you into [reactive] mode only if you let it.” Allowing PR principles and practices to inform your social media strategy will help you take an active role and create valuable conversations around the latest news and issues that matter most to your audience.

5. PR helps to build trust and relationships

In a world where many still believe that PR and social media are two very different animals, it’s easy to see why so many businesses struggle to align their PR and social media activities.

‘PR is about building relationships, not just for the sake of it, but to communicate with journalists and other stakeholders. Social media is about building relationships to communicate with your customers and prospects. So aligning the two makes perfect sense

### **The Benefits of Aligning Social Media with Public Relations**

The benefits of aligning social media with public relations are plenty. These two critical areas of your business have a lot to gain from working together. Here are some benefits of aligning social media and public relations:

**Strengthen brand reputation.** By sharing positive content that your target audience is excited to see, you can build up a positive reputation over time.

**Grow brand awareness.** The more you share great content on social media, the more people will be exposed to your company.

**Drive traffic to your website.** When you share links on social media, they can drive traffic back to your site or blog. This can help increase conversions and sales, as well as provide valuable SEO benefits for your website (more on this later).

**Increase sales and revenue.** The more people know about your brand and what it has to offer, the more likely they are to consider purchasing from you in the future. A combination of sales promotions and other types of content can help drive more sales for your company over time.

## How to Align Your Social Media and Public Relations Efforts

Successful PR professionals know that their work doesn't end when they get a story published. While it can be satisfying to see the fruits of your labor in print, that's only the first step of a much longer process. A good PR pro will engage with reporters, editors, and influencers to ensure that the positive momentum continues.

If you're just getting into the world of public relations, this may come as a surprise. After all, we often think of PR as a one-and-done endeavor: You write a pitch; you send it; you hopefully get some love from reporters, and you move on to something else. But the reality is much more nuanced than that.

The same is true for social media marketing — indeed, there are many parallels between the two worlds. Social media marketers also know that success comes from building relationships over time, not simply from generating “likes” or shares on individual posts.

This means that if you're running both your company's social media and public relations efforts (or even if you're just managing one or another effort), it makes sense to align them to achieve better results in both arenas. Here's how:

- Establish a relationship.

It all starts with a conversation between the two teams to see what each brings to the table. Each team will have different strengths and weaknesses, so find out how you can leverage those strengths to complement each other.

- Create a joint strategy.

The two teams should work together to create a joint strategy that includes short- and long-term goals, along with metrics you'll use to measure progress. This also means identifying specific projects that both teams can work on together, so you have something to aim for right away. Your goals should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely – so that everyone knows what needs to be done by when.

- Get everyone on board with training sessions.

Training sessions should involve both teams from day one so that everyone understands exactly what's happening and why it matters for them. These sessions should be ongoing to ensure that everyone is up-to-date on any changes or strategies.

- Focus on newsworthy items.

Public relations is all about creating buzz around newsworthy events and announcements. These days, it's also about making sure that potential media outlets like Mashable and TechCrunch are aware of what you're doing. If you can get mentioned in these sources, your company — and your social media efforts — will benefit.

- Make your content relevant.

Social media campaigns don't have to be highly focused on products or sales to be effective, but they do need to be relevant to the target audience. When your PR firm has highlighted your company as a leader in a particular field, you can use this information as the basis for campaigns that will resonate with prospects and customers alike.

## **Disadvantages**

Social media is a very important and powerful tool. It is also a way to communicate with people in a very effective way. It is an effective way to promote your business and it gives you the chance to find new customers for your business. However, there are a few disadvantages that could affect your social media marketing efforts.

Here are some disadvantages of aligning social media with public relations:

The biggest problem is that PR people are trained to make themselves and their clients look good, which conflicts with the “keep it real” nature of social media. When you're in PR mode, your first instinct is to make sure the message is positive and controlled. Social media isn't about control — it's about letting things flow freely.

It can be difficult to keep up with the latest trends in social media marketing. Many different changes will occur regularly, so it is hard for businesses to keep up with this type of change. If your social media does not get updated regularly, then you will miss out on potential customers and sales opportunities.

It takes time to maintain your social media accounts. This means that if you do not have enough time to update your accounts regularly, then you will lose out on sales opportunities and potential customers. It is therefore recommended that you hire someone else who has more experience in the field of social media marketing to help you manage your accounts.

It may be difficult to track down information about people who post negative remarks about your business online. Let's say that you are monitoring

your Facebook page and come across a negative comment about your company posted by an unhappy customer. You click on the person's profile name in hopes of finding contact information so you can resolve the issue privately

### **What to consider when deciding if Public Relations and Social Media should be aligned**

The decision to align public relations and social media requires a strong understanding of the unique business problems each discipline is capable of solving.

Each discipline has its strengths and weaknesses, which should be considered when deciding whether or not to align them.

Public relations can drive top-of-funnel activity, such as brand awareness and consideration, which is most often measured through outputs (impressions) or earned media value. Social media, on the other hand, is primarily responsible for driving lower-funnel goals such as engagement, conversion, and loyalty, which are typically measured through engagements and click-through rates.

While there are exceptions to these rules, it's important to note that PR and Social Media carry different expectations based on their ability to solve different business problems at different points in the funnel.

PR focuses on gaining press coverage for a brand and can influence the way editors cover current events. Many times the journalists covering these events will follow press releases via social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook. For example, many news organizations have Twitter feeds that post information about breaking news or even follow through on press releases via social media.

Social media on the other hand focuses on gaining followers and engagement on various platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook. It involves posting content that people find useful and engaging...

The biggest reason to align PR and social media departments is that they share similar goals of influencing public opinion while helping brands connect with their customers. Aligning them can help the two teams work together more cohesively.

When you decide whether or not PR and Social Media should be aligned, there are many factors to take into consideration.

You could have an online presence that is more than just a website, blog, and social media marketing.

At the same time, it will help you to get more out of your marketing strategies.

There are plenty of good reasons why you should be aligning PR with social media marketing.

For one thing, they're both focused on building relationships with your customers. They're also both capable of providing valuable insights into the minds of your audience.

If you're looking for a way to build brand awareness and credibility, then PR is the way to go.

However, if you want to make sure that your products and services are promoted effectively, then social media may be the better choice.



## CHAPTER 21

# IS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGING THE FACE OF PR

**S**ocial media is influencing and changing the way that brands do things. Social media used to be a tool for people to connect and express themselves. Now it has turned into a tool for branding and marketing that has changed the face of traditional public relations. Take a quick peek at how social media is changing PR in some very unexpected ways.

