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Emerging Trends

in the ever-shifting
communications
landscape

Advice from communications & PR experts on what to keep
an eye on in the current communications landscape

Global Public Relations Network | Worldcom Group

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As the communications landscape is shifting faster than ever, we’ve asked 15 of our communications experts to share their advice on a trending topic. We hope you will find the insights useful. To contact any of our experts just click on the link at the bottom of each post.



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Deciding When To Take A Stand On Social Issues

Everywhere you look, there's a new, potentially polarizing issue emerging. There was a time when people wouldn't even consider bringing some of these topics up at their dinner table. Now, they expect companies to not only have a point of view, but to take a stand.

In fact, consumers have higher expectations that brands and CEOs speak out and take a stand on an issue than they did just two years ago. Numerous studies demonstrate that consumers are willing to pay more for products from companies who have similar values and beliefs, are more brand loyal to those organizations, and are more willing to offer them grace in the face of adversity.

But you can't be all things to all people, and you can't speak out on everything. So as an organization, how do you know when you should take a stand on an issue?

It's not easy, and these decisions can have major business implications. When deciding whether or not to take a stand on an issue, consider these four key points.

- **Does the issue align with your company's vision, mission and brand?** It's important to separate personal feelings from what makes sense for the business.
- **Have you considered all points of view?** While one group of stakeholders may feel extremely passionately one way, there's likely to be another group that feels the opposite. Consider ALL points of view and remember social issues are viewed differently around the globe.
- **Are you adding value to the conversation, or just another voice?** Don't take a stand just to be heard – consumers will see through you. If you're going to speak out, make sure you're contributing something meaningful to the conversation, actively committing to/driving change or offering solutions.
- **Are you walking the talk?** By taking a stand or speaking out, you're opening yourself up to scrutiny. Be prepared to show what you're doing to be part of the solution, and make sure your internal house is in order.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at [contact Padilla](#).



Julie McCracken

Julie McCracken, vice president, Padilla, is a member of the agency's Corporate Advisory Group, and focuses on social impact, employee engagement, corporate culture and change communications. Padilla, Minneapolis, USA.

AI's Transformative Role in Fintech PR

Fintech is experiencing an unparalleled revolution courtesy of AI. As these tech-savvy financial firms continue to reshape how we interact with money, their PR strategies are evolving, too, leveraging AI's potent capabilities. For fintech firms aiming to carve their niche in a hyper-competitive landscape, AI isn't just an asset; it's a necessity.

Why It's Important:

For financial services and fintech, trust is currency. And for tech companies, staying innovative and relevant is vital. The industry promises disruption, and every communication and campaign signals to stakeholders just how transformative fintech can be. With AI, PR efforts can be laser-targeted: sentiment analysis gives real-time feedback, predictive algorithms guide content strategy, and automation ensures timely engagement.

Here are key insights to keep in mind:

- **AI-Driven Analytics is Your Compass:** Navigate the vast seas of stakeholder data and interactions using AI. Its insights will shape and refine resonant PR campaigns.
- **Anticipate with Predictive Engagement:** Use AI's foresight to gauge market and stakeholder reactions, letting you stay ahead in your communication strategies.
- **AI Ethics & Data Transparency Are Non-Negotiable:** Fintech organizations must be transparent in an industry built on trust. Ensure stakeholders know how AI tools process their data, fortifying trust and transparency.
- **Stay Agile with Continuous AI Learning:** The fintech landscape evolves relentlessly. Ensure AI tools and strategies adapt and innovate at a similar pace.
- **Automate, but Personalize:** While AI can automate many PR processes, ensure the touch of personalization remains. Tailored messages, even if AI-generated, strike deeper chords.

The intersection of AI and fintech presents a transformative shift in the financial world. As digital innovations continually redefine our financial interactions, AI emerges as a linchpin, ensuring fintech firms communicate effectively, strategically, and ethically. Embracing the intelligence and insights offered by AI isn't merely about keeping pace with industry evolution. It's about leading from the forefront, pioneering new-age financial dialogues, and setting benchmarks for others. For fintech firms eyeing leadership and influence, integrating AI into their PR arsenal is the unequivocal way forward.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at stefan@pollackgroup.com



Stefan Pollack

Stefan Pollack is President & CFO of The Pollack Group, Los Angeles, USA.

The Importance Of Driving Belief And Belonging To Achieve Your Business Objectives

The three extracts below from current articles focus on three different actions to take to create a PeopleFirst organisation. The first in [Entrepreneur.com](https://www.entrepreneur.com) by Terrell Strayhorn, PHD focuses on the benefits of creating a sense of belonging.