### **Social Media Has Changed the Way People Access Information**

Social media has changed the way we access information. Now, it's easier than ever to get information about everything from your favorite band to the latest news when you want it. Not only has social media changed how we access information, but it has also changed the very nature of public relations and what we expect from our companies and corporations. Here's a look at how social media is changing PR for good.

#### **Information on Demand**

We live in an always-on society. We can access information when we want it, and we don't have to wait for it. That means that if there is a crisis brewing within your company or industry, you can expect it to be available via social media before you even know about it. You need to be prepared with a response before the first wave of questions hits your inbox.

#### **PR Is Faster, More Responsive**

In today's always-on world, PR is not just about reacting and responding to crises. It's also about being able to respond quickly and accurately to any inquiries or comments that come through your different platforms. Consumers want answers right away and they want them when they're browsing their social channels as opposed to searching for an email address or phone number online. As a result, PR professionals are now more responsive than ever

There are many ways to utilize the different platforms to get your client's messages out there including:

- Create blog posts on your website that you can then share on your social media sites. This can be a great way to not only inform your audience but also drive traffic back to your website.
- Post pictures or videos along with longer articles you've written about a client or event you're promoting. People often respond better to visual cues so this can be a good way to reach more potential customers.
- Share links to articles written about your clients in newspapers and magazines or events they sponsored.

### **Internal and External Communications Have Merged**

If you are a PR professional and have ignored the trends in social media, now is the time to get on board. The use of social media by PR professionals has been changing the role of PR and altering the way they interact with the media, as well as other groups that are important to their clients or organizations.

Social media has changed the role of PR professionals in several ways. First, they have become their publishers. Gone are the days when only journalists could publish stories or news items. Today, with the advent of blogging, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, and online video-sharing sites like YouTube, PR pros can now publish information about their clients or organizations directly to a wide audience.

Second, Internal and external communications have merged. Every employee is now a brand ambassador who can speak on behalf of a company at any time and in any place. When it comes to your online presence, you need to think like a publisher and invest in technology that allows you to publish quickly and effectively.

Third, social media has helped make public relations more transparent. In other words, it is harder for any company or organization to hide negative news in today's online world. That makes transparency even more crucial for success."

Every employee is now a brand ambassador who can speak on behalf of a company at any time and in any place. When it comes to your online presence, you need to think like a publisher and invest in technology that allows you to publish quickly and effectively.

It's easier than ever for people to find out about news about your company. In the past, companies had more control over what information was released about them and when it was released. Nowadays, your customers can find out about any news before your company does.

The result is that public relations and social media have evolved together. They no longer work in silos, but rather as one department working together. It's important to remember that the role of the PR pro today hasn't changed much since the days of Edward Bernays. You're still there to create and maintain a positive image for your company or client. The difference is that now you have many more tools at your disposal to reach those goals.

While social media may be changing PR, remember that some things will never change. You still need to know how to communicate effectively through different channels and how to adjust your message depending on who you're talking to (customers, investors, community leaders). You also need to understand how certain industries work and what is important to them.

### **PR Pros Must Adapt to Changing Times**

If you follow the social media sphere, you may have noticed a new trend in PR. Social media is changing the face of PR. Companies are beginning to see the value of social media and are working to incorporate it into their marketing campaigns.

What does this mean for the public relations industry? It means that PR pros must adapt to changing times. Social media is no longer a fad and it is here to stay. Companies must learn how to utilize social media effectively to keep up with today's technology-driven world.

The traditional role of a PR professional is changing as well. In addition to writing press releases and pitching stories to media outlets, PR professionals are now becoming more involved with online marketing campaigns, including search engine optimization (SEO) and content strategy. Some companies do not even hire publicists anymore! Instead, they are hiring SEO experts who can help them optimize their websites for search engines such as Google or Yahoo!.

How can PR professionals adapt? By learning how to use social media effectively and incorporating it into their day-to-day activities.

Here are five ways that PR pros can use social media to create a successful campaign:

- Create an engaging profile: Make sure your company's Facebook page is updated regularly. It should have an inviting cover photo and a great bio that includes all of the necessary links and ways for people to contact your company.

- **Use hashtags:** Hashtags are necessary for PR pros because it's the easiest way for people to find you online. When using Twitter, use hashtags that are relevant to your industry or trends that relate to your business or product. You can also create a hashtag for your event or campaign so that people can easily search for information on it.
- **Make it interesting:** Since people are bombarded with so much information these days, it is important to make sure what you post is interesting. It should be creative and relevant because, without those two components, you may lose your readers' attention. **Be consistent:** A business needs to be consistent when posting on social media accounts. For example, if you post updates every Monday morning but then one week go silent, it may give off a negative impression. It is important to post regularly so that people don't forget about your brand or think you have stopped doing business altogether.
- **Engage with customers:** A Facebook page is not just for posting links and promotions. It's also a valuable opportunity to communicate directly with customers and resolve any problems they may have with your products or services. This can turn what would otherwise be a negative experience into a positive one for the customer, who will likely go away feeling satisfied that their concerns were addressed by the company directly.

### **Transparency has Become More Important Than Ever for Brands**

PR has evolved over the years, and the advent of social media has had a major impact on the way PR professionals go about their jobs. This new world of social media has brought with it some unique challenges, but also some great opportunities for brands.

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#### **The Importance of Transparency**

Unlike traditional media, which is typically one-way communication from the brand to the consumer, social media is a two-way street where consumers can engage directly with brands in real-time. The lines between brands and consumers are no longer as clear because consumers now have the opportunity to become involved in shaping a brand's identity and its messaging.

In this environment, transparency has become more important than ever for brands. Consumers appreciate companies that are honest and open about who they are and what they do, which is why transparency is so important when speaking to audiences through social media.

Brands that don't take advantage of this new opportunity for transparency run the risk of becoming irrelevant in a rapidly changing landscape. Consumers have come to expect ever greater access to information about the companies they do business with, and social media provides an easy avenue for them to engage in conversation with brands they love (or hate).

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In the past, if someone had an issue with a company or its product, they might call their customer service line or write a letter. But now that concerns can be aired so publicly, you have to be more proactive about staying on top of issues.

Here are some tips for protecting your brand in the age of social media:

Check in regularly with what people are saying about you. You can use tools like Google Alerts and Mention to stay on top of conversations about your company. Make sure you set up profiles on all major social networks and check them daily for new content.

Be proactive about getting out in front of issues that may arise. If there is a problem with one of your products, don't wait until it gets out into the social sphere before addressing it publicly. Acknowledge that there may be an issue and let customers know how you plan to fix it.

## **Social Media is Changing the Definition of PR**

There's a new paradigm in public relations, and it's profoundly different than what we've seen before.