'When employees feel a sense of belonging in the workplace, they're free to be their authentic, true selves, which makes it easier to show up, engage with others, create solutions and perform well. People who don't feel workplace belonging experience anxiety, (dis)stress and mistrust that ultimately hampers their performance and creativity. That's why entrepreneurs and leaders should design organizational policies and practices to encourage it.'

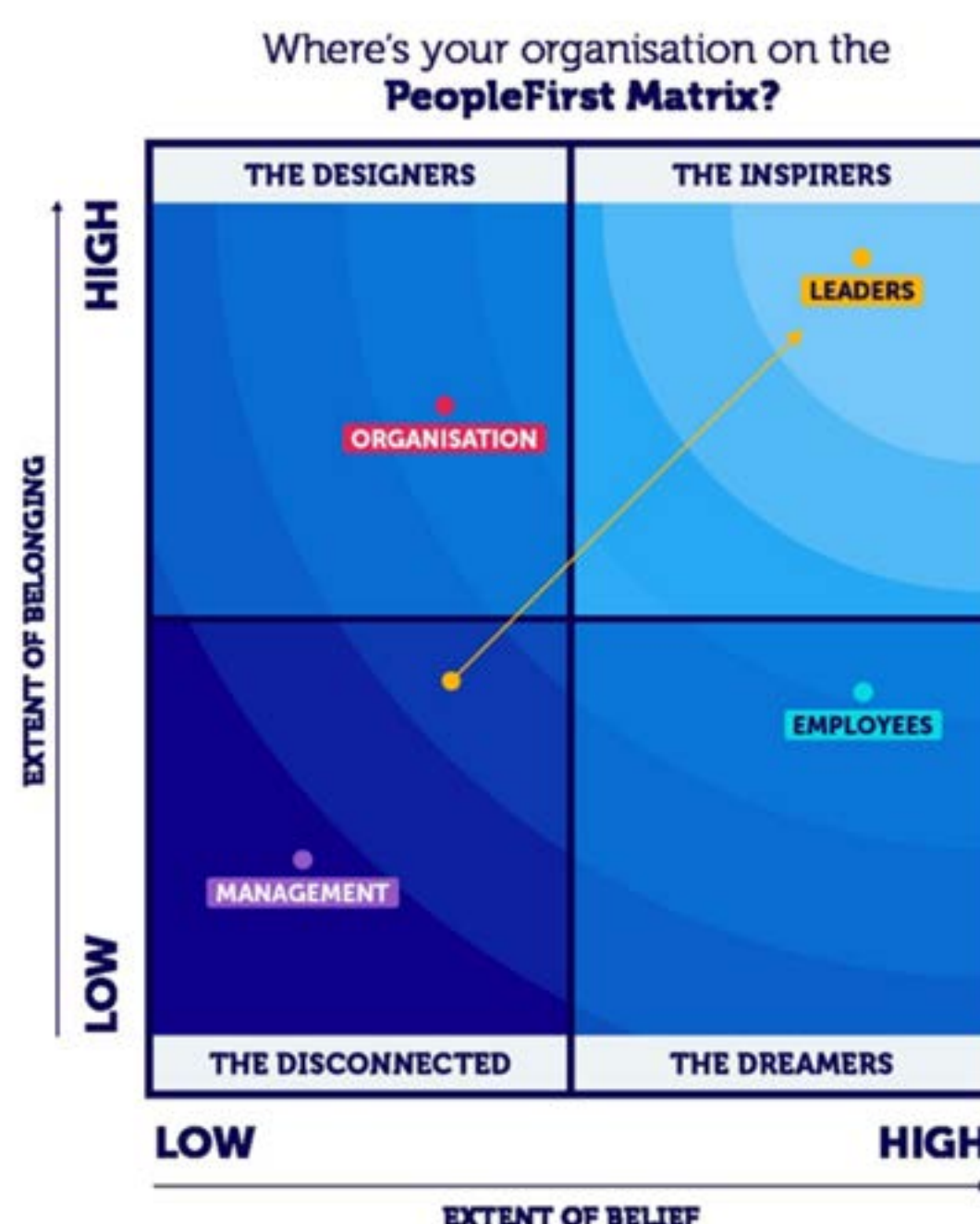
But what do you need to do to create belonging. The extract below from an excellent article by Matt James in [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com) highlights the importance of Inspiring Leadership and communication to creating a PeopleFirst organisation.

'Picture this: you're a leader with high EQ. Your team looks up to you because you inspire them, foster collaboration, and make decisions that take everyone's emotions into account. Effective communication is your superpower. By building rapport, listening actively, and speaking with empathy, you create a positive work environment where ideas flow freely. Leaders with high EQ inspire teams, foster a positive work culture, and drive productivity.'

Then there is this extract from a [CNBC article](https://www.cnbc.com) by Goh Chiew Tong which show that having an inspiring and inclusive culture is just as important as inspiring leadership.

'A toxic workplace culture was one of the biggest culprits behind the Great Resignation – which saw droves of workers leaving their jobs or switching careers during the post-pandemic era. But since then, some companies are moving to the other extreme of "a culture of niceness," and that could be just as damaging as toxicity, said one social psychologist.'

These three articles show that becoming PeopleFirst is a journey that will never be fully completed because things change. What you focus on depends on where you are on that journey. So, it makes sense to find out where you are positioned on the PeopleFirst Matrix and whether there is alignment between senior leadership, line management and employees.



Interested in learning more? Connect with us at crispin@inspiring-workplaces.com



Crispin Manners

Crispin Manners is CEO of [Onva Consulting](https://www.onvaconsulting.com) and Chairman of [Inspiring Workplaces](https://www.inspiring-workplaces.com), UK.

“Food is Medicine”: A New Horizon for the Food Industry

In recent years, the adage “food as medicine” has surged in popularity, emphasizing the potential for the foods we consume daily to promote health and prevent disease. While fruits and vegetables have traditionally been at the epicenter of this dialogue, a broad spectrum of foods can contribute to holistic, disease-preventing dietary patterns.

As insurance companies, academic institutions and governmental bodies continue to explore nutrition's role in health management, a unique opportunity arises to identify the ideal dietary pattern(s), delivery format, and duration to enhance health outcomes. This beckons all food industry stakeholders to collaborate and become pioneers in this evolving space.

Three Key Strategies for Food Industry Engagement in “Food is Medicine”:

a. Narrate the Public Health Significance:

For inclusion in this movement, food must offer a definitive public health benefit. It's essential to communicate which diseases or populations might benefit from your product and the scientific evidence backing these claims. By substantiating a product's role in disease prevention or management, food industry stakeholders can solidify their position in food is medicine interventions.

b. Foster Cross-Industry Partnerships:

Building relationships with insurers, food retailers, non-profits, and health organizations is crucial. Collaborative endeavors allow the food industry to have a voice in shaping the future of the food is medicine movement. Strategic partnerships open doors to additional opportunities to integrate a wider mix of foods into food is medicine programs.

c. Develop Advocates:

To gain traction, industry players should seek and support champions—those echoing their mission. By wielding evidence-based nutrition insights, these advocates can amplify the role of specific foods in health promotion.

All nutritious food products warrant acknowledgment in the food is medicine discourse. It's the food industry's moment to engage and accelerate the integration of food into the healthcare system.

Interested in learning more? FoodMinds has dedicated experts tracking all things Food is Medicine. Connect with us at ContactUs@foodminds.com



Maya Maroto

Maya Maroto, EdD, MPH, RDN is a Vice President at FoodMinds, a division of Padilla, based in our Washington, DC office. She leads our Food is Medicine team.

Embracing AI for Marketing Success

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into marketing strategies is reshaping the landscape, offering a range of powerful tools. This transformation spans generative AI, predictive analytics, and large language models (LLMs). These advancements can potentially revolutionize marketing, presenting both opportunities and challenges. Marketers harness these capabilities to craft compelling content like blog posts and images; however, this isn't AI's sole advancement. Predictive analytics empowers businesses to forecast future earnings with precision, guiding decision-making for well-defined goals.

AI's influence even extends to investment advice, enhancing prediction accuracy and efficiency. Moreover, open-sourced LLMs like Llama 2 are democratizing access, encouraging innovation and spurring exponential growth. Embracing AI isn't just smart—it's imperative. At True, we're working with our clients to better understand the role of AI in marketing. One thing is certain: you can either lead or fall behind – and staying relevant hinges on staying updated.

For the industries True specializes in, such as construction and manufacturing, AI holds significance. It creates efficiency, streamlines processes, and optimizes operations. While AI doesn't lay bricks, it helps shape the blueprint, freeing us humans from menial tasks for grander visions. So, how should other marketers address this trend and capitalize on AI?