In the old days, publicists used to be the gatekeepers of information. Sure, there were the leaks, but publicity pros were still able to control the narrative and spin information to benefit their clients.

Those days are over.

The role of the public relations professional is becoming more strategic, and social media marketing is taking its place alongside traditional promotional tactics.

Marketing and public relations professionals are beginning to understand that they must understand how to use new social media tools. New ways to reach consumers are emerging every day. Blogs, micro-blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and many others are now considered mainstream communication channels for businesses of all sizes ... in all industries.

The importance of social media cannot be underestimated. Some industry experts believe that social media marketing will eventually replace the traditional press release altogether. The reasons for the decline in press releases include lack of trust by journalists who have been "bombarded" by press release after press release with little or no relevancy to their readership.

The future looks promising for public relations professionals who understand new media tools like blogs and Twitter and how they can be used to communicate your message to your target audience ... via an engaging conversation. This is what blogging is all about!

Social media is a great tool for brands to reach their audience. They can humanize their brand and create a relationship with the consumer. Although some brands do not directly engage with consumers, they can monitor and see what consumers think of them.

Through platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, brands can show off their dedication to customers. Brands can also highlight the personality of their company through social media posts.

While there are many benefits of social media for brands and businesses, companies must have a clear social media strategy in place. Without one, they could face backlash from consumers or risk losing any trust they have built up in the past.

## CHAPTER 22

# HOW DOES PR DIFFER FROM SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Now that social media have become the default channel for distributing news, public relations and social media marketing seem to be converging. But they're not the same thing, and it's important to understand how they're different.

### What Is Social Media Marketing?

Marketing is the process of attracting business by positioning your product or service in a way that makes it appealing to customers. It's about building and maintaining your brand image. Social media marketing is simply the use of social channels — usually Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on — as marketing tools.

### What Is Public Relations?

PR, on the other hand, is about creating positive relationships with stakeholders — including customers, investors, and employees — and managing them during times of crisis. A public relations professional may write blog posts or communicate via social media, but those are just tools for doing the job.

In a nutshell: Public relations professionals use editorial methods to build relationships and gain exposure for clients, while social media marketers use paid methods to build relationships and gain exposure for brands.

Both social media marketing and PR are focused on boosting brand awareness and reputation, but they each utilize different tactics and channels to achieve those goals.

The biggest difference between public relations and social media marketing are as follows

### **PR relationships are built over time.**

There's no shortcut to cultivating a good relationship with a reporter. It's not enough to send out multiple emails and wait for them to ask you for more information. The best relationships take years to build and require trust, respect, and a lot of communication.

PR people tend to focus on the long term. They understand that building relationships takes time and that it is a process. They are also very aware of how important it is to be strategic and not to waste resources, whether those resources are time or money.

PR people also understand the importance of telling a story, something many brands still struggle with. Storytelling is so important in PR because it helps build relationships between a brand and the public.

PR people live for media relations. This is their specialty. This is what they do best! The best PR professionals nurture and build relationships with journalists, bloggers, and influencers over time so that when they need coverage, they already have the connections in place to get results.

### **Social media marketing is a less personal way to communicate with customers.**

When it comes to marketing your business, nothing beats personal communication. Talking face-to-face or even over the phone is more effective than email, and a real conversation is 100 times more effective than social media.

The problem is that not all businesses can afford the time or resources needed for these kinds of interactions. Not every business has a sales force, and even if you do, your salesperson can't be on a call 24 hours a day. This is where social media excels — giving you a way to stay in touch with customers and prospects without having to be there in person or on the phone. It can't replace those other methods of engagement, but it can supplement them.

Social media marketing is an extremely effective way to reach out to potential customers and stay in touch with existing ones — but it's only one piece of your marketing mix. The biggest mistake you can make is thinking that social media should be the only piece of your marketing mix.

Social media is a less personal way to communicate with customers.

- It can be difficult to measure results.
- Not everyone uses social media.
- Some customers may not want to talk with you on social media.
- It takes a lot of time to run a social media campaign correctly.

But in the end, it's all about how the customer feels. Social media marketing is a less personal way to communicate with customers and can be a useful way to reach out if you're running an online business or if your target market lives far away.

But for local businesses, especially those that rely on repeat customers, embracing the more personal aspects of social media can help build relationships with customers that will help keep them coming back for more.

#### Benefits

- Using social media can benefit your business by:
- Increasing exposure and building loyalty
- Providing instant communication with customers
- Getting customer feedback on products and services
- Staying current with trends and connecting with influencers
- Reducing marketing costs

Social media has become a powerful marketing tool for brands of all sizes. But not everyone is using it effectively.

If you want to boost your business and engage with your audience, follow these social media marketing best practices:

Define your goals. If you don't know what you want to achieve, how will you know when you've done it? Identify what success looks like for you and your business, so that every decision will be made with an end goal in mind.

Identify your audience. You can't write content if you don't know who it's for. Figure out where they live, what they do, and what their challenges are. The better the understanding of your target market, the more successful your social media marketing efforts will be.

Create high-quality content. Sharing great content is a surefire way to drive traffic to social channels, increase engagement and generate leads. Remember that quality always trumps quantity when it comes to content creation. Focus on creating valuable content that resonates with your audience instead of flooding their timelines with mediocre posts that have little value or relevance.

Use visuals in your posts. Images and videos perform much better on social media than simple text updates. Visuals make a post stand out from the crowd and catch people's

#### **PR focuses on building relationships with journalists and influencers.**

A good way to think about it is this:

A press release can be sent out to a thousand journalists at once, but only one (hopefully more!) will write back asking for more information. That is the start of a relationship and that's when you need to be ready with good story angles and content ideas.

The same goes for people who are tweeting on behalf of publications. The first thing they're going to do is check out your website and social media presence. If they like what they see, they'll follow you. This is when you need to engage with them by thanking them for following you, asking questions, sharing their content, etc. You want to keep them warm so when you reach out with a pitch, it doesn't come out of the blue.

One of the best things you can do to improve your relationship with the media is to follow their work. You can find a lot of this information in the media kits and archives on media websites.

After you find the information, make a list of the publications and journalists who cover topics related to your industry or specialty. This can be a very long list, but it's important to know exactly who you are pitching because it lets you personalize your outreach and build long-term relationships.

Before you pitch your story, do some research on the reporter (using LinkedIn, Twitter, and so on) to get a better idea of what they cover and what types of stories they prefer. The more information you have about them, the better chance you have of getting their attention.

### **PR Is Earned, Social Media Marketing is Paid**

Social media marketing is a great way to help you create buzz and attract new customers. But where does it fit in with your overall public relations (PR) strategy?

PR is the art of getting earned media, while social media marketing is a form of paid media. These two tactics are each powerful on their own, but they're even more effective when used together.

There are two main types of digital marketing. Organic (or earned) and paid.

Paid social media marketing is a paid form of digital marketing, where ads are placed on social media platforms to reach a target audience. Paid social media marketing allows you to pay for your content to be promoted and distributed more widely than it would organically, through retargeting influencer campaigns, and more.

Organic social media marketing consists of unpaid content that you post to your owned profiles to grow your audience and engagement. The keyword here is "unpaid". This can include posting content on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or any other platform where you have an account.

Public relations (PR) is the use of strategic communications to build mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its public. PR is

about reputation—the result of what you do, what you say, and what others say about you. PR can also be defined as the practice of managing communication between an organization and its public.

PR is earned coverage in the press based on a company's newsworthiness or goods/services being newsworthy enough for journalists to write about them in their publications. On the other hand, social media marketing is paid promotion on platforms.

Public relations (PR) is defined as the way organizations, companies, and individuals communicate with the public and media. A key function of PR is to manage reputation through earned media coverage — to ensure the right messages are shared in the right way to the right audiences.

In a communications landscape that has shifted dramatically in recent years — driven by social media and the rise of digital platforms — brands are now able to engage directly with consumers in real-time.

Marketing, on the other hand, focuses on promoting products and services, either directly or indirectly, through paid ads that reach audiences in a variety of ways.

These two aspects of marketing your business — PR and social media marketing — should not be confused. Although they support each other, they are not interchangeable.

### **PR Engages the Media, Social Media Marketing Engages the Public**

Public relations and social media marketing can appear to be similar, but the two are quite different. The differences become obvious when you understand how the two work.

The primary function of public relations is to engage the media. PR agencies help companies communicate with the press, which then communicates with the public. The goal is to get positive coverage in as many publications as possible, on as many channels as possible — including television, radio, print, and online.

Social media marketing's primary function is to engage the public directly. It's about helping companies communicate with the public directly. It does this by creating an active social media presence for a company or brand and then engaging people on its social networks.

The two types of outreach share some important similarities. They both involve telling stories about brands, and both can help generate awareness for products and services. But there are some key differences between the two as well. Let's look at what they are and how they can be used together:

- PR outreach focuses on getting media coverage whereas social media marketing focuses on engaging with people directly
- PR helps boost credibility while social media helps boost visibility
- PR is more focused on building a bigger narrative while social media marketing involves lots of small conversations
- PR creates relationships with journalists while social media marketing creates relationships with social influencers
- PR involves targeting specific journalists whereas social media marketing involves targeting specific people

PR is an important function that requires an expert team of specialists. It's not something you can outsource to a marketing agency and expect it to get the same level of attention as other marketing strategies.

Social media marketing, on the other hand, is a strategy that can be included as part of your marketing or PR campaigns.

If you're not sure how to use social media for your business, then hire a professional digital agency that knows what they're doing. A good social media campaign will engage your target audience, resulting in more sales leads and higher conversions.

### **PR Respects Traditions, Social Media Marketing Embraces Change**

Public relations professionals are traditionally trained in the fine arts of brand management, media relations, and relationship building. Social media marketing is a relatively new field that focuses on how to use social networks and how to merge traditional public relations with new technology.

#### **PR Respects Traditions**

PR is not dead. It's still as vital as ever, but it is changing to suit the times. What hasn't changed is its core aim: to build and maintain positive relationships with the public. This can be done through social media, but it's more of a challenge because you have to reach your audience on a personal level. As a result, PR will respect traditional methods like press releases, building contacts in the media, and attending industry conferences.

#### **Social Media Marketing Embraces Change**

Social media marketing is relatively new compared with PR, and it's rapidly evolving as new channels emerge and existing ones are refined. The importance of social media marketing lies in the fact that it allows companies and brands to reach their target audiences directly; they're no longer reliant

on journalists or other intermediaries to get their message across. As a result, social media marketers need to embrace change and adapt to stay ahead of their competitors.

#### Social Media Marketing Focuses on Viral Trends

Viral marketing is the latest buzzword for marketers. It refers to one person's ability to share information with their friends, who share it with their friends, and so on. The result is a spreading network of people who were reached by a single person's action. For example, when Justin Bieber made his debut on YouTube, he was discovered by Scooter Braun, who signed him to his record label and encouraged him to post more videos on YouTube.

#### Social Media Marketing Relies on Analytics.

When it comes to social media, no brand can truly say its efforts aren't working. Every post and every campaign will have a result, whether that is positive or negative. The question is, are you paying attention? Social media marketing relies on analytics.

One of the most important things your business can do with social media is to monitor and measure results. Without analytics, you are throwing darts in the dark. Analytics provide valuable insight into how your customers interact with your brand through social media channels.

Social media analytics allow you to:

- Determine which social networks should be the focus of your time and resources.
- Learn what kind of content your audience shares and engages with.
- Find out when your followers are active so you can schedule your posts accordingly.
- Analytics tools can show you exactly who's paying attention to your social efforts, as well as where they're coming from and what they're interested in.

The very first step in the process of analytics is identifying an objective for your social media activity. Are you trying to increase followers? Find leads? Sell more products?

Once you have identified your goals, the next step is to track them using the tools available on each platform. Each platform has metrics and measurements you can use to determine how well your posts are performing.

If you would like to get in touch with news reporters and media outlets and feature your brand in their stories then PR is the way to go.

Companies have been using public relations forever to generate sales and revenues. And, that's because it works!

Public relations is the most cost-effective way of spreading brand awareness and getting featured in the news. However, you're likely to get more success with PR if you're able to write effective press releases.

If you have no idea how to write press releases then fear not because this blog post will give you all the tips you need for writing effective press releases that will get picked up by news reporters and media outlets.

## CHAPTER 23

# HOW SOCIAL MEDIA INTERTWINES WITH PR AND DIGITAL MARKETING

**S**ocial media makes it easy to share information in a very public way. Even if you aren't looking to get involved in the conversation, it's easy to pick up on what people are talking about.

It is also just as easy, and tempting, to react quickly and impulsively when you see something that doesn't line up with your beliefs. This is why many brands and businesses hesitate with putting themselves out there on social media platforms.

Social media has altered the way people interact with brands. Many brands that previously didn't have a voice are now able to speak authentically, directly to their audience. A large number of companies have seized this opportunity and reaped the rewards, but many others have failed miserably.

The key is to know how to use social media correctly – and that means understanding how it fits into your overall marketing strategy. Brand images can take years to build but only seconds to crumble if mismanaged by a company.