Adopt a phased strategy

Crawl, Walk, Run. Integrate AI into everyday tasks, such as composing emails and task prioritization – small yet impactful steps. As familiarity grows, explore avenues to implement it on a larger scale within your organization.

Embrace AI's versatility

AI or LLMs can often be augmented or trained on a business's own data, adding more intelligent and relevant information to the user. Look to leverage these opportunities to extract the most value possible from your AI Tools and applications.

Acknowledge AI's rise but comprehend the associated risks

Prevent bias in AI models, address copyright concerns in generative AI, and uphold ethics—use AI judiciously.

In the era of AI, seizing opportunities while navigating challenges will define successful marketing strategies. But remember, staying ahead of the times is the key. Embracing modern tech is no longer a choice but a necessity for thriving in the ever-changing business landscape.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at wsilasi@truedigitalcom.com



Wayne Silasi

*Wayne Silasi is Digital Marketing Lead
at True Digital, Cleveland, USA*

Don't Panic, Illustrate!



We have seen this trend for a long time, but recently it has intensified. The harsh reality that consumers no longer want to read long texts is one that marketers – and PR professionals in particular – must face. Printed newspapers and magazines have fallen into a deep, pitch-black hole. Social media users are no longer talking about books or other print products. It seems that the familiar text-based world of media and public relations is gone forever.

This situation may be uncomfortable, but smart marketers can use it to their advantage. Visualization and illustration are the key words. If you want to be successful with your PR campaigns, you need to invest time, energy and all the necessary resources to properly illustrate your messages. As we live in this new, highly visual age, everything has to be visually appealing. High quality illustrations and infographics must accompany press releases. Landing pages, websites and all other digital communications should have visuals that support the brand's key messages as strongly as written copy. Short-form video, gifs, memes – these also need to be incorporated into communications today, even in corporate and B2B campaigns.

Fortunately, there are plenty of tools and ways to create eye-catching illustrations. Easy-to-use design and video editing software, stock photo and video libraries, even AI-based graphic design solutions. The key element is to know what you want to convey. You need to have an idea of how to support your message with visual content. And this is where design professionals can help. They may not be the cheapest solution, but in most cases the investment in expert skills will yield a better ROI.

In this new visual world, PR and graphic design should go hand in hand. So don't panic, illustrate.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at rnagy@probako.hu



Andras Nagy

*Andras Nagy is a Managing Director at
Probako Communications, Hungary.*

From Intuition to Insight: Leveraging Data to Refine Your Craft and Deliver PProven Results

In the swiftly evolving realm of public relations, embracing data and analytics is now pivotal for success. The shift towards data-driven PR is underway, demanding professionals to seamlessly combine intuition with insights. Here's how to excel in this landscape:

a. Embrace the Data Shift

With analytics a priority for over 38% of communicators, a fully integrated measurement culture is essential. Don't rely solely on vanity metrics; embrace data-driven recommendations to prove value and optimize campaigns.

b. Transform Mindsets

Earned media analytics goes beyond recap reports. Utilize data to make real-time decisions, streamline media relations, and devise long-term strategies. All team members should grasp basic analytics, fostering collaboration between creativity and analysis.