On the other hand, the marketing landscape has changed, and social media is now a crucial part of any brand's PR strategy. Social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter, are the new megaphones for organizations. These social channels allow brands to cultivate relationships with their customers, industry influencers, journalists, and other important stakeholders.

The direct-to-consumer nature of social media allows organizations to build relationships and create lasting engagement with their audience in a way that has never been possible before.

Here are five ways in which PR and social media intersect:

### **PR and Social Media**

We use social media to stay updated on what's going on in the world around us. However, the company you work for may not be using social media to its fullest

potential. Social media is a great way to connect with customers and potential customers and it can also be used as a tool to help your business grow if used correctly.

Here are some tips on how you can use social media in your business:

- Determine what platform(s) you will use
- Post regularly
- Engage with followers
- Monitor feedback and respond appropriately
- Share content related to your business
- Promote yourself or others you know that have small businesses

Sharing your brand's story on social media through the use of storytelling is a powerful way to connect with customers.

Social media storytelling uses emotion and authenticity to form a stronger connection with your audience. In this guide, we'll introduce you to the concepts of social media storytelling, provide tips on how to start using it, and show examples from brands who are doing it well.

What is Social Media Storytelling?

Storytelling has been around for thousands of years. It's how humans (and animals) pass down important information and memories from one generation to the next. Storytelling helps us create meaning out of the seemingly random events that occur in our lives. It's also how people relate to each other and form emotional connections.

## **Digital Marketing and Social Media**

Digital marketing is the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media and differs from traditional marketing in that it uses channels and methods that enable an organization to analyze marketing campaigns and understand what is working and what isn't – typically in real-time.

Digital marketing poses special challenges for its purveyors. Digital channels are proliferating rapidly, and digital marketers have to keep up with how these channels work, how they're used by receivers, and how to use these channels to effectively market their products or services. Just as television overcame the radio and the internet overcame television, digital is now overcoming every other form of marketing communication.

Digital media is so pervasive that consumers have access to information at any time and any place they want it. Gone are the days when the messages

people got about your products or services came from you and consisted of only what you wanted them to know. Digital media is an ever-growing source of entertainment, news, shopping, social interaction, and a wide variety of other information.

Social media is a specific type of digital marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social networks to achieve your marketing and branding goals. Social media can be a useful source of market information and a way to hear customer perspectives.

Blogs, content communities, and forums are platforms where individuals share their reviews and recommendations of brands, products, and services. Businesses can tap and analyze the customer voices and feedback generated in social media for marketing purposes; in this sense, social media is a relatively inexpensive source of market intelligence that can be used by marketers and managers to track and respond to consumer-identified problems and detect market opportunities.

For example, the Internet erupted with videos and pictures of the iPhone 6 “bend test” which showed that the coveted phone could be bent by hand pressure. The so-called “bend gate” controversy created confusion amongst customers who had waited months for the launch of the latest rendition of the iPhone.

However, Apple promptly issued a statement saying that the problem was extremely rare and that the company had taken several steps to make the mobile device’s case stronger and robust.

### **The Importance of an Integrated Approach**

Social media is not a separate entity from your other marketing efforts. It is an integral part of your overall digital marketing strategy and should be integrated with the rest of your marketing activities.

Social media doesn’t exist in a vacuum, so you can’t treat it as a separate marketing activity where you post updates about special offers or information about your company. Instead, you must weave social media into the way you communicate with customers and how you deliver customer service.

#### **The Importance of an Integrated Approach**

PR and marketing go hand-in-hand, and social media is essential for both. PR professionals use social media to drive awareness and engagement with a brand, while marketers use it to increase revenue.

This dual-purpose means you have to tread carefully around certain topics and be sensitive to how they’re presented online. Of course, these aren’t new

challenges — brands have been dealing with them since the beginning of PR. But the speed at which social media moves means you have to act quickly.

Imagine, for example, that your organization is experiencing a PR crisis — maybe someone has accused your brand of unfair practices, or perhaps one of your products has caused injury or harm. How quickly can you respond? Do you have a plan? If not, then you need to develop one.

Here are some reasons why an integrated approach is important:

- Marketing and communications people need to work together. It's no secret that these two groups often don't see eye-to-eye or have different agendas, but when organizations don't work together, it's the customers who get confused.
- The customer experience needs to be seamless across all channels. From marketing campaigns to support calls to tweets, businesses need to deliver consistent messages and experiences on every platform, in every medium, and at every touchpoint between a brand and its customers.

Social media marketing is becoming more and more important, and it is no longer just a supplementary tactic in the overall marketing mix. So, to be successful, you need a strategy that incorporates your social media marketing into your digital and PR efforts. That way, you're creating an integrated approach that allows you to build an audience and create content that addresses their needs.

Social media sites are where people spend time online, so it only makes sense that you would integrate this into your overall efforts. Social media is an organic way to engage with customers by humanizing your brand. It allows them to ask questions and get answers from you. An effective social media strategy has a comprehensive plan for what you want to achieve and how you will go about doing it.

The following are some of the best ways to integrate social media into your marketing:

The following are some of the best ways to integrate social media into your marketing:

- **Focusing on the Right Platforms**

Before you can start integrating social media into your overall marketing plan, you need to figure out which platforms you will use. It is not necessary or even wise to be on every single platform. Rather, it's best to focus on the platforms

that directly align with your goals and make sense for your business. If your target audience isn't on a certain platform, then why would you waste time there? You don't need to be everywhere to be successful.

The key to social media success is finding out where your target audience is already spending time online and then meeting them there. Consider researching which platforms they use most often so that you know where to focus. Once you find out which platforms they use most often, you can create beneficial content specifically for them and place it on those sites.

- **Using Social Media for Customer Service**

One of the most important, and often overlooked, aspects of building a brand on social media is customer service. While many businesses have their dedicated customer service Twitter handles (e.g., @ComcastCares), you don't have to have a special account set up just for customer service to use Twitter in this way.

Companies can use social media as an extension of their customer service departments. Whether you choose Twitter or Facebook as your primary customer service platform, you should look for ways to engage customers and address issues before they turn into full-blown complaints. Responding quickly and effectively to customer complaints can do wonders for your brand image and keep people coming back in the future.

- **Creating Content That Engages Readers**

Social media is all about engagement. You shouldn't expect people to follow you unless you offer them something of value in return. This means sharing content that relates to your industry but isn't necessarily related to your product or service.

Create high-quality content for your company's blog that engages readers. The content can be anything from sales-related items to lifestyle tips or even quick and easy recipes. You might also include news on upcoming events or sales, as well as new product lines. To attract readers, you must include a unique perspective in your blog posts that makes them stand out.

- **Understanding Your Audience**

The first step to building a strong social media presence is to understand your audience. What are they interested in? What do they want to hear? Take the time to research who they are, what they like, and what makes them tick. You can use tools like Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, and Twitter Analytics to gain

valuable insight into your target audience. Once you understand their wants and needs, you can create content that will speak directly to them.

These questions will go a long way in developing a customer persona for your brand, which is the framework for any successful campaign. Once you have a solid understanding of who you're targeting, it's time to establish goals for your social media marketing.

### **The Future of Social Media in PR and Digital Marketing**

The future of social media in PR and digital marketing is bright. Social media is on the cusp of becoming one of the most powerful and innovative tools for public relations and marketing professionals. However, as with all good things, there are a few bumps along the road to success.

Here are some predictions for social media as it relates to PR and digital marketing:

#### 1. Content will be king

I think content is going to continue to be big because people have an insatiable appetite for content. People have an insatiable appetite for knowledge and they want to learn things and they want to share things with others. That's not going to go away, that's only going to increase.

#### 2. User-generated content will continue to grow

I think we're going to see a lot more user-generated content in the future. People are starting to realize that they don't have to rely solely on traditional publishers or traditional media outlets who control what gets out there. Now anyone can put anything out there and brands need to learn how they can leverage that into their marketing strategy.

#### 3. Personalization is going to get bigger

When you talk about personalization, you're talking about ads, email messages, location-based marketing, and content being tailored to the audience in question. The reason why personalization is going to be huge? It plays into the concept of "relevance." When content or a marketing message is relevant to a person's life, they're going to respond to it much more favorably.

Additionally, we can expect to see a greater reliance on AI, VR, and AR technologies to heighten user experiences and broaden their utility.

Customers can expect more personalized recommendations from brands that are using AI to process their big data.

Virtual reality will be used to create a more immersive user experience as well as better train employees.

Augmented reality will develop into a more interactive tool than it is today and will provide customers with real-time information about products and services.

Social media for business is no longer optional. It's an essential way to reach your customers, gain valuable insights, and grow your brand. But learning how to make the most of social media marketing can be overwhelming. So, where do you start?

The first step in developing a social media strategy is to establish overall objectives and goals for what you want to achieve through social media. With these objectives in mind, you can then create content that aligns with your goals and appeals to your target audience.

In addition to publishing your content on social networks (and on your blog), don't forget about sharing other people's content as well. Social sharing is a great way to boost engagement on your blog and social pages.



## CHAPTER 24

# ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

**T**he key to effective media relations lies in the concept of mutuality. Both sides want something from the other, and for news media, these are information, ideas, and access to sources. For an individual or organization, it is access to an audience, or in some cases a need to correct or add information. The key to mutuality is making sure you understand what each side wants and providing it.

A newswire service can provide your organization with a means of reaching many different news organizations at once. In the case of a developing story, a press release distributed via newswire service can get your point of view out faster than if you distribute it yourself and wait for individual reporters to contact you.

For some organizations, social media may be more effective than traditional media relations because it allows them to reach their specific target audience directly through “owned channels” such as a blog or Facebook page.

### **How To Reach The Media**

The world of media relations is not as it was when I began my career; the internet has changed everything.

In the old days of print, you had a better chance of reaching a reporter. The same person who wrote the story would often answer the phone, and newspapers published their email addresses. Today, however, most online news sites do not provide contact information for their journalists. And where they do, your pitch is more likely to be seen by an intern or an assistant than the person you want to reach.

This means that building relationships with reporters and editors is more important than ever. Reporters are inundated with ideas from publicists and

others hoping to get coverage for their clients. But if you have a great relationship with a reporter and she knows that you consistently send her good ideas, she's far more likely to take your call or respond to your email than someone she doesn't know.

There are many ways to work with the media, but when it comes to PR, you want your product or service to be reviewed.

#### Media Relations Tactics

Whether you're pitching a story to a local paper or writing a press release, there are some effective tactics for getting noticed by the media.

- **Be timely:** Give reporters what they need when they need it (or very soon thereafter). If you don't have time to read their request and respond within a few hours, then you are not going to be useful to them.
- **Be useful:** Make sure you understand what the reporter needs and that your response helps them meet their deadline (which could be within minutes).
- **Be available:** Make sure they know how to contact you if they have follow-up questions or if the story changes after you have submitted your response.
- **Be quotable:** Give them something clever, interesting, or provocative that they can quote directly without worrying about accuracy.

The key to getting the attention of the media is knowing what they want. Journalists want good stories and information that is useful for readers and viewers. They know their audiences, and if you can create a story or package of information that is relevant to their audience, then you are more likely to get coverage.

The media are also looking for ways to make their lives easier as they race on deadlines. Help them by providing concise and complete information, such as specifics about your event including who, what, when, where and why it should be covered.

#### y Media Relations Strategy

Media relations is a key component of your public relations strategy. The goal is to get the media to write about you, talk about you or interview you. This can be achieved by calling them up and pitching your story to them over the phone, by sending an email, or by actually sending them a press release. The media relations strategy is part of your overall marketing plan and should include:

- **Developing A Media List**

You need to figure out what media outlets are relevant to your project and its audience. You can find this out by looking at other events that are similar to yours or by doing some research on your area. The best sources of information are members of the media themselves. If you have contacts in the media, talk to them about what they like to cover and what they're working on.

There are many different types of media — newspapers, magazines, radio shows, television programs, online publications — each with a different timeline and format. All news outlets have deadlines that determine when their content is finalized (i.e., when their stories go to press). When you contact the media about your event, make sure you know their deadlines so that you don't contact them too late or too early (which will just annoy them).

- **Preparing Your Message**

When you start thinking about pitching your company's story, some key messages should be conveyed through your pitch:

The problem statement – what is the problem that your company is solving? Why does this problem exist? What impact does it create? The solution – how does your company solve this challenge? Why is your company better at solving it than other companies in the industry? Results/evidence - what evidence can prove that your solution works? This can include third-party validation from industry experts

- **Preparing Your Press Release**

A good press release is accurate, concise, and includes a compelling attention-grabbing headline. Make sure you have all the facts first before writing the story because once a story is in print it's there forever - even if you correct it later.

Your press release should be no longer than one page. It should include: who, what, when, where, why, and how (be as specific as possible.) Keep the press release simple and easy to read.

Use "action" words such as "announced," "launched," "introduced" and so on. Use present tense and avoid jargon and technical terms. You want to appeal to a general audience, not an industry insider.