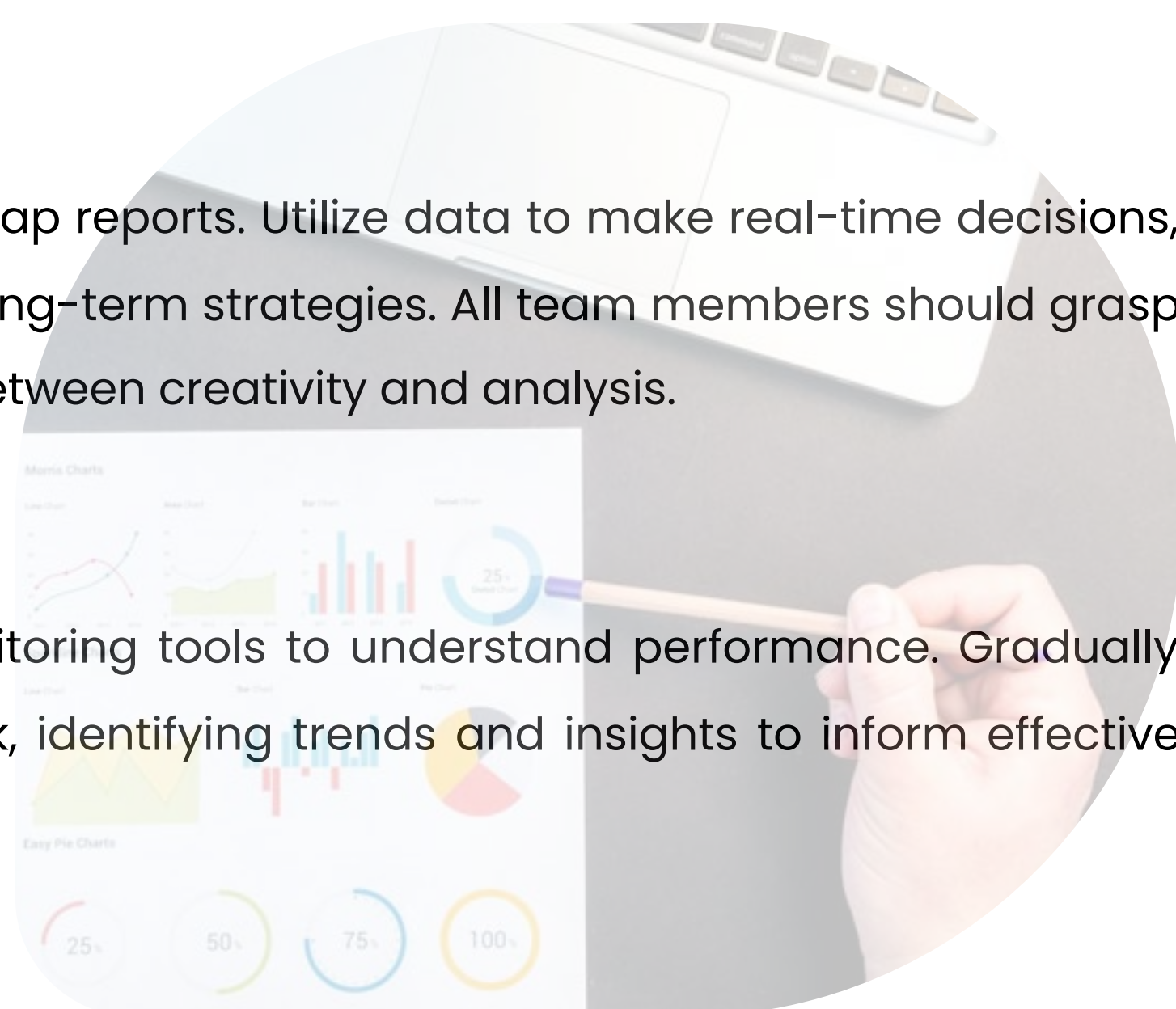
c. Start Small, Think Big

Begin by leveraging earned media monitoring tools to understand performance. Gradually integrate analytics into day-to-day work, identifying trends and insights to inform effective media strategies.

a. Prioritize Value Over Volume

Choose metrics aligned with goals. Focus on quality over quantity. Metrics like key media penetration and message pull-through yield meaningful insights, helping to tailor strategies for better results.

In a landscape of shifting currents, navigating the dynamic media landscape requires relationships and data fluency. Foster connections with traditional journalists, podcasters, and influencers to elevate your craft. Embrace analytics to refine strategies, bridging the gap between intuition and insight.



Interested in learning more? Connect with us at slaltrelli@coynepr.com



Sierra L'Altrelli

Sierra L'Altrelli is Senior Account Supervisor, Analytics & Measurement Strategist, at Coyne PR, New Jersey, USA

ESG Strategy:

Moving from “Feel Good” to Real Accountability

Today, no organization, regardless of the industry in which it operates, can avoid the topic of environmental social governance (ESG). Stakeholder expectations are becoming more stringent and “feel good” pieces about charitable donations, volunteer work and local initiatives are no longer enough. Organizations need an ESG strategy that is grounded in data-driven, internationally-recognized reporting frameworks and focuses on disclosure around risks, opportunities and goals. Leaders who are serious about ESG reporting need to take transparency to a new level.

Goal setting and accountability

B2B companies, especially, face a high degree of scrutiny from regulators, investors, employees and customers when it comes to their sustainability performance. Reports that cherry-pick accomplishments can trigger accusations of greenwashing and result in reputational damage. We are witnessing a shift to greater accountability, which means that organizations must set clear goals and integrate ESG metrics into their operations. By being transparent about their goals and sharing them with investors, they’re putting a stake in the ground—and it forces the organization to make progress.

Responding to external influences

Societal trends can influence the areas on which companies report. For example, carbon footprint reduction is now a goal not just for manufacturing companies but also for companies in other sectors. The same goes for supply chain transparency. There’s a lot of diligence that goes into mitigating ESG risks that come from the supply chain. At the same time, the increased focus on DEI has prompted greater attention to company policies and leadership makeup.

Finding your unique angle

While reporting frameworks exist to bring consistency in how companies measure their ESG performance, it’s critical that companies understand and respond to the unique concerns of their stakeholders. When we work with companies on ESG reporting, we recommend asking stakeholders what they care about—what’s material to them, with respect to the industry and/or the company. That’s how they start to begin to build their ESG strategy and figure out what they need to monitor and report on.

Interested in learning more? Connect with mlackey@standingpartnership.com



Melissa Lackey

Melissa Lackey is a President and CEO at Standing Partnership, St Louis, USA.

Crisis Communication Is Increasingly Being Left To Experts

Social media platforms are accelerating the way a problem can become a major crisis within hours and how a local crisis can become a global problem with lasting damage. As a result, more and more companies are seeing the added value of experts who specialize in crisis communications because the dynamics of a crisis and the risk of reputational and commercial damage cannot be underestimated. Regardless of whether you work in healthcare, industry, logistics, pharma or IT: *'15 minutes of fame'* increasingly lead to *'15 years of shame'* unless you are properly prepared for a crisis and have an expert response to a crisis.

Crisis communications experts help you to:

- Ensure you have the systems, policies and processes in place to protect organisations and brands from the worst outcomes of a crisis.
- Rehearse and simulate the most likely crises for your organisation so that your people are ready to respond in the right. Until you've run a simulation you can't be certain how people will respond – and that lack of certainty can leave you exposed to lasting damage.
- Ensure you prioritise people ahead of property or profit in a crisis. If you don't demonstrate you have a heart the court of public opinion will judge you harshly.
- Ensure that every possible audience and channel of communication is monitored, and consistent messages provided. In the absence of transparent messaging people or special interest groups will use your crisis to further their own agenda and leave you damaged in the process.
- Learn from a crisis and enhance their preparedness for future crises.
- Identify opportunities to turn the negative story into a positive one by partnering with not-for-profit organisations that enable you to be seen as a genuine force for good.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at serge.beckers@wisse-worldcom.nl



Serge Beckers

*Serge Beckers is Managing Director
at Wisse Kommunikatie, Netherlands.*

Pioneering Pathways: Navigating the Ever-Changing Media Terrain in Travel PR

In today's travel PR landscape, understanding the evolving media terrain is crucial. Print and online media shifts require PR professionals to rethink strategies beyond traditional outlets. Here, we explore alternative approaches:

Podcasts: With 464.7 million podcast listeners and growing, podcasts offer a targeted way to share news. Position clients as industry thought leaders by collaborating with relevant podcasters. Shows like "The Travel Diaries" and "Women Who Travel" spotlight unique stories and insights.



Influencers: Leverage influencers' built-in audiences across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and X – formerly Twitter. These virtual storytellers can effectively convey brand messages and news. Major brands like Hilton and Tarte Cosmetics engage influencers to amplify their messaging creatively.

Broadcast: While national broadcast segments are sought after, local outlets can provide longer segments that deeply engage the target audience. Secure local coverage and consider pitching the same story to the network's national syndicate for wider reach.

As media evolves, building relationships remains pivotal. Cultivate connections with journalists, podcasters, and influencers to ensure effective promotion. Stay agile, embracing new pathways in the ever-changing landscape of travel PR.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at mabril@coynepr.com



Michelle Abril

*Michelle Abril is Vice President at
Coyne PR, New Jersey, USA.*

Supplying to a large company? Start your ESG-work now!

As many as 82% of large Finnish companies say that they are under pressure to tighten or renew requirements related to their supply chain due to corporate responsibility commitments. More than 42% of large companies say that they have already replaced subcontractors or suppliers due to responsibility obligations.

These numbers come from a 2023 large-business survey made by the financial group OP in Finland. The survey reveals that companies increase their responsible operations because they want to fulfill their customers and investors' expectations as well as strengthen their business and meet regulatory obligations.

Although not all obligations yet apply to small and medium-sized enterprises, it is time for them to start environmental social governance (ESG) work and keep it actively on display through proactive ESG communications. In this way they will protect their position in supply chains and their attractiveness as a network partner, as an investment target or in business mergers and acquisitions. They will also ensure their attractiveness as an employer, as more and more job seekers are paying attention to both ESG commitments and ESG action.