Here are some tips for writing a press release:

- Prepare an 'Attention Grabber'. It's important to have an attention grabber in your first paragraph. This will make your press release stand out from

the hundreds that most media outlets receive each day. If you don't have something to grab a reader's attention, they'll simply move on and read something else. This is why it's important to always include something relevant, timely, and newsworthy in your first paragraph.

- **Include Some Background Information.** Once you've captured the reader's attention, you need to provide them with some background information and details about what makes your story worthy of coverage. Include information about what it is you're releasing, who is involved and how it helps readers. Also include contact information so that people can find out more if they want to do so.
- **Never send out a press release that is not grammatically correct or that lacks complete information.**
- **Always have a contact person, phone number, and e-mail address on your press release.**
- **Include several quotes from key people involved in whatever event you're announcing in your news release.** Quotes add credibility and color to your story and make it more interesting for readers and listeners. They also provide journalists with additional sound bites they can use in their coverage of your announcement.
- **Keep It Short And Sweet** Readers in today's society do not want to spend a lot of time reading long press releases that go on for several pages.

The press release is a very useful, albeit often underutilized, element in a comprehensive media relations campaign. A well-written press release can be valuable to your organization

- **Follow-Up With The Media**

Follow-up is critical to the success of your media relations efforts. After you have sent out your press release, you need to make sure it has been received and that it is going to be used. If a reporter indicates they are interested in writing a story based on your press release, send them any additional information they may need such as high-resolution photos, biographies, statistics, or other data.

If the story appears in a print publication, send a thank you note along with a copy of the article for their files. If your press release is used for television news stories, record the segment on videotape and send a copy of the tape to the reporter and station with another thank you note.

If you are going to call reporters directly, you must develop a list of reporters who are likely to be interested in your company or product. Many reporters specialize in either reporting on certain industries or specific topics (such as technology or health) so you must know what those interests are before contacting any reporter. In addition, finding out which publications they work for will help you determine whether the reporter would be interested in writing about your story or not. To do this research, go online and look at the masthead of these publications to find out who their reporters are and what they cover. You can also find out what other stories they have written recently so that you have a better idea of their areas of interest. Most

### **Social Media Options For Nonprofits**

The Internet is a vast place, and it can be hard to know where to begin when setting up social media for a nonprofit. However, there are a few key players who have become the core of online presence. Here's a list of the major types of social media, along with some ideas on how you can use them to help your organization succeed.

**Facebook:** The biggest and most basic social network out there, Facebook was founded in 2004 and has since grown to more than 1 billion users worldwide. For nonprofits, the platform is great for sharing information about events and fundraisers that you're hosting. It's also a fine place to share news updates and other content that may be of interest to current supporters.

**Twitter:** This social microblogging site has exploded in popularity since its launch in 2006. Users can post 140-character messages, or "tweets," which can include links to further information on a wide variety of topics. For nonprofits, this is a fast and effective way to share messages about upcoming events or breaking news updates quickly with many people at once.

**YouTube:** YouTube offers an opportunity to engage people in your organization's mission by sharing videos that promote your cause, events, or activities. Videos related to your cause can also be shared on a blog or website, further extending their reach online.

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is primarily used by business professionals and academics, but it is also an effective way to connect with donors and other supporters who work in the nonprofit sector or have strong personal networks.

“How can you use social media effectively for your nonprofit? Here are some popular tips for starting on the Social Media landscape:

1. Make a list of the social media sites that your organization’s audience is likely to be on. For example, if your audience is mostly young adults, then you might think about Facebook and Twitter. If your organization works with high school students who are looking for scholarships, then you may want to consider Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Then go to each site, create a profile and start using them.
2. Start with one or two sites where your organization’s audience is most likely to be found. Familiarize yourself with how the site works and see how other organizations are using it to communicate with their audience. Once you feel comfortable with these sites, create profiles for your organization on other social media sites.
3. Find ways for users to interact with your content on all of these sites (i.e., “Like” it or add comments). This will help people become more engaged with your organization and will encourage them to share information about your work with others in their social networks, which in turn promotes word-of-mouth advertising.

### **Achieving Success With Multimedia Content**

Before you start your social media efforts, you should spend some time creating a comprehensive plan that includes exactly what you want to achieve and how you plan to get there. Once you have this plan, you can use it as your guide to keep your efforts on track.

- A good social strategy should include at least the following:
- A brief overview of your business and its goals
- What type of audience you are targeting
- Which social media platforms will be most effective for reaching that audience
- What types of content you’ll be sharing
- How often you will share content
- Who will be in charge of managing the accounts?

Getting the word out about your company, products, and services, has never been easier. Thanks to the Internet, you can reach a worldwide audience with a few keystrokes.

The following are elements you can use to achieve success with multimedia content:

**Podcasts.** Podcasts are audio sets with a range of topics, from music or news to politics or finance. You can create one for your business and have listeners subscribe to it on iTunes.

**Videos.** Videos are not solely for entertainment anymore — businesses are using them as a medium to communicate their brand message. This can be done by developing a YouTube channel and posting videos regularly, or just uploading videos from your cell phone directly to social media networks like Facebook and Twitter.

**Infographics.** Infographics are visual representations of data or knowledge that help simplify the concept for readers who aren't keen on reading. They're also known for being shared more than other forms of content, which is great for marketers looking to go viral with their content.

Consumers today are bombarded with information, so grabbing their attention and holding it long enough to get your message across is a formidable challenge. In response, public relations (PR) professionals have moved beyond the traditional press release and into new media, trotting out a whole arsenal of tools and tactics to get the job done.

The PR world has become vastly more competitive as well. With so many people on Facebook, Twitter, and other social sites, it's tougher than ever to stand out from the crowd and make an impact. This chapter will help you do just that by covering some of the most effective ways to spread your company's message via social media.

Overall, there are many different elements of active media relations and developing a positive image for your company. It is essential to know how all of these elements work together as one, and each element should serve as an asset for another. Reporters need to know that your company offers a unique product or service, and social media development is the ideal way to show them this information.



## CHAPTER 25

# IS THE FUTURE PR AND MASS MEDIA OR PR AND SOCIAL MEDIA?

**P**R is undergoing a fundamental shift. Today, the traditional mass-media model of PR is changing in response to the emergence of social media. As a result, many organizations are rethinking their approach to PR. Some are continuing to use the traditional mass-media model while also adding social media tactics to reach new audiences. Others are focusing solely on embracing social media.

As a public relations professional, you might be asking yourself: What's the future of PR? Is it going to be PR and mass media or PR and social media?

Which approach should you choose? To decide, examine your goals and target audience carefully. Then consider where they spend their time and how they want to receive information about you and your organization.

What is clear is that public relations practitioners have to develop increased competencies and skills in digital communications. The days of being able to get by with minimal understanding of technology are long gone.