Where to start and what to communicate?

When is a company ready to be able to say that it is acting responsibly? And what should you communicate? You can communicate about small steps you are taking. You just need to make a commitment to communicating.

What do you need to follow?

At the very least, sector-specific legislation, regulations and guidelines. The most important thing is to study or get help in order to understand the most important issues concerning your own company and industry, and focus on them, to ensure that you do not miss opportunities because a competitor meets the customer's responsibility expectations better.

Now is the time to start preparing because change takes time. It does not just happen by changing the wording. First you need an analysis and its implementation, which can extend to the properties of the products or material choices.

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at marja@medita.fi



Marja Keränen

Marja Keränen is a Communications consultant at Medita Communication, Finland.

Personalizing Marketing to Boost Brand Loyalty

As the world continues to evolve, so do consumer behavior trends. Today's consumers are more informed and empowered than ever before – thanks to the internet and social media. They have higher expectations and demand more from the brands they choose to do business with.

Because of this, there is a need to shift marketing efforts to focus on more personalized experiences, as consumers seek out products and services that cater to their individual needs and preferences. It's no longer acceptable to cast a wide net and hope that some will bite. We recommend clients focus on using the data they have to create relevant content tailored to their unique audiences.

For example, you can create targeted emails with product/service recommendations based on the consumer's purchases, browsing history, or previous engagement. You can also use social media to create personalized promotions and ads that are tailored to the consumer's demographics, interests, and behavior.

These are just two ways we, as marketers, should leverage data and machine learning to create personalized experiences that resonate with consumers and drive engagement and loyalty.

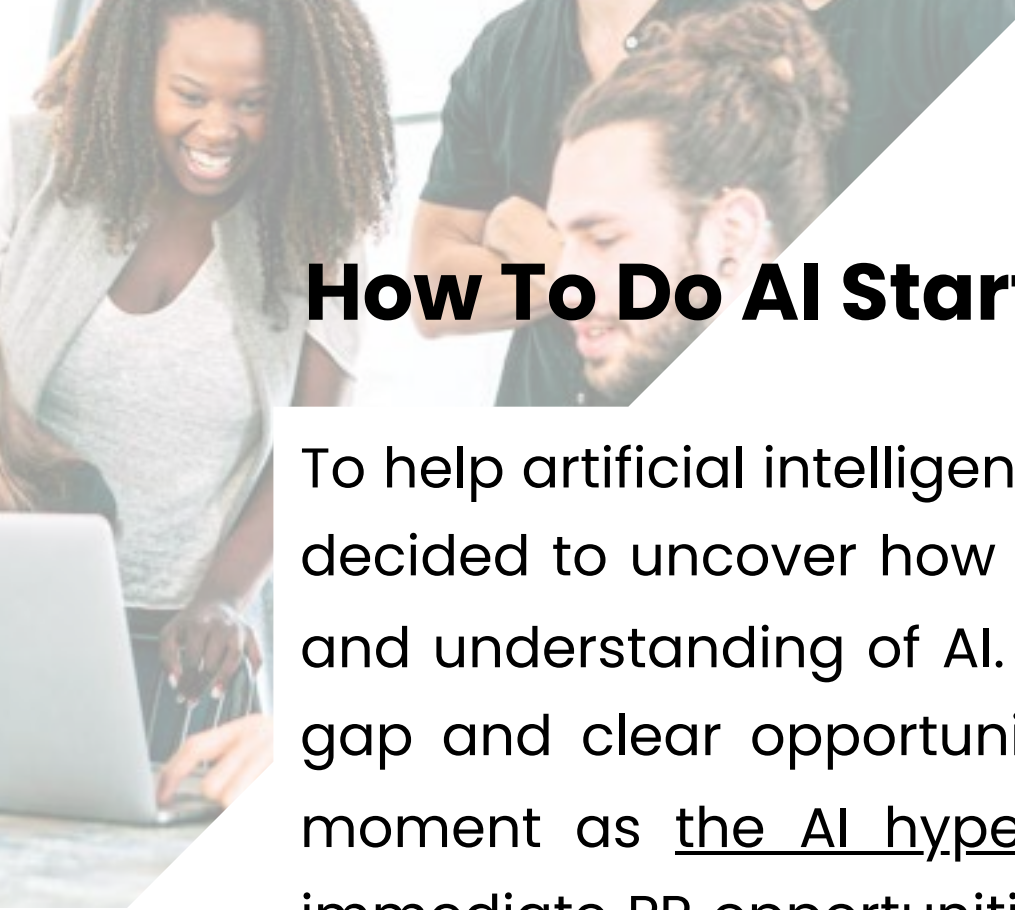


Interested in learning more? Connect with us at mkline@truedigitalcom.com



Madeline Kline

Madeline Kline is Content Marketing Manager at True Digital, Cleveland, USA.