You need to understand how different social media platforms work, as well as other technologies. You should know what tools are available to help you manage your time more efficiently, organize information, connect with colleagues and stakeholders, share information and monitor, or the issues that matter most to your organization.

If you aim to reach a relatively large number of people quickly with a consistent message and image, the traditional mass-media model is still your best bet. Typically, this includes journalists and bloggers who write for mainstream publications and have large followings on Twitter or Facebook. If you want to reach niche audiences such as technical experts, medical professionals, business buyers, or scientists, mass media isn't likely to be effective because those audiences tend to seek out specialized publications that are read by a few others. In this case, social media is often the better choice.

### The Idea in Brief

Public relations is the discipline that helps companies build and manage their reputations. Social media are digital tools that let people interact socially on the Web. Together, they give PR pros unprecedented power to monitor and influence what's being said about their companies. But many don't understand how to use social media or why it's critical to their jobs.

### The Idea in Practice

The future of public relations is not exactly as you might expect. It's not about so-called "traditional" PR versus so-called "new" social media.

It's not one or the other. It's both. The future of PR and communications is PR and mass media, plus PR and social media.

The most successful companies and organizations will be those that embrace the combination of mass media and social media with broadcast, print and online, e, plus blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, be — all integrated into a single, cohesive communications strategy.

### What PR Can Learn from Social Media

Learn to capitalize on the potential of social media, PR pros must transform themselves from one-way communicators to two-way dialogists—engaging customers and others through Facebook, Twitter, and other tools instead of simply pushing corporate messages. As authors Shel Holtz and John C. Havens observe, "It's not enough to simply provide information; information is everywhere," so PR must also be able to create meaningful relationships with constituents. That requires a new set of skills:

**Learn to Listen.** One of the social media's most significant benefits is that it enables companies to track conversations about their products and brands. PR pros must monitor social networks regularly for discussions—including negative feedback—so they can respond promptly if necessary. Ford Motor Company established a command center where staffers scan blogs, websites, and social networks for mentions of the company and its competitors 24 hours.

## **The future of PR**

In the future, PR will have a very different place in the overall marketing mix. In the coming years and decades, we'll see a much more integrated approach to PR, marketing and advertising, timing, with all three working together in harmony.

The rise of social media has had a significant impact on PR and its place in the marketing mix. It used to be that companies could manage their brand reputation through traditional channels like press releases and earned media

coverage. Still, now there's an ever-increasing number of ways for customers to interact with brands.

This means that today's PR pros need to be familiar with a broader range of marketing techniques, from social media management to digital advertising. At the same time, digital marketers are starting to see the value in using PR techniques like content marketing and influencer engagement in their campaigns.

Ideally, all these approaches will work together seamlessly. And when they do, they can produce some impressive results — not only by increasing brand awareness and boosting sales but also by changing perceptions about important issues.

For example, look at the work Greenpeace has done over the years. They've made environmental issues come alive for people worldwide through creative stunts that attract massive amounts of earned media.

### **PR and mass media**

PR is not a field that is well understood. Even people who work in PR may not fully understand the ins and outs of what they do or how they do it. But PR is also not an industry that will fade away anytime soon, even with the rise of social media as a marketing tool.

The field of PR has gone through many evolutions over the years, but now it seems that we are on the edge of another one. The question is whether it will be PR and mass media or PR and social media.

PR and mass media are deeply intertwined. Mass media is the primary source of information for the majority of the public, and therefore, it is the key to getting your message out to the masses.

As the Internet, social media, and mobile technology change marketing, P, R, and mass media are converging. The distinctions among them are becoming blurred.

- PR is moving away from earned-only media to paid, owned, and shared media.
- Mass media is not disappearing. It's morphing into something different than what it used to be.
- The skills needed for PR in the future will increasingly be digital skills

PR professionals should be fluent in “old” and “new” media. PR people have a unique advantage over journalists because they know how both sides of the

process work. And this knowledge allows them to tell their clients' stories better and get them published in mass media outlets.

## **PR and social media**

PR may be more important than ever, but the technologies for delivering it have changed radically.

PR is about relationships, and social media does a better job of developing relationships than traditional mass media. The key to success in PR is to create relationships that matter with people who care about what you do.

Public relations and social media are now two sides of the same coin. A well-executed social media strategy will be of more excellent value to your organization than any press release or news story.

Why? Because everyone is a publisher, and everyone is a potential influencer. When you publish a press release or send it to a reporter, you have to hope that the journalist does something with your story to get it in front of an audience. That's not a given — if you've ever pitched a journalist, you know that more often than not, they're not interested in your news.

You can reach more people directly by publishing on social media. The more people who share your content on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, the more people you can reach in total.

Furthermore, if you publish "news" on your company blog or website, no one has to reprint it to get traction. It's there 24/7/365 for everyone to see (and share).

On the surface, it might appear that PR will be focused on social media, but let's not forget about mass media! We believe that mass media is still alive and well in this digital age.

The following are some reasons why:

Websites are a form of mass media. Blogs are rapidly growing in popularity, and they often link to other news sites or news releases to add more information to their stories. This is a great way to get publicity through blogs and traditional news outlets.

You can send out news releases for free on various websites where journalists can find them easily. Many people who browse these websites work for mainstream news outlets and may pick up on your story idea from one of the news releases posted there.

Mainstream media outlets often use blogs as a source for their stories because they are considered more credible than unknown websites. The key

is getting your story idea on a blog where journalists pay attention to it so they might contact you for additional information or an interview.

### **The future of PR is both mass media and social media.**

PR is not social media. PR has always been about reaching the right people through the proper channels to deliver the right message. It's just that our tools and tactics have changed.

The best PR pros are those who understand how to use both mass media and social media to accomplish their goals for their clients or organizations. They can work a story with the press in traditional ways, but they also know how to seed stories and content through social networks, blogs, and other online vehicles.

The good news is that many of the skills that make someone a great PR person—being a great writer, identifying and attracting influencers, and communicating to sources effectively—transfer well to social media. And many skills that make someone good at social media—an understanding of how communities form and spread information; an ability to identify and create compelling content; comfort with using new technologies—also make them effective in traditional PR.

Whether you're working in PR, marketing, or another function, it's essential to understand how these worlds are converging so you can figure out where your skills fit into this new environment.

PR professionals who can combine knowledge of mass media with the latest trends in social media will be highly sought after by employers.

PR professionals who understand mass media and navigate social media have a dual advantage. They have the experience to help shape news for traditional outlets, and they know what is driving online conversations about their clients or organizations.

Public relations professionals need to know both worlds well to create meaningful content that resonates with audiences.



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