How To Do AI Startup & Tech PR, Featuring AI Survey Insights

To help artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (genAI) startups inform their PR efforts, we decided to uncover how the meteoric rise in AI news coverage translated to people's views and understanding of AI. Through a consumer survey, we found there was a big awareness gap and clear opportunities in PR for AI startups and companies. It is a critical business moment as the AI hype cycle heats up, and AI startups should act fast. Here are the immediate PR opportunities for AI startups that our survey of 1,000 employed U.S. adults, and experience guiding companies through past innovation waves, uncovered:

Corporate communications & storytelling

By creating a corporate storytelling engine — fueled by a pipeline of momentum news, thought leadership, newsjacking and greater purpose stories — and validation tactics (i.e., awards, analyst reports) AI startups can inch out ahead of competitors not yet embarking on PR.

Vertical education and demand

Our data showed people are eager to learn more and that press are interested in real-world use cases. Companies should consider their biggest industry opportunities and build out storylines and assets to demonstrate value and relevancy to each.

Trust building

Our survey showed a good amount of fear around AI, from privacy to job displacement. With industry regulation still in talks, the responsibility — and opportunity — lies with the AI companies themselves. Corporate/product PR and messaging needs to address and alleviate concerns (of buyers and end users).

Financial communications & IR

In our survey, of the 50% of respondents who invested in the stock market, 13% were already investing in AI company stocks. Another 43% were considering it. For AI companies whose goal is fundraising or IPO, or ones who are already publicly traded, investment-focused PR can help create buzz, specifically, in investor audiences.

As the market is still taking shape, now is the time for AI startups and companies to focus on corporate awareness and brand storytelling. It not only *positions* a company as the market leader, the social proof and exposure help manifest *actual* market leadership by gaining reach and consideration with would-be customers, talent and prospects ahead of the competition. **You can see the full article here.**

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at here



Julie Babbitt



Leslie Clavin



Julie Babbitt and Leslie Clavin are Vice presidents at SHIFT, a division of Padilla, Boston USA.

Reviving Real Connections: In-Person Events Reignite PR Engagement in the Digital Age

Virtual events have been essential for PR professionals, but the resurgence of in-person press gatherings is undeniable. Recent surveys indicate 55% of event professionals plan to have most of their events be in-person experiences, and 72% agree that in-person events are a crucial part of their marketing strategy.

In-person events provide an immersive experience that demands attention and builds a sense of community and brand identity. Product demos feel more real, and brand messages hit home when shared in a real-world setting. Live events also grant media deeper interactions beyond scripted presentations, leading to richer stories. Human interaction enhances experiential content, something you can't get at virtual events. It also allows for the feel of an exclusive, authentic behind-the-scenes look at the brand.

For successful live press events, consider these key tips:

- **Plan with Purpose:** Understand the event's purpose – be it product introduction or brand exposure. Set measurable goals to guide planning.
- **Roll Out the Red Carpet:** Partner with influencers or celebrities to amplify attention and generate buzz.
- **Engagement through Entertainment:** Incorporate interactive experiences, custom touches, and unique giveaways to keep attendees engaged and excited.
- **Socialize Your Event:** Leverage social media platforms to boost awareness. Create event-specific hashtags and use social photo booths for shareable moments.
- **Location Matters:** Choose a spot aligning with your brand or adaptable for custom themes. The right location sets the stage for success.
- **Provide Transportation:** Offer transportation to ensure attendees' punctuality and control over the event's flow.
- **Mark Their Calendars:** Send calendar invites to confirmed media attendees via Google Calendar or Outlook to prevent scheduling conflicts.

With the return of in-person events, brands can build authentic connections. Crafting immersive experiences ensures lasting impact and distinguishes your brand. Happy planning!

Interested in learning more? Connect with us at bmurphy@coynepr.com



Brian Murphy

*Brian Murphy is Senior Vice President
at Coyne PR, New Jersey, USA*



